

News

Reminder: First Friday University Social Today

A First Friday University Social will be held from 4 to 6 p.m. on Friday, June 5, in the Alumni Lounge of the Memorial Union.

All faculty, staff and graduate students are invited.

Complimentary soda and light snacks will be served, and a cash bar will be available.

There will be no First Friday University Socials in July and August. The remainder of this year's socials are scheduled for 4 to 6 p.m. at the following locations:

- * Sept. 4, Rozsa Center
- * Oct. 2, Portage Lake Golf Course Par and Grill
- * Nov. 6, Portage Lake Golf Course Par and Grill
- * Dec. 4, Rozsa Center

Reminder: Rozsa Center Closed Today

The Rozsa Center will be closed all day today, Friday, June 5. For your ticketing needs, contact the Central Ticket Office (SDC) or Tech Express or visit <http://tickets.mtu.edu>. The center apologizes for any inconvenience.

Michigan Tech Receives Stimulus Money for Teacher Education Program

by John Gagnon, promotional writer

Nearly \$1 million of federal stimulus money has found its way to Michigan Tech for a scholarship program that focuses on increasing the number and quality of teachers of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in the state.

Brad Baltensperger, chair of the Department of Cognitive and Learning Sciences, says the National Science Foundation is providing \$900,000 over the next five years to train students and professionals to teach STEM disciplines in high schools.

Twenty-four students and 12 professionals will be recruited for the program. The undergraduate students will receive up to \$10,000 a year for two years; the professionals will receive up to \$18,000 for one year.

"This is pretty exciting," Baltensperger said. "It's a great use of stimulus money. A stronger cadre of teachers will help diversify the STEM-related workforce, energize local economies and support national competitiveness."

He said the program addresses a "gradual but steady decline," both statewide and nationally, in the numbers of STEM educators. "There is a need for highly competent science and math teachers, especially at the high school level."

The NSF, he said, "wants to increase that pool of teachers and to encourage people to stay with the profession" by helping them succeed.

The initiative will supply STEM teachers for "high-need" urban and rural schools that have difficulty

recruiting highly qualified science and mathematics teachers.

Tech's program targets the Saginaw and Grand Rapids areas and includes extensive collaboration with two school districts, two community colleges and two universities in those cities.

Participants will be recruited from the Tech student body, high schools, community colleges (especially Delta and Grand Rapids Community Colleges) and professionals in the STEM fields who want to switch careers and become teachers.

Undergraduate students will participate in the program for their junior and senior years. In return for two years of scholarship support, they will be required to teach in a high-need school for four years. STEM professionals will participate for one year and will be required to teach in a high-need school for two years. Should graduates not fulfill those responsibilities, the scholarship becomes a loan that they have to repay.

Helping student teachers will be education faculty at Michigan Tech, Saginaw Valley State University and Grand Valley State University who will visit, monitor and encourage student teachers as well as graduates of the program who are entering the teaching profession.

"New teachers can feel overwhelmed," Baltensperger said. "Teachers in difficult school settings are much more likely to persist in that job if they have help. We're trying to provide a support network." That will include an on-site mentor, regular visits by teacher education faculty and an online graduate course focused on effective teaching, working with diverse learners and communicating with parents.

Another partnership is with the Saginaw and Grand Rapids public school districts. "They have agreed to take our students for field experiences and for student teaching," Baltensperger said. "They will accept student teachers, provide them support and guidance from district teachers and look to our students when they hire new teachers."

Overall, some teachers struggle to teach STEM course work, Baltensperger said. "It goes beyond knowledge of the discipline. How do you teach in a way that students can learn? These problems aren't usually about content. You don't just tell them more about it. It's usually a problem of trying to convey knowledge. They need more mentoring, training, support and reinforcement."

The goals of the program are broadly based:

- * increase the number of excellent secondary teachers in STEM
- * strengthen the academic performance of urban students in STEM disciplines
- * improve students' attitudes toward STEM fields
- * create a pipeline of students, especially female and underrepresented minorities, for Michigan Tech

Faculty at Tech in mathematics, the sciences and engineering will provide background support and help choose scholarship recipients.

Baltensperger is the coordinator of the NSF program, which is named after Robert Noyce, the late inventor of the integrated circuit (or microchip), who was called "the mayor of Silicon Valley." Other leaders for the project include Chris Anderson, special assistant to the president; Shari Stockero, assistant professor of mathematics education; Sarah Green, chair of chemistry; and John Jaszczak, professor of physics.

Lot 14 Closure Extended to Expedite Construction

submitted by Andy Niemi, Grounds manager

Parking lot 14, located between Fisher Hall and Walker, will remain closed until Monday, July 6, to allow for faster construction of the northbound lanes of US 41 and eliminate the need for temporary gravel drive entrances to the parking lot.

With the completion of the northbound lanes, the entrance to lot 14 will be paved and reopened to traffic. If lot 14 is your assigned parking lot, please use lot 9, east of the Rozsa Center, for your parking needs during this time.

Please use caution, good judgment and patience while driving through the construction detours.

Remember that fines are doubled in construction zones, so "Give em a Break."

If you have any questions or comments, call Niemi at 487-2722.

Regular Features

New Staff

Jaclyn B. Johnson has joined the staff of University Marketing and Communications as a graphic designer. Johnson comes to Michigan Tech from Casselman & Henderson, P.C., in Marquette, where she worked as an administrative assistant. She also has experience as a freelance graphic designer and photographer. Johnson holds a Bachelor of Fine Art, with a concentration in graphic design, from Michigan State University. She lives in Hancock and enjoys mountain and road biking, running, camping, snowboarding, snowshoeing, watching movies and traveling.