

Macalester Receives \$800,000 Grant from Mellon Foundation for Immersive Learning

St. Paul, Minn. – Macalester College has received an \$800,000 grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in New York to support immersive learning experiences for both students and faculty as a means of enhancing the power of a liberal arts education. The nearly four-year award will fund this project through the 2016-2017 academic year.

The grant is titled "Creative Lifelong Learners: Linking Immersive Experiences to the Liberal Arts Foundation."

Immersive learning, which includes community-based projects, civic engagement, study away and experiential learning such as research and internships, enables students to test the relevance of academic knowledge, enhance critical thinking skills, apply and improve analytical skills, increase awareness of societal issues, broaden perspectives on diversity, and develop civic responsibility. For faculty, immersive experiences enliven continued learning and teaching, build reciprocal partnerships with the community, and create new areas for scholarship and research. These benefits have been documented in available educational research as well as in the published work of service learning scholars.

The grant will also help instill in students and faculty the ability to reflect more intentionally and meaningfully about what has been learned through the prism of their personal beliefs and values.

"For many years, Macalester has benefitted from the support of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and this generous grant is no exception," said Macalester President Brian Rosenberg. "The immersive learning that faculty and students will be experiencing in a liberal arts setting such as Macalester will deepen their appreciation for learning as a lifelong endeavor, and we have the Mellon Foundation to thank for that."

In 2008, the Mellon Foundation funded another Macalester project, "Curricular Pathways," and in many ways, this project builds upon that successful initiative.

A key element of the "Curricular Pathways" project was that it centered on Global Citizenship which encompasses all four values of Macalester's mission: academic excellence, internationalism, multiculturalism, and service to society. Global Citizenship will continue as a unifying theme in this project, thereby ensuring that core elements of Macalester's mission and values will be operationalized in support of faculty and curricular development.

Christy Hanson, Dean of the Institute for Global Citizenship and Distinguished Lecturer in International Studies, is the grant's director. "As a member of Macalester's faculty, I know immersive learning and intentional reflection are valuable tools to both faculty and students," said Hanson. "I look forward to the upcoming opportunities this grant will provide us as we link all these experiences back to a liberal arts foundation."

Macalester College, founded in 1874, is a national liberal arts college with a full-time enrollment of 2,035 students. Macalester is nationally recognized for its long-standing commitment to academic excellence, internationalism, multiculturalism, and civic engagement. Learn more at [macalester.edu](http://www.macalester.edu) (<http://www.macalester.edu/>)

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