



# LSA First Fellows

## A Comprehensive First-Gen Support Network in LSA

Many first-generation students experience tremendous financial stressors, often cobbling together multiple jobs to close the gap between financial aid and demonstrated need. Opportunities—from unpaid internships and research work to extracurricular activities—remain out of reach for many first-generation students on our college campus. National trends also point to alarming disparities in GPA, graduation rates, sense of campus belonging, and use of university resources.

In the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, several programs are tailored to support small groups of first-generation students, including the Comprehensive Studies Program and Kessler Scholars Program. But we must do more to support the thousands of their first-generation peers who are left without the essential scaffolding for success.

**LSA First Fellows is a bold new program that will expand the breadth and depth of resources that support first-generation students in LSA.**

## Cohort Programming

No first-generation student should feel left behind. Because students' sophomore year is a critical period for early success to take root, all first-generation sophomores in the college will be invited to participate in the program. Using a cohort-based model, the LSA First Fellows Program will scale existing support structures and supplement them with new resources for first-generation, LSA sophomores. LSA First Fellows will have access to resources, mentors, and the academic and experiential opportunities that build student success.

The program's guiding principles are grounded in a strengths-based perspective to cultivate and sustain a sense of belonging, pride, and community among our first-generation students. Each component of the LSA First Fellows Program focuses on student success—drawing on data-driven insights to help students thrive academically throughout their college journey.

## First Fellows Funding Opportunities

We have about 800 first-generation sophomores, including transfer students, in the College of LSA. Our goal is to invite each and every one of these students to take part in the First Fellows Program, and to endow the program so that we can sustain this level of support and commitment to first-generation sophomores for years to come. **An endowed gift of \$50M would partially endow the First Fellows Program in LSA.**

### Course Support

Enrollment in a one-credit course will provide students with regular contact with an instructor and an opportunity to build community with peers. Classes will discuss academic exploration, research opportunities, campus climate issues, selecting majors/minors, and planning for summer opportunities. **A gift of \$100,000 will cover the cost of one cohort's class section.**

### Team-based Mentoring Support

Every First Fellow will be connected to people whom they can rely on—personally, academically, and professionally. Faculty, staff, and graduate students are being recruited to serve as trained mentors, helping students navigate and access the vast resources available at U-M. **A gift of \$15,000 will fund one graduate student's participation as a First Fellows mentor.**

### Social Event Support

The First-Gen Commitment will host multiple social events throughout the year, with specific attention to enhancing first-generation students' sense of pride and belonging throughout LSA. LSA First Fellows will be invited to attend these college-wide events, such as milestone celebrations and community social events. **A gift of \$50,000 will fund one cohort's events for a year.**

### Summer Financial Support

Every First Fellow will be awarded a \$4,000 summer stipend for use during the summer following their sophomore year to pursue educational summer opportunities, including research assistantships, nonprofit and community-based positions, unpaid internships, and study abroad experiences—without financial stress. **Every gift of \$4,000 will support one student's summer stipend. An expendable gift of \$3.2M will fully fund all First Fellows' summer stipends for a year.**



**“I’m a first-generation student from Connecticut. I love LSA because I don’t feel like a number here, I actually feel like someone they’re excited to see come in every day. They participate in my spirit of wanting to learn. I know that whatever questions I have, someone is going to help me get there as long as I stay curious. I’ve never felt so limitless.”**

*—Krista Schrader, class of 2027*

for what's next ▶

**Look to Michigan**