



RAOUL WALLENBERG INSTITUTE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Teaching, research, and public engagement to combat antisemitism, divisiveness, and discrimination

The mission of the Raoul Wallenberg Institute at the University of Michigan is to foster the values embodied by Raoul Wallenberg—empathy, tolerance, and leadership—by studying hatred directed against religious and ethnic communities, fostering cross-cultural understanding, and elevating civic discourse. Through teaching, research, and public engagement, the institute will develop strategies to combat antisemitism, divisiveness, and discrimination.

The Raoul Wallenberg Institute was established by the University of Michigan in December 2023 as part of a university-wide effort to combat antisemitism and advance religious diversity and inclusion on all three campuses. “We are bringing together leading U-M expertise and diverse perspectives toward a safer and more inclusive world, and even more, a brighter world of peace,” announced President Santa J. Ono.

Raoul Wallenberg, the institute's namesake, was a Swedish humanitarian who graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in architecture in 1935. Nine years later, he volunteered to work in Budapest on behalf of the U.S. War Refugee Board to aid U.S. efforts to rescue European Jews during the Holocaust. He is credited with saving some twenty thousand Jews from deportation to the Auschwitz death camp by establishing safe houses and handing out Swedish protective papers.

Wallenberg was made an honorary citizen of the United States by President Ronald Reagan—one of only eight people in history to receive this honor—and was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal by President Barack Obama. Since 1985, Wallenberg’s legacy has been honored at the University of Michigan through the Wallenberg Medal and Lecture and the Wallenberg Fellowship.

TEACHING AND CURRICULUM

CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT

The Raoul Wallenberg Institute will provide funding for instructors to develop new courses, including team-taught classes and courses devoted to research on relevant topics; to add modules to existing courses; or to redesign courses that advance the mission of the institute. Funding may also be used for undergraduate and graduate student support, course website development, the acquisition of curricular materials, digital and technological assistance, or other projects related to curricular development. The institute may also want to develop a certificate program.

FLAGSHIP COURSE

Students will learn about the values embodied by Wallenberg through our flagship course, “Empathy, Tolerance, and Leadership” to be developed in collaboration with experts across the university and offered as a 200-level 1-credit mini-course or as a 300-level 3-credit course every fall semester.

CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS

The Raoul Wallenberg Institute will sponsor conversations geared primarily toward students on charged issues related to the mission of the institute. These conversations will model tolerant and respectful dialogue and be open to all students who register in advance and agree to the set guidelines of exchange. Conversations will be professionally facilitated and may include presentations and/or guidance from subject experts.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The Raoul Wallenberg Institute will fund and assist in the identification and development of experiential learning opportunities for students who seek to engage with the values of the institute beyond the classroom. Experiential learning can be integrated into courses and/or promoted through internships. The institute will work with and support instructors to identify or develop experiential learning opportunities in collaboration with community partners.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP FELLOWS

The Raoul Wallenberg Institute will create a student leadership program geared specifically toward fostering cross-cultural dialogue and common understandings about charged issues related to the mission of the institute. Applicants could, for instance, be selected to engage in semester-long dialogues with a format that builds upon the Challenging Conversations series and that trains students to become facilitators for other groups in their communities and beyond.

RESEARCH

The Raoul Wallenberg Institute at the University of Michigan will become a leading center for cutting-edge research on issues related to the mission of the institute.

MAJOR RESEARCH INITIATIVES

The Raoul Wallenberg Institute will directly sponsor and oversee major collaborative research initiatives at the University of Michigan. Funding may be used to support faculty, postdoctoral fellows, graduate and undergraduate student researchers, technical and administrative staff, and equipment and travel expenses. Each project will be funded for a maximum of three years with the possibility of renewal. We anticipate funding new projects on an annual basis. Recipients of funding will be expected to present their findings to scholarly workshops every semester, creating an institute-specific workshop series. Workshops may include scholars and students at the University of Michigan and elsewhere.



RESEARCH FUNDING SUPPORT

Each year, the Raoul Wallenberg Institute will solicit proposals from across U-M for smaller research projects that advance the mission of the institute. These may include requests for summer faculty funding, funding for student research assistants, postdoctoral researchers, equipment, travel, and other eligible research expenses. Recipients of research grants will be expected to attend and present their work at Wallenberg research workshops.

RESIDENTIAL FELLOWSHIPS

The Raoul Wallenberg Institute will also provide two to three fellowships for scholars and practitioners whose work advances the mission of the institute and enhances its intellectual community. These fellowships can include U-M faculty, emeritus/emeraita faculty, visiting faculty, postdoctoral scholars, and practitioners (researchers, journalists, NGO members, activists, governmental and intergovernmental officials on leave, and independent scholars) and can include short term and/or longer term fellowships of up to three years. Fellows will pursue their own projects while interacting and collaborating with the institute and other resources at the University of Michigan.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Raoul Wallenberg Institute at the University of Michigan will be a public-facing resource for the State of Michigan.

PUBLIC DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH

The Raoul Wallenberg Institute will disseminate the results of its research and programs on a regular basis through various means, including opinion pieces in major media outlets, podcasts, public conferences and symposia, the publication of occasional research papers, webcasts, and newsletters.

SPEAKER / EVENT SERIES

The Raoul Wallenberg Institute will sponsor moderated conversations in communities around the state on charged issues related to the mission of the institute. These conversations will model open and respectful dialogue and will provide opportunities for influential and thoughtful figures in the public eye (politicians, thought leaders, entertainers, influencers, etc.) to be in conversation with subject experts and professional moderators.



DISTRICT AND CHARTER SCHOOL OUTREACH

The Raoul Wallenberg Institute will serve as a resource for district and charter schools in the state of Michigan, particularly in reference to the Genocide and Holocaust Education Public Act 170 of 2016, which requires "age and grade-appropriate instructions about genocide, including but not limited to the Holocaust and the Armenian genocide." In collaboration with other Holocaust pedagogy initiatives, the institute will hold seminars and workshops for school leaders, identify and publicize age and grade appropriate sources of information, and offer assistance in the ongoing development of curricula. The institute will also undertake age-appropriate school-focused programming within the scope of the institute's mission. When appropriate, such programs may be developed and carried out in association with other University of Michigan centers and programs, such as the Donia Human Rights Center, the Center for Armenian Studies, the Weiser Center for Europe and Eurasia, the Weiser Center for Emerging Democracies, the Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies, the School of Education, and the University of Michigan Global Islamic Studies Center.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

We welcome gifts at all levels to support the critical work of the Raoul Wallenberg Institute.

FACULTY AND STAFF LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

To ensure sustained academic leadership and vision, as well as strong administrative direction, we will establish the following key positions, as well as a robust administrative staff cohort:

Endowed faculty director to guide scholarly and teaching activities across the institute and beyond—\$3 million

Endowed staff director to support strategic planning and ongoing operations for maximum impact—\$2 million

TEACHING, CURRICULUM, AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Endowed teaching and curriculum fund to launch flagship course, support ongoing curriculum development and innovative teaching practices—\$1 million

Endowed student engagement fund to support staffing, curriculum development, student fellowships, experiential learning initiatives, and deeper conversations—\$2.5 million

RESEARCH

Endowed research fund to support the awarding of projects and grants—\$10 million

Endowed fellowship fund to provide stipends and grants for faculty, visitors, and practitioners—\$6.5 million

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Endowed community outreach fund to build staff and infrastructure for a speaker/events series and engage in school outreach—\$2.5 million

WAYS TO FUND YOUR GIFT

Your partnership connects the college's rich past to a boundless and bright future. You can change lives with gifts of cash, pledges, or appreciated securities, and create a meaningful legacy through your bequest, trusts, gift annuities, and other planned gifts. Your generosity makes an impact on what's next, for a better tomorrow.

for what's next ▶

Look to Michigan

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