**Ford School Public Interest Technology (PIT) Initiative:**

**Group Independent Study and Course Project Opportunity**

**Title: PIT career paths and constraints faced by persons of color**

**Background**

The Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan in conjunction with Generation Titans and Techtown Detroit are launching an inaugural Public Interest Technology (PIT) Fellowship for current Masters students and recent graduates. The objective of the Fellowship will be to educate practitioners, students, and key decision-makers about emerging PIT research and develop a robust strategy to address inequities currently in PIT-adjacent fields.

**Timeline: Winter Semester 2020**

**Client Organization**

TechTown is Detroit’s Entrepreneurship Hub. They help tech startups and local businesses launch and grow--serving as an incubator and accelerator. TechTown supports businesses with coworking and office space, meeting space and event space. They also connect entrepreneurs to resources, and learning and networking events in Detroit.

Contact: Paul Riser, Jr, Director of Detroit Urban Solutions

**Program Details**

Students will be matched with social entrepreneurs for a semester long project that focuses on a social benefit for the Detroit Metro area. Students will work in consulting teams where they will engage with PIT research, as well as develop consulting and project management skills. At the end of their project, student teams will present their innovative solutions to representatives from Techtown Detroit, faculty from the Ford School of Public Policy, New America Foundation. Project findings will also support PIT Collaborative research development which will be shared with national the PIT University Network institutions

**Prospective Students**

The Michigan PIT Collaborative seeks students with interest at the intersection of technology and public policy. Partnering with social entrepreneurs in the Detroit Metro Area, students will fuse technological enhancements on people-driven solutions to advance social equity in historically disadvantaged communities. Participating Fellows will be enrolled in a group independent study for 2-3 credits.

The students will support the project team (TechTown, GenerationTitans, PIT) by producing a final report that may include recommendations regarding:

* Career pathways for students pursuing PIT careers.
* Opportunities and obstacles of PIT practitioners with the focus on persons of color.
* Customized Policy recommendations and guidance from TechTown Detroit for accelerating each TechTown PIT entrepreneurs.

A prospective student who will be successful in the PIT Fellowship will have experience in/with the following:

* Computer Science/Engineering
* Science, Technology, and Public Policy
* Business Development/Consulting
* Community Organizing/Engagement

**Partnerships**

The Michigan PIT Collaborative seeks to partner with social entrepreneurs of color who are delivering innovative solutions to address community needs. Prospective partners involvement entails meeting with student teams weekly (or as needed). Representatives from each partner organization will be present for project kickoff, workshop, student seminars (as needed), and the final student presentation in May. PIT Collaborative Partners will be compensated for support of student teams throughout the duration of the project period.

**Public Interest Technology (PIT) University Network**

The Public Interest Technology University Network (PITUN), which was convened by the Ford Foundation, New America, and the Hewlett Foundation, is a partnership of 21 colleges and universities dedicated to building the nascent field of public interest technology, as well as growing a new generation of civic-minded technologists and digitally fluent policy leaders.

“As a social justice funder, our hope for a better world forms the fundamental core of what we do,” said Darren Walker, president of the Ford Foundation. “Our society is marred by devastating inequalities of all kinds and addressing these challenges requires ideas that marry inspiration with impact. Through the work happening in colleges and universities to leverage technology to serve the public interest, we hope to build a new generation of technologists and policymakers who will be able to hold—in both hands—a desire to disrupt the systems that are no longer working and a dream of something bigger: doing good for others.”

For more information about the PIT Fellowship for students, please contact PIT PI Robert Hampshire (hamp@umich.edu) and Project Manager Jessica Taketa at jestaket@umich.edu

To learn more about being a partner in the Michigan PIT Collaborative Fellowship, please contact Raymar Hampshire at raymar@generationtitans.com