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## Lee Honor College News – 2017

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Congratulations to Jill Puckett and Nathan LaWarre on being named [University Innovation Fellows](#) by Stanford University!

<http://wmich.edu/news/2017/03/38475>

MARCH 1, 2017

## Stanford names two WMU students as University Innovation Fellows

contact: Mark Schwerin

March 1, 2017 | WMU News

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Two Western Michigan University students are among 224 nationally and internationally named University Innovation Fellows, a global program run by Stanford University that empowers student leaders to increase campus engagement with innovation, entrepreneurship, creativity and design thinking.

**Jill Puckett**, a student majoring in advertising and promotion, with minors in general business and gender and women's studies, is from Marshall, while **Nathan LaWarre**, a student majoring in electrical engineering with a minor in environmental studies and sustainability, is from Saranac. They have just completed training to join the program.



*Spring 2017 University Innovation Fellows*

## Empowering students

Students chosen for the program, which is run by Stanford University's Hasso Plattner Institute of Design, represent 58 higher education institutions in seven countries. The program empowers students to become agents of change at their schools. Fellows work to ensure that their peers gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to compete in the economy of the future and make a positive impact on the world.

Fellows advocate for lasting institutional change and create opportunities for students to engage with innovation, entrepreneurship, design thinking and creativity. They design innovation spaces, start entrepreneurship organizations, host experiential learning events and work with faculty to develop new courses.

Puckett hopes to better connect students from different areas in interdisciplinary projects and research.

"I believe that to truly foster innovation and entrepreneurship on campus, we need to have students from all areas working and learning together," Puckett says. "So far, working with Nathan and other students through the Innovation Club, I have learned so much from students outside my major. Because of this experience, I think differently, with more creativity, because I see things from a different perspective."

LaWarre also credits the Innovation Club and other opportunities for entrepreneurship on the WMU campus, including Starting Gate, student project labs at the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, WMU's entrepreneurship minor and student research grants.

"I am looking forward to the road ahead of me," LaWarre says. "Learning doesn't stop at the ending of our UIF training. Hopefully, we will be able to make an impact on WMU's campus and fuel the entrepreneurial spirit."

## LaWarre

LaWarre, an active member of the Sunseeker solar race car team at WMU, works as a tutor at Kalamazoo high schools and as an intern with an architectural engineering firm. He hopes to one day work in the renewable energy field, researching and creating more efficient sources of energy.



*Warre and Puckett*

## Puckett

Puckett works as an office assistant in WMU's Office of the Vice President for Research. Starting this summer, she will take on the marketing capabilities and strategies intern position at Amway in Grand Rapids. After graduating in spring 2018, she plans to move on to grad school and earn a master's degree in market research before starting her career.

## **University Innovation Fellows program**

With the addition of this year's fellows, the University Innovation Fellows program has trained 1,000 students at 185 schools since its creation. Fellows are sponsored by faculty and administrators as individuals or teams of students and selected through an application process twice annually. Following acceptance into the program, schools fund the students to go through six weeks of online training and travel to the annual University Innovation Fellows Silicon Valley Meetup. Throughout the year, they take part in events and conferences and have opportunities to learn from each other, Stanford mentors, and leaders in academia and industry.

"During their training, fellows learn how to analyze their campus innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems and understand the needs of stakeholders with the goal of uncovering opportunities to enrich the education opportunities for peers," says **Leticia Britos Cavagnaro**, program co-director.

**For more information**, visit [universityinnovationfellows.org](http://universityinnovationfellows.org). To learn more about WMU's fellows, visit [universityinnovation.org/wiki/Western\\_Michigan\\_University\\_Student\\_Priorities](http://universityinnovation.org/wiki/Western_Michigan_University_Student_Priorities).

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