



information
changes
everything



SCHOOL OF
INFORMATION
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Growth through uncertainty

Though we continue to face uncertainty as the COVID-19 pandemic continues on, I am pleased to present this Impact Report: an appreciation of the support we have received from our friends and donors.

Despite the unpredictability the virus has brought to our lives, your generosity has allowed us to continue to grow. We have seen a record number of applicants to our academic programs as well as a record number of newly enrolled students. At the same time, we have processed a record number of financial aid packages. There is a need, and we are determined to meet it.

In this report you will see the impact a gift to UMSI can have. Our Student Emergency Fund helps students with unexpected expenses so they can continue their scholarship uninterrupted. The UMSI Engaged Learning Program Gifts fund is used to help students have access to hands-on, high-impact learning experiences that could otherwise be out of reach.

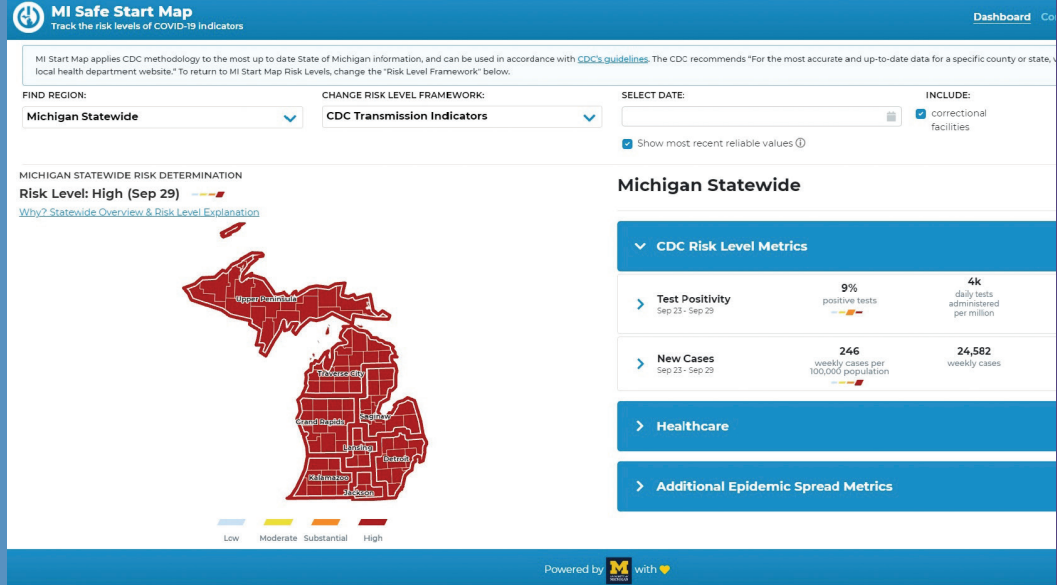
During this time of uncertainty, the support of our community of givers has never been more important, or more appreciated. With your help, UMSI continues to be a beacon, attracting outstanding new faculty and students, producing research with impact, and educating the next generation of information professionals.

This Impact Report presents an overview of how we distribute our donors' gifts, some of the programs made possible by those gifts, and what inspires some people to give. These donations can change students' lives and make a meaningful difference in the school's future.

We are deeply grateful.

Thank you.

Thomas A. Finholt, Dean
School of Information



UMSI alumni, students, faculty and staff create important COVID tracking tool

University of Michigan faculty, staff, alumni and students developed online tools designed to help local and state officials reopen the economy safely and gradually while allowing them to quickly identify and respond to potential coronavirus hot spots and outbreaks.

The tools include a COVID-19 symptom checklist web application and COVID-19 dashboard designed to provide real time, visualized data for officials to easily identify areas where the coronavirus presents a higher risk, and for the public to understand the pandemic status in their community and across the state.

The MI Safe Start Map dashboard development was led by the U-M School of Information in partnership with the School of Public Health, involving dozens of faculty, staff, students and alumni.

The goal was to help state leaders “balance lives and livelihoods” as they determined when it was safe to resume various activities as the state emerged from various COVID safety directives, said Paul Resnick, professor of information and associate dean for research and faculty affairs at the School of Information.

“Given there are many indicators that could show something is going wrong, you want a way to systematically monitor them, calling people’s attention and having them then go and investigate something before making the difficult decisions about when to reopen what.”

Using procedures developed by epidemiologists at the School of Public Health, the dashboard uses key public health indicators such as number of daily new cases per million residents and percent positive tests to help local and state public health officials identify and track hotspots that require further attention. A scaled-down version for the general public lets people look up the current risk phase of their region and see some of the underlying indicators that contributed to officials’ determinations.

“The notion that we get to build a tool for the state to use is humbling—it says something about the Michigan brand—but I felt prepared and confident we could together build something that could rise to the challenge.”

—ALEX FIDEL, MSI '20

In all, more than 80 staff, faculty members and students from information, engineering and public health contributed to the app and dashboard development.

UMSI students involved included a 2020 graduate who served as project manager, responsible for recruiting and onboarding new members. Emil Meireles called his involvement with the project “exciting and humbling.”

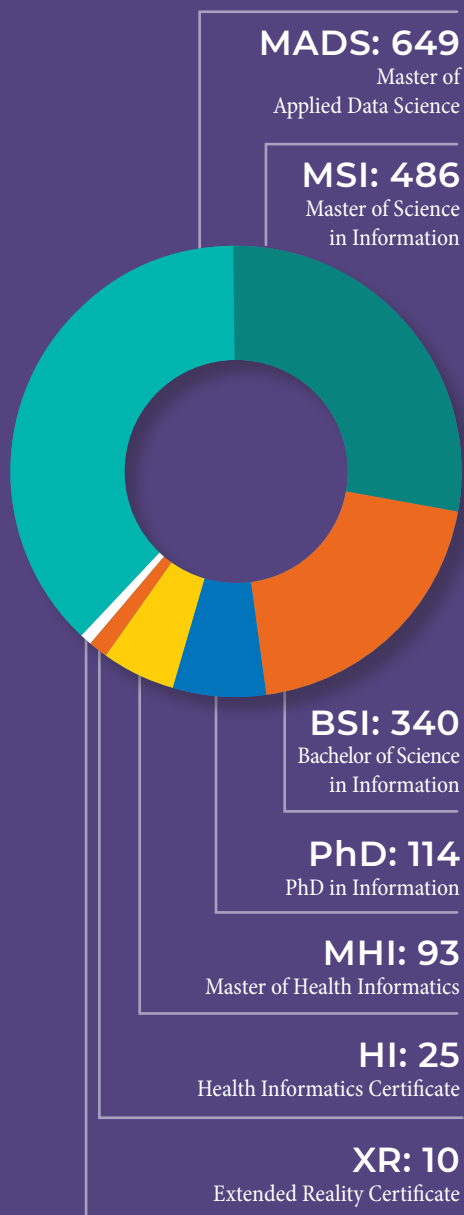
Alex Fidel, one of the co-leaders of the User Experience (UX) Team and a recent Master of Science in Information graduate, said his degree and a graduate certificate in health information prepared him well for the work.

“It wasn’t intimidating. The notion that we get to build a tool for the state to use is humbling—it says something about the Michigan brand—but I felt prepared and confident we could together build something that could rise to the challenge.”

Ani Madurkar had just completed his first year in the Master of Applied Data Science program at the School of Information, during which he chose to work on how demographics like wealth and population impact COVID.

“Data scientists should be cognizant of the impact they have in society,” said Madurkar, an IT data analyst in Okemos, Michigan. “It’s exciting to see what this could mean for the future of health and technology.”

Enrollment by program



70

Core faculty



9,539

Living alumni



95%

Recent graduate employment



95%

Recent graduate job satisfaction

Student emergency fund provides just-in-time aid

For members of the University of Michigan School of Information community facing unforeseen financial challenges, payments awarded through UMSI's Student Emergency Fund provide the right aid at the right time, helping students like recent Master of Science in Information grad Josue Figueroa (MSI '21) stay on track in their education.

In 2020, Josue received his semi-annual scholarship stipend through UMSI in January. After securing an unpaid internship early on in the year, he began to grow concerned about being able to support himself over the course of the summer, in the middle of economic lockdown resultant of the COVID-19 pandemic. His next scholarship stipend was not due to come through until September.

"Even though I was getting the experience, I wasn't necessarily being compensated financially," Josue says. "I realized that I'm in a position where I need to swallow my pride and take the opportunity to ask for help because I needed the help. I didn't have any additional way of supporting myself while I was here in Ann Arbor."

With its student body remaining UMSI's top priority, the school's Student Emergency Fund is in place to support students like Josue who encounter an emergency situation or one-time, unusual or unforeseen expenses during their degree program. During the difficulties of the past year, donors have helped to meet unforeseen challenges faced by many students in the UMSI community.

"We have always wanted to make sure that students have their needs met, especially those immediate needs that come up suddenly. What we never want to see happen is a student have to stop moving forward in their educational goals," says UMSI Executive Director of Academic and Student Affairs Laura Elgas.



JOSUE FIGUEROA

When Josue got the notification that his emergency funding request had been approved to cover his current monthly rent and utilities payments, the relief was so palpable he said he almost shed a tear.

"I was just filled with joy that I wasn't going to have to scramble to figure out how to cover my living costs while here in Ann Arbor," he says.

From addressing housing or food insecurity to replacing laptops to relieving a bevy of other formidable circumstances, the UMSI Student Emergency Fund's one-time payments help students like Josue overcome all kinds of unexpected financial obstacles to continue their education at UMSI.

"I love knowing that students are being cared for and watched and supported through their time at the School of Information," says Elgas. "It means a lot to me to be part of a community that sees students in this way and wants to support them all the way through."

In fiscal year 2021, UMSI disbursed \$55,104 to students facing financial hardships due to loss of income.

"Thank you to the donors for making the emergency fund available," says Josue, "making it an opportunity for students like myself that have been or are in a position where they need help financially."

"Thank you to the donors for making the emergency fund available, making it an opportunity for students like myself that have been or are in a position where they need help financially."

—JOSUE FIGUEROA, MSI '21



JOSHUA TOOKER, MICHAEL PAYNE AND LAUREN TRIMBLE, (LEFT TO RIGHT)

A UMSI ANNUAL FUND PROJECT

UMSI students add transparency to absentee ballot process

As part of the UMSI Citizens Interaction Design Summer Fellows Program, three Master of Science in Information students worked with the Michigan Department of State to help build transparency into absentee voting.

The team partnered with township and city clerks across Michigan, interviewing them to understand the challenges they faced during the first presidential election since Michigan voters approved a 2018 proposal to vote by absentee ballot without stating a reason.

During the interviews, students kept hearing about high demand for mail-in ballots in the months leading to the 2020 presidential election. Clerks were processing an enormous number of emails and phone calls from anxious voters who wanted updates on the status of their absentee ballots.

Using a process pioneered by staff from the City of Ann Arbor, the team worked with municipal IT departments in four regions to create and pilot an automated email notification system. As clerks updated ballot status in the statewide Qualified Voter Files, emails were automatically sent to those voters. This process saved clerks and their staff, on average, two hours a day.

Scott TenBrink, civic engagement program manager at the School of Information, said the students' role was to connect people to the voting opportunity and increase access through information systems and tools. The students often take unique approaches to looking at how government interfaces with citizens.

"One thing I've heard multiple times from partners that we work with is that this has changed the way we think about the work that we're doing," he said. "I think that our students come into these civic programs with a list of skills that they've kind of rehearsed in a classroom, but never applied to a real-world setting. And local government is probably one of the places that has the most chaos, political influence and frustrating obstacles.

"It's fair to say that the absentee ballot project changed my trajectory. The Frost Fund support made a huge impact on my experience at UMSI and helped me re-frame my career."

— LAUREN TRIMBLE, MSI '21

"And at the same time, they have people who are passionate about accomplishing the goals that they've set out for the public to make a difference in the world. So being exposed to those things, I think, really changes our students' perception of the value of the skills that they have and the challenges that they're going to face in the real world when they start work and hopefully get involved in civic information projects."

The project was funded in part by the UMSI annual fund and with support from the Frost Open Access Endowed Fund. The Frost Fund was created by late School of Information Professor Robert Frost and Professor Emerita Margaret Hedstrom to support workshops and special initiatives by students and faculty that look closely at open access to information and issues related to the public domain.

"It's fair to say that the absentee ballot project changed my trajectory," said Lauren Trimble, a student on the project. "The Frost Fund support made a huge impact on my experience at UMSI and helped me re-frame my career. I'm committed to using my MSI degree and my accessibility background to reduce barriers to information, increase usability, and foster design decisions that lead to greater inclusion."

What is the UMSI annual fund?

UMSI's annual fund is a flexible source of funding that is used at the dean's discretion for the school's highest priorities and most urgent needs. Gifts of all sizes are combined and leveraged for their collective impact.

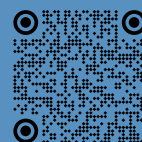
In fiscal year 2021, \$60,000 in annual fund gifts was used to provide 39 students with internship grants to assist those who took unpaid or low-paying internships.

\$60K
IN INTERNSHIP
GRANTS FOR
39
STUDENTS

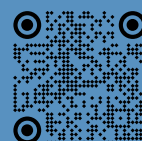
Annual fund gifts also funded six Citizens Interaction Design (CID) projects at \$5,000 each. These six students worked on civic initiatives for clients such as the City of Lansing and the Michigan Department of State as part of the Global Information Engagement Program.

6
CITIZENS
INTERACTION
DESIGN PROJECTS
\$5K
EACH

SEE THE
CITY OF LANSING CID PROJECT
umsi.info/CIDLansing



SEE THE
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE
CID PROJECT
umsi.info/CIDmichigan



Your support for UMSI

Total production

\$3,770,583*

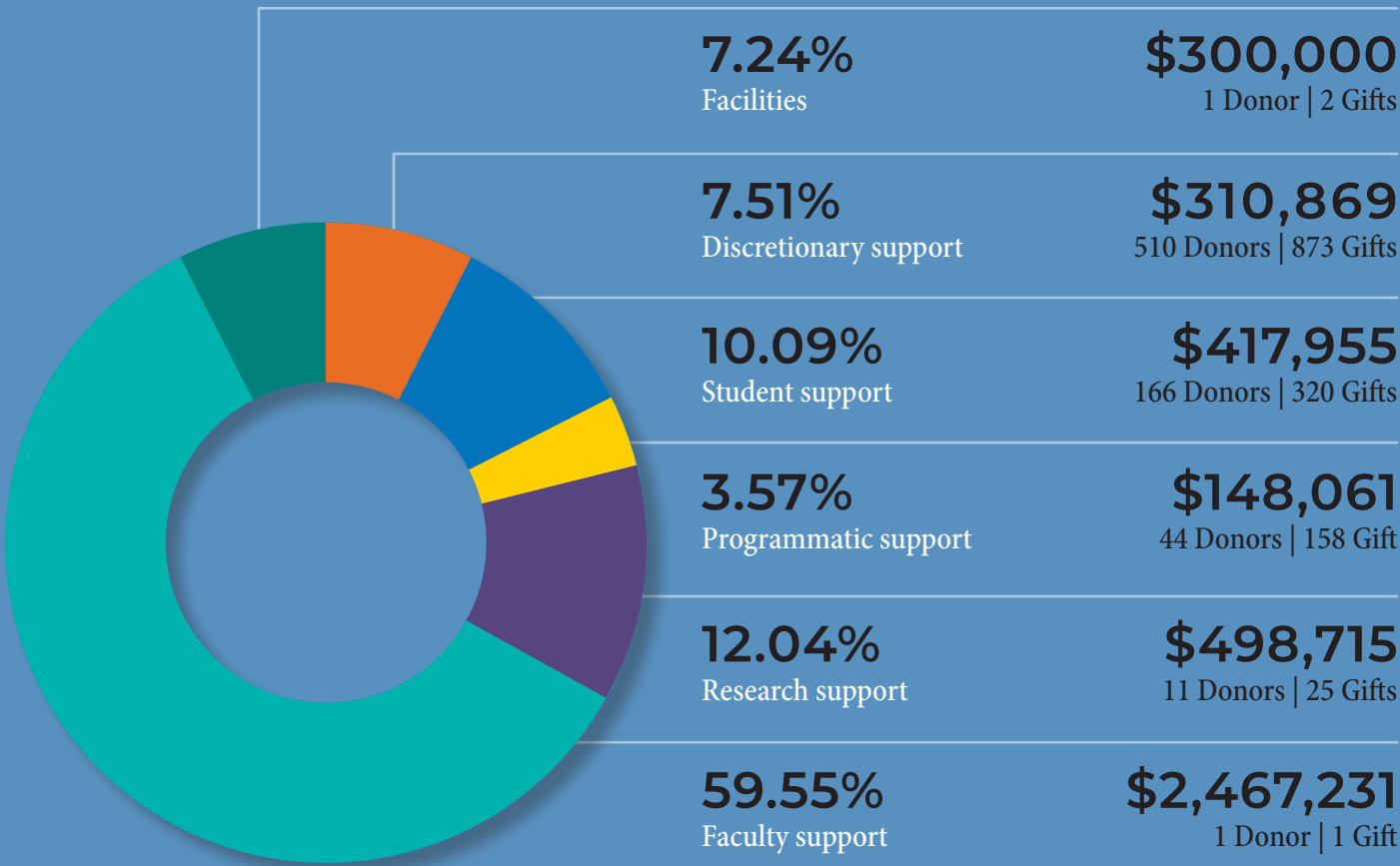
Dollars raised

\$4,142,831*

*Total production includes all expectations committed to the school during the fiscal year, including pledges and unrealized bequests. Dollars raised represent the revenue received, including realized bequests and pledge payments from pledges established in previous years.

Number of donors	First-time donors	Active alumni
683	78	9,539

How the dollars were applied



Definitions

DISCRETIONARY SUPPORT

Uses included school-wide events and activities, faculty recruiting and student organization activities, and funds for students participating in unpaid internships.

PROGRAMMATIC SUPPORT

Uses include funding guest speaker series, the Alternative Spring Break program, and expoSItion.

RESEARCH SUPPORT

Used for funding faculty research projects and initiatives.

STUDENT SUPPORT

Uses include student scholarship and financial aid funding and student awards.

FACULTY SUPPORT

Used for funding professorships.

FACILITIES

Used to fund UMSI's future home on North Campus.

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105 S. State St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1285
si.umich.edu

For more about how your support is making things happen at UMSI, follow us on



To make a gift to UMSI, visit umsi.info/give



To reduce our environmental footprint, we have eliminated UMSI's printed calendar from our portfolio of communications. We welcome any feedback you may have at umsi.development@umich.edu

To learn more about ways you can engage with the school, visit si.umich.edu/alumni



On the cover: UMSI students and alumni

1. Allison Thorsen is using information to keep ancient literature from being lost.
umsi.info/AllisonT
2. Ani Madurkar is using information to deliver actionable insights that drive executive decisions.
umsi.info/AniM
3. Anjan Banerjee is using information to help patients get more from every office visit.
umsi.info/AnjanB
4. Shannon Li is using information to help companies be more inclusive.
umsi.info/ShannonL

