River Leadership
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06.25.2009 | Campus and Community  The University of Dayton Rivers Institute received a three-year, $180,000 grant in June from the McGregor Fund to develop a multidisciplinary curriculum to form civic leaders who are committed to the greater community and good stewards of rivers and other natural assets.

The College of Arts and Sciences sought the grant on behalf of the Rivers Institute, which is administered by the University's Fitz Center for Leadership in Community. Like other initiatives of the Fitz Center, the Rivers Institute's new river leadership curriculum will employ both undergraduate research and experiential, community-based learning to achieve its objectives. Coordinators plan to tap expertise from all academic areas of the University to focus on the Great Miami watershed and the Great Miami River in Dayton as precious assets that generate communal, economic, aesthetic and ecological vitality in the region.

In the curriculum to be developed, Rivers Institute cohorts of students, staff and faculty will teach and learn collaboratively with public and private community partners to build advocacy for the watershed and promote a vision to maximize the rivers' value culturally, environmentally and economically. The Rivers Institute recognizes both students and faculty as leaders in these efforts. Current River Stewards come from 15 academic disciplines.

Calling the river system "one of the region's untapped assets," geologist Don Pair, associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, said the Rivers Institute and the proposed leadership curriculum can be key resources for re-energizing Dayton and addressing its economic needs.

Besides Pair, leadership of the Rivers Institute in 2008-09 included graduate student Emily Klein, ArtStreet director Susan Byrnes, Fitz Center executive director Dick Ferguson, undergraduate student Tracey Horan, biology professor emeritus Brother Don Geiger, S.M., and Miami Conservancy District program development manager Dusty Hall.

About the McGregor Fund
The McGregor Fund (url: http://www.mcgregorfund.org) is a private foundation established in 1925 by gifts from Katherine and Tracy McGregor "to relieve the misfortunes and promote the well-being of mankind." The foundation awards grants to organizations in human services, education, health care, arts and culture, and public benefit. The area of principal interest of the foundation is the city of Detroit and Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties in Michigan. The McGregor Fund has granted $190 million since its founding and had assets of $187 million as of June 30, 2008.

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