

**Teachable Moments:  
the good, the bad, and the undergrads**

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*Museum of Cultural and Natural History  
at  
Central Michigan University*

**Focus: impact of Natural History collection  
on undergraduates (and on *us!*)**



**Museum Studies  
Minor Program  
(MST)**

*Spoiler: broader than “just” biology!*

# MCNH Origins

- Museum established in 1970
- Comprised collections from across campus



Natural History  
Collections



Anthropological &  
Archaeology Collections



Geological Collections



Historical Collections



Museum of  
**Cultural and  
Natural History**

Research

Public Tours  
& Programs

Teaching

Exhibitions

Museum Studies  
Minor Program  
(MST)

# MCNH Origins

Undergraduates integral to museum work from inception...



Tours/Programs



Exhibiting



Collections Management

# Museum Studies Minor Program

24 Credit hours:

❖ **4 courses (3 credits each):**

MST 310 Introduction to Museums

MST 315 Museums, Stakeholders, and Communities

MST 320 Collections Stewardship and Curatorial Work

MST 325 Public Programming in Museum

❖ **6 hrs of electives**

❖ **MST 598 Museum Internship (6 hrs)**

# MCNH + MST Program = Synergy

- MCNH employs 10-15 undergrads each year
- MCNH involves 40+ volunteers annually
- Students involved in ALL aspects of museum work



# Pros & Cons of Our Program

## Pros:

- See first hand the importance of collections  
(*“WOW”, research and education, personally and to others*)
- MST’ers: learning trade *hands on*
- Learn to problem solve, leadership
- Accountability and Professionalism





# Pros & Cons of Our Program

## Cons:

- **Take a LOT of training, then they're gone...**  
*(so is the labor actually cheaper??)*
- **They are not professionals...**
- **You have to be really specific**
- **Sometimes lack natural curiosity/problem solving**
- **Occasionally not reliable/don't get it/not responsible....**



# Conclusions

- Its worth it:
  - They learn
  - They get jobs
  - They reflect positively on us (*we love taking them to meetings!*)
- We *do* have more help, we learn from them

