

DETROIT TO PITTSBURGH

LAWRENCE TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

CANOE TRIP 2005



Commemorating the 250th Anniversary of the French and Indian War

This summer Lawrence Technological University students and faculty are traveling from Detroit to Pittsburgh via canoe, following one of the main trade routes used by Native Americans and French voyageurs in the 1700s. Not only are they learning about history, they also are making it.

The interdisciplinary team, representing departments ranging from humanities to civil and mechanical engineering, began their eight-week journey on May 14, first canoeing down the Rouge River in southeastern Michigan from a point near the University's campus in Southfield, then into the Detroit River, and on to Lake Erie.

After several weeks of paddling along the Lake Erie shore, the team will become the first individuals in modern times to make the historic 14-mile portage to Waterford, Pennsylvania, linking the Great Lakes with the Ohio River basin. Back in the water, they will follow LeBoeuf Creek to French Creek and finally to the Allegheny River and Pittsburgh, where the trip culminates on July 9, the 250th anniversary of the Battle of the Monongahela, which took place nearby and in which the British General Edward Braddock was defeated by French and Indian forces.

MAKING HISTORY

Two years in the planning, the canoe trip project has been almost entirely student initiated and managed. Not only did team members design and build the 24-foot-long replica of a birch-bark fur traders' canoe in which half of them are traveling (accompanied by modern canoes), they also sought out sponsors and raised the \$33,000 needed to cover the cost of the trip, designed a webpage, built a trailer to aid in the portage of the canoes, organized on-the-water practices, and mapped the route.

ABOUT THE CANOE

Junior mechanical engineering student Mike Means designed the canoe using computer-aided engineering design software, a book on canoe building, Internet research, and notes he took during a meeting with a master canoe builder. Although the replica is the same shape and size as its historical predecessor, for reasons of safety and

TEAM MEMBERS

- Adam Affholter
- Jason Copely
- Laura Hallam
- Joe Heady
- Denise Janus
- Chris Jurczak
- Stan Kurek
- Mike Means
- Chris Naida
- Wayne Novach
- Will Schumaker
- Chris Trunick
- Joe Wallace

FACULTY ADVISORS

- Donald Carpenter, civil engineering
- Andy Gerhart, mechanical engineering
- Phil Vogt, humanities

SPONSORS

\$2500 - \$5000

- DENSO International America, Inc.
- Ford Motor Company
- Lawrence Technological University College of Arts and Sciences Alumni
- College of Engineering Alumni
- Department of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Communication
- Kern Family Foundation Student Venture Grant
- UGS

\$250 - \$500

- Bruce Annett, Jr.
- Boat U.S.
- Great Lakes Docks & Decks
- Doris Heimann
- Lawrence Technological University Alumni Association Board
- James D. Naida
- NTH Consultants
- Orchard, Hiltz, McCliment
- Malcolm Pirnie
- Skanska USA
- Yaldo Eye Center

Under \$250

- Cushing Malloy
- Flying Canoe Traders
- Karen Fuller
- Golden Hawk Golf Club
- Hugh Hallam
- Dino Hernandez
- Kroger
- Lodge Cast Iron
- Prestige Engineering
- Nancy Tyminski
- West Marine

FUN CANOE FACTS

- Design and construction took over 1,000 hours
- 3,280 linear feet of cedar were used in the 160 strips that form the mold
- Final weight: 300 pounds
- Capacity: up to 8 paddlers and up to 1,200 pounds of gear

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durability it is made of cedar strips overlaid with epoxy and fiberglass and painted to look like the traditional birch bark.

LEARNING HISTORY AND MORE

In merging historic traditions with modern technology, the Detroit to Pittsburgh Canoe Trip represents a remarkable application of Lawrence Tech's motto "Theory and Practice."

During the trip, team members will explore several subjects that directly relate to what they are experiencing, including hydrology, environmental science, history, and entrepreneurship. They will study the five watersheds through which they will pass, the technology and culture of the 1750s, and the impact of technology on the landscape. The route takes them through three of the nation's largest cities—Detroit, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh—as well as some of its more pristine areas. Participants have earned up to six college credits.

Beyond lectures and research in the above subjects, team members are gaining real-world experience in teamwork, communication, leadership, organization, logistical planning, and physical fitness and endurance.

The communities that the team passes through also will benefit as the trip draws attention to their historical heritage and the natural beauty of a region marked by industrial activity, where both heritage and beauty are too easily (and too often) overlooked.

TRIP DETAILS

- Team member Chris Naida used mapping software to plot more than 1,500 points and arrive at the total trip miles of 483.5.
- All the canoeists passed a basic swimming skills test, and four became Red Cross certified life-guards.
- The Compagnie LeBoeuf, a group of French and Indian War reenactors, will canoe with the team from Waterford to Pittsburgh.
- Some students will dress in authentic period clothing.
- Team members will make presentations at stops along the route.
- The Detroit to Pittsburgh Canoe Trip has been integrated into the state of Pennsylvania's official French and Indian War Commemoration calendar of events.

For further information visit www.ltu.edu/canoe_trip or contact the Lawrence Tech News Bureau, 248.204.2210.



The Lawrence Tech Advantage

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- On-campus housing

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