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# EMU LECTURER BIKING ACROSS MICHIGAN FOR STUDENTS

 By [Erica Hobbs \(/erica\)](#) | July 2, 2013

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YPSILANTI, Mich.—Last weekend, one avid bicyclist set out to use his passion for a good cause. John Fike, a part-time lecturer in Eastern Michigan University's Political Science Department, has embarked on a two-week bicycle ride across Michigan to raise money for programs that promote student experience at Eastern.

Fike's 450-mile route began Saturday in Lansing and will continue through Battle Creek, Kalamazoo, South Haven, Grand Haven, Big Rapids, Mount Pleasant and Bay City before finishing in Lexington.

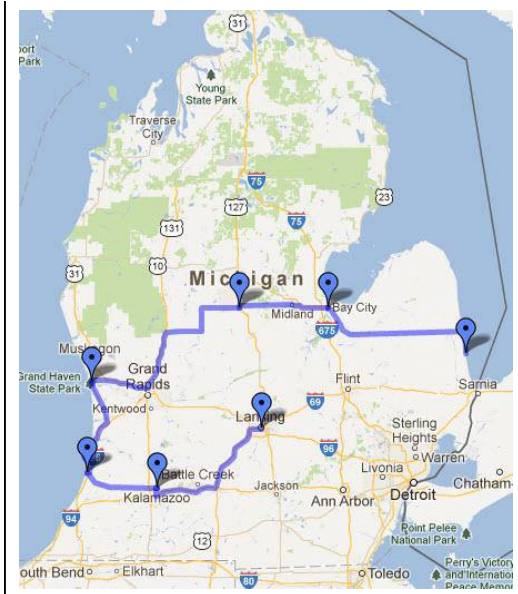
He is aiming to raise \$4,000 from outside pledges that will support the study abroad programs through the Eastern Michigan University Foundation and the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance Program, which trains students for careers working with non-profit organizations.

"Both of those programs are giving students the practical experience to go with their degrees so they can actually say to their employers, 'Look what I've accomplished,'" Fike said.

For Fike, age 70, long bicycle trips across the state are nothing new. He and his wife, Bonita, have been taking bicycle vacations for years, though this will be his longest one yet and the first time using their trip as a fundraiser.

He said his longest trip prior to this was a 250-mile ride in 2011 from Lansing to Mackinac City. But this year, Fike said he was so impressed by what his students had accomplished that he decided to use his trip to give back. He said study abroad programs, in particular, have a striking effect on student development and something he wanted to support.

“[Students who study abroad] tend to have a mature understanding of the world about them, they tend to be more focused about what they want to do in that world,” he said. “They tend to be more attentive in class and participate more in the dialogue that goes on and they are more focused in their learning.”



## Wake-up call

Fike's journey to hardcore bicyclist began 10 years ago when he was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, which served as a wake-up call for a lifestyle change.

“I had to change my behavior if I wanted to avoid dialysis down the road,” he said.

His wife suggested he get back into bicycling, an interest from his younger days, and bought him a bicycle for his birthday. He then returned the favor and bought her a bicycle for her birthday a month later.

The two started to bicycle around their home in Ypsilanti, eventually taking on larger trips across the state. While Fike said his wife does not ride along with him during his longer trips, including this one, she drives along and meets him at designated spots to provide food, supplies and other support.

The two will also be taking some days off during the journey to relax and sight-see.

“She's the best in the world,” he said. “She puts up with everything that goes along with a trip like this.”

Fike said he has currently raised about \$1,500 for the cause, but said there is still a long way to go.

Ceci Reiker, a staff member with the Eastern Michigan University Foundation, said Fike's efforts support life-changing opportunities that few students get to experience. She said Fike's ride is a unique way to combine his passions for which they are grateful.

“John's contribution to this important initiative is an example of creative, ‘outside-the-box’ fund raising, leveraging his love of cycling with his love of EMU and its students,” she said in an email. “We are grateful to John for his efforts on the program's behalf.”

To keep track of Fike on his journey, follow him on social media via [@EMUJohnfike](https://twitter.com/EMUJohnfike) on Twitter and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/%20BikingForEmuStudents) (<https://www.facebook.com/%20BikingForEmuStudents>).

Support Fike. Donate directly to either the EMU Foundation

(https://%20www.emufoundation.org/index.php/public-give.html?fund=01922)  
or the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance Program  
(https://www.emufoundation.org/index.php/public-give.html?fund=01191)  
through the end of July.

**About Erica Hobbs** (/user/2120)



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