



FALL 2017 - FALL 2022

STRATEGIC PLAN



College of Social Science
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY



LETTER FROM THE DEAN

The complexity and scale of societal challenges demand agile and rigorous solutions that can emerge only through exceptional research, teaching and collaborations. This strategic plan advances our land-grant and world-grant legacy, and guides our investments to ensure that we lead in discovering and disseminating essential patterns of social interactions and decisions.

This plan was developed via an extremely participatory process. Our Strategic Planning Steering Committee was chaired by Department Chair Walter Hawthorne (History) and School Director Mary Finn (Criminal Justice). This group included one tenure-system faculty from each Department and School, many of whom are also affiliated with Centers/Programs/Institutes, as well as two fixed-term faculty, one staff member, three alumni, one undergraduate student, one graduate student, and two representatives from MSU as a whole. The committee met monthly to debate, disagree, and eventually fight for consensus. The discussions were directly informed by a College-wide survey, ably synthesized by the Faculty Advisory Council, regular consultation with Chairs and Directors, and a series of strategic questions explored by the Associate Chairs. In addition, we held two College-wide retreats, together drawing over 450 participants, to solicit feedback and guidance.

I especially want to thank our facilitator, Dr. Alan Glassman. Dr. Glassman planned the meetings, kept the group on track, and continually challenged us to work together for the improvement of the College.

Developing this plan involved making choices. Implementing it will involve even more choices. Our Vision, Values and Mission will guide us in these choices. Equally importantly, we commit to preserving the spirit of the Steering Committee in working together to realize our College-wide identity and advance the common good.

RACHEL T.A. CROSON
Dean, College of Social Science

VISION

Our science transforms the human experience and inspires leaders.

MISSION

We will be global leaders in top-tier research while advancing engaged learning and societal well-being.



VALUES

QUALITY

We hold ourselves to the highest standards to achieve lasting influence.

INCLUSIVENESS

We foster a culture in which all individuals are valued, respected and engaged so that diverse voices can enrich our work.

CONNECTIVITY

We link with campus and external communities to leverage our strengths and collectively realize our shared goals.

INTEGRITY

We are honest, transparent and courageous in our discovery and dissemination of knowledge.

CREATIVITY

We imagine innovative approaches to understand and improve the world.

EMPOWERMENT

We equip individuals and communities to make informed and just decisions.

STEERING COMMITTEE

FACULTY

Joe Cesario
PSYCHOLOGY

Mike Colaresi
POLITICAL SCIENCE

Carl Davidson
ECONOMICS

Jeff Ericksen
HUMAN RESOURCES
AND LABOR RELATIONS/
INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES
IN SOCIAL SCIENCE

Eric Juenke
POLITICAL SCIENCE/
CHICANO/LATINO STUDIES

Jay Kennedy
CRIMINAL JUSTICE/ANTI-
COUNTERFEITING AND
PRODUCT PROTECTION CENTER

Sheryl Kubiak
SOCIAL WORK

Stephanie Nawyn
SOCIOLOGY

Jiaguo Qi
GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT,
AND SPATIAL SCIENCES/CENTER
FOR GLOBAL CHANGE & EARTH
OBSERVATIONS

Mark Roehling
HUMAN RESOURCES AND
LABOR RELATIONS

Mark Wilson
SCHOOL OF PLANNING,
DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

Andrea Wittenborn
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
AND FAMILY STUDIES

Gabriel Wrobel
ANTHROPOLOGY

Jinhua Zhao
ECONOMICS

CHAIRS

Walter Hawthorne
CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Mary Finn
DIRECTOR, SCHOOL OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Sharon Zhong
GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT,
AND SPATIAL SCIENCES

STUDENTS

Demetrice Jordan
GRADUATE

Leigh Rauk
UNDERGRADUATE

MSU REPRESENTATIVES

Pero Dagbovie
ASSOCIATE DEAN, THE
GRADUATE SCHOOL (HISTORY)

Karen Klomparens
SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE
PROVOST (PLANT BIOLOGY)

SENIOR STAFF

Rachel Croson
DEAN

Thomas Jeitschko
ASSOCIATE DEAN

Steve Kautz
ASSOCIATE DEAN

Joe Messina
ASSOCIATE DEAN

Neal Schmitt
FORMER INTERIM DEAN

Pamela Gray
CHIEF OF STAFF

Nwando Achebe
FACULTY EXCELLENCE ADVOCATE

Nick McLaren
SENIOR DIRECTOR OF
ADVANCEMENT

ALUMNI

Joe Hollis
Mike Morrow
Ann Tomlanovich





GOAL AREA

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

Grant Gunn, PhD,
a College of Social
Science Cryosphere
Geographer, measuring
ice thickness changes
in the Arctic.



Our scholars engage in sustained research excellence that demonstrates thought leadership. We will increase national and international recognition for top-tier and impactful research that addresses societal challenges.

THEMATIC AREAS

The College will support 3-5 thematic areas of research that advance our ability to address societal issues and will achieve national and international recognition.

FACULTY EXPECTATIONS

The College will ensure that each unit defines, communicates, implements and supports high scholarship standards to increase our national and international reputation.

COLLABORATIONS

The College will facilitate and recognize collaborations within and across fields.

PHD SUPPORT

The College will prioritize and support successful and effective doctoral fields.

MEASURING OUTCOMES

50%
INCREASE

FACULTY RESEARCH PRODUCTIVITY

to the top half of the AAU*

25%
INCREASE

FACULTY WITH NATIONAL AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

20%
INCREASE

PERCENTAGE OF FACULTY

as principal investigator on external grants

50%
INCREASE

PERCENTAGE OF PHD STUDENTS

with excellent placements

*Association of American Universities



GOAL AREA

LEARNING

College of Social Science Students pose for a photo during the Study Away Program in Flint, MI.



Our students acquire the communication and analytical skills needed to excel in complex and changing environments. We will enhance opportunities to develop these skills through engaged and experiential learning.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Our faculty will enhance our students' educational and career success by developing their practical and adaptive skills.

EXPERIENTIAL AND ENGAGED LEARNING

The College will facilitate and recognize collaborations within and across fields.

OPPORTUNITY GAPS

In order to reduce differential persistence, graduation and rates of academic good standing the College will develop and improve mechanisms to support at-risk students in our ISS and large-enrollment courses.

MEASURING OUTCOMES

50%
REDUCTION

REDUCE OPPORTUNITY GAPS

for underrepresented minority, first generation and low income students in ISS and large-enrollment courses

5%
INCREASE

IMPROVE SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATE

meeting or exceeding the MSU target

10%
INCREASE

SUCCESSFUL PLACEMENT RATES OF STUDENTS

in appropriate careers and graduate or professional programs



GOAL AREA

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Carl S. Taylor,
PhD, Professor
of Sociology,
teaching a class.

Our college is open and welcoming, deriving strength from a plurality of identities and lived experiences. We will build a more diverse and inclusive environment to fulfill our mission, consistent with University policies and state and federal law.

INCLUSIVE CLIMATE

The College will ensure an inclusive and welcoming environment for its students, faculty, and staff.

FACULTY HIRING AND RETENTION

The College will increase the proportion of tenure-system under-represented faculty utilizing aggressive recruitment, outreach and retention strategies.

DEVELOP FUTURE FACULTY

The College and its units will develop programs to increase the proportion of under-represented individuals in the academic pipeline utilizing aggressive recruitment, outreach and retention strategies.

MEASURING OUTCOMES



INCREASE

**UNDER-REPRESENTED
TENURE-SYSTEM FACULTY**

in the College



INCREASE

**UNDER-REPRESENTED
PHD STUDENTS**

in good standing in the College



GOAL AREA

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

Alumnus Curtis Mack speaks with students during Social Science Week.

Our identity establishes us as a destination and a source of expertise. We will further connect with alumni and communities.

IDENTITY

In coordination with CABS, the College will leverage MSU's brand to create a unified College identity.

OUTREACH

Our faculty will engage and include academic and external communities to co-create a more visible societal impact.

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

The College will engage alumni and friends to increase support for our mission.

MEASURING OUTCOMES

40% INCREASE GIFTS
INCREASE

10% EXTERNAL PRESS MENTIONS
INCREASE
of faculty research or quotes by faculty as experts



OUR SCIENCE **TRANSFORMS THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE**
AND INSPIRES LEADERS



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socialscience.msu.edu