

Recommendations of the Boldness by Design Internationalization Taskforce

The taskforce makes five priority recommendations for action. They include: (1) internationalization of curricula and learning; (2) recruitment and integration of international students and scholars into campus living and learning environments; (3) enhanced access to and quality of language instruction; (4) further internationalization of faculty in instructional, research and outreach roles; and (5) strategic focus and priority setting to MSU's international engagement.

In this document, we first provide a rationale for and underscore the importance of expanding Michigan State University's international reach and engagement. This is followed by brief summaries of each of our recommendations.

General Rationale: To be a great 21st Century university, Michigan State University must be an institution of international reach and distinction. To be so, it must be engaged in research, teaching, and outreach in strategic countries and regions around the globe. Our graduates must be able to participate effectively in a global workforce. Our class rooms and curricula must be infused with global, comparative and international content, the research of our faculty informed by comparative perspective, and our institutional engagement not just in Michigan and throughout the nation, but around the world.

Higher education institutional reputation and rankings are driven now by global metrics, rather than only by domestic ones. Over the last few years, a number of world rankings of higher education institutions have emerged to reflect this reality. Michigan State University is ranked within the top 50 to 100 institutions in the world in most of these rankings. Our current reputation and ranking is a product of not only how we are viewed in the United States, but how scholars and leaders elsewhere in the world see us.

Reputation and rankings in 21st Century higher education depend as much or more on opinions from abroad as they do on opinions from within the United States. Access to and the impact of the World Wide Web has transformed and widened learning and research options globally. Cross-border teaching and learning interaction among scholars and sharing research and applications world wide has exploded via the WWWeb. This is one of the realities of learning, scholarship and research in the 21st century.

As higher education systems undergo a developmental explosion around the world, and in an expanding array of countries and regions (e.g., Eastern Europe, throughout Asia, and parts of Latin America and Africa) higher education competition widens and deepens on a global scale. Just as trade in goods and other services flows through increasingly porous national boundaries, so does trade in education, research ideas, and applications. Just as businesses and corporations learned that survival depends on engagement in the global market place, so must higher education and particularly MSU see itself in such a marketplace. Reputation provides access to resources and partners--both of which increasingly are found outside our national boundaries.

The globalization of market competition, international labor mobility, and the mass dispersion of cultures gives international knowledge and programming renewed status among peer institutions. MSU is in head-to-head competition with many institutions for study abroad sites, the best international students, research and project contracts, and Title VI, USAID and other sources of funding. So, too, the State of Michigan is confronted by the new global realities. As Michigan corporations, large and small, engage in business activity abroad, their needs for language acquisition, cross-cultural awareness, and knowledge of opportunities abroad intensify. MSU has both capacity and an obligation to help Michigan benefit economically and in other ways from the new global realities.

International engagement is one of a half dozen signature elements of MSU's brand name. It represents a significant comparative advantage in the global higher education market. The increasing pace of globalization

and international interdependence make it imperative that MSU maintain and strengthen its international programming in the 21st Century.

Recommendation #1

Michigan State University should take an integrated set of steps to assure that all graduates have significant exposure to international, comparative and global content in their curricula. Steps should include:

1. Design components and tracks in integrative studies (particularly in ISS and IAH) to assure that all students are exposed to global, international, and comparative content and perspective as a key component of integrative studies at MSU.
2. Identify and incorporate into each major appropriate global, international, and comparative content that is germane to the major.
3. Review and revise major requirements throughout campus to encourage and accommodate language study, an experiential component abroad (e.g., study abroad, internships, service learning), and specializations, minors, or second majors with global, area or thematic content.

Rationale: A prerequisite for living and working effectively within the new global reality is having a citizenry and workforce that understands other cultures and is capable of interacting effectively with them. Student-citizens will be the next leaders in engineering, science, agriculture, law, business, politics, and other professions. They need to understand the global dimensions of their professions and future careers in order to be more productive employees and enlightened citizens and leaders. Their future success depends in part on how informed they are about different ideas and perspectives in other countries and cultures. A 21st century higher education institution cannot pretend that it graduates educated persons without assuring effective exposure to such issues.

A number of national bodies have over the last several years issued calls to action to internationalize curricula and learning. These includes reports and taskforce recommendations issued by, for example, The American Council on Education, The National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, the American Association of Colleges and Universities and the American Association of Universities, to name a few. A primary goal referenced by these reports is to mainstream global, international, comparative experience and content throughout the curriculum so that virtually every student, regardless of department or major, has the opportunity to extrapolate materials from one culture or region to another, to collaborate with colleagues not only at home but abroad, and to gain experience in living and working successfully in a global environment.

Success in meeting the curricular challenges of globalization requires cross-investments in other areas such as developing and supporting faculty expertise and institutional supports for internationalization. Providing access to and rewards and incentives for international engagement is essential. Our other recommendations relate to these needs.

Recommendation #2

MSU should develop a strategic vision and implement an action plan to enhance recruitment and retention of high quality international students, better integrating them into the campus environment, and enhancing relations with them as alumni. We need to:

1. Determine MSU goals for total numbers of international undergraduates, graduates, and professionals (degree and non-degree seeking) attending MSU and goals for the diversity of students' countries of origin and majors of destination;

2. Enhance marketing, recruitment and support to attract and retain the best international students, including particularly under-represented groups;
3. Provide a welcoming campus environment and enhance integration of international students into campus living and learning environments in ways mutually beneficial and which further internationalization of the on-campus environment;
4. Establish long-term, mutually productive relations with international graduates, emphasizing their alumni status, their continuing contact with MSU as adult learners, and their status and roles as MSU citizens for life;

Rationale: International students at MSU have been important contributors to our reputation as an internationally engaged university. International students bring significant intellectual contribution and cross-cultural perspective, and help bridge national boundaries in our missions of knowledge creation and knowledge dissemination. International students enrich campus-based instruction, provide skills for our research laboratories and outreach projects, and connect the campus to the globe. Our responsibility is to provide them with the best possible educational opportunity, and with a positive experience while they are here.

Today, international undergraduate and graduate students at MSU number nearly 3,300, comprising about 7.5% of our student body and come from over 100 countries, ranking MSU 20th in the country in terms of total international student enrollment. However, the many factors that have made the USA and MSU an attractive destination for international students are changing, including, for example: USA disinvestment in long-term training and education scholarships for bringing students here; burdensome visa processes and restrictive regulations diminishing student mobility; spiraling costs of higher education and a lack of creative responses to address the cost obstacle; new, high quality and heavily marketed competition from other nations; growth in high quality indigenous higher education systems; and more cost-effective alternative learning models (e.g., hybrid WWWeb assisted degree programs, sandwich education models).

In the past, MSU like many other American universities took a laissez faire, “build it and they will come” attitude toward international students. As a result, our marketing of MSU as a high quality destination has been un-strategic and weak. Although we could get away with this approach in the past, it is unlikely to be productive in the future. Our laissez faire approach also resulted in substantial imbalances in country of origin (e.g., today 50% of students come from three countries) and in majors of destination (today, 50% seek majors in three colleges). We have also taken a laissez-faire approach to what happens to international students once here and to integrating them into our institutional missions, thereby missing numerous opportunities to have them contribute more significantly to our internationalization objectives.

Recommendation #3

MSU should provide language instruction and cultural information that can be accessed by a wide range of users and emphasizes various degrees of competencies depending on the specific goals of the learners. We should:

1. Enhance the quality of language instruction currently in place so that language courses are performance-based and provide seamless integration of language and content, particularly cultural content, at all levels.
2. Expand the variety of languages offered, the modes of instruction utilized, the proficiency levels available, and the number of specialized courses and programs in order to expand the reach of foreign language instruction to new, previously untapped, audiences, which in many cases were prevented access in traditional language programs.
3. Provide national leadership in the area of second language acquisition, pedagogy, and foreign language program development.

Rationale for the Recommendation: MSU’s engagement nationally in these issues continues to positively impact national discussions and policy decisions regarding priorities and new directions in supporting the expansion of the number of students studying foreign languages, increasing the proportion of students who study less commonly taught languages, and supporting the growth of students studying languages to the advanced level. MSU has unique experience in offering instruction in the less commonly taught languages (LCTLs – languages other than French, Spanish, German, or English) and remains committed to building its capacity in the more commonly taught languages. In a globalizing world, where MSU graduates must effectively cooperate, negotiate, and compete with counterparts who are multilingual at home and abroad, foreign language competency is an essential part of internationalizing student life on campus as well as serving faculty and student research needs.

Led by the proposed outcomes-based language requirements (as opposed to seat time) in the new Residential College in Arts and Humanities, MSU language programs are adopting performance-based outcomes and are rethinking the artificial barrier between language form and content by formulating a carefully integrated curriculum that fuses language, culture, and other content to arrive at higher levels of language competence and access to foreign cultures. Additionally, centers and programs such as ISP, the ELC, CLEAR, the US-China Center, LGSAAAL, and the LCTL Program, enhance current language programs by providing a wide range of innovative programs for professional development in areas of language acquisition, pedagogy, and effective uses of technology. Activities associated with the several new initiatives promote and improve K-12 language instruction in partnership with MSU. Activities from our several new initiatives include the use of educational technology for language learning, intensive summer language camps and institutes, study abroad, and after-school programs and clubs.

MSU must continue to innovate in the areas of curricular reform, increase the use of competency metrics in all language programming, and serve the community by developing programs for MSU faculty and area K-12 teachers to improve and assess their competency in foreign languages and cultures.

Recommendation #4

MSU must further internationalize its faculty and programs through expanded overseas research initiatives, strategically focused hiring related to university and college priorities, and internationally and globally enhanced curricula. We should:

1. Increase faculty involvement in international research through development of strategic partnerships with international and global institutions and universities in priority world regions.
2. Encourage development of university, college and departmental incentives that recognize and reward international engagement, especially in research.
3. Identify and address strategic faculty hiring needs in the international arena in dialogue with deans, chairs, directors, and key faculty.
4. Enhance faculty engagement in curricular enhancement through course development grants, faculty exchange programs with partner institutions abroad, and opportunity for mid-career refocusing.

Rationale: A global university that rises in standing among its peer institutions must have a research mission at its core. And the realities of the global market place for ideas, research and learning make it imperative that our research activity and perspectives become global. The generation of new knowledge about international trends, problems and achievements is the signature activity of a global land-grant institution. To face 21st Century challenges, MSU must mobilize its best minds to address critical issues at the intersection of the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities, and of the local and global.

Our need for faculty to be internationally engaged is so pervasive that every faculty member should have the opportunity and be encouraged to engage internationally and globally, and faculty hiring should consider candidates' interests or experiences in international engagement.

The university's research mission for the future should be based on, but move beyond, MSU's key institutional strengths and directions today. Research is the essential foundation on which other elements in the university's mission depend, including teaching, graduate student training, student life, service, and outreach. Research is central in graduate and advanced undergraduate student training, and students need expanded opportunities to participate in international, multidisciplinary research projects and mentoring.

A comprehensive and systematic program to further internationalize MSU faculty and address barriers to their international involvement needs to be put in place. The university must forge strategic research partnerships with international and global institutions and universities in selected world regions around research issues of mutual concern. The university's and colleges' identified research directions must clearly incorporate international dimensions and situate local problems in global contexts. International grant writing skill building and development workshops need to be made available for faculty and staff. Colleges and other units must continue to provide matching seed funds for faculty to launch multidisciplinary programs of international research through the Global Area and Thematic Initiative. The central administration must address challenges with respect to contract and grant administration, export controls, and intellectual property rights.

Financial support from the Provost and ISP should continue to identify and address strategic hiring priorities in dialogue with deans, chairs, directors, and key faculty. Quality Fund initiatives with the Colleges of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Arts and Letters, Education, and Social Science reflect these discussions, as do proposals for U.S. Department of Education Title VI seed funding of other key positions. The professional schools must be more fully engaged in internationalization efforts. The university should assist departments with dual or joint faculty hiring with international partner institutions as a means of leveraging resources through complementary rather than duplicate hiring.

To increase the international capacity of existing faculty, MSU must enhance their competency in foreign languages; support the development of new or revised courses with international content; expand faculty exchange programs with partner institutions abroad; mentor mid-career faculty to retool; and promote faculty engagement in international entrepreneurship. To this end, salary and promotion decisions need to give greater recognition to faculty contributions to international research, teaching, and engagement.

Recommendation # 5

While continuing to encourage the many interests which regularly engage more than 1,000 MSU faculty and staff in international activity, MSU should strategically focus its planning and investments to strengthen its global engagement. We should:

1. Expand MSU's global reach through themes or areas of expertise in which MSU has significant capacity to effectively engage abroad in research, instruction, international development and problem solving.
2. Make decisions to expand capacity in selected themes or create new areas of expertise which are consonant with wider institutional priorities and offer strong potential for enhancing MSU's global position and strength.
3. Identify world regions or sub-regions, countries and partner institutions (domestic and abroad) which explicitly connect to high priority areas of institutional research and instructional interests.
4. Establish partnerships which benefit MSU and our partner institutions and which produce societal benefits here and abroad, including economic and other benefits for Michigan. Bold new models for

partnership are required, including, for example, joint or dual degrees, joint appointments, shared facilities, and joint ventures.

Rationale: MSU's global engagement traces its modern roots back 60 years to rebuilding efforts in Europe and Asia following WW II, and then in Africa and South America. This engagement has produced an exceptionally wide array of programs and amplified interests and expertise among our faculty. MSU faculty apply area, language and thematic expertise in every world region, with particular strengths in democratization; education and human capacity building; economic development; environmental management and sustainable development; food production, security, and safety; infectious diseases and public health; GIS and remote sensing; grades and standards; survey and data systems gauging the quality of life; and watershed management.

The scope of our engagement abroad makes MSU a truly global player. However, it is not possible to do it all well under existing models of funding. Even a focused agenda will require creation of strategic resource sharing partnerships between MSU and partners here (e.g., university consortia, federal and state agencies) and abroad.

A new model is needed by which capacity is increased through a sharing of costs and expertise in joint research, instructional, and outreach efforts (e.g., joint research and shared research facilities and funding, faculty and student exchanges, shared instructional expertise, joint or dual degrees, joint appointments, joint bidding for contracts, and joint engagement in community development and problem solving). Information technology and a growing and increasingly high quality higher education infrastructure in developing countries make this more possible than ever before. MSU's international engagement in the 21st Century will be based on reciprocal partnerships with host-country institutions. Among other strategies, MSU will need to engage in blending virtual campuses with facilities at partner institutions abroad.

MSU can sustain only a limited number of such partnerships, so a strategic focus is needed in the number, location and substantive foci of these partnerships. The four elements above provide guidance for making such decisions. We must also look for those alliances and countries and regions that provide us with opportunities for broad and deep engagement which cross-reinforce our missions.