

MISSION STATEMENT

Michigan State University holds a unique position in the state's educational system. As a respected research and teaching university, it is committed to intellectual leadership, and to excellence in both developing new knowledge and conveying that knowledge to its students and to the public. And as a pioneer land-grant institution, Michigan State University strives to discover practical uses for theoretical knowledge, and to speed the diffusion of information to residents of the state, the nation, and the world. In fostering both research and its application, this university will continue to be a catalyst for positive intellectual, social, and technological change.

Founded in 1855 as an autonomous public institution of higher learning by and for the citizens of Michigan, this institution was in 1863 designated the beneficiary of the Morrill Act endowment. It became one of the earliest land-grant institutions in the United States. Since 1863, Michigan State has evolved into an internationally-esteemed university, offering a comprehensive spectrum of programs and attracting gifted professors, staff members, and students. The University, seeks excellence in all programs and activities, and this challenge for high achievement creates a dynamic atmosphere. At Michigan State University, instruction, research, and public service are integrated to make the institution an innovative, responsive public resource.

As the only land-grant institution in the state, Michigan State University is committed to providing equal educational opportunity to all qualified applicants; to extending knowledge to all people in the state; to melding professional and technical instruction with quality liberal education; to expanding knowledge as an end in itself as well as on behalf of society; to emphasizing the applications of information; and to contributing to the understanding and the solution of significant societal problems. Michigan State University's adherence to academic freedom and open scholarly inquiry supports these essential academic functions.

The university's land-grant and service mission first originated in the areas of agriculture and the mechanic arts. While these emphases remain essential to the purpose of Michigan State, the land-grant commitment now encompasses fields such as health, human relations, business, communication, education, and government, and extends to urban and international settings. The evolution of this mission reflects the increasing complexity and cultural diversity of society, the world's greater interdependence, changes in both state and national economy, and the explosive growth of knowledge, technology, and communications. Just as the focus on agriculture and the mechanic arts was appropriate when Michigan State University was founded, the wide range of instructional research, and public service commitments that now characterize this university is essential today.

By 1964, the instruction, research, and public service activities at Michigan State University had achieved the high level of excellence necessary for membership in the Association of American Universities (AAU). Innovation and leadership in these three crucial areas, and in the extension of knowledge to the state, the nation, and the world, are the hallmarks of this university. An excellent and diverse faculty insures the superior quality of academic programs, and contributes to the expansion of knowledge and its application in the public interest.

Research and scholarship help preserve and enrich cultural and creative traditions, as well as contribute to the formulation of new knowledge. Graduate programs draw upon and support faculty research, extend the benefits of research, and educate students for professional careers. The established national and international reputation of the university is based upon the quality and distinctiveness of the research and scholarly activity of its faculty and students.

Research and public service are mutually enriching activities for both faculty and students, and contribute significantly to the high quality of both undergraduate and graduate instructional programs. Through research, faculty members enhance the scope and effectiveness of their teaching. Through public service, faculty validate past research findings and identify the need for new research and for modifications of curricula. Participating with faculty in research and service projects provides students with unique learning opportunities, and consequently improves the quality of both graduate and undergraduate education.

At the undergraduate level, the university offers strong, comprehensive programs in the liberal arts and sciences and in major professional areas which include a significant general education component. Michigan State University provides opportunities for students of varying interests, abilities, backgrounds, and expectations. Underlying all educational programs is the belief that an educated person is one who becomes an effective and productive citizen. Such a person contributes to society intellectually, through analytical abilities and in the insightful use of knowledge; economically, through productive application of skills; socially, through an understanding and appreciation of the world and for individual and group beliefs and traditions; ethically, through sensitivity and faithfulness to examined values; and politically, through the use of reason in affairs of state. Mindful of such purposes Michigan State University is committed to graduating educated men and women with diverse backgrounds who are active learners, ready to assume the responsibilities of leadership wherever opportunities arise.

Michigan State University fulfills the fundamental purposes of all major institutions of higher education: to seek, to teach, and to preserve knowledge. As a land-grant institution, this university meets these objectives in all its formal and informal educational programs, in basic and applied research, and in public service. As an AAU institution, this university meets these commitments through its instructional and research programs. Through the excellence of its academic programs, the strength of its support services, and the range of its student activities, the university provides opportunities for the fullest possible development of the potential of each student and each citizen served, and enhances the quality of life and the economic viability of Michigan. Education of its citizens is the state's best investment in its future. Michigan State University has honored, and will continue to honor, this public trust.

Approved by the Michigan State University Board of Trustees on June 24–25, 1982.