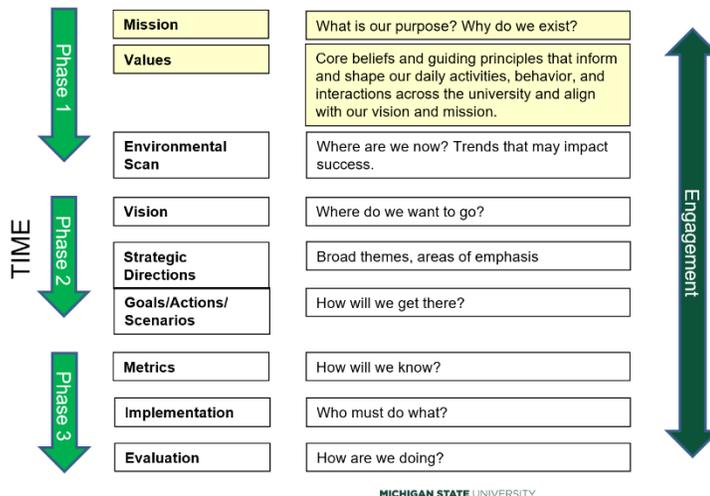


**MSU Strategic Planning Steering Committee
Values Subcommittee Report 8/22/20**
(Johnson, Aiello, Bales, Dagbovie, Esquith, Gruber, Lipscomb)

The charge. We were asked to formulate community input to date into a draft values statement to be iteratively improved over the course of fall strategic planning community engagement activities. In other words, we offer the values presented in Table 2 as a continuation, rather than the end, of discussion of values.

The framework. Within the framework being used by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee (SPSC), values are “core beliefs and guiding principles that inform and shape our daily activities, behavior, and interactions across the university and align with our vision and mission” (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: The Strategic Planning Process



A few characteristics of values are worth noting:

1. Values can be institutional or personal. This report describes institutional values (a shared set of values guiding the strategic plan and guiding MSU in general going forward).
2. Congruence between personal and institutional values helps foster buy-in to institutional values. That is why it helps to have a process of defining values that is forged (i.e., through discussion) rather than forced (i.e., top-down).
3. Our community wants greater accountability and correspondence between our stated institutional values and our behavior.
4. Mutual understanding of meaning of values and implications for behavior can be developed through discourse. We envision the fall SPSC engagement activities as the beginning of this discourse. However, community discourse about the meaning of MSU values and their implications for behavior should be ongoing for as long as we espouse these values. A statement of values creates an open and respectful framework for interpretation and discussion.

The process. The draft values we present below were created in three steps. SPSC input. First, in February, the SPSC (n = 21) provided individual and group written answers to the following questions:

1. *What do you see as MSU's values? What values would you like to see MSU build its future on?*
2. *What is the university's primary mission? Why should we exist?*
3. *What values that you assume are key to the university do you see expressed in the life of MSU? When do you see this? How do you see these values expressed?*

Three of us (Bales, Dagbovie, Johnson) each individually reviewed all responses to these questions, and then met together to create a consensus list of values reflected in the written responses. This list was included in our 3/15/20 report to the SPSC. We also noted that possible definitions of many of the values were included in participants' written responses. In addition, we recommended that input from the 21 members of the SPSC was not sufficiently broad to use as the sole basis of a draft values statement, and recommended that members of the campus community be asked open-ended questions about potential aspirational values for MSU.

Community input. Second, in April through June, members of the MSU community (including students, staff, faculty, alumni, parents, community partners) were invited to respond to the following questions on the MSU Strategic Planning website:

1. *What is our primary mission? Why do we exist? Who do we exist first and foremost to serve?*
2. *What is MSU’s distinctive contribution? If MSU ceased to exist tomorrow, what would be lost that other Michigan colleges and universities would not be able to replace or address?*
3. *What values would you like to see guide Michigan State University over the next 5-10 years?*
4. *What would these values look like in action?*
5. *How can we help our actions reflect our values and hold members of the MSU community accountable to follow them?*

Emails inviting responses to these questions were sent to the entire campus community. Three of us (Aiello, Gruber, Lipscomb) reviewed Questions 3-5 answers and identified key concepts that emerged. After discussion, the three lists were combined to create a final list of terms.

Integration and draft values. Ms. Gruber created a master list of all concepts from the three readings of the community input and from the SPSC input consensus document, and organized the concepts into clusters by grouping similar concepts together. The clusters were re-arranged and merged through group discussion. Finally, Drs. Dagbovie and Johnson framed the clusters into values statements, using phrases and sentences from stakeholder input, and refined them through editing and discussion.

Mission and strategic advantages. Drs. Johnson and Esquith summarized the answers to Questions 1-2 (focusing on mission and strategic advantages) in a separate analysis, reported below.

The results. We received responses to the mission questions (questions 1-2) on the university SPSC website from 245 people, and responses to the values questions (questions 3-5) from 175 people. Breakdown of respondent roles is shown in Table 1. Efforts were made to ensure that all members of the campus community received an invitation to respond. However, only about 0.4% (245/65,000) of the current campus community (i.e., not counting alumni) responded. Students in particular seem under-represented. The invitation was sent out during COVID and the end of the semester, so many people may not have seen it.

Table 1: Respondent self-categorization	Mission questions n (%)	Values questions n (%)
Faculty/academic staff	115 (47%)	91 (52%)
Alumni	79 (32%)	52 (30%)
Support staff	52 (21%)	38 (22%)
Donors	24 (10%)	11 (6%)
Graduate students	14 (6%)	13 (7%)
Parents	10 (4%)	7 (4%)
Undergraduates	5 (2%)	2 (1%)
Retirees	3 (1%)	3 (2%)
Executive management	2 (1%)	1 (1%)
Total*	245	175
<i>*Totals do not add to 100% because some respondents fit multiple categories. All donors had another role as well.</i>		

Agreement among the 245 community respondents and between results of the SPSC (n = 21) and community (n = 245) responses was high. For example, there were few concepts and no clusters in the SPSC data that did not map onto the clusters from the Community Input data (see Appendix A for details). Through discussion and refinement, we: (1) merged a cluster of terms such as “empowerment” and “participatory” with another cluster that described community engagement and outreach; (2) removed a cluster of terms such as “financial responsibility,” “forward looking,” “sustainable,” and “long-term thinking” because we viewed these concepts as strategies rather than values; and (3) removed “liberal arts” as a term because it reflects a topic area more than a value per se. The final clusters used to create the values statements are shown in Figure 2.

While working on defining the values representing each cluster, we further combined clusters #1 and #8, and separated a cluster representing safety and integrity into two separate high-level values. The resulting draft values to present to the university community for reaction, refinement, and additional input and discussion are shown in Table 2. We framed the definitions as “we will” statements to reflect that these are aspirational values and commitments moving forward.

Additional points of discussion that we pose to the SPSC include:

- Cluster 1: We discussed “participation,” “collaboration,” “collaborative partnership,” and “engagement” as alternate titles for this cluster. Our goal was to choose the strongest statement. Additional ideas that

Figure 2: Final Values Clusters

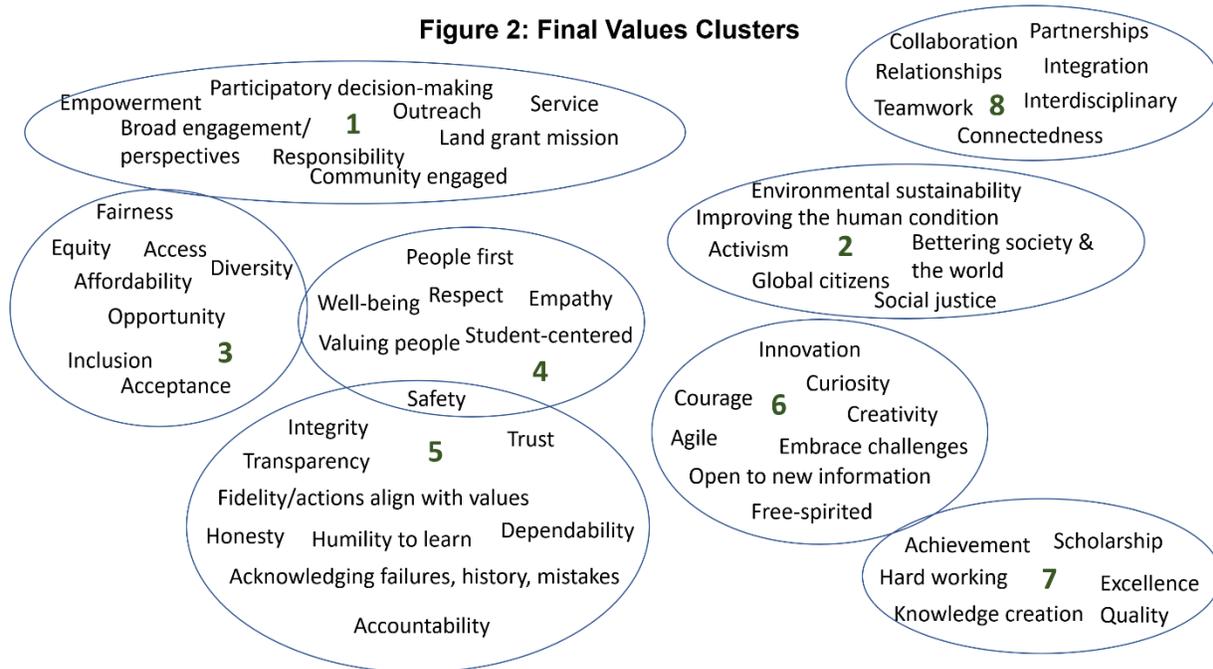


Table 2: Draft values statements for further discussion by the campus community

1. **Partnership.** We will achieve our collective goals by working collaboratively across roles and disciplines and in partnership with local and global communities. Our deeply-rooted commitment to broad participation and engagement is central to our land-grant heritage and mission.
2. **Social justice.** We will be active in improving the human condition, promoting local and global citizenship and solving the world’s major problems in the twenty-first century.
3. **Diversity, equity, inclusion, and access.** We will nurture a campus culture that is equitable, accessible, and affordable and that embraces diverse ideas, backgrounds, and experiences. We will create environments that are welcoming and inclusive, and we will create structures that ensure equity.
4. **People first.** We will put people first. We will value and support the well-being of all students, staff, faculty, and the diverse communities with whom we work, with the well-being of those in less powerful positions taking precedence. We will strive for empathy toward others’ thoughts, feelings, and experiences, listen with open minds, and use this understanding to guide our actions.
5. **Safety.** We will be transparent, open, safe, and responsive. We will be humble to hear new information. We will create physically and psychologically safe environments that empower everyone to thrive and do their best work. Our policies, procedures, and their execution will be clear, consistent, written, and will align with our values. Our decision-making will be inclusive and clear, so that people understand why and how decisions are made that impact them.
6. **Integrity.** We will hold ourselves accountable to the highest levels of integrity, honesty, trustworthiness, and dependability.
7. **Innovation.** We will solve the world’s most pressing and intractable problems, generate new approaches, and help apply them to those who need them most. We will foster creativity, explore different paths, and find new directions. We will empower ourselves, our partners, and the leaders of the future to “advance knowledge and transform lives.”
8. **Excellence.** We will hold ourselves to the highest standards of teaching, research, and engagement because our excellence makes a critical difference to the amount of good we can do.

could be added to the definition of this cluster include, *“We innovate in participatory decision-making,” “We seek grass-roots ideas from faculty, staff, students. We hear all voices across the institution. All stakeholders see and understand the process so that they see themselves in the plan, fostering commitment, accountability, and investment in outcomes,”* and *“We establish a process to gather community and MSU perspectives on societal needs and align with the abilities of MSU.”*

2. Cluster 2. We considered “activism” and “active citizenship” as alternate titles. We were concerned that titles including the word “citizenship” might invoke the idea that we did not want to partner with non-US citizens. “Civic responsibility” is another title option.
3. Cluster 3. We chose the title “diversity, inclusion, and access” to represent both more traditional DEI concepts and our commitment to access for first-generation students and the idea of the “people’s university.” The statement, *“We nurture a safe campus climate and inclusive culture that is accessible and equitable, embracing diverse ideas, backgrounds, and experiences,”* was edited to have less overlap with the “safety” value. We also liked the statement, *“We embrace and uplift our diverse student, staff, and faculty body, and the diverse communities with whom we work”* because we already used the word “embrace” in the definition, and because we make a statement about faculty, staff, and students as the first sentence of the next value. However, we could consider putting these statements back in. A statement about empowering all to be engaged could also potentially go in this value definition.
4. Cluster 4. There was extensive discussion of what to call this cluster. “Empathy” and “belonging” did not seem clearly enough tied to action. “We will put people first,” sounded like a campaign slogan. “People-centered” is OK but is an adjective and the rest of the values are nouns. This value as stated also raises questions about “Which people come first? Who gets to decide?” One possible answer is that power-down people take precedence and that this is a value for all of us to embrace as we make decisions. Alternate wordings for “people in less powerful positions” could be “people with less power.” Another alternative is that this phrase could be deleted.
5. Cluster 5. A previous definition of this cluster read, *“We will create physically and psychologically safe environments that empower everyone to thrive and do their best work. We will be responsive to concerns and humble to hear new information.”*

We look forward to future discussion on these issues.

Community input on question 5 (*“How can we help our values be reflected in our actions and hold ourselves accountable to them?”*) was collated by Ms. Gruber. Her summary is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of community suggestions for helping our actions align with our values
Consequences
Don't fear letting people go who violate codes of conduct
Punishment for violators
Real accountability for violators
Reward positive behaviors and examples
Firm, zero tolerance
Annual reviews, promotion, tenure
Have rewards/incentives based on values
Faculty rewards for social justice work
Incentives for local collaborations (giving back to Michigan)
Support
Required training
Training, esp. for those who want to support the values but don't know how
Not just recruitment of diverse peoples, but also supporting their attainment
Leaders/administration
Lead by example
Have the same (or more severe) consequences for people in senior positions who violate values (no one gets to ignore the values)
Put structures in place to prevent abuse of power (e.g., limited term positions)
Hiring/selection of leaders should use alignment with values as a criterion
Clear policies (e.g., around sexual assault)
Clear expectations
Policies driven by data & research
Make values clear

<p>Communicate values Publicize values Clear communication in general Information sharing, esp. regarding challenges Honest, clear communication Transparent decision-making Specific metrics and evaluations examining unit/university/leadership's adherence to the values Can't hold people accountable without hearing their perspective Governance Culture change</p>
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Responses to questions about mission and purpose (Q1). *What is our primary mission? Why do we exist? Who do we exist first and foremost to serve?* Dr. Johnson reviewed the 245 community responses to these questions and provided the following summary. There was good agreement between the n = 21 and n = 245 answers. In qualitative research terms, we reached saturation.

Table 4: Primary mission/who do we exist to serve?
<p>MSU is a model land grant institution that serves the people of Michigan and the world through education, research, and outreach.</p> <p>Respondents tended to describe one of two ultimate goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The goal of research, teaching, and outreach is to benefit society, and students are one important way of doing that (but there are other ways as well). 2. The goal of research, teaching, and outreach is to benefit students (who by the way benefit society). <p>Two top answers: As a public, land grant institution, we exist to serve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The people and communities of Michigan first, and then the people of the world. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. "We exist to serve the people of Michigan- to educate them, to research fields that will help them thrive, to support their artistry and invention." 2. Higher education students (many say, especially those from Michigan; some add, especially minority, first generation, children of the "working class"; making education accessible).

Additional ideas included:

- We exist first and foremost to serve one another. In serving one another, we serve the world.
 - MSU's primary mission is to provide the best collaborative and inclusive learning environment for all Spartan students, faculty, staff, and alumni. These Spartans will then be equipped to be able to serve their communities all around the world.
- We exist to develop and promulgate useful knowledge and to articulate clearly the values that undergird that use.
 - The primary purpose of research is to search for truth. The primary purpose of teaching and learning is to share truth. Our purpose in sharing truth is to benefit individuals and communities (please note that there are multiple truths, depending upon perspective, context, etc.)
 - Create and disseminate knowledge.
 - Help students learn to weigh the barrage of information that comes at them.
- "MSU should exist to make the world a better place."
 - "Transform the world."
 - "Michigan State is America's premier land grant institution. It exists to prepare the working person's sons and daughters to make the world a better place than they found it."
- "To educate citizens of the State of Michigan in a way that prepares them to be contributing members of the community for a lifetime."
- "The land grant mission is be a good steward of our resources and be to the benefit of the citizens of Michigan, the community and the broader world. Education and equal access to all eligible students. The

focus on diversity and equal access takes a shift back to the education mission and how we serve the students who become the next generation's leaders.”

- “Advancing Knowledge/Transforming Lives still captures in a concise way our deep commitment to our founding land-grant mission in a 21st century context. With that in mind, it is not appropriate to identify a single group that we exist to serve first. We serve our state, nation, the world--in collaboration with our students, faculty, staff, partners, and communities.”

Responses to questions about MSU's distinctive contribution (Q2). *What is MSU's distinctive contribution? If MSU ceased to exist tomorrow, what would be lost that other Michigan colleges and universities would not be able to replace or address?* Dean Esquith reviewed the 245 community responses to these questions and provided the following summary.

Table 5: What is MSU's distinctive contribution?

MSU's Mission Statement is familiar (<https://trustees.msu.edu/about/mission.html>). What is “primary” among these various goals? Perhaps to answer that we need to be able to defend the claim that MSU should “exist” even if other institutions have the same mission and are successful at what they do. So, here are a few sentences with these questions in mind.

The primary mission of MSU is to demonstrate in practice how the provision of quality teaching and learning, excellent research and creative work, and community engagement do not compete with one another but are all more effectively achieved when done in integrated and interdisciplinary ways. The whole must be greater than the sum of these three parts. The justification for this ambitious claim is that at a time when vital public goods are either being abandoned or privatized for those who can afford them (e.g., public health, public safety), the good of public higher education is more essential now than ever. MSU is in a position to ‘show by doing’, not just by saying, that public higher education can educate the next generation of scholars and creative thinkers capable of addressing global problems and the local forms they take in partnership with other members of society to achieve other needed public goods. Public higher education for the public good.

Responses reflecting additional ideas included:

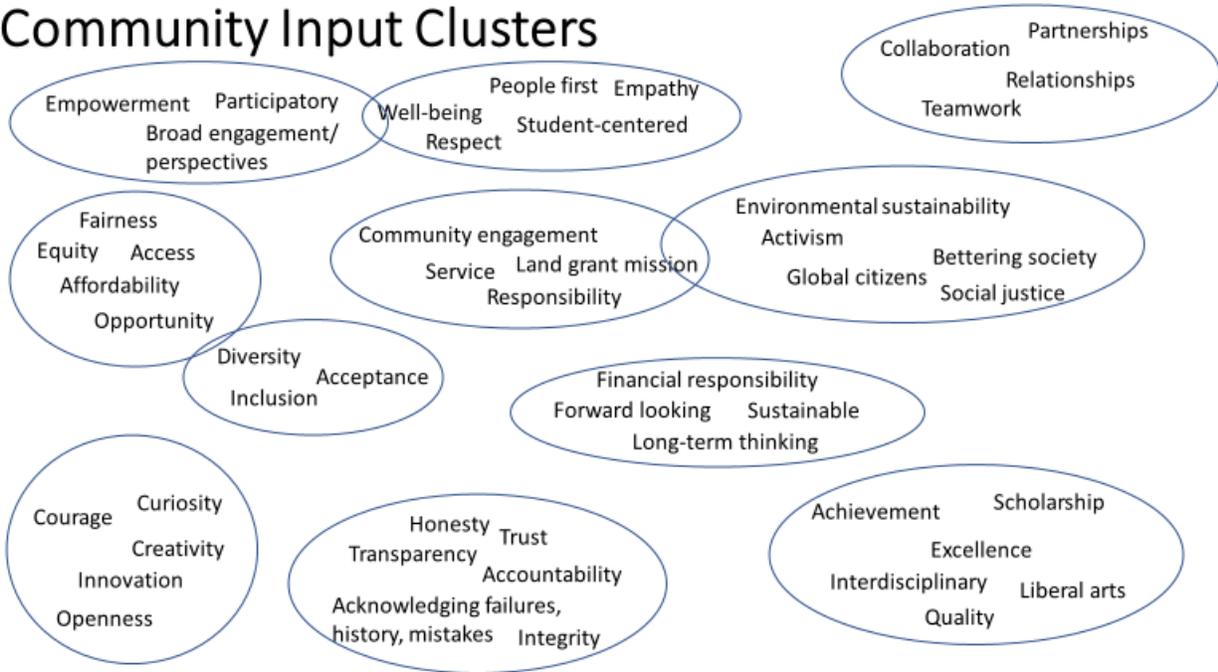
- We are a high output research institution with a focus on disenfranchised and underserved populations. We are uniquely positioned to be a research institution with a strong academic reputation while still committing to help the underserved communities in which we work.
- MSU needs to exist to offer a diverse, broad education and R1 resources accessible to all Michiganders.
- MSU provides those who are usually without access with nationally-recognized higher education and R1 resources in a comfortable, accessible way that doesn't alienate the population it serves. MSU exists to serve the working class and give equal access to world renowned learning, research, and career opportunities.
- MSU makes quality education and research opportunities available first and foremost to Michiganders, and to anyone interested in learning in a holistic, community-rooted, practical-application atmosphere.
- “The reason to have diverse colleges united under one university is because no one disciplinary area suffices for addressing societal problems, and fostering connections across the university must be a central goal-- otherwise there is no reason to keep different disciplines together in one institution.”
- “MSU should exist to serve all communities throughout Michigan... MSU's distinction is that it has a large existing network that makes education of all kinds (not only degree programs) accessible to all Michiganders.”
- “The citizens of the State of Michigan - we have a responsibility to educate our kids, keep our State competitive, support our business base, and partner with them to support the University. MSU offers education to place grads in good jobs right here in Michigan. As our families grow, they can stay in Michigan and enjoy the lifestyle this amazing State offers us. MSU grads are business leaders, education professionals, medical professionals, engineers, artists, scientists, and farmers - everything we need to make our State the best place to live anywhere.”

Next steps. Values and their meaning are often worked out through discourse. We have provided a synthesis of what approximately 266 Spartans (the SPSC and those who responded to our email) have said. Next steps include:

1. Refining values. We suggest presenting the draft values and definitions widely, clarifying that they are a draft summary of our community's initial responses, and asking "What do you think? What would you add?" Greater community engagement, especially targeting students, will improve the values statements, their meanings, and a collective sense of ownership for them.
2. Implementing values. Implementing these values will require further discussions by the SPSC and ongoing conversations among the many stakeholders of the University. Even after the values statements are finalized, continuing discussions of their meaning and application are an important part of their implementation and integration into MSU culture.
3. Considering relative priority of values. We should consider how to prioritize and resource these values. In other words, if the values compete with one another for resources or even conflict with one another, how will the conflicts be resolved?
4. Informing strategic planning. Our values should help guide our strategic plan. In addition:
 - If MSU exists to serve the people of Michigan and its students, how will we incorporate these groups' perspectives into our strategic planning?
 - There was richness in the answers to Questions 1 (primary mission/who do we exist to serve) and 2 (MSU's distinctive contribution). We provided summaries above, but it may be informative for SPSC members to read through raw community responses.

Appendix A

Community Input Clusters



SPSC Clusters

