

**MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY FEB. 13  
PERMANENT MEMORIAL DESIGN  
COMMUNITY INPUT**



**May 23, 2025 FINAL SUMMARY REPORT**

## Introduction

In the wake of the tragic events that unfolded Feb. 13, 2023, Michigan State University established the Feb. 13 Memorial Planning Committee in October 2023. Composed of a cross-section of the university community, including members from the Associated Students of Michigan State University, the Council of Graduate Students, Department of African American and African Studies, School of Social Work, Student Life and Engagement, and the Office of the Provost, this sub-committee of the Public Art On Campus Committee has been engaging the broader MSU community to gather insights and input for the creation of a meaningful and lasting memorial on campus.

The committee worked with the National Charrette Institute at MSU to survey the campus community in early 2024 and identify the most important purposes of the memorial, as well as potential modes of interaction and location. These engagements are summarized in the May 31, 2024, report. A [Request for Proposals](#) was then created based on that feedback and distributed to artists, design firms and organizations across the country in July 2024. They were invited to design, build and install a permanent memorial in one of two campus locations:

- Sleepy Hollow between Beaumont Tower and the Music Practice Building
- Old Horticulture Garden located near the Student Services Building

Twenty proposals were received. In September 2024, the Feb. 13 Permanent Memorial Planning Committee met to evaluate the proposals according to the criteria listed in the RFP. Three designs that best met those criteria were selected for community input.

## Spring 2025 survey

The designs by the three [selected finalists](#) (Portillo and Guinto, HWKN and James Dinh) were presented for public input through the Spartans Together website. Recorded presentations by each finalist as well as multiple views of designs and the project proposal were available on the website. Using a matrix developed from spring 2024 community input, the public was invited to contribute feedback on the proposals via an online community survey that ran from Feb. 10, 2025, through March 31, 2025. The survey was distributed by QR code at the Feb. 13, 2025, remembrance gathering on MSU's campus. Posters with the design proposals were displayed in multiple locations on campus and in East Lansing, and communications were sent out via numerous email listservs, articles in MSU Today and Inside MSU, as well as publicized on MSU social media platforms and in displays in the residence halls. Several regional newspapers, television and radio stations also circulated the information about where to find the designs and survey.

There were three sections to the survey, one for each proposal, and each section consisted of the same seven Likert-scale questions and one free-form text entry box. A total of 2,742 surveys had recorded responses to at least one proposed design. In addition to the online survey, conversations with directly impacted groups also took place.

## Summary and results

Overall, survey respondents rated the Portillo and Guinto (P&G) proposal the most favorably across the seven questions that were drawn from the MSU community survey in 2024:

- The memorial design honors and remembers those lost and impacted on Feb. 13.
- The memorial design facilitates the processing of grief.
- The memorial design facilitates healing.
- The memorial design provides a safe and protected space for reflection and contemplation.
- The memorial design provides a space that can be experienced individually.
- The memorial design provides a space that allows visitors to gather in community.
- The memorial design is situated in a natural and serene setting.

92% of respondents provided feedback and/or comments on the P&G survey (2,532); 66% provided feedback on the HWKN survey (1,818); 62% provided feedback on the JD proposal (1,706).

Respondents also had the opportunity to submit comments in the free-form text boxes under each proposal in the survey. Recurring themes included:

- Portillo and Guinto:
  - the peacefulness of the water feature and symbolism of reflection
  - the overall beauty of the design
- HWKN:
  - the combination of personal and community spaces
  - the incorporation of nature and how well it meshes with the rest of campus
- James Dinh:
  - the overall beauty of the design
  - the functionality and symbolism of the stone