

Outreach Task Force Report

Executive Summary

Outreach at MSU impacts hundreds of partners and serve a variety of functions that connect directly to the plan for Transformational Change and to the land-grant service mission of the university. Outreach activities provide meaningful service to the community; provide venues where faculty grow, lead, and share life changing research; are a means of serving as an economic catalyst in Mississippi and beyond; provide a platform from which we tell the world about State; and support recruitment and our overall enrollment strategy. Outreach often involves service but is not one sided. The hallmark of outreach is community engagement that is mutually beneficial, and the myriad of outreach activities led by the university serve to foster **public support for the institution, support student recruitment, provide experiential learning opportunities** for students and advance **research and scholarship**.

While outreach is the primary mission of the MSU Extension Service and MAFES, outreach is a campus-wide endeavor. Outreach is supported by the office of Student Leadership and Community Engagement, by dedicated outreach and engagement offices and staff across campus and is often supported by external funding. However, although outreach is central to the land-grant mission of the institution, outreach is not supported in ways that are parallel to research and teaching. Based on our internal assessment and review outreach at other similar institutions, we make the following recommendations as ways to strengthen outreach. These recommendations will support greater coordination and foster collaboration, assist with requests for information and services, provide data for reporting purposes, promote student enrollment, and increase public support for the university.

Recommendations

1. Recognize outreach as a critical element to the mission of the university
 - Foster conversations about the role of outreach in faculty evaluation, promotion, and tenure
 - **Review existing awards to ensure recognition of outreach activities**
2. Support, evaluate, and improve outreach assessment and data collection
 - **Identify and evaluate existing data systems**
 - **Improve or adapt existing systems and gather data on a regular basis**
3. Tell the stories of MSU Outreach
 - **Revamp the outreach website**
 - **Synthesize information about outreach into summary reports for key audiences**
 - **Evaluate, promote, and expand the ways we communicate about MSU outreach**
 - **Promote the Institutional Repository**
4. Provide additional training and support for outreach
5. Create a university-wide infrastructure to support outreach from a university-wide perspective
 - **Create senior leadership to support and advance outreach**
 - **Reimagine the Community Engagement Committee**
 - **Join the Engagement Scholarship Consortium**

Charge

As a land-grant university, Mississippi State University embraces its role in research, teaching, and service – even as reflected in our university seal. A fundamental role that MSU plays in MSU and globally is through its outreach and service efforts. However, although we are highly structured in research and academic programs, our outreach efforts are quite disparate, and there is not a comprehensive focus for these efforts. During our ongoing strategic planning process this lack of clarity has been highlighted, and thus your vice presidents ask that you serve as a task force with the following charge:

1. Develop a comprehensive inventory of outreach, service, and community engagement activities at MSU.
2. Provide recommendations on best practices for outreach and service coordination from other universities.

Task Force Membership

Devon Brenner, Research and Economic Development (chair)
Brent Fountain, Academic Affairs
Jeffrey Rupp, Entrepreneurship Center
Leah Kemp, Fred Carl Jr. Small Town Center
Alex McIntosh, Development Foundation
Steve Martin, MSU Extension Service
Bill Epperson, Veterinary Medicine
Kathy S. Jones, Student Leadership & Community Engagement
Timothy Hopkins, Access, Diversity, and Inclusion
Jeremiah Dumas, Finance and Administration
Assisted by Tori Boatner, Office of Research Development

Outreach at MSU

What is outreach?

To learn more about Outreach at Mississippi State University (MSU), members of the task force collected information about outreach in our colleges, centers, and other units. A first challenge was to try to understand the range and scope of outreach at MSU. As we gathered information, did not try to set a prescriptive definition of outreach. Instead, we were interested in learning about what MSU considers outreach and how we define outreach in practice. In thinking about outreach, we were informed by overlapping concepts related to the land-grant mission of the university, MSU's engagement in Extension through the Division of Agriculture, Forestry, and Veterinary Medicine, and our recognition that faculty and staff engage in a wide range of service activities, many of which include external partners. We were also informed by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, which defines community engagement as

collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, and global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. The purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching, and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good (<https://public-purpose.org/initiatives/carnegie-elective-classifications/community-engagement-classification-u-s/>).

Or, as one faculty member told us, outreach “involves an extension of our research, learning and service mission to take ‘it’ to the people— whatever ‘it’ is that we produce and yield of interest to those internal and external to our college.” Outreach, then, is a broad concept that includes activities that are public facing or involve external partners and result in increased access to or knowledge about the research, teaching, expertise, skills, and resources of the university.

Several recent reports suggest the complexity of trying to inventory all the outreach conducted by MSU faculty and staff. In 2019, the Governor asked MSU to provide Year of the Child Reports, cataloging information about programs that impact children aged birth through 18. After several weeks of data collection and requests for, MSU reported on over 150 separate programs with expenditures over \$29 million. Our most application for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching Community Engagement Classification was 183 pages long and still only reported on a portion of the outreach and community engagement activities of the university. The most recent Report on Activities and Results for the MSU Extension Service and MAFES summarizes involvement and impact of 47 different Extension programs for a wide variety of external partners from beekeepers and farmers to individuals with diabetes focusing on topics ranging from financial literacy to emergency preparedness to competitive market strategies. As these reports suggest, a great deal of outreach happening at MSU. It quickly became clear that it would be exceedingly difficult to capture every instance of what might be considered outreach. We immediately had questions about what level of detail would be necessary (do we need all the names of all the industries and communities that are external partners in outreach, or a count of how many individuals are impacted, or other concrete information?). We wondered who the audience for data about outreach might be and how the information would be used. We were also cautious that an inventory of outreach in the 2020-2021 school year might be affected by the restrictions of COVID-19, and we were hesitant to ask faculty to complete a new survey or report during an already difficult year.

Over the spring semester, members of the Outreach task force collected existing reports and asked administrators and colleagues in our units to give us information about the types of outreach, external partners, focus for, and outcomes of outreach in their colleges, departments, centers, institutes, and offices. Rather than a comprehensive inventory of every instance of outreach, our intent was creating a “snapshot” that would help us learn more about how outreach is already structured and supported and understand the types and range of outreach activities at the university. The intent was to capture enough information to make informed recommendations about how outreach can be supported and ways we can the story of the impact of the university.

What kind of outreach do we do at MSU?

Outreach at MSU impacts hundreds of partners including families and individuals, workers and employers, teachers and students, nonprofit organizations and agencies, communities and county and municipal government, state and federal agencies, and a wide variety of industry partners from nursing homes and schools to the Beef Advisory Board and the Mississippi Children’s Museum. While many outreach activities are local, MSU engages in meaningful statewide, national, and global outreach activities. Outreach activities at MSU serve a variety of functions that connect directly to the plan for Transformational Change and to the land-grant service mission of the university. Outreach activities provide meaningful service to the community; provide venues where faculty grow, lead, and share life changing research; are a means of serving as an economic catalyst in Mississippi and beyond; provide a platform from which we tell the world about State; and support recruitment and our overall enrollment strategy. Each of these functions is described below with key examples from across the university.

Service. Colleges, departments, centers, and programs at MSU engage in service to a variety of stakeholders. For example, MSU’s AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) project, housed in the office of Student Leadership and Community Engagement, matches community-minded volunteers who have made a year-long commitment with community-based agencies where they engage in work to address poverty and advance educational and economic well-being for the citizens of our state. The Maroon Volunteer Center matches MSU students, faculty, and staff with community partners—programs in the Maroon Volunteer Center include Maroon Edition Habitat for Humanity and dedicated days of service, such as the MLK Day of Service. MVC volunteers work with youth at the Boys and Girls Club, provide tutoring, clean up parks and cemeteries, organize donations at local resale shops, socialize puppies and kittens at animal shelters, and more.

The Department of Music is just one of many departments that sponsor campus events for high school students. Events hosted by the Department of Music bring hundreds of high school students to campus for learning experiences such as Band Day, Choral Symposium, Honor Band, Solo & ensemble Day, Double Reed Day, and Music Discovery Day. Music camps and events are just one of hundreds of examples of experiences for p-12 students on the MSU campus—from field trips and guest speakers in classrooms to AP Computer Science preparatory camps and athletics.

Another example of service-focused outreach is the Starkville MSU Area Rapid Transit (SMART), a Federal Transit Authority funded rural mass transit system administered by the MSU Transportation Department. SMART provides fixed and flex route services, along with complimentary paratransit services for the MSU campus as well as throughout the City of Starkville. With annual ridership numbers averaging over 750,000, SMART has been recognized as the Transit System of the Year by the Mississippi Public Transit Association and prides itself on providing transportation services to all in our community in a way that directly impacts their quality of life.

The MSU Thrive Program works to support students that has aged out of foster care, an emancipated minor, homelessness or have parents that are deceased. This program works closely with Palmer Home for Children to host the “Adventures Summer Camp” for children. This program engages children grades 7th through 12th in educational programming, college essentials,

success information sessions and teambuilding activities. The Adventures Summer camp provides children the opportunity to connect with Mississippi State University.

Homeward Bound is a program matching unowned animals in MS with new owners in the NE US. This program uses a network of foster providers in MS to accept dogs and cats for a period of transition from homelessness to wanted homes. Following a 2–3-month transition, animals are transported to shelter in the NE US that have prearranged owners. The program was initiated in 2006 by 2 veterinary students and has been expanded and maintained to this day.

MSU students enrolled in service-learning classes engage in service projects with community partners every year. The Center for Community-Engaged Learning (CCEL) has designated sixty-three classes as service-learning classes since 2013. Community-engaged learning is a holistic pedagogy that integrates meaningful community or civic engagement into academic course objectives through experiential learning and critical reflection to enrich the educational experience of students, teach civic responsibility, and meet the needs of a community.

Outreach as service is multiplied by programs that train and educate community volunteers. For example, the Master Gardener training program, where participants are required to volunteer 40 hours in return for 40 hours of education and training from the MSU Extension Service. Master gardeners become assets to their communities by spearheading projects and extending their horticulture education learned from MSU to the public. These and many, many other examples illustrate the meaningful service provided to communities by MSU outreach activities.

Grow/Lead Life Changing Research. MSU scholars grow and lead life changing research by engaging in outreach to connect new knowledge to the public. One example of this type of activity are the many museums and galleries housed on the MSU campus. MSU's public galleries display university scholarship and provide members of the community with opportunities to learn about history and archaeology, geology and more. MSU's collections (entomology, Lincolnia, herbology, etc.) are resources for scholars both within and beyond MSU.

Faculty at MSU conduct research in a wide variety of disciplines, research that serves as the basis for education programs and public policy advocacy. For example, researchers at the Social Science Research Center have conducted research in tobacco use and child welfare and well-being and worked with cities and states to advocate for evidence-based policies that have improved air quality for workers in the food industry and the health of young children in our state. Extension faculty conduct research in areas from pesticide youth to food science and nutrition to family interactions and translate that research for the public through briefs, publications, short courses, workshops, and certifications.

Another example is the work of Dr. Margaret Khaita, whose research focuses on infectious disease epidemiology and food safety. In addition to her work in the lab, Dr. Khaita is leading an MSU team facilitating scientific exchanges and working on new standards for the safe trade of agriculture products across communities in the African Union and was recently named to the One Health High-Level Expert Panel, where she will advise international organizations about the spread of new diseases. The most recent winners of awards for community engaged research and the scholarship of engagement are examples of research that has an outreach focus and that is helping extend the knowledge of the university to audiences beyond our campuses—the AIM for CHange project brings faculty and students together with medical facilities' and food networks to reduce and prevent obesity in Mississippi. MSU Extension Professor Allen

Barefield and his students analyze economic and community-focused data to provide elected officials and community leaders with unbiased data to guide local policy. Education researchers on the Meridian Campus, including Dr. Jeff Leffler, are working with the local community to advance arts and arts education through the Any Given Child project. And the Gulf Coast Community Design Center is collaborating with coastal communities on research about how to best manage stormwater and prevent pollution.

Embrace the role of economic catalyst. MSU scholars leverage the role of the university to improve the lives of individuals and the economic and social wellness of communities locally, across Mississippi, and globally. For example, the MSU Center for Entrepreneurship and Outreach (Ecenter) is also home to a University Center funded by the Economic Development Administration, EDA. The mission of these centers is to “leverage university resources for economic development. This center supports economic development in multiple ways, including providing external clients with teams of MBA consulting students. These students provide technical assistance and applied research to the clients to help them grow and launch their businesses. Recently the COB is worked on a re-use redevelopment plan for the Mississippi Industrial College owned by Rust College in Holly Springs. The students have partnered with Belinda Stewart Architects to develop a business plan that includes the feasibility of the reuse of the abandoned historic buildings, comparatives of other neighboring operations, and cost to operate and maintain the proposed use and the path to begin implementing the plan including potential funding sources. These and other student-led projects and the work of the MSU e-center to support entrepreneurship are having a positive economic impact throughout the state. The goal is to create economic opportunity and economic “churn” in a blighted area of the Holly Springs community.

Another example is the work of The Geosystems Research Institute, which serves as a partner and research resource for government agencies at the state, local, federal, and international level, as well as for commercial entities desiring to expand their current technical capabilities or to diversify into new market opportunities. GRI researchers and Extension personnel provide training, give presentations, and provide demonstrations for farmers and producers. GRI and many, many other Extension programs work directly with industries to advance economic development in the state.

MSU extension provides leadership for several industries cross the state, such as the Beef Quality Assurance Program, which improves animal care and consumer confidence in beef products. Over 3,000 MS producers have been BQA certified since 2005.

Two centers in the College of Art, Architecture and Design, the Fred Carl Jr. Small Town Center in Starkville and the Gulf Coast Community Design Studio in Gulfport engage in outreach that spreads statewide and is typically scaled at the neighborhood, city, or regional level. Both centers operate by community-initiated contact to offer skilled planning or architecture, landscape architecture services for communities. In Marks, MS, for example, the Carl Small Town Center worked with the community to commemorate their civil rights history, creating a cultural trail that would boost the local economy and create new cultural amenities. Just as the STC did in Marks, it is common for the two centers to establish long-term relationships with communities. The centers’ comprehensive approach helps communities achieve many benefits that include aesthetic and sustainable improvements to their built environment, providing economic benefit as well.

Tell the World about State. MSU outreach activities serve to create more awareness nationally about the university, its capabilities, and contributions to changing the state and the

world. Just as an example, many MSU-published magazines tell the story of MSU research, teaching, and service to outside audiences. These include [Alumnus](#), the magazine of the Alumni Association; [MPRINT](#), published by the MSU Development Foundation; [Engaged](#), published by the Center for Community Engaged Learning; [Nexus](#), the National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center (NSPaRC) magazine, [Pegasus Press Magazine](#), published by the College of Veterinary Medicine; [Landmarks](#), published by DAFVM; [SchoolFocus](#) and [Connections](#), published by RCU with support from the Mississippi Department of Education; [Extension Matters](#), published by MSU Extension Service, [Vision](#), the magazine of the College of Arts and Sciences; and the [Jabberwock Review](#), a journal of literature and Art published by the English Department, among others.

Other outreach to tell the MSU story includes videos, podcasts, and a wide variety of social media channels and platforms. For example, the [True Leadership](#) website provides videos, blog posts, and podcasts that tell the story of MSU teaching and learning. A new collection of Faculty Insights summarize knowledge relevant to the public. [Vision TV](#) is a collection of interviews with MSU scholars and teachers hosted by the College of Arts and Sciences. The Alumni Association's [Bulldog Bites](#) provide well-produced conversations with MSU faculty, staff, and researchers to explore how the university is making an impact, and The College of Business has a monthly television program that runs statewide and on social media platforms. This program, Dividends, regularly features outreach efforts such as Lemonade Day, the iCreate Camp and the Innovation Challenge. These and other examples—the university's numerous Twitter and Instagram feeds, Facebook accounts, and other social media and more—directly communicate about State to targeted audiences and the public—but the fact is that all our outreach activities are opportunities for members of the community to learn about MSU. Every time a faculty member leads a workshop, a center collaborates with an industry or community, or Extension Agents interact with members of the public, we have an opportunity to increase knowledge about and raise the profile of MSU.

Support the University's Enrollment Strategy. MSU outreach also contributes to university goals to recruit students and pursue healthy, sustainable growth in student enrollment. This often includes outreach directly to K-12 students, families, and schools. For example, faculty in the department of Educational Leadership in the College of Education are working in Greenville Mississippi and Kemper County and other districts to promote a college going culture by making students aware of opportunities and promoting financial literacy and college-preparation coursework in high school. Similar efforts are taking place in Lauderdale County and McComb Mississippi through the RCU and the university's federally funded GEAR-UP project. One outcome of this project will be virtual reality tours of MSU facilities. Another example: the Department of ISE has a student led group, ISE Reps. This group sends post cards, emails, and makes calls to prospective students and visitors. They lead departmental tours and are developing social media outlets to share departmental activities. They are also developing stock information to share with HS counselors to have available for students to view.

Another example is the work of the Holmes Cultural Diversity Center, which works closely with the Office of Admissions and Scholarship to host Latinx Preview Day. The preview day consist of one day campus exploration day for Latinx students in grades 9th-12th across the state of Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. This event day is designed to provide an avenue for students to explore the campus of the Mississippi State University, learn more about our academics and non-academic resources, meet faculty and staff, engage with current Latinx

students on campus. The Latinx Preview Day continues to offer a great first look at the MSU experience.

These outreach activities are explicitly targeted to help high school students be ready for college and choose MSU, but all of MSU's outreach activities have the opportunity to support enrollment. Every interaction with an students and youth, with families, with workers and employers, is an opportunity to display the university's strengths and to connect with potential students for our academic programs. The Center for Distance Education recognize this potential and is working to identify the university's industry partners and other outreach opportunities so that they can share information about the BAS degree and other online education opportunities with potential students and with employers who might sponsor enrollment in MSU's degree and certificate programs. Every interaction with external partners is an opportunity to build the reputation of the university and encourage enrollment in MSU's academic programs.

How outreach is supported at MSU

MSU has several structures and invests resources for outreach and community engagement. The most recent application to the Carnegie Foundation for the Community Engagement Designation reported that in 2017-2018, "MSU's permanent allocation toward community engagement has increased by over \$3 million to \$106,336,288. This includes funding for On-campus Public Service, College of Veterinary Medicine Public Service, the Stennis Institute of Government, the Mississippi Alcohol Safety Education Program, Water Resources Research Institute, Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, Forest and Wildlife Research Center, MSU Extension Service, and the Center for Advanced Vehicular Systems" and that internal budgetary allocations for the Office of Student Leadership and Community Engagement, which includes the Center for Community-Engaged Learning and the Maroon Volunteer Center, have increased from \$488,440 in 2010 to \$648,665 annually." These investments reflect the centrality of outreach and engagement to the university. At MSU, outreach activities take place as part of the work of the MSU Extension Service and MAFES, are led by outreach and engagement offices and personnel in colleges and take place as all or part of the work of externally facing centers and institutes at the university. In addition, outreach that is supported by external funding and conducted as part of the service work of our faculty and staff. Each of these types of outreach is described below.

Extension

The MSU Extension Service is a primary organization structure for outreach at MSU. Through its centers, programs, and research, MSU Extension improves the economic, social, and cultural well-being of Mississippians in all 82 counties by providing research and education in a practical and applicable way in the areas of agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer science education, and community resource and economic development; by using the latest technology and teaching techniques to serve clients; by developing and using volunteers to help disseminate programs and information; by cooperating with other groups and agencies; and by maintaining a culturally diverse staff responsive to the needs of various audiences at all socioeconomic levels.

MSU Extension works arm-in-arm with the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Experiment Station (MAFES). The mission of MAFES is the creation of knowledge through

fundamental and applied research in the fields of science related to agriculture, food, natural resources, the natural environment, people, and communities with the goals of providing safe, nutritious, desirable food and fiber products and processes for consumers, and assuring businesses that comprise Mississippi's agricultural industry have the information required to remain competitive in a global marketplace. Each year, about 150 MAFES scientist work on more than 585 projects.

MSU Extension and MAFES have four regional research and Extension (R&E) centers strategically located across the state (north, Delta, central, coast) that serve as hubs for Extension outreach and MAFES research in each region. Each R&E center also has satellite stations where scientists conduct research specific to each region, as well as research that is part of statewide programs. Additional units include Crosby Arboretum, Center for Research on Human-Wildlife Conflict, Extension Center of Government and Community Development, Extension Center for Technology Outreach, Geosystems Research Institute, Water Resources Institute, Stennis Institute of Government and Community Development, and Southern Rural Development Center. In addition, and an Extension office is in each of Mississippi's 82 counties.

MSU's Extension agents and researchers work closely with external partners to conduct needs assessments, develop appropriate outreach, and research efforts. Extension Agents and faculty researchers push education and information into the spaces where people can access it – whether in a paper, field day, presentation, blog, website, TV show, etc. A mix of personnel conduct Extension related outreach and research. Some are housed entirely in Extension offices or centers, some 100% extension faculty are affiliated or nested in departments in the colleges in DAFVM, and some have split appointments with Extension and academic departments and/or centers and institutes. For individuals with 100% or partial Extension appointments, outreach is used as an evaluative factor on annual evaluations and in P&T packets.

University-Wide Offices

Some outreach activities are the responsibility of dedicated offices and staff who are tasked with coordinating, leading, and supporting outreach activities.

Student Leadership and Community Engagement. The Student Leadership and Community Engagement office (SLCE) provides support for community engagement and outreach across campus. SLCE provides training, support and coordination through outreach, service-learning, volunteerism, and community engagement through its many programs, including the Maroon Volunteer Center (MVC) and AmeriCorps VISTA. The Center for Community-Engaged Learning (CCEL) at the SLCE works with faculty, students, and members of MSU Extension to advance community-engaged learning opportunities for MSU students with partners throughout the state. CCEL advances community-engaged learning by working with faculty to identify community partners, consulting on syllabus revision, recognizing designated service-learning courses, and collaborating on research design for community-engaged scholarship, among other services. SLCE also coordinates the signature leadership programs such as the Montgomery Leadership Program and Day One Leadership Community (Day One). Day One Leadership Community—matching incoming first-year students with service-learning leadership opportunities in the community to foster civic responsibility and support the transition to college life. The students, faculty, staff, and community partners of SLCE are transformed through the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and resources in a context of partnership and

reciprocity. This transformation drives the social, educational, and economic progress of communities across our state and nation and around the globe.

Community Engagement Committee. The Community Engagement Committee is a standing committee comprised of a mix of appointed and elected representatives who report to the Provost. The charge of the committee reads: “Coordinates the advancement of community engagement, service-learning, and outreach activities on-campus, within the region, and beyond.” The Community Engagement Committee plays a key role in promoting community-engaged teaching on campus and in helping prepare for and write the submission for the Carnegie Classification as a Community-Engaged Campus. During the 2020-2021 school year, much community engagement work was curtailed by the pandemic, and the committee was not highly active.

Other examples. Many other university offices support outreach and collaboration with external partners. The Office of Technology Management helps faculty scholars facilitate the transition of intellectual property (IP) to the marketplace. OTM helps faculty inventors bring their ideas to the public and fosters corporate engagement. The Office of Research and Economic Development (ORED) also supports corporate engagement by building relationships with industry partners throughout the state world-wide. The Office of Research Compliance provides training and support for faculty seeking IRB approval for community engaged research. Amanda Tullos serves as liaison to the Partnership Middle School, a middle school located on the MSU campus, and fosters collaboration and between faculty and staff at MSU and students, teachers, and administrators at the school and in the rest of the Starkville Oktibbeha School District. And the list goes on.

Dedicated Offices and Personnel in Academic Units

Many of the academic units at MSU have dedicated outreach staff and/or offices including:

Engineering. The Bagley College of Engineering sponsors its K-12 Outreach Office with a mission to engage and expose young people to the field of engineering as well as the variety of potential careers and opportunities within the field; encourage young people to explore their personal interest within the engineering fields; and to bring attention to engaging a diverse population of future engineers. The purpose of the K-12 Outreach Office is to develop and implement programs and curricula to engage K-12 students and allow them to explore the fields of engineering through hands-on, minds-on problem-based learning activities. Additionally, professional development opportunities are provided for educators of all settings (public, private, charter and home school educators are all invited) in a large variety of STEM-based programs. The office has two full time employees and they run a wide variety of K-12 initiatives including summer camps, robotics programs, and the Region V Science and Engineering Fair.

Education. With three full time staff, the office of Clinical and Field-Based Instruction (OCFBI) coordinates field based instruction for education programs in the College of Education including matching student teaching interns with cooperating teachers in schools across the state and providing professional development for districts and serves as a liaison between faculty and districts. OCFBI also conducts a variety of recruiting activities for programs in the College of Education.

Veterinary Medicine. The Outreach Office at the College of Veterinary Medicine coordinates various initiatives designed to help improve our state, nation and world including on-site tours and open houses, summer camps and the VetAspire program that brings high school

and undergraduates to campus to experience a day at MSU CVM. Our faculty, staff and students reach out in many ways to provide services to the community, promote the field of veterinary medicine, and engage members of the public in a variety of events and activities.

College of Business. The Center for Entrepreneurship and Outreach in the College of Business (Ecenter) promotes entrepreneurship and community engagement in numerous ways. With support from the Economic Development Administration, the Ecenter on campus helps students on campus launch new businesses by providing mentoring, office and collaboration spaces, and connections with business leaders that help students get their public-facing ideas off the ground. For example, the Ecenter hosts and/or facilitates “Shark Tank” like pitch competitions for junior and senior high school students in several Mississippi communities. The IDEA shop, located in downtown Starkville, is a public maker space where members of the public are invited to use tools and resources and launch new business ideas.

Centers and Institutes

Many of MSU’s centers and institutes engage in service and outreach work by engaging with the public either through externally funded grants or engage in fee-based service. For example, the Research and Curriculum Unit is a university level center that works directly with the Mississippi Department of Education, school districts, teachers and administrators, and community partners around a variety of projects that advance teaching and learning in the state. RCU’s Career and Technical Education programs including writing CTE curriculum and administering coursework and assessment to license new CTE teachers. RCU is currently engaging in a variety of teacher certification and K-12 outreach programs to advance computer science, including the CS4MS program. The RCU’s GEAR UP grant, through the federal TRIO program, is advancing college readiness and graduation rates in three communities across the state.

University-wide centers work closely with corporate and industry partners, state agencies, and communities. Some examples: The Raspet Flight Center, The Center for Advanced Vehicular Systems, nSPARC and the Social Science Research Center work closely with state agencies to help leverage data to answer questions of policy and practice. . . details here?

Many centers housed in colleges also have a public facing mission. For example, the Writing/Thinking Institute in the College of Education provides fee-based professional development focusing on the teaching of reading and writing to K-12 educators across the region. The Migrant Education Service Center receives federal funding through the Mississippi Department of Education to provide services to migrant students and their families in schools and communities across the state.

In BCOE, the Center for Advanced Vehicular Systems (CAVS) Extension significantly invests a portion of state funds (~\$75K per year) to manage and lead the Student Technology Exchange Program (STEP) effort. This program links area high schools with Nissan’s Training Center so that students are trained using the robotics and automation equipment relevant to potential careers in the automotive and other high growth industries. Each year approximately 40 students graduate from this program. All of CAVS Extension’s \$624,000 in state appropriations (an average for the last several years) is invested and leveraged on behalf of providing engineering engagement for the state through its support of both industrial outreach and support of the BCOE’s K-12 outreach program.

Grants, Community Engaged Learning, and Service

Beyond these formal structures and offices, a great deal of outreach takes place because of service or collaborative research grants and/or as service activities of individual faculty members. Many federal agencies provide funding to support outreach and other service activities, for example, Stephanie Lemley and Carley Morrison have USDA funding to support professional development for teachers focusing on agriculture literacy, and Yan Sun and her colleagues have funding to develop teaching materials to help high school students use weather data to learn about data science. Sometimes service or outreach is the focus of external funding, and sometimes, outreach is a small component of a larger research grant. The National Science Foundation (NSF), for example, requires investigators to develop a plan for “Broader Impacts”—so that a portion of funding is used to benefit society by advancing understanding of science, communicating research findings, or supporting the development of the STEM workforce. Ryan Folk and his colleagues, for example, recently received NSF funding to study nitrogen fixing symbioses in flowering plants. A portion of grant funds have been used to support workshops for high school students and outreach to the public about the importance of symbioses. Vicki Montiel-Palma has NSF funding for catalyst research to form new molecular compounds. She and her team will also be working with the Mississippi Migrant Education Service Center to advance STEM education for migrant youth. Similarly, the Department of Defense Army Research Labs supported professional development for teachers and after school programming for students as part of funding provided to CAVS for the Lab to Fab project, now in its final year. Although outreach was only a small part of the overall project, the grant provided support for over 300 teachers to learn to teach material science and implement maker spaces.

Outreach is also an outcome of graduate and undergraduate courses and programs. In the College of Business, MBA students develop business plans for community partners as part of their capstone course. In a partnership between the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the Starkville Main Street Association, undergraduate students taking a Neighborhood Scale Design course housed in the Department of Landscape and Architecture provided comprehensive community designs and exhibition plans from undergraduate. This kind of experience gives students real-world learning opportunities and provides beautification and development opportunities for the city of Starkville. Another example: in Public Policy and Administration, the graduate student capstone course includes a project that “offers each student the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of the theory and practice of public administration by applying the skills gained in the MPPA program to an applied project.” One project objective calls for students to “produce a report that demonstrates critical thought,” which is an essential part of the reflective process in community-engaged learning. Current projects are engaging local cities in feasibility of hiring social media specialists and researching reentry courts for offenders. The CVM Shelter medicine service provides a service/learning environment that enhances surgery skills in veterinary students while providing no cost spay/neuter surgery to MS animal shelters. Since 2007 over 96,000 surgeries have been performed.

In every college, faculty engage in outreach activities that are recognized as service in their annual review. Faculty share their knowledge with youth as speakers at clubs or in high school classes. Just a few examples: last year faculty in Geosciences; Food Science, Nutrition and Health Promotion; Kinesiology; Curriculum, Instruction and Special Education; Architecture; Landscape Architecture; Sociology and more provided programming or

collaborated with teachers or wrote curriculum or appeared as guest speakers in classes at the Partnership Middle School.

Finally, faculty and staff are increasingly engaging in public scholarship by communicating with audiences outside of academia in venues such as *The Conversation*, *Faculty Insights*, and with blog posts, editorials, and more. These publications bring prestige and recognition of MSU's scholarship—Colleen Sinclair's recent articles about misinformation have received over 100,000 hits, and Molly Zuckerman's scholarship about patients who died at the Mississippi State Asylum was recently featured in a TV series about mental health.

Data about Outreach

Currently, responsibility for collecting and tracking data related to outreach exists in several offices based on the unit responsible, type of data collected, and expertise involved. This information is utilized for annual performance evaluations, course assessments, program and partnership assessments, and campus and community impacts. The most recent application to the Carnegie Foundation described the following systems for collecting data on community engagement activities:

The SLCE maintains OrgSync Service Management (OSM) software, which tracks community engagement and service, including hours, participants, partners, learning outcomes, and processing reflections. Participants log data, and the community partner (CP) verifies and approves the activities. OrgSync is used to collect data about community engagement programs and classes within SLCE, CCEL, the Center for Student Activities, MSU Athletics, FYE (First Year Experience) classes, CE (Community Engagement) Fellows courses, other CEL classes and community-oriented units and the Americorps VISTA program. The Maroon Volunteer Center and CCEL also use OrgSync to maintain a database of collaborative community partnerships and volunteer activities.

Digital Measures is another data collection tool that can provide information about outreach. All faculty, research associates, and extension agents have access to Digital Measures, a productivity-tracking tool they use to input activities related to their teaching, research, and service. This generates the faculty annual evaluation report and other reports, such as extension reporting for government agencies. The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE) maintains this system and use of Digital Measures is required by some colleges and departments for annual review. Digital Measures includes fields that designate activities related to community engagement, which allows the institution to track how faculty incorporate engagement into their research, teaching, and service. Faculty who do not use Digital Measures also report about outreach and engagement as part of annual review, though those data may be less easily accessible.

Federal reports are another source of data about outreach and engagement activities at the university. The MSU Extension Service and MAFES provide annual reports about participation in and effectiveness of extension activities to NIFA every year. The EDA University Center, operating through the Center, reports outreach efforts as part of its federal reporting requirements.

Recommendations

The examples described above are just the beginning. Every day MSU faculty and staff are collaborating with communities, engaging in research that impacts industry and the economy, providing service to children and youth, and the list goes on. Our initial scan of outreach activities conducted by the university suggest that MSU faculty and staff engage in a wide variety of outreach activities that have positive impact for our partners—and that these activities are mutually beneficial. While service and engagement benefit our community partners, they also bring countless benefits to the university including:

- *Fostering public support for the institution.* As we engage with communities in positive ways, we garner support that helps sustain public and private investment in MSU. The more that the public, our alumni, and policy makers know about the work we do at MSU the more likely they are to support continued investment in the university.
- *Supporting student recruitment.* Outreach programs directly and indirectly support academic programs at MSU. As we engage in positive ways with communities we build understanding of the range of degrees and programs offered—and when our partners have positive experiences with MSU faculty and staff they may be more likely to send their students or enroll in our programs themselves, including both in-person and distance programs. For example, Susan Seal at the Center for Distance Education is working to identify external and corporate partners as a lever to recruit for the BAS and other distance degree programs.
- *Providing experiential learning opportunities.* Undergraduate and graduate students involved in community-engaged learning, volunteer, and other outreach experiences gain real-world experience that supports academic learning. An added benefit is that engagement with industry and community partners can inform our academic programs by giving us feedback about the skills and abilities graduates need to succeed as new employees.
- *Advancing research and scholarship.* Outreach supports research from the conception of the research problem to dissemination. Collaboration with external partners can help researchers identify research questions, influence methodological design, and may even lead to financial support for research. Community engaged scholarship ensures that faculty are addressing real-world challenges and doing research with, not for, our partners, and can lead to greater impact of MSU scholarly activity.

However, there are ways that outreach and engagement could become even better than what already exists. To make recommendations about how best to support outreach at MSU, members of the task force surveyed public facing materials at similar institution, including other high-research land-grant institutions, to learn more about outreach and engagement at those institutions. Based on our review of other institutions and our internal scan of outreach at MSU, we make the following recommendations:

1. Recognize outreach as a critical element to the mission of the university

The task force recommends that the Provost's office and other appropriate divisions investigate ways to promote an understanding of outreach as central to the mission of the university and valued activity for all personnel by taking steps to (1) foster conversations about the role of outreach in evaluation, promotion, and tenure, (2) align policies and practices to

support outreach, and (3) review existing faculty and staff awards to ensure recognition of outreach that has a positive impact.

Foster conversations about the role of outreach in faculty evaluation, promotion, and tenure. Outreach and engagement have many positive outcomes for the university, however, for many faculty and staff, outreach and engagement are seen as service activities that are peripheral to the more essential activities of research and teaching. This is particularly true for non-Extension faculty. Faculty should drive conversations about evaluation, promotion, and tenure, but there may be a role that administration can play to foster and lift faculty voices as they relate to service and outreach and to foster conversations with academic deans and department heads and college and departmental committees and signal support for a broadened definition of scholarship and teaching that embraces outreach. This work has already been happening. As noted in the most recent application to the Carnegie Foundation several colleges are working or have already revised policies for P&T to include Community Engagement, including CALS, MAFES, CVM, and CAAD. For example, the College of Veterinary Medicine has current policies that reward continuing education outreach as part of Clinical Service, and states that clinical service excellence is among key promotion criteria and P&T document of the College of Art, Architecture and Design states that “Service to the School of Architecture, the College of Architecture, Art, and Design, the University, and to State or National constituencies and organizations is required of a candidate for promotion and/or tenure.”

Work to foster conversations about the role of outreach in faculty evaluation and P&T should happen in conjunction with other work happening on campus related to broadened definitions of scholarship and teaching that recognize the importance of outreach and community engagement. The recent Faculty Evaluation task force revised the annual review form to include a space for faculty to write about the impact of teaching, research, and scholarship in each section of the review form. Conversations about the role of entrepreneurship and innovation, open data, team science, and public scholarship are happening across campus. Continued conversations and changing cultures that embrace broadened definitions of scholarship have an added benefit of advancing diversity and inclusion—particularly because women and minority scholars may be more likely to and or interested in engaged scholarship. Certainly, outreach and engagement are a component of annual review for Extension faculty,

Review existing awards to ensure recognition of outreach activities. we recommend a review of college and university level awards for how they recognize outreach. For example, Virginia Tech recognizes a “Land Grant Scholar” ([link](#)), and Ohio State recognizes scholars who are doing work with significant impact to communities ([link](#)). This might include review of college-level awards and raising the profile annual awards for community engaged teaching, scholarship, and research (awarded by the SLCE) to honor those awardees on a level equivalent to the Powe and Grisham awards that recognize achievement in scholarship and teaching.

2. Support, evaluate, and improve outreach assessment and data collection

Our work as a committee to take a snapshot of outreach suggests that there are hundreds of examples of outreach every year—more than can be easily captured in a single task force report. While we identified several reports and reporting systems, there is no centralized repository for data, data systems do not communicate with one another, and no single office or individual has access to all the data or information being collected about outreach. A database or

shared, centralized repository of current and accurate information about outreach knowledge would be useful for many purposes:

- *To support collaboration.* Current and accurate information could help personnel with shared goals and interests identify internal and external collaboration partners. With shared knowledge, MSU faculty with shared interests could find each other to collaborate, and faculty with innovative ideas could leverage existing relationships to build networks and gain access already existing partnerships. Every week, ORED and the Office for Research Development receive requests from faculty looking to identify external partners for projects they are planning. With more shared information about outreach and engagement, we could leverage existing relationships with particular K-12 school districts or industry partners for new collaborations.
- *To foster greater coordination.* Increased knowledge about outreach activities could allow teams to collaborate and to coordinate to avoid duplication of effort and strengthen existing programs. Entities across campus find themselves working in communities that other MSU units are currently working in or have recently worked in. As we worked to learn about outreach across the university, we heard stories about how having multiple entities working in the community could be confusing to community members. Just knowing that other units are working in a particular small community or with specific industry partners can ensure that outreach activities seem more coordinated and planned.
- *To respond to requests for information.* MSU administrators need to understand where MSU is working and how things are going to be able to respond when partners, community members, donors, and elected officials ask questions about MSU activities. In addition, media often call looking for experts in particular fields and/or stories about MSU activities. A database or other record of ongoing outreach activities could facilitate responses to these queries.
- *To respond to requests for services.* To avoid duplication of efforts and provide communities with more comprehensive solutions, a portal should be established to link communities with the appropriate MSU units to provide technical services. A centrally managed portal could serve as a “front door” for industries and community partners who might come to MSU seeking industry partnerships, research collaboration, career services, continuing education, or other relationships. Right now, there is no single point of access for external partners to find collaborators or learn about university capabilities. (Note: The EAB white paper [For the Greater Good Boosting the Value of Industry Partnerships](#) provides recommendations for such a public-facing portal).
- *To promote MSU.* Greater knowledge about our work and its impact could help MSU public affairs and communications staff promote the work of the institution (see Recommendation 3, below).
- *To assess and evaluate outreach and have data for reporting purposes.* The university’s periodic application for Carnegie Community Engagement Classification as an engaged university requires documentation of the scope and impact of outreach and community engagement activities. The next application cycle for Carnegie designation is 2026, with application submissions beginning in April 2025 (<https://public-purpose.org/initiatives/carnegie-elective-classifications/community-engagement-classification-u-s/upcoming-cycles/>). To be ready for this report and to communicate with other audiences about outreach and engagement, it is necessary to have systems for gathering and tracking data on an ongoing basis. Data collection and review can support

assessment and evaluation to support accountability and help the institution determine the impact of outreach and communicate stakeholders about the value of investment in the university

For reasons such as these, other institutions have dedicated systems to collect this outreach and engagement data. For example, USC Chico is one of several institutions using [Collaboratory](#)—this online platform allows faculty to input data about external partners and community engagement. Other institutions have portals where faculty enter external partnerships and other information about outreach activities or regularly survey faculty about outreach (e.g. University of Colorado-Boulder <https://www.colorado.edu/fis/frpa/what-outreach> and the Texas Tech *Raiders Engage Survey* https://www.depts.ttu.edu/opa/assessments/raidersengaged/outreach_engagement.php). We are not, at this point, recommending that a platform such as these be purchased for or created at MSU. All these data collection methods require faculty time and may be redundant to other data we are already collecting at MSU. We already have multiple approaches for documenting faculty and staff activity and the work of centers, institutions, and Extension. Some of the data we already collect include

- Faculty evaluation/annual review, including Digital Measures data
- Reports to funders
- Annual reports by units such as centers and institutes
- OrgSync data collected about student volunteer and engagement activities and service learning and community engaged classes
- Expenditure data
- Extension’s Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results

These and other data sources not yet identified could become sources of valuable information about MSU Outreach, but they are not currently all being centrally collected or used to draw conclusions or expand understanding of outreach. To balance needs for additional and more consistent data without over-burdening faculty, we make the following recommendations:

Identify and evaluate existing data systems. To build knowledge about existing and ongoing outreach activities we recommend that all existing data systems be identified and evaluated, and a plan be for collecting information from colleges and departments, offices, centers and institutes and other entities that do not already report on outreach activities. While data collection is systemized for some divisions and units (e.g., Extension, student volunteering and service-learning courses), data collection is not automatic in other places at the university. We recognize that collecting data and learning more information about outreach is not a one-and-done endeavor. Rather, a system or set of systems are needed to continually provide updated information about outreach. This might include adding communicating and reporting about outreach to the roles of a designated administrator or other person in each unit. To improve data collection, we recommend expanded use of Digital Measures for both faculty and service/academic units that have an outreach component to collect and modify DM screens to collect relevant data.

Improve or adapt existing systems. We recommend that systems be improved or adapted in order to provide relevant and consistent data across divisions, units, and programs. Changes to the information we collect about outreach may be needed because of existing variation. For example, Extension and MAFES personnel track participation and evaluation results for every activity to comply with federal reporting requirements, but this level of data does not exist for all outreach activities. It may be helpful to develop a set of use cases and/or

identify potential audiences and purposes for data collection to determine the level of detail and focus of data collection that is necessary. Some data we already collected provides a great deal of information about outreach. For example, some indicate the number of MSU students, K-12 students, community members, or other individuals who participate in each workshops or program. Some reports indicate specific industry or community partners and others are more general. Some provide contact information which might enable future collaboration, but more often data is summarized, and individual external partners and contact information are not part of the reports. Currently, the types and depth of collected about outreach activity depend on the audiences for the data, and many are collected only annually and in retrospect, so that it is exceedingly difficult to create a real-time snapshot or answer questions about activities that are happening now. The types of information to be collected should reflect the uses and audiences for the information. If no one will ever need to know or use the information, there is no benefit to requiring compliance with a data system. As stated earlier, we are not yet recommending a new system for collecting information about outreach activities. While it may be determined that a new system is needed to collect data about research, any system that requires data entry should only be adopted after we determine that we meet our needs by increasing use of and improving or adapting the systems we already have.

3. Tell the Stories of MSU Outreach

The Office of Public Affairs, the communications staff in Extension and other divisions, the many newsletters and magazines and social media streams, all of these are already working to tell the stories of MSU outreach and engagement to a wide variety of audiences. However, we believe that there is a need to ensure that outreach is a focus of the work that is being done to “tell the world about State” and create more awareness nationally and locally about outreach and engagement. Therefore, we make the following recommendations related to telling the story of MSU Outreach.

Revamp the Outreach Website. Currently, if you scroll to the bottom of the Mississippi State University home page, you can click a link to <https://www.msstate.edu/outreach>. Our outreach page has a list of recent outreach-related news stories and links to Extension and other offices, units, centers, and institutes that engage in outreach. This is a good start, but our review of other institutions suggests that there may be better models for an outreach or engagement website. Other universities have “outreach” or “engagement” more obviously located on the home page (see, for example, Auburn <http://auburn.edu>, Colorado State <https://www.colostate.edu> and NC State <https://www.ncsu.edu>). These institutions also have much more information at their outreach or engagement webpages including resources for external partners to find university collaborators, resources for learning to engage, and much more. See for example, the “ways to engage” links at Michigan State university <https://engage.msu.edu> or “engagement” at the University of Nebraska-Omaha <https://www.unomaha.edu/engagement/index.php> which provides statistics, examples, data, resources and more to support and advance university outreach. We recommend a review of our webpage and revision framed around the many benefits and needs of outreach described in this report and the goals of outreach.

We believe it would be beneficial to create a public facing portal where community members, industries, and others could find partners and request services. See for, example, the community connect resources at Missouri <https://community.missouri.edu/> or the Community

Engagement roadmap at the University of Nebraska-Omaha
<https://www.unomaha.edu/engagement/roadmap.php>

Synthesize information about outreach into summary reports for key audiences. As we learn more about outreach and the amazing work being done by MSU faculty and staff in communities across the state, region, and globe, it will be beneficial to continue to review and synthesize information into reports and other publications. Reports, articles, stories, and the like should be written and designed with the various audiences and purposes in mind (e.g., recruiting students and faculty, improving university rankings, communicating to funders and legislators, etc.). MSU will need to reapply for its Carnegie Foundation status as an engaged university in 2026, and then will need to reapply every two years. Identifying and creating appropriate data systems and reports would help the institution be more prepared for the application process.

Evaluate, promote, and expand the ways we communicate about MSU outreach. As described above, a wide variety of print and online publications, social media accounts, and other publications and platforms are being used to communicate about MSU's outreach, engagement, and the impact of our work. These publications are created for specific audiences (e.g., alumni of the College of Business or teachers and school leaders or industries or poetry readers). However, it is unclear how we coordinate across publications or evaluate the impact they are having—how much traffic, which publications are reaching targeted audiences, how publications could be leveraged to support student recruitment or communicate with even broader audiences about our impact. For example, it may be that stories featured in Foundations or Dividends or Pegasus could also be featured by OPA's Twitter or Facebook feeds to broaden the reach or become stories in MSU's Bulldog Bites or Our People publications. The task force did not have the capacity to undertake a wide or systematic review of the many communication platforms and venues published by the university, but we believe that additional review could yield positive benefits to promote and communicate the story of MSU outreach.

Promote the Institutional Repository. MSU's institutional repository, Scholars Junction, is a resource for archiving publications and other products created by the university. The many reports, briefs, magazines, and other publications developed as an outcome of outreach can be housed at the institutional repository to create a permanent archive that is freely accessible, even when university websites change. MSU librarians have expertise about how to decide what to archive and how to create systems to make information freely and openly available. Archiving outreach publications may also assist with reporting such as the application for Carnegie classification. We recommend that steps be taken to promote the use of the institutional repository.

4. Provide additional training and support for outreach

Outreach and engagement require skills and approaches that can be learned, including effective collaboration, respectful communication, and other scholarly and practical skills. Mutually beneficial outreach and community engagement/two-way partnerships require ongoing commitment and intentional practices of reciprocity, mutual respect, and cross-cultural understanding. If we are to increase the impact of MSU and advance outreach, it may be helpful to provide additional training and support for faculty, students, and staff that will build capacity to engage in effective community engagement for teaching, research, and service.

The CCEL, housed in SLCE, already provides some opportunities for faculty to learn to conduct community engaged teaching—particularly for groups of faculty participating in the

Community Engaged Fellows Program. However, there is a need to develop additional programs to help faculty and staff learn to do outreach, conduct community-engaged research and scholarship, and communicate with public audiences about their work. Other institutions provide professional development for faculty, staff, and students to support outreach. Ohio State University, for example, offers professional development workshops to support engaged research, teaching, and other programs. See <https://engage.osu.edu/professional-development/>. Other institutions also offer training to students who want to engage in community-engaged teaching and learning after graduation. For example, Michigan State University offers a graduate certification in community engagement (see <https://gradcert.engage.msu.edu/about>). An extensive list of resources and models to support this work can be found at the Engagement Scholarship Consortium (<https://engagementscholarship.org/networks-partnerships/engagement-scholarship-network/professional-development>).

5. Create a university-wide infrastructure to support outreach from a university-wide perspective

As the previous sections of this report demonstrate, outreach at MSU is a decentralized endeavor. There is strength in this decentralization. Different disciplines, different purposes, and different partners all call for different approaches to outreach. However, we also recognize that there is a need for additional infrastructure that can help provide university-wide support for outreach, particularly as university outreach becomes more complex, more nuanced, and grows across our state and region. As indicated in the charge for this task force, there is not currently university-wide infrastructure for outreach and service that exists that is parallel to support for research and teaching. Therefore, the task force makes the following recommendations related to university-wide infrastructure.

Create senior leadership to support and advance outreach. We recommend that a senior leadership position and/or university-wide office be created to build stronger system-wide support for outreach. This recommendation is consistent with the recommendations of the Carnegie Foundation, which stated “The architecture for engagement has to match the commitments to communities, to students, and to faculty scholarly work.” Many of our peer and peer-plus institutions have an associate provost or Vice President or Vice Provost who leads a university-wide office for outreach and engagement. For example, Michigan State University’s University Outreach and Engagement is led by an Associate Provost (<https://engage.msu.edu/about/departments/apuoe> and NC State’s Office of Outreach and Engagement is led by a Vice Provost (<https://oe.ncsu.edu/staff/>). At Auburn University, the Division of University Outreach office is led by a Vice President and Associate Provost (<http://www.auburn.edu/outreach/administration.htm>) and houses several centers including the Center for Educational Outreach & Engagement Development, the Encyclopedia of Alabama, and the Office of Faculty Engagement. The University of Missouri has merged Extension and community engagement and created a very large upper university administration. The University of Missouri System Office of Engagement and Outreach (<https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/engagement-outreach>) indicates that the office works to track data and evaluate outcomes of outreach, extension, and engagement; advance engagement through training and fellowships and an annual “engagement week”, and more.

A new senior leadership individual or office at MSU would not replace or supervise existing structures. Rather, this person or office would need to work closely with Extension,

OPA, academic units, co-curricular units, the SLCE to enact the goals listed above. In particular, the new position/office should be tasked with:

- Facilitating engagement and collaboration across campus
- Supporting data collection, assessment, and evaluation of outreach and tasked with collecting and synthesizing data
- Listening to and learning from internal and external partners and answering questions about outreach
- Advancing outreach by helping develop or support training
- Promoting outreach by working with OPA and other communications professionals to identify and lift up
- Evaluating and advancing
- Foster conversations about reward structures, policies, and systems to support outreach
- Become the home for some existing university-wide offices and programs that already support outreach, such as Student Leadership & Community Engagement

New infrastructure to support outreach would not change what we are doing right but would demonstrate a commitment to outreach and community engagement and would help to promote and support the work of colleges, centers, institutes, departments, and offices are already leading MSU's outreach and engagement. New outreach-focused senior leadership would not replace or supersede the work of MSU's Extension Service, but instead, could help to build relationships and foster collaboration across Divisions and make sure that external partners and the impact of outreach and engagement are widely known across the institution.

Reimagine the Community Engagement Committee. In its current configuration the Community Engagement Committee (CEC) has over 35 members and a broad mission to "Coordinates the advancement of community engagement, service-learning, and outreach activities on-campus, within the region, and beyond." The CEC is large, and its members may not have community engagement or outreach as a central part of their roles at MSU. In addition, the CEC's mission may be too broad for a committee of individuals with other responsibilities to accomplish. The Taskforce recommends that the CEC be re-imagined. First, the committee should have a clearer and more narrow focus. The CEC could serve in an advisory role, providing input and feedback to the work of senior leadership as it relates to outreach and engagement, much as the Faculty Research Advisory Council provides input to the Office of Research and Economic Development. We also recommend that the committee membership be re-evaluated to include a smaller overall number of members (under 15 or closer) and include individuals who are working in colleges and centers whose primary mission is outreach or engagement. It may be that additional committees or sub committees could also be created, e.g., to focus on engaged teaching or engaged scholarship or volunteerism, and/or ad-hoc committees could be created as needed (e.g., for the development of the next application to the Carnegie Foundation).

Join the Engagement Scholarship Consortium. Finally, we recommend that MSU join the Engagement Scholarship Consortium (see <https://engagementscholarship.org/networks-partnerships/engagement-scholarship-network/professional-development>). The Engagement Scholarship Consortium is comprised of higher education member institutions that work collaboratively to build strong university-community partnerships and help build community capacity. The consortium provides support for the scholarship of engagement, international collaboration professional development for engaged scholarship, and more. Membership would provide additional resources to advance engagement at MSU.