



College of Social Science
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

5 YEAR Strategic Plan Report

2017

2022



About the Plan

Our science transforms the human experience and inspires leaders.

Whether at the cellular scale via brain scans or at the global scale like climate change, our science focuses on people. Our scholars and students seek to understand behavior and to develop effective policy and real-world solutions informed by those understandings.

This strategic plan advances our land-grant and world-grant legacy, and guides our investments to ensure that we lead in discovering and disseminating essential patterns of social interactions and decisions. This plan was developed via an extremely participatory process. Our Strategic Planning Steering Committee was chaired by Department Chair Walter Hawthorne (History) and School Director Mary Finn (Criminal Justice). Finn served as Dean for the College from March 2020 to June 2023. While this group included many who work in the College and in other areas of Michigan State University, many external stakeholders, like alumni, also had input. Included on the committee were one tenure-system faculty from each Department and

School, many of whom are also affiliated with Centers/Programs/Institutes, as well as two fixed-term faculty, one staff member, three alumni, one undergraduate student, one graduate student, and two representatives from MSU as a whole. The committee met monthly to debate and strive for consensus. The discussions were directly informed by a College-wide survey, ably synthesized by the Faculty Advisory Committee, regular consultation with Chairs and Directors, and a series of strategic questions explored by the Associate Chairs. In addition, we held two College-wide retreats, together drawing over 450 participants, to solicit feedback and guidance. Special thanks to our facilitator, Dr. Alan Glassman. Dr. Glassman planned the meetings, kept the group on track, and continually challenged us to work together for the improvement of the College. Developing this plan involved making choices. Implementing it involved even more choices. Our Vision, Values and Mission guided us along the way. Equally important, we committed to preserve the spirit of the Steering Committee in working together to realize our College wide identity and to advance the common good.

Vision

Our science transforms the human experience and inspires leaders.

Mission

We will be global leaders in top-tier research while advancing engaged learning and societal well-being.

Values

QUALITY

We hold ourselves to the highest standards to achieve lasting influence.

INCLUSIVENESS

We foster a culture in which all individuals are valued, respected and engaged so that diverse voices can enrich our work.

CONNECTIVITY

We link with campus and external communities to leverage our strengths and collectively realize our shared goals.

INTEGRITY

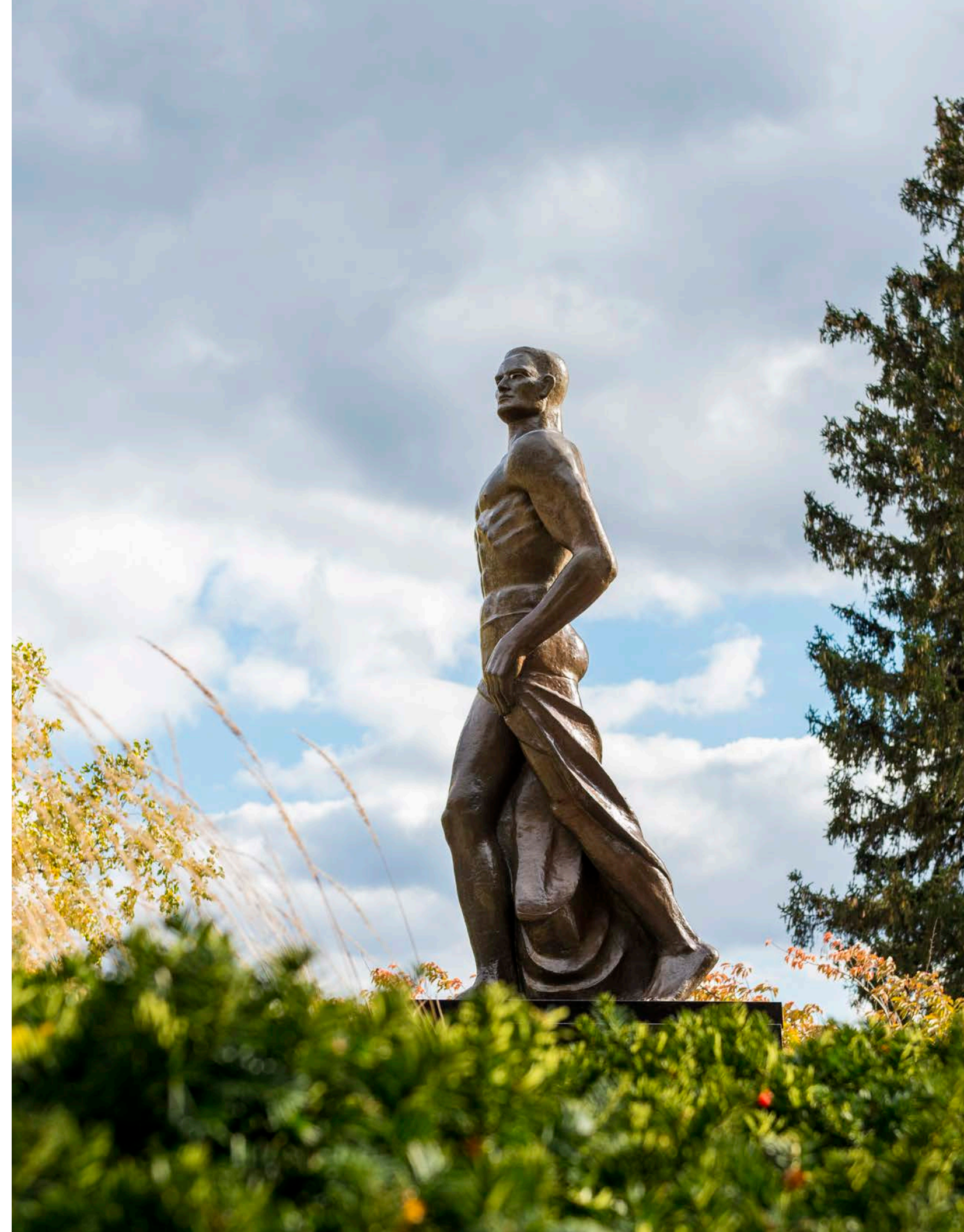
We are honest, transparent and courageous in our discovery and dissemination of knowledge.

CREATIVITY

We imagine innovative approaches to understand and improve the world.

EMPOWERMENT

We equip individuals and communities to make informed and just decisions.





STEERING COMMITTEE

CHAIRS

Walter Hawthorne
Chair, Department of History

Mary Finn
Director, School of Criminal Justice

FACULTY

Joe Cesario
Psychology

Mike Colaresi
Political Science

Carl Davidson
Economics

Jeff Ericksen
Human Resources and Labor
Relations/Interdisciplinary
Studies in Social Science

Eric Juenke
Political Science/
Chicano-Latino Studies

Jay Kennedy
Criminal Justice/
Anti-Counterfeiting and
Product Protection Center

Sheryl Kubiak
Social Work

Stephanie Nawyn
Sociology

Jiaguo Qi
Geography, Environment,
& Spatial Sciences/Center
for Global Change & Earth
Observations

Mark Roehling
Human Resources and
Labor Relations

Mark Wilson
School of Planning,
Design and Construction

Andrea Wittenborn
Human Development
and Family Studies

Gabriel Wrobel
Anthropology

Jinhua Zhao
Economics

Sharon Zhong
Geography, Environment,
and Spatial Sciences

STUDENTS

Demetrice Jordan
Graduate

Leigh Rauk
Undergraduate

MSU REPRESENTATIVES

Pero Dagbovie
Associate Dean,
The Graduate School (History)

Karen Klomprens
Special Assistant to the Provost
(Plant Biology)

ALUMNI

Joe Hollis

Mike Morrow

Ann Tomlanovich

SENIOR STAFF

Rachel Croson
Dean

Thomas Jeitschko
Associate Dean

Steve Kautz
Associate Dean

Joe Messina
Associate Dean

Neal Schmitt
Former Interim Dean

Pamela Gray
Chief of Staff

Nwando Achebe
Faculty Excellence Advocate

Nick McLaren
Senior Director of Advancement

*Note: Individual titles listed
under these individuals reflect
their positions in 2017 and
may be different now.*



Goal Areas

THEMATIC AREAS

The College will support 3-5 thematic areas of research that advance our ability to address societal issues and will achieve national and international recognition.

COLLABORATIONS

The College will facilitate and recognize collaborations within and across fields.

FACULTY EXPECTATIONS

The College will ensure that each unit defines, communicates, implements and supports high scholarship standards to increase our national and international reputation.

PHD SUPPORT

The College will prioritize and support successful and effective doctoral fields.

Target Outcomes

50%
INCREASE

FACULTY RESEARCH PRODUCTIVITY
to the top half of the AAU*

25%
INCREASE

FACULTY WITH NATIONAL AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

20%
INCREASE

PERCENTAGE OF FACULTY
as principal investigator on external grants

50%
INCREASE

PERCENTAGE OF PHD STUDENTS
with excellent placements

*Association of American Universities

GOAL AREA

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

Our scholars engage in sustained research excellence that demonstrates thought leadership. We will continue to increase national and international recognition for top-tier and impactful research that addresses societal challenges.

One of our most important goals is to retain and foster an environment where faculty can flourish in our college. We want to attract top experts in their fields, thus adding to the reputation of research and teaching excellence at MSU. We also want to make sure the scholastic achievements of our faculty are recognized nationally and among colleagues.

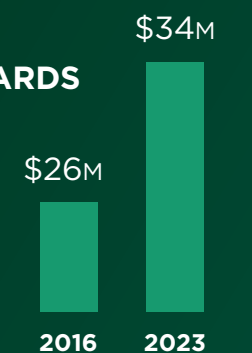
Major Points of Success



57%
FACULTY WITH NATIONAL AWARDS (AA)

EXTERNAL GRANT AWARDS (DOLLAR AMOUNT)

32%
Increase



Psychology students prepare for running an EEG experiment by plugging electrodes into a cap. Participants in the study will perform a memory task while electrical brain activity is recorded.

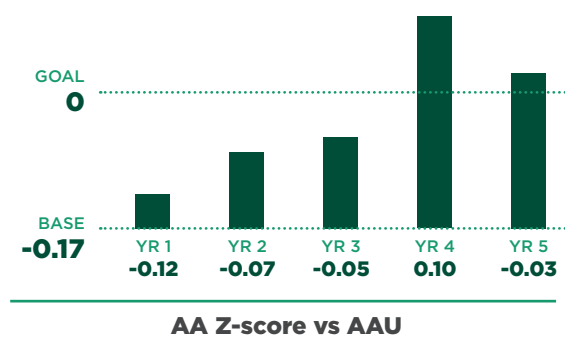
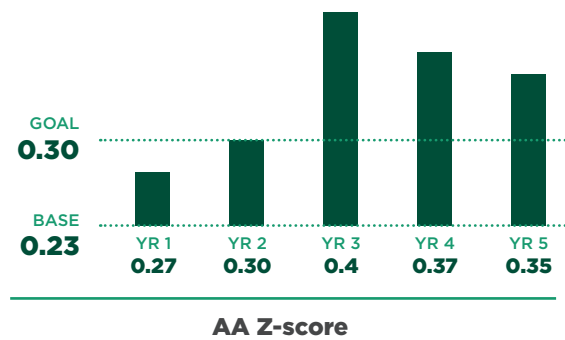
Results

FACULTY RESEARCH PRODUCTIVITY

To measure research productivity, we use data from Academic Analytics (AA) to see how we compare to other institutions with a particular emphasis on those in the Association of American Universities (AAU). Key metrics track the scholarship of faculty, including publications, grants and citations to capture impact. The Z score tells us how we perform relative to other institutions. A score of zero means that we are average, while a score of 1 means that our faculty productivity is one standard deviation above the norm. A negative score means that our performance is below average.

In five years, we exceeded our goals in both areas. Our college is in the 60th percentile in the country in terms of social science when compared to all institutions in the AA database (Z score = 0.35), while we are right at the average when compared to the AAU (Z score = -0.03). Considering the strength of the institutions in the AAU and the budget cuts that we have faced; this is an impressive performance.

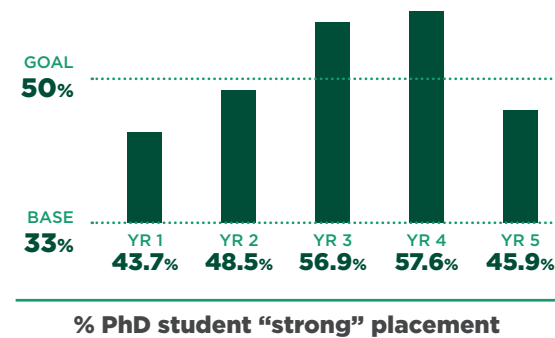
The size of our faculty has declined recently due to retirements. However, we have made nearly 20 new hires related to our thematic research areas, and added



faculty in our highly rated programs, like African History, Organizational Psychology, Criminal Justice, and Econometrics. We have also filled endowed positions and are trying to fill more. We want to seat more faculty with distinctions that highlight their contributions, such as the John A. Hannah Distinguished Professorship, Foundation professorships and 1855 professorships.

PERCENTAGE OF PHD STUDENTS

Overall, the five-year placement rate for graduate students attaining excellent placements increased, at times exceeding the five-year goal, but landing at 45% at year five. Our success at increasing quality placements was impacted in the final year due to COVID-related influences on the job market and research delays created by the pandemic.

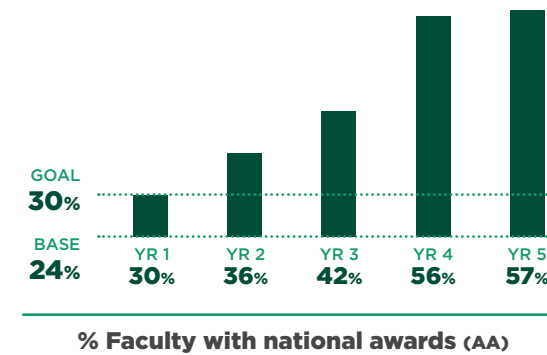


The College of Social Science will continue to make investments in PhD students. Investments and support providing research funding to students to facilitate conducting more ambitious research projects and expanding fellowship opportunities that grant students dedicated time to advance their scholarship.

FACULTY WITH NATIONAL AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

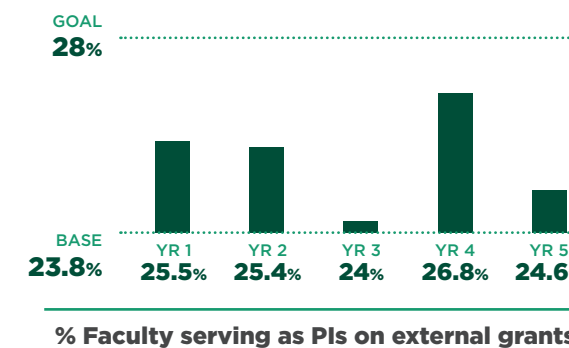
During the five years of the strategic plan, we were able to increase the number of faculty members receiving national awards and recognitions by an impressive 57%. Our goal was just 30% over 5 years. Despite many challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, many retirements, leadership changes and limited resources, we saw great successes because of resilience among our faculty, demonstrating a sincere commitment to our college's mission.

As encouraged by the provost's office, we made a great effort within our units to encourage nominations for national awards. Our Psychology department was particularly effective at getting more faculty recognized. When we have more outstanding faculty being recognized, we serve to further institutional reputation, attract more world class faculty, and garner external funding to enrich and transform the human experience, the heart of social science. We also established our own college award categories and worked on getting more recognition for other awards in the university. We will continue to encourage nominations in all our units to keep this momentum going.



FACULTY RESEARCH PRODUCTIVITY

The percentage of College of Social Science faculty who were Principal Investigators on awarded projects increased slightly over five years. While the increase fell just short of 28% goal, faculty received larger awards on funded projects. Additionally, one-third of all faculty were involved in an externally funded project while one out of eight faculty in the College were on multiple grants funded projects each year. These metrics



underscore how active our researchers are despite the many challenges of the past three years. As a R1 Doctoral university with very high research activity, social scientists at Michigan State University continue to engage in research to address society's most pressing issues. We continue to support researchers who are asking critical questions aimed at solving some of the most intractable social problems. Such support enables us to train new generations of scholars to continue this important work. We will continue funding small grant initiatives to help faculty conduct the pilot studies needed to test innovative ideas and facilitate external funding support.

We also will continue amplification of our five thematic areas of emerging research excellence to showcase the excellent and innovative work being conducted in these critical interdisciplinary subfields:

- Coastlines & People
- Youth Equity Project
- Consortium for Sexual and Gender Minority Health
- Future of Work and the Human-Technology Interface
- Minority Politics

EXTERNAL GRANT AWARDS

We have increased external grant awards by 32% over the past five years. Since our baseline year in 2016, we increased research awards from \$26 million to over \$34 million. This increase occurred despite challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

External grant awards support the research enterprise and help us conduct cutting-edge and meaningful, wide-reaching projects, often on a global scale. These robust initiatives help attract highly qualified faculty and graduate students in social science, boosting the status and stature of our programs.



Goal Areas

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Our faculty will enhance our students' educational and career success by developing their practical and adaptive skills.

EXPERIENTIAL AND ENGAGED LEARNING

The College will facilitate and recognize collaborations within and across fields.

OPPORTUNITY GAPS

In order to reduce differential persistence, graduation and rates of academic good standing the College will develop and improve mechanisms to support at-risk students in our ISS and large-enrollment courses.

Target Outcomes



DECREASE OPPORTUNITY GAPS
for underrepresented minority undergrads



PLACEMENT RATES OF STUDENTS
in full-time employment or graduate or professional programs



IMPROVE SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATE
meeting or exceeding the MSU target

GOAL AREA

LEARNING

Our students acquire the communication and analytical skills needed to excel in complex and changing environments. We will continue to enhance opportunities to develop these skills through engaged and experiential learning.

Major Points of Success



91.9%

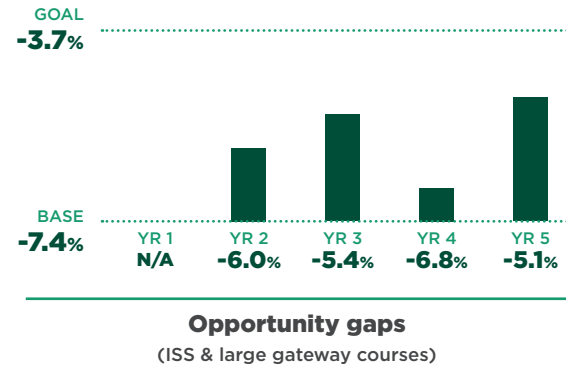
PLACEMENT RATES OF STUDENTS
in full-time employment or graduate or professional programs

Results

Students learn about the College of Social Science each fall during our colloquium event.

OPPORTUNITY GAPS

We reduced opportunity gaps for minority, first generation, and Pell eligible students from a difference of 7.4% to 5.1% but fell short of our goal of a 50% reduction (i.e., improving from 7.4% to 3.7%).



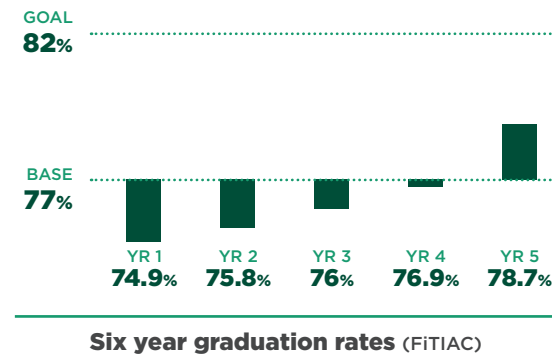
Progress in this area is due to some investments in direct resources for students that included help rooms, peer assisted learning, and additional investments in large and gateway courses – all to benefit the success of our students. These efforts, combined with innovative teaching, fostering a sense of belonging for all students, creating optimal class sizes for traditionally larger courses, likely helped reduce opportunity gaps. As we look to the future, some of these initiatives echo and support goal areas in the University’s 2030 strategic plan. Thus, the College is in a strong position to contribute to the Student Success themes in the MSU 2030 plan based on experiences working on this goal.

SIX YEAR GRADUATION RATE

Although we did not meet the five-year goal of increasing six year graduation rates, we were able to increase that number overall by 1.7% to 78.7%, from the baseline cohort, the class of 2010.

Disruptions in the educational journey caused by the COVID-19 pandemic likely caused delays in some students’ time to graduation. Students had to pivot to remote learning, and some may have faced increased financial pressures that created new challenges for persistence. The college was

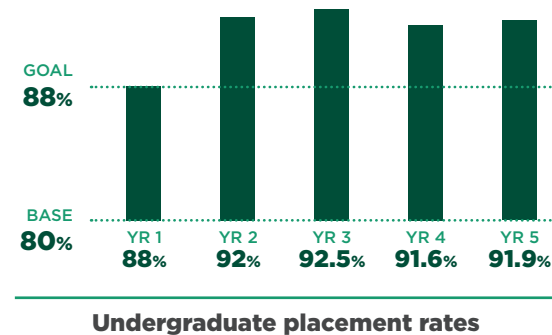
sensitive to these challenges and our instructors were flexible and supportive during the pandemic. This flexibility, along with enriching the student experience with a sense of belonging, experiential learning opportunities and strengthening support for career planning were likely factors in our increased graduation rate. These efforts provide a strong foundation for our ability to meet MSU’s ambitious 6-year graduate rate of 86% by 2030 in the University strategic plan.



We also offered support to students with the College of Social Science Student Emergency fund, which provided financial resources as many students lost their job during the pandemic or the industry in which they worked was hindered by the pandemic.

PLACEMENT RATES OF STUDENTS

We exceeded our goal in the area of placement rates and saw an increase to 91.9%. Our five year goal was 88% from 80% in the baseline year.



We invested in our career services programming both at the college and university level, helping our students make a smooth and successful transition into the workplace. We made key hires and expanded peer supports for career development. We have worked to integrate Career Services with the entire Student Affairs team to provide more holistic supports for students. We encouraged students to think about their careers early in their college journey. We asked students what kind of impact they wanted to have on the world so we could connect them to the right major and experiences. We created programming initiatives that put the careers team in the classroom to talk directly to students in large classes. We launched a successful study away program for first generation students last May and will expand the program this May. We also helped many students find internships and jobs through our Handshake system.

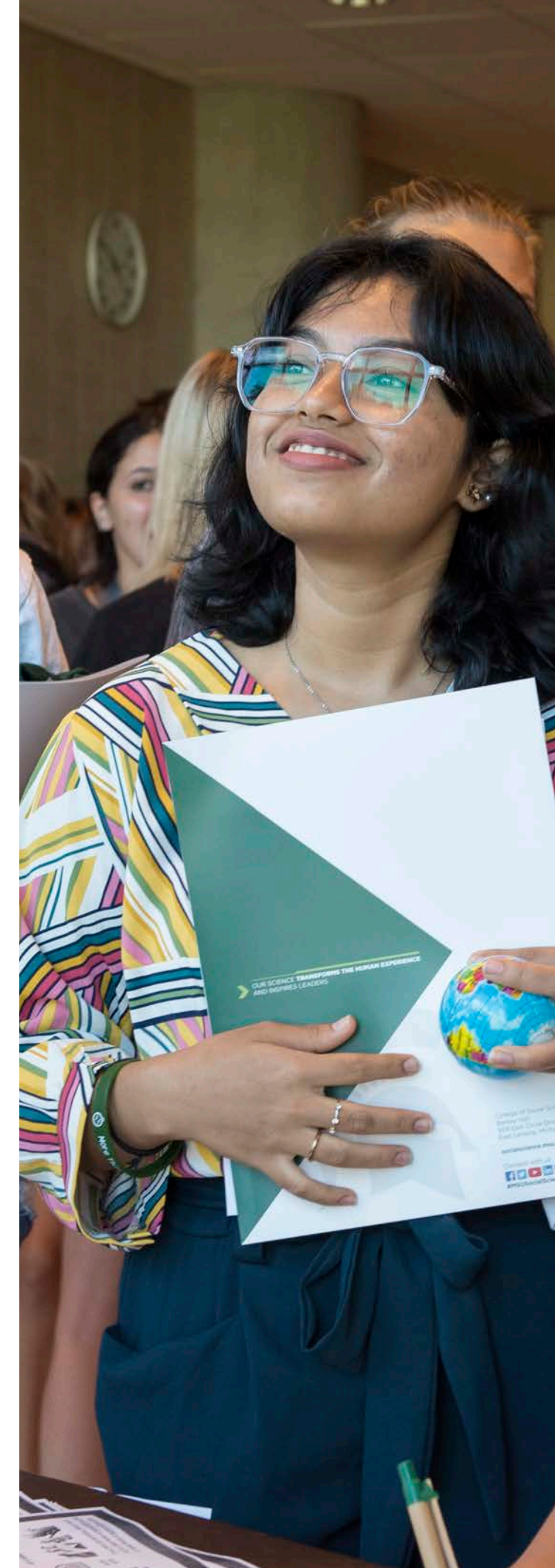
LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

We will build on this momentum for the next strategic plan by taking what has worked, finding new innovations to support students, and giving students the tools, insights, and skills, they need to succeed and flourish throughout their lives.

One very successful initiative has to do with undergraduate research. The PURI, which stands for the Provost’s Undergraduate Research Initiative, demonstrates our commitment to high impact experiences and experiential learning by pairing students with faculty mentors to advance research in the social sciences. The College has matched investments by the Provost’s Office to strengthen undergraduate research and foster meaningful and productive collaborations between students and faculty.

Another tangible and visible commitment to our students is through our Social Science Scholars Program, which also supports undergraduate research and experiential learning.

We have also invested in diversity, equity and inclusion efforts surrounding undergraduates, by including them in our college DEI strategic planning efforts. It is critical that we elevate our students’ voices in these efforts.





Goal Areas

INCLUSIVE CLIMATE

The College will ensure an inclusive and welcoming environment for its students, faculty, and staff.

FACULTY HIRING AND RETENTION

The College will increase the proportion of tenure-system under-represented faculty utilizing aggressive recruitment, outreach and retention strategies.

DEVELOP FUTURE FACULTY

The College and its units will develop programs to increase the proportion of under-represented individuals in the academic pipeline utilizing aggressive recruitment, outreach and retention strategies.

Target Outcomes



INCREASE

PROPORTION OF UNDER-REPRESENTED TENURE-SYSTEM FACULTY



INCREASE

PROPORTION OF UNDER-REPRESENTED PHD STUDENTS

GOAL AREA

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

At the College of Social Science, we believe that the quality of our academic programs, learning, and work environments is improved when we uphold the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We strive to cultivate an inclusive and welcoming college environment that **celebrates a diversity of people, ideas, and perspectives.**

Major Points of Success



17.4%

PROPORTION OF UNDER-REPRESENTED TENURE-SYSTEM FACULTY



20.5%

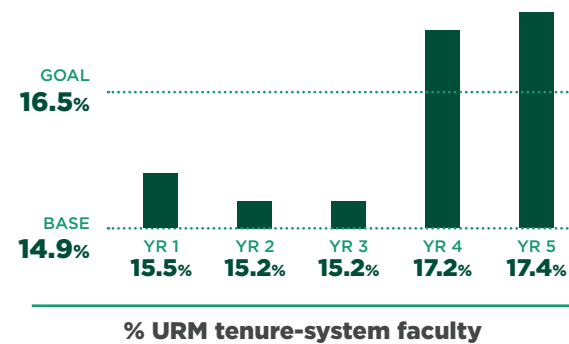
PROPORTION OF UNDER-REPRESENTED PHD STUDENTS

◀ 2022 Dean's Research Associates. From left to right, Kendall Morris, School of Social Work; Raul Rodriguez, Political Science; Ampson Hagan, Anthropology; Rene Crespín, Economics.

Results

PROPORTION OF UNDER-REPRESENTED TENURE-SYSTEM FACULTY

Develop programs to increase the proportion of under-represented individuals in the academic pipeline.



We saw success in our DEI goals. We increased the amount of underrepresented tenure stream faculty and PhD students, exceeding our 5-year goal for each. We achieved these goals in part by developing the Dean’s Research Associate (Postdoctoral) program, which promotes an inclusive scholarly environment in which outstanding scholars in the social sciences support the advancement of DEI in the academy. We recruited three cohorts of Research Associates and to date two cohorts have successfully transitioned to the tenure-system. To further advance the proportion of underrepresented faculty, we also established the Dean’s Senior Distinguished Scholars program, which aims to promote an inclusive scholarly environment for exceptional senior faculty who will bring distinction to Michigan State University, substantially enhance the College of Social Science’s standing, and support the advancement of DEI.

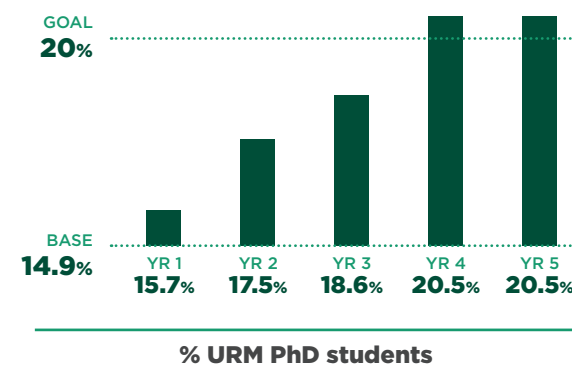
To advance an inclusive and welcoming climate, we established the Dean’s Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion, which provides the Dean with guidance on DEI policies and procedures, and

created the Dean’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Fellows pilot program, which prepares faculty to be DEI leaders. The opportunity to report DEI contributions to research and scholarship, teaching, and service and outreach, has also been integrated into the tenure and promotion processes. We also recognize those making strides to promote DEI internally and externally with our Diversity Matters newsletter, which featured a student, a faculty/staff member and an alumnus each month, and our College DEI Awards.

Looking to the future, we have developed the first DEI Strategic Plan for the college to align with the University Strategic Plan and illuminate the unique contributions the College of Social Science will make to advancing DEI. The plan was constructed in collaboration with faculty, staff and students to ensure that the process and product represents our collective voices and mutual interest in providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all.

PROPORTION OF UNDER-REPRESENTED PHD STUDENTS

One way the College works to transform the human experience is by cultivating scholars who represent a diverse set of experiences and bring new questions and insights to social science. We seek to empower students from underrepresented backgrounds to choose MSU and to flourish in our programs, becoming leaders in their fields.



Investments in diversifying and strengthening supports in our College include the Early Start program, which provides underrepresented students a springboard for beginning their graduate studies early and financial investment in their pre-doctoral and doctoral research projects. The College has doubled access to Academic Achievement Graduate Assistantships, supporting the efforts of our programs to support and develop students.

During the last five years, we have steadily increased the percentage of underrepresented minority students. Our five year goal was 20%, and we landed at 20.5 % by year five.



Dr. Emilie Smith, the first to participate in the Dean’s Distinguished Senior Scholars Program, is a professor of Human Development and Family studies, as well as the lead on the college thematic research area called the Youth Equity Project which focuses on reducing disparities among marginalized youth. ▲



Goal Areas

IDENTITY

In coordination with MSU's central communications team, the College will leverage MSU's brand to create a unified College identity.


OUTREACH

Our faculty will engage and include academic and external communities to co-create a more visible societal impact.

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

The College will engage alumni and friends to increase support for our mission.

Target Outcomes

 **40%**
INCREASE
GIFTS TO THE COLLEGE

 **10%**
INCREASE
EXTERNAL PRESS MENTIONS
of faculty research or quotes by faculty as experts

GOAL AREA

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

Our identity establishes us as a destination and a source of expertise. We will further connect with alumni and communities.

DEVELOPMENT

Financial support is critical to help our students, faculty and staff so they can transform the human experience.

COMMUNICATIONS

Strategic communications plans are critical to showcase the incredible work of our students, faculty and staff in visible and meaningful ways. Creating awareness about our research that transforms the human experience will strengthen our reputation, engage key stakeholders and has the power to positively impact all areas of our college.


Major Points of Success

EXTERNAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT

\$10M
avg / year 

PRESS MENTIONS OF FACULTY

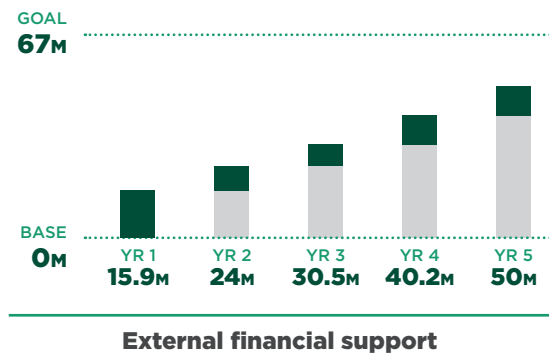
55.2%
increase 

 MSU College of Social Science Alumnus Mike Morrow shares insight with a student at an event, just one of many events held by the College that bring students and alumni together.

Results

FUNDRAISING PROGRESS

The College of Social Science raised \$7,833,473.87 in Year Five (5). This brings our overall total raised for the five-year period to \$50,033,473.87, \$17M short of our \$67M goal.



This goal was established toward the end of a university-wide capital campaign. Empower Extraordinary was a \$1.2 Billion campaign that ran from July 1, 2011 through December 31, 2018. During that campaign the College of Social Science set a goal of \$60 Million and we raised \$66,998,364, surpassing the goal by nearly \$7 Million. Since the start of 2011 the College has increased the average annual amount raised by nearly 152%. We went from raising an average of \$3.4M per year to \$8.6M per year. Despite many challenges, numerous leadership transitions at the University, College of Social Science, University Advancement, the COVID-19 pandemic, throughout the strategic plan we made exceptional progress.

- We received 14 7-figure gift commitments and 92 6-figure gifts commitments.
- We established 5 endowments for endowed faculty positions
- We established 132 endowments for undergraduate scholarships, graduate fellowships, and experiential learning

- We established 45 endowments to support faculty and student research, programmatic supports, and discretionary funds for various programs across the college.
- More time investments to connect alumni with our students, through initiatives like our Social Science Scholars program, our Career Development team, and numerous stewardship events.
- We have raised over \$4M to support the Women’s Leadership Institute
- The Blanchard Public Service Forum continues to raise \$50k+ annually, on average, for future programming, with an existing endowment of over \$1.5M
- We continue to focus on finding ways to increase support for experiential learning at the college, including: InnovateGov, Michigan Government Semester Program, Flint Community Initiative, D.C. Study Away, Social Science Scholars support, etc.

As we look toward the future, we look forward to working with senior leadership, along with chairs/ directors, and faculty in our college to build strong relationships with our donors and supporters that will create transformational and lasting impact for the College of Social Science’s future. We are eager and excited to begin working on a \$3 Billion university-wide campaign that will end in 2030. We anticipate a \$100M campaign goal for the College of Social Science during the next campaign.

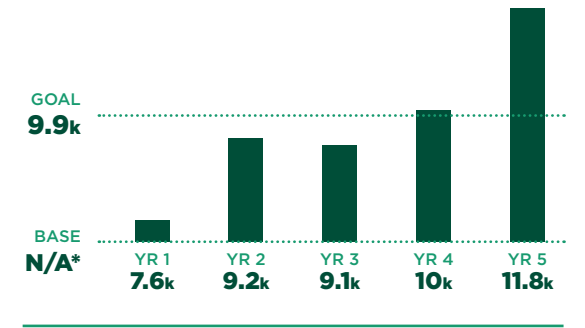
INCREASE MEDIA MENTIONS (ABOUT FACULTY RESEARCH)

We saw great success when it came to showcasing our faculty research in the news media. Our goal was to increase these mentions by 10% over five years. We completed year five seeing an impressive 55.26% increase. Our faculty was

mentioned over 47,500 times during those five years, reaching over 576 million people collectively. If you were to put a dollar value on this coverage (publicity value) it would equal roughly \$81.5 million dollars.

We were able to accomplish this by hiring staff with formal strategic communications expertise, implementing college and unit level content strategies, building more relationships with faculty than ever before, and by working closely with University Communications to amplify all research related content to local, state, national and international media outlets. We will continue this momentum with research amplification and telling more stories, with a focus on our five college thematic research areas.

Another major communications related goal was to create a unified visual identity in accordance with MSU brand standards for the college that would be visible on all materials, including all digital spaces like websites and social media.



Press mentions of faculty

** Methodology change note: Between year one and year two, we changed the way we measured media mentions. We went from counting by hand to using Cision software, thus we do not have comparable data for the baseline year.*

We have done this in all academic units across the college. We have or are in the process of overhauling all institutional websites, implementing best practices on social media, and increasing the professionalism of all printed materials. We have seen incredible increases of social engagement and web traffic as a result, as well as supporting our development team more effectively when engaging alumni, donors and other supporters.

MSU Political Science Pre-Law Alumna Tanisha Sanders gives students meaningful advice at a Women’s Leadership Institute event. ▼





OUR SCIENCE **TRANSFORMS THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE**
AND INSPIRES LEADERS



College of Social Science
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

socialscience.msu.edu



#MSUSocialScience