Reimagining Evaluation and Professional Pathways for Faculty and Academic Staff

***Strategic Plan Theme*: Staff and Faculty Success**

***Funding Level*: Below $1 million**

***Facility Needs*: No new facilities will be needed**

***Submitting Unit*: OFASD**

Collaborating colleges/departments/units involved with this proposal.

Faculty and Staff Affairs, University Outreach and Engagement, Human Resources, Institutional Diversity Initiatives, Academic Specialists Advisory Council, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, Educators Empowering Students Success Workgroup, the Council of Diversity Deans, the Council of Academic Deans, College of Natural Science, and College of Arts and Letters

What is the proposal's big theme or idea?

For MSU to be seen as an institution of choice that is able to hire and retain excellent faculty and academic staff, which is critical to ensuring student success, there must be clear and transparent evaluation systems on an annual basis and for promotion in rank as well as meaningful opportunities for professional development throughout the university. Historically, focus has been primarily on tenure-stream faculty with far less emphasis on fixed-term faculty and academic specialists whose roles in contributing to the multiple missions of the university are increasingly critical. Additionally, traditional metrics for evaluation do not capture much of the impactful work in represented within the activities of many faculty and academic staff. The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the university and diversity, equity and inclusion strategic plans have made clear the need to address structural inequities in how evaluation takes place, what work is evaluated, how individuals are supported to do their best work, how excellence is acknowledged and rewarded, and what opportunities for meaningful engagement exist across rank and status.

What is the proposal's goal?

The proposal has two main, related goals:

1) bring together disparate efforts from across campus to develop more effective systems of evaluation that fully incorporate DEI principles and practices and the training and resources to implement them; and

2) develop a portfolio of professional development opportunities that support multiple pathways for advancement in rank for faculty and academic staff.

These goals require collaboration across key stakeholder units to:

Goal #1:

`Conduct a landscape analysis of evaluation policies and practices across campus`

`Identify evaluation process shortcomings that need to be addressed and equitable exemplars that might be`

`Ensure that evaluation criteria incorporate contributions made to: community-engaged scholarship, outrea`

`Coordinate more effective training, resources, and information dissemination across levels of faculty a`

Goal #2:

Conduct a needs assessment that identifies professional development programs across campus, including those

Work with partners to develop sustainable portfolio of professional development opportunities that address

Determine ways to more effectively promote activities and work with academic leaders to intentionally support/
This proposal aligns with the strategic objective to Create a Workplace Culture that Advances DEI and
Supports all Faculty and Academic Staff through:

Review university policies, practices and opportunity structures to increase diversity, foster inclusive

Provide supervisors and managers with resources to effectively incorporate DEI recruitment and retention Establish a

dynamic and inclusive mentoring culture that links individual success to unit-level, college Expand opportunities for

leadership, career growth and skill development, and leverage the university's Define the significance, or impact of your big

idea.

Addressing the pandemic's impact on the work of faculty and academic staff, along with the ability to more authentically represent diversity, equity, and inclusion work, have made evident what so many already knew: annual evaluation is a varied and ambiguous activity often disconnected from the process of promotion in rank for faculty and academic staff and from the espoused core values of the institution. The end result is fixed-term faculty and academic specialists who remain in base-level positions throughout their careers; pre-tenure faculty who rely on word of mouth to understand expectations and a review process that leaves them unsure of how to situate their work in teaching, research and service/outreach in order to succeed; and associate-rank tenured faculty who assume leadership, outreach, international and DEI responsibilities but are not encouraged to put in materials for promotion. These inconsistencies, poorly articulated processes, and lack of general information and support lead to inequities, lack of opportunities, dissatisfaction, disengagement, and often, departure. A general lack of transparency regarding position definition, conditions of employment and distributions of effort, annual review, promotion practices, and in some cases salary raise sources form significant barriers to the recruitment and retention of a strong and diverse academic workforce. Apart from the ethical issues of these inequities, institutional aspirations to be a leader in DEI and a top-ranked university are thwarted as women and faculty of color, who tend to be those traditionally most engaged in work that supports student success, DEI efforts, public engagement, and service/leadership roles, are systematically less likely to be recognized within the traditional metrics of the academy.

The proposal brings together campus constituents to create more transparent, equitable and inclusive policies and practices for those in non-tenure stream faculty and academic staff positions and develop diverse and inclusive career pathways.

Who will be impacted?

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What does sustainability for your proposal look like?

In the first two years, landscape analyses and needs assessments identified above will be conducted. Based on these data, a portfolio of programs will be compiled, including those already available and those needing to be developed; programming and trainings will be created with longer term sustainability in mind. Resource support will be needed for personnel to conduct the landscape analyses and needs assessments, and to compile foundational data.

Following each subsequent evaluation cycle, data will be updated on numbers of faculty and academic staff eligible for promotion review, who pursued review, and who were successful. Similar participation data for leadership and professional development opportunities will be compiled across campus, and career mapping examples constructed for use in educational offerings.

Periodic feedback from constituents and partners will steer future efforts and appropriate metrics to determine success in meeting preliminary goals and setting new targets.