

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEI&B) Learning Institute

Strategic Plan Theme: DEI

Funding Level: Between \$1-5 million

Facility Needs: No new facilities will be needed

Submitting Unit: Lyman Briggs College

Collaborating colleges/departments/units involved with this proposal.

Current collaborators include Lyman Briggs College, the Residential College of the Arts and Humanities, James Madison College, the Honors College, the Advancing Racial Equity and Advocacy (AREA) Program, the DEI&B Advisors Working Group, the Center for Teaching and Innovation, graduate teaching cohort programs (i.e, LBC's SULT Fellows, JMC's IIT Fellows, and RCAH's Fellows), the Drew Science Scholars, and the Assistant Deans for Undergraduate Education for the STEM Colleges. This proposal also aligns with calls from student activist groups such as the Black Students' Alliance's 2020 DEI plan and we, therefore, envision partnering with MSU student groups as part of the next step for the DEI&B Learning Institute. The College of Education and the Graduate School have expressed interest in collaborating if the proposal moves forward and there are also potential synergies with the emerging ULA at State program.

What is the proposal's big theme or idea?

The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEI&B) Learning Institute is a new consortium of discipline-based and interdisciplinary education research scholars, evidence-based teachers, professional advisors, and students focused on inclusive teaching practice and holistic student success. Collaborators design, assess, implement, and disseminate interventions that promote DEI&B in educational spaces including classrooms, help rooms, undergraduate research labs and studios, and advising offices. Weaving together previously disparate activities, the Institute will amplify and sustain their benefits for MSU's constituents while developing Lantern, a new inclusive educators digital learning space with national and international impact. An embodiment of MSU's land grant mission of serving diverse and marginalized populations, the DEI&B Learning Institute will position MSU as a world leader in inclusive education and advising. The Challenge: Achievement Gaps & Institutional Silos: Despite past efforts on campus, the MSU's six-year graduation rate for students of color is consistently lower than their white counterparts, as are the rates for first-generation and/or low income students. As MSU's 2020 Student Transition report made clear: "When considering intersectionality, achievement gaps are sometimes staggering... For instance, while the overall six-year graduation rate for the 2013 cohort was 81%, it was only 45.8% for students in that cohort who identify as African American/Black, Male, First-Generation, and High Financial Need." As a land grant institution propelled by new DEI and Student Success-focused University Strategic Plans, we must both amplify existing efforts and significantly invest in new approaches to transform the student experience. Our solution: MSU is in need of an umbrella institute that will amplify existing initiatives as well as incubate and propagate new practices. The DEI&B Learning Institute will bolster extant DEI&B teaching and learning and advising efforts and foster new practices across campus by serving as a nexus for collaboration, thereby accelerating MSU's DEI&B and Student Success strategic plans. In addition to advancing DEI&B at MSU, the DEI&B Learning Institute will design and pilot an inclusive educators' digital learning space called Lantern for faculty and advisors physically located on campus and those working with the University through extension, outreach, and engagement initiatives. As an open-access digital space, Lantern will create new opportunities for collaborations between community colleges and majority minority-serving institutions (MSI). This platform,

which includes a longitudinal database for inclusive education research, will propel MSU's profile nationally and internationally as a university truly dedicated to DEI&B and student success.

What is the proposal's goal?

Goal 1: Establish a Collaborative Community for Educational Transformation that Advances DEI&B and Reduces Achievement Gaps. Create more inclusive learning environments for MSU undergraduate students that reduce achievement gaps. Amplify and sustain extant efforts and facilitate new efforts that promote DEI&B. Generate new multi- and interdisciplinary collaborations of researchers, instructors, advisors, and students working to design, assess, implement, and disseminate interventions that promote DEI&B in educational spaces including classrooms, undergraduate research labs and studios, help rooms, and advising offices.

Goal 2: Establish the Lantern, a Novel Inclusive Educators Digital Learning Space that Expands, Sustains, and Makes Accessible Evidence-Based Approaches to Inclusive Teaching & Learning and Advising. Identify, catalog, and assess DEI&B scholarly practices and interventions in the classroom and create an open-access database of validated instruments, practices, and strategies for assessing student learning and affect (e.g. self-efficacy, feeling of belonging) for specific subgroups (e.g., first-generation college students vs non first-generation, gender etc.) across classes, semesters, disciplines, and institutions.

Goal 3: Make MSU an International Leader in Inclusive Education. MSU closing its achievement gaps and meeting its 2030 student success goals will speak for itself. In addition, the DEI&B Learning Institute will engage in extensive dissemination efforts including training graduate teaching assistants, faculty, and academic advisors. Furthermore, the Lantern inclusive education digital learning space, will facilitate grant activity and publications connected to longitudinal research studies. These efforts will expand the Institute's impact across campus, nationally, and internationally and increase MSU's national and international rankings.

Define the significance, or impact of your big idea.

Like most large campuses in the United States, classroom or discipline specific DEI&B work at MSU is pursued across multiple units by academic staff with diverse disciplinary backgrounds, but because these initiatives are not a primary focus within units, it can be difficult to find collaborators and sustain efforts over time, thus limiting the impact on the student experience. While exciting pulses of DEI&B activities happen on campus, competing demands on people's time, faculty and advisor turnover, and grant lifecycles result in efforts fading and lessons learned being lost. The temporal nature of existing efforts results in a lack of long-term data on interventions that effectively increase DEI&B and prevents MSU from generating sustained - and in turn institutional - change.

The DEI&B Learning Institute represents a fundamental shift in business-as-usual at MSU, breaking down silos across campus and creating a University-wide Institute focused on DEI&B that advances student success. It will create a collaborative of instructors, researchers, and advisors from across the disciplines, all of whom are focused on inclusive education and transforming teaching and advising practices across campus. The DEI&B Learning Institute will allow MSU to join a very select group of research-intensive universities devoting resources to DEI&B emergent scholarship and teaching practices (e.g. Stanford's IDEAL, Northwestern's SEARLE Center, Queen's University's CTLI, and University of British Columbia's Equity and Inclusion Office). Furthermore, the Lantern will make inclusive teaching more accessible, enabling instructors to easily identify evidence-based inclusive teaching practices while collecting long-term data related to DEI&B across disciplines and facilitating new lines of inquiry for education research. Thus, Lantern holds the potential for the Institute to have a transformative impact on inclusive teaching practice and undergraduate education research (inter)nationally.

Measures of Success: 1. Increased retention of and decreased opportunity gaps for students from marginalized groups 2. Increased collaboration on inclusive teaching, advising, and research across academic roles, units, and disciplines 3. Increased knowledge production focused on DEI&B and student success, including publications and external grants 4. Increased participation of students from marginalized populations in high impact learning practices, such as undergraduate research, internships, and service learning 5. Increased engagement with DEI&B professional development opportunities by advisors, instructors, and students

Who will be impacted?

The impact of the DEI&B Learning Institute will be transformative and holistic for MSU's undergraduates, graduate student teaching assistants, researchers, instructors, and advisors. Extending beyond MSU, the Lantern holds the potential to transform inclusive teaching practice and post-secondary education research both nationally and internationally.

Examples of impact include: Faculty affiliated with the Institute will develop, pilot, and assess content and approaches that promote DEI&B in our academic spaces. The Institute will also provide support for project design and implementation, host collaborative groups, and assess the impact of educational transformations targeted at critical student junctures. In addition, it will provide research opportunities and funding to graduate and undergraduate students with an interest in DEI&B. Students in courses run by affiliated faculty will be supported by a dedicated DEI&B-focused Student Success and Advising team. This team will conduct curriculum and process mapping to determine the current barriers for student success that result in opportunity gaps. The DEI&B Learning Institute will also provide professional development for MSU instructors, with a focus on inclusive pedagogy across the sciences, arts, and humanities, thus maximizing impact on student success.

What does sustainability for your proposal look like?

Financial sustainability will ensure institutional change at MSU and renown (inter)national leadership in DEI&B education and education research. Sustained inclusive education training and development of faculty, advisors, and graduate student teaching assistants will result in significant and sustained improvements in student success, higher levels of belonging, and increased diversity in MSU's next generation of students, faculty, and advisors. Similarly, financial sustainability will enable the Lantern, an inclusive educator digital learning space that is significant in size and scope to affect teaching and learning far and wide, while also creating opportunities for longitudinal DEI&B education research. Such an open-access, longitudinal, digital resource will place MSU as a world leader in inclusive education.

Impact and financial sustainability begins with a \$5 million investment by the University to create the Institute in years 1-5, with a goal to externally match these funds during years 6-10. We envision a two-pronged approach that pairs external federal grants (e.g. NSF) with foundation and individual philanthropy. The DEI&B Learning Institute will be a prime naming opportunity for a private foundation (e.g. W.K. Kellogg) or individual donor interested in leaving a meaningful legacy at MSU that has national and international reach. After year 10, the institute will be funded through a combination of endowments, external grants, and institutional resources.