

“My Future Matters”: Investing in Our Future Spartans through Pre-College Programming - Taking Strategic and Impactful Action On Closing the Education Gap

Strategic Plan Theme: DEI

Funding Level: More than \$5 million

Facility Needs: Adjustments to existing facilities will be needed

Submitting Unit: College Access Initiatives/University Outreach & Engagement

Collaborating colleges/departments/units involved with this proposal.

College Access Initiatives

What is the proposal’s big theme or idea?

“My Future Matters”: Creating a Pre-College Initiative that Works Pre-college recruitment for MSU that provides a consistent presence with students throughout their high school years that then helps funnel them into MSU and continues to provide crucial support to them throughout their undergraduate years. This would expand pre-college and pathway programs with the goal of supporting underrepresented, first-generation, Pell grant-eligible, and economically disadvantaged students in not only attending MSU, but thriving at MSU and becoming proud alumni/ambassadors of the university.

What is the proposal’s goal?

- 1) Creating sustained college going culture through programming within inner city and rural high schools (9-12), specifically those with 50% or more students who qualify for free or reduced lunch in the tri-county area (Ingham, Eaton, Clinton) to recruit for MSU. In the future, we would add a middle school component and extend boundaries to engage other communities in Michigan.
- 2) Through this in-school programming, we would provide consistent interactions through comprehensive support (academic, financial, social/emotional, etc.) from MSU to target student populations to keep MSU at the top of students’ minds, make them feel that they belong and turn it into a top priority as recruits.
- 3) Foster regular interactions through on-campus programs/residencies between target students and MSU students/staff/faculty/alumni with similar backgrounds, identifying and providing role models at the university. Through this on-campus programming, we would connect students to campus resources (resource offices/support services, student organizations, sororities/fraternities, etc) before they become Spartans, in turn creating “space” for target students, to aid in retention.
- 4) Dramatically increase the financial and institutional assistance from MSU, available to target students to make MSU a more accessible and viable college option. This assistance would be framed through three components: expansion of bridge program, financial support, and growth of MRULE-ICA program. First, expand the MAGIC bridge program that will help shift the new Spartans’ mindset from high school to college and help unite them with the college community. Second, students would be rewarded financially, based on their level of participation in the pre-college program (e.g. books/supplies, partial or full tuition, full-ride); other forms of financial aid would not be impacted by this amount. Finally, significantly increase the number of I.C.A.s on campus and prioritize students from this program in recruitment for these roles to create belongingness and increased academic self-efficacy.

Define the significance, or impact of your big idea.

- 1) Underrepresented, first-generation, and economically disadvantaged students see post-secondary education (specifically MSU) as a not just realistic but a desired option for them.
- 2) MSU is better able to recruit and retain students from these target populations, thus increasing the diversity of its students and decreasing disparities in graduation rates, plus establishing consistency, respect and trust in BIPOC communities.
- 3) MSU and its educational programs, research initiatives, outreach efforts, and general community will not only benefit from greater diversity and equity, but also expand, advance and take advantage of this opportunity to become desperately needed HEI leaders in this nation's changing landscape.
- 4) Creating sustainable support and effective systems within the university to establish a permanent pathway, while also providing necessary support while students are enrolled.
- 5) Students are well supported and equipped to be successful and become proud alumni who can be informal ambassadors/recruiters for the university, and future donors.

Who will be impacted?

Pre-college students that are underrepresented, first generation, Pell grant-eligible, and/or from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. MSU, as an institution, would be impacted as well, if the goal is to recruit, retain, and graduate a diverse student body and eliminate disparities in MSU's graduation rates, which means changing the systemic narrative that these students didn't work hard to be a Spartan. All MSU students would benefit from a more diverse campus/student body where there is ample opportunity to interact with and gain new perspectives from students with different backgrounds. The quality and impact of MSU's education, research, and community outreach would benefit from increased diversity and broader perspectives within its student population, which would have far-reaching impacts well beyond campus borders.

What does sustainability for your proposal look like?

MSU has to INVEST in this mission (money, permanent staff, campus space, and other resources). It has to become part of the fabric of MSU, starting with the central part of its structure, systems, and overall commitment. The use of the word "fabric" is a challenge we welcome; however, all fabric is, by definition, interwoven or knitted together – we are asking for that radical of a change. Since "community" is the ultimate goal for both practical and moral purposes, the gathering of all threads is essential. Does this University want to be brave instead of safe?