

Transdisciplinary Hubs: A Working Model of Transdisciplinary, Global Hub bringing together Academia & Industry effectively, as seen through the A-CAPP Center

Strategic Plan Theme: Global Impact

Funding Level: Between \$1-5 million

Facility Needs: Adjustments to existing facilities will be needed

Submitting Unit: CSS/A-CAPP Center

Collaborating colleges/departments/units involved with this proposal.

CSS/A-CAPP Center; Broad College/International Business Center; CSS/Criminal Justice; Law/Experiential Education; CANR/Packaging; CAS/Adv&PR/MAP Lab

What is the proposal's big theme or idea?

We propose a bold next step in the evolution of the A-CAPP Center to create a transdisciplinary hub, in collaboration with our partners at MSU, and private and public sectors to address trademark counterfeiting and brand protection issues. To date, the Center has been impactful as a U.S.-based, multidisciplinary center working with external partners. We propose to expand the Center's reach and dissolve traditional borders to achieve five key goals, to: 1) expand the global reach of the Center, 2) focus on the rapidly growing advancements in technology in the online space both as a tool and a threat through transdisciplinary research and education; and 3) expanding outreach to consumers and other stakeholders (such as firms in high tech industries, e-commerce, and social media) impacted by counterfeiting; 4) grow student engagement as the next generation of professionals in brand protection; and 5) strengthen our relationship with our partners on campus to be a leader in best practices of creating transdisciplinary, global hubs that are connected to industry. We believe taking the A-CAPP Center beyond our current focus by adopting a global focus in a transdisciplinary way is essential as counterfeiting and brand protection are real, practical issues that have moved into the online marketplaces globally through the exponential development of new technologies and fueled by COVID-19. Gone are the days when this issue impacted only luxury brands and consumers at local flea markets. With this expansion of the Center, we have a chance to impact not only brand protection professionals (brands, law enforcement, law firms, security providers, e-commerce platforms and more), but consumers worldwide who are now living in this easily accessible, unavoidable threat in the online space. The threat of counterfeits online is potentially one of the most disruptive and impactful areas of illicit trade globally and will continue to expand and grow in the upcoming years, impacting anyone who shops online. Additionally, initial evidence shows that there is a disparate impact on global communities based on economic status, social status, and other characteristics, particularly when the online space is involved, influencing the need for further advancement and expansions of programs to a global level. We can help to identify and capture some of these practical solutions stemming from research that can bring together stakeholders through education and outreach in this area. MSU is currently the leader in the US in this space of anti-counterfeiting—if funded, this proposal will expand our leadership globally and ensure that we maintain the facilitation of cutting edge research, outreach and education as technology grows, morphs, expands and people continue to get more access to products in the online space. It would also provide a model for other centers at MSU to be transdisciplinary engaged across campus tapping into our academic strengths.

What is the proposal's goal?

1. To Globalize the engagement, research, education and outreach of the Center beyond our traditional partners and expand to deal with this truly global phenomenon including multilingual and multicultural experiences relevant to other global communities, including the underserved and underrepresented.
2. To Expand Focus on Technology and Online Impact through in Research (including joint faculty and transdisciplinary research projects, new lab capabilities in emerging technologies), Education (including new for-credit, non-credit and experiential) & Outreach (to stakeholders in this field, non-credit courses, engagement with government and other external partners, continued growth of existing outreach tools) in the areas of through in e-commerce, social media, illicit supply chains, packaging and digital protection technologies, artificial intelligence and machine learning, metaverse, dark web, law disruptive technology, systems engineering, data science, AI, IOT, biometrics, machine vision, RFID, communications, cyber security and assured computing.
3. To Expand Outreach through Stakeholder Engagement and Work with Consumers through research, education & outreach with stakeholder expansion beyond our traditional groups to new groups such as small and medium size businesses, entrepreneurs, technology service providers, online platforms; explore the massive impact on consumers, including those with not as easy access to technology or protective tools, as well as educational and outreach efforts.
4. To Increase and Deepen student Engagement and Education through growth and development in an experiential education setting with transdisciplinary exposure and experience leading to employment or further educational opportunities; continue leading the field with industry-focused education certificate in multiple languages; and DEI scholarships and partnerships with industry to incentive students from diverse backgrounds to consider careers in this field.
5. To Help Others on Campus with Similar Goals of Transdisciplinary, Global Hubs work successfully with external stakeholders

We believe this project work will be foundational because A-CAPP's work will be useful to a wide array of firms from multinational corporations to small and medium size businesses; from lawmakers to border protection; from e-commerce platforms to small tech companies; and from the single parent purchasing baby products online to the farmer purchasing pesticides for their summer crop to be safer from the risk of buying potentially dangerous and deadly counterfeits.

Define the significance, or impact of your big idea.

Transdisciplinary centers working closely with those impacted by the focus of the research is an incredibly valuable practical tool. We have seen this with the A-CAPP Center and this type of expansion for the Center and other hubs would greatly help expand impact. Since COVID-19 and the change in consumer purchasing patterns from mostly in-store to mostly online, the threat of purchasing counterfeit items has increased significantly. Counterfeiters are aware of this shift and are taking advantage. Every individual in the world who purchases any product online is at risk of buying counterfeit from unknown sellers with no possible retribution, in every corner of the world that holds a risk to harm and even kill the consumer. Our work has the chance to fulfill our global land grant mission of helping to study, find solutions, and reach out to educate everyone from lawmakers to governments to consumers who are touched by this issue.

Background A-CAPP was founded with the idea of establishing a multidisciplinary center focused on the study of trademark counterfeiting, which for many years was a brick and mortar issue faced by brands and law enforcement looking to stop the sale of counterfeit goods. The Center developed relationships across campus, as well as extensively with brands primarily based in the United States and with leading law enforcement authorities, such as the National Intellectual Property Rights Center within U.S. Homeland Security. The A-CAPP Center became the leading academic center in the U.S. on these issues. Our research has been multidisciplinary since our founding- working with partners from Engineering, Packaging, Business, Law, Criminal Justice, Supply Chain, and Communication, Arts and Science. Additionally, we integrated MSU students into our program as researchers and interns, who are, upon graduation, being placed into brand protection positions; and, we offer the only online brand protection professional certificate in the U.S. to date with over 2,000 courses completed. COVID-19 has necessarily created the space for us to begin the

global expansion of our research, education and outreach, increasing the number of organizations that we have worked with to over 500 and global attendance at our events in over 27 countries in the past two years. Our outreach has also been highly successful with highly attended, impactful events combining industry and academia; a monthly podcast using storytelling as the delivery mechanism; and our online quarterly journal. The Center's authority on the subject is evident in the fact that individuals from the Center were invited and testified before Congress three times in 2021, twice before the House and once before the Senate and are frequently invited to speak worldwide and quoted in the media as experts on this topic.

We have mentored over 150 students through experiential education at the Center from across campus in the past five years from over 20 majors across campus.

Who will be impacted?

If our goals are accomplished, we can impact: Transdisciplinary Research and Outcomes for a problem that knows no disciplinary boundaries and help inform everyone from stakeholders to policy makers in this space based on our research Larger Consumer Community and a Safer World for the public through education and outreach not just industry stakeholders but to anyone in the general public who can be potentially exposed to purchasing dangerous counterfeit products Bringing together of private and public sector partners to help inform these issues from their practical experience in order to make our research applied in the community Students receiving experiential education in a transdisciplinary environment working on real-world problems to help their careers; exposing diverse students to this space and helping to place them in jobs post-graduation

What does sustainability for your proposal look like?

Human Connection and Education- Sustainability is created through sustained and deepened relationships with those within MSU and external to MSU in this field. Also, not just keeping the ideas within the context of the Center but also training and mentoring others hubs in the MSU community and promoting transdisciplinary efforts on campus with lessons learned through publications, quarterly meetings, training, particularly in successful outreach and private sector collaboration in multiple industries. We have shown sustainability across the past ten years through extended engagement with the private and public sectors on this issue and being the "go to" academic institution on this topic through our research as well as education and outreach. It is an area that will continue to be of interest for some time. Additionally, we have always had some type of revenue generating component, whether for external facing non-credit courses, or other private sector based resources that will contribute to the financial sustainability of the center. We additionally have a membership-based industry advisory board, as well as corporate sponsorships for event that have helped contribute to sustainability in the past. These and new initiatives will remain critical to sustainability in the future, as will funding for this new global technology initiative.