

# Leading MSU: A framework for developing, and supporting strong leaders across MSU

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

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

***Facility Needs: Adjustments to existing facilities will be needed***

***Submitting Unit: Office of Faculty and Academic Staff Development***

***Collaborating colleges/departments/units involved with this proposal.***

Faculty & Academic Staff Development(FASD), Faculty & Academic Staff Affairs(FASA), MSU Human Resources, Office for Institutional Diversity & Inclusion. It is also expected that current leaders across the university would be involved to share their knowledge and mentor others.

***What is the proposal's big theme or idea?***

Michigan State University is a complex organization amidst significant organizational change. As such, it is increasingly important that we are strategic and intentional about developing leaders at every level of the organization in a way that helps us to work collaboratively to support our mission, live our values, and strengthen our culture. The recommended framework is grounded in the following assumptions: -Leaders are responsible for the ongoing development of themselves and others. It is in MSU's best interest to provide aligned, quality learning opportunities at all levels. -Leaders have responsibility in shaping the culture and assuring it is in keeping with MSU values and mission. -The MSU leadership model should be visible and integrated in our key talent management processes: hiring, onboarding, development, rewards, promotions, and evaluations. -Leadership can be demonstrated by anyone, and we should strive to grow and retain those who demonstrate these skills. Those with a formal title will be held accountable for developing and modeling management and leadership ability.

Clear expectations of leaders in a changing environment are critical, and this initiative provides that framework.

The building of this framework was completed prior to the pandemic with executive sponsors. There have been many focus groups with MSU leaders at all levels to inform the creation of the framework and again to get feedback once it was developed.

***What is the proposal's goal?***

Enact a sustainable framework that develops and supports strong leaders who lead MSU into the future. This effort supports our goal to contribute to faculty, staff, and student success and helps in attracting and retaining high performing faculty, staff, and leaders.

In numerous focus groups, MSU leaders indicated that they all had to "learn the hard way;" this wastes time, increases frustration, and leads to costly mistakes. Exit interviews tell us that people leave due to lack of support and inadequate leadership. Research tells us that a concerted effort to hire, develop, and evaluate leaders will facilitate retention to combat "The Great Resignation," strengthen our culture, and make the most of our limited resources. It is also an important avenue to integrate various aspects of the MSU Strategic Plan, the DEI plan, and the RVSM plan.

The components of the framework include the following: 1. Expanded leadership development opportunities for leaders at all levels, with specialized programming to address varying needs and levels of complexity.

a. Create a synergistic approach between leadership development programs and resources at the University level to provide equitable access for all leaders. i. This would include the coordination of existing leadership learning opportunities and the addition of new learning cohorts to enhance peer networking and reduce silos, workshops for deep skill building, online options for information sharing, fellowship opportunities, and mentoring support. 2. Assessment and coaching opportunities to help with self-awareness and guide individuals toward the learning opportunities that best fit their needs at different points in their career. a. This would include the development of a bank of leadership coaches and trained professionals available to conduct and debrief assessments (e.g. 360's, StrengthsFinder).

i. An investment is needed in the adoption and implementation of a specific 360 instrument or similar assessment. Having a centrally supported formative assessment would be critical to aligning and measuring expectations across the University. 3. Integration into current practices to enhance alignment and accountability regarding leadership expectations. a. Hiring: Postings for leadership positions would require identified leadership skills b. Onboarding: Designed to help leaders get off to a good start at MSU c. Development plans: Plans for leaders to continue to expand their leadership capacity in a changing world and prepare for future positions d. Rewards & Promotion: To retain effective leaders we need to acknowledge those who exhibit strong leadership capacity and address those who do not. This contributes highly to retention. e. Evaluation: Establish clear expectations for formal leaders and use these to evaluate their demonstrated leadership ability

4. Information sharing. Create a website as a hub for leadership information, learning opportunities, best practices, etc.

***Define the significance, or impact of your big idea.***

This initiative strengthens culture, increases engagement, furthers recruitment and retention efforts, results in cost savings, garners interest in leadership, and effectively prepares leaders for their next career step. Research consistently reveals that leadership effectiveness has a tremendous impact on these issues. And while most leaders may agree theoretically with institutional values and the importance of key leadership qualities, many do not know how to consistently demonstrate them to build/rebuild trust, facilitate inclusion, address problematic behavior, manage change, and bring out the best in others. Not only will a strong leadership development strategy help with these issues, but Millennials and Gen Z employees choose an organization because of their development opportunities — or leave due to the lack of them. Career pathways and support in growing with an organization are essential. Barhate, B., & Dirani, K. M. (2021) Spencer, A., (2020)

***Who will be impacted?***

Everyone in the broader MSU community. Not only will this help leaders to be effective, but it will help them support future leaders and contribute to a more accountable, engaged, inclusive workforce with high morale. This would have a much-needed impact on retention and recruitment of a diverse, high-performing workforce that provides a strong foundation to support student success. This initiative would be a model for other universities if fully supported.

A full communications strategy would need to be developed to reach all employees across the University and help them understand how the framework can help them navigate current roles or assist them in preparing for the next step in their careers.

***What does sustainability for your proposal look like?***

This is not a one and done program. While the heaviest lift will be in the beginning, ongoing resources and support will be needed to continue to recruit and support strong leaders over time, as the world we interact with changes. This will require ongoing measurement of success, periodic needs assessments to assure programming is meeting changing needs. There will be resource needs, which include increased staffing in FASD, cost of assessments and coaching, and communications, including website development and maintenance.