

# Spartan Studios: High-impact Interdisciplinary, Experiential Courses

***Strategic Plan Theme: Student Success***

***Funding Level: Between \$1-5 million***

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

***Submitting Unit: Center for Teaching & Learning Innovation***

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

Center for Teaching and Learning Innovation, Center for Community-Engaged Learning (CCEL), the Graduate School, Office of Faculty and Academic Staff Development (FASD), University Advancement, Corey Marsh Ecological Research Center (CMERC), Bailey Scholars Program in CANR

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

Why should students attend MSU in East Lansing? Spartan Studios is one of the Center for Teaching and Learning Innovation (CTLI)'s answers to that question, extending an initiative of the Office of the Provost to create a signature, transformational teaching and learning experience for participating MSU undergraduates and faculty. We create and support co-taught interdisciplinary experiential courses that are project-based, student-driven, and offer local solutions to complex societal challenges. Studios courses simultaneously develop contact zones for social innovation in collaboration with industry, government, and community partners. We seek to grow this project following our successful 3-year pilot.

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

We need institutional commitment to expand access to our innovative course model for MSU students and educators.

The goals for this project include: -Scale up the number of Spartan Studios courses to 40 (up to 2400 students) per year -Recruit 100 faculty members from across MSU's academic units -Grow our assessment, research, and coordination capacities -Support educator peer coaching where early adopters work with new educators -Coordinate between units for course design, approval, implementation, and cost-sharing -Facilitate educator professional development in our innovative teaching model including planning, co-teaching, working with community partners, assessment, and research opportunities (DBER/SoTL/community-engaged research) -Market these opportunities to students, their families, alumni, local partners, employers, and donors -Position Spartan Studios as MSU's signature, innovative teaching and learning experience

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

In our 3-year pilot project of 9 courses and 17 faculty members, over 130 students were coached by interdisciplinary teams of educators. Students were empowered members of their project teams and worked alongside peers from other majors to produce real-world impacts and to critically reflect on their powerful experiences. We have qualitative research showing how these courses empower student learning and engagement, and student feedback that these courses were rewarding, interactive, relevant, and unique at MSU. Our institutional analytics suggests that Studios students are more bold in their choice of major and have a lower time to degree. Our participating faculty members were reinvigorated in their teaching, with one describing it as "one of the most gratifying teaching experiences of my career."

***Who will be impacted?***

Spartan Studios impacts: -Students. We improve MSU student access to and inclusion in transformational high-impact learning experiences within undergraduate courses. Students learn from teams of faculty members, have autonomy over their problem-based learning projects, and learn alongside students from other majors, gaining teamwork skills and real-world problem solving highly valued by employers. -Educators. We offer professional development for educators who learn our innovative teaching model, which improves and invigorates teaching at MSU. Educators teach interdisciplinary, experiential courses and partner with local or community organizations, and have opportunities to study a variety of research outcomes connected to their teaching. -Partners. We offer local and community partners the benefits of working alongside groups of students and faculty members who get to focus on real issues impacting communities. Students deliver iterative designs in consultation with external or MSU partners, and can employ these real solutions to benefit the communities they serve through community-engaged learning.

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

To expand this opportunity, we see a need for sustainable infrastructure to recruit faculty members, scale the number of Studios courses, develop our assessment and research pipelines, and expand access to these impactful experiences. Our participating faculty reported that they need more support with assessment and student recruitment, and indicated that they face financial, administrative, and workload challenges. We need to increase our capacity to coordinate with academic units on campus including cost-sharing for course development and implementation, offer assessment expertise to our faculty partners, and continue with our productive research output. We need to reduce the bureaucratic barriers that impede academic units and their faculty members from interdisciplinary teaching. Finally, we need to enhance our storytelling and branding of this project for audiences internal and external to MSU with communications and marketing assistance.