



BOLDNESS BY DESIGN

Strategic positioning of Michigan State
University for national and international
leadership as the premier land-grant
university for the 21st century



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

OUR STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:

By 2012, Michigan State University will be recognized worldwide as the United States' leading land-grant research university.

How will we fulfill this commitment?

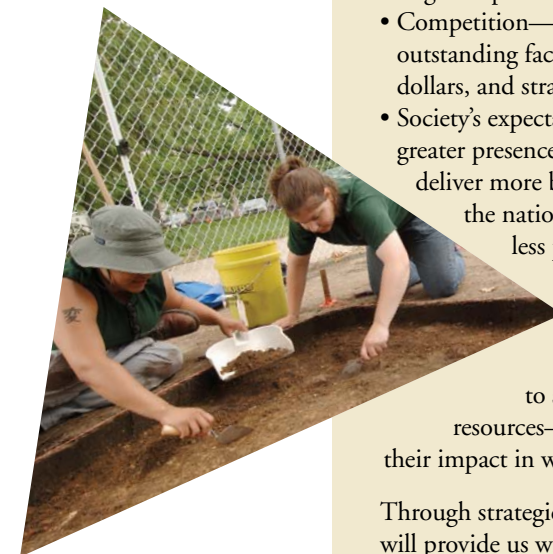
By boldly daring to be who we are and who we were created to be.

By doing it even more boldly and better than we are now.

By boldly recasting our land-grant mission to meet 21st century challenges and opportunities.

We will honor the values of our past and draw from them the energy to innovate our future—around the world, across the nation, and at home.

*President Lou Anna K. Simon
Sesquicentennial Convocation Address
September 8, 2005*



STAYING FOCUSED AMID THE FASCINATION OF POSSIBILITIES

Michigan State University, in its sesquicentennial year, has arrived at a defining moment in its history. Our university—the pioneer land-grant university—was created 150 years ago to fill a special mission: to embrace practical knowledge, as well as traditional scientific and classical studies, and to apply the rewards of higher education to benefit society and the public good.

Over the years, we have remained true to that mission. We have faced many defining moments as the economy of our state and nation moved from agrarian to industrial and as our nation experienced domestic and international conflict, adapted to demographic shifts, and advanced inclusiveness and diversity.

With each of these defining moments—as with the one we face today—we have been strong and ready to make bold choices and take advantage of the kaleidoscope of possibilities presented by a changing world.

Today, our nation is in the throes of a monumental change from an industrial to a knowledge-based economy. This change presents Michigan State University—and all public higher education institutions—with a new set of challenges.

- Global issues—from the prospects of global trade to the blight of global poverty and environmental stress ...
- Competition—for attracting and developing talented students, outstanding faculty and staff, public and private funds, research dollars, and strategic partners ...
- Society's expectations—that public universities will assume a greater presence in building the national and local economy, deliver more breakthrough discoveries, and partner to address the nation's most urgent social problems with increasingly less public funding support ...

To meet these challenges and succeed in a world filled with innumerable fascinating problems to solve and opportunities to seize—and to do it with constrained resources—we must focus on our strengths and advance their impact in ways that are relevant for the 21st century world.

Through strategic positioning, we will chart a course. That course will provide us with focus, guidelines for decision making, and milestones and measurements of our progress and success.

OUR STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES:

What must we do in our current situation to position Michigan State University to fulfill this strategic commitment?

Enhance the student experience

Enrich community, economic, and family life

Expand international reach

Increase research opportunities

Strengthen stewardship



BUILDING ON AND ADVANCING OUR STRENGTHS

Michigan State University today is a strong and proud institution, ranked one of the top 100 research universities in the world. We attract top-quality students, faculty, staff, and partners who are drawn by our strong traditional academic disciplines and professional programs and our flexible, collaborative spirit that fosters cutting-edge, cross-disciplinary approaches to teaching and learning, research and scholarship, and the application of knowledge.



Since assuming the presidency of Michigan State University on January 1, 2005, Lou Anna K. Simon—in preparation of this strategic positioning initiative—has been working with the MSU Board of Trustees and her

leadership team and with students, faculty and staff; alumni, donors and friends; community, government, and business leaders; presidents of peer institutions; and strategic partners. She has traveled widely around the state, across the nation, and abroad, listening and reflecting on the perceptions and advice of these constituents and colleagues on how to position Michigan State University as the land-grant university for the 21st century.

What she heard was: Focus. Simplify. Become more nimble. Play to your extraordinary strengths. Take what is true about Michigan State University and recast it to address 21st century realities. Be the university that defines the relevance of the land-grant mission for the 21st century world.

From this, she and her leadership team have defined five strategic imperatives to guide Michigan State University in fulfilling its strategic commitment:

- Enhance the student experience—by continually improving the quality of academic programs and the value of an MSU degree for undergraduate and graduate students
- Enrich community, economic, and family life—through research, outreach, engagement, entrepreneurship, innovation, and diversity
- Expand international reach—through academic, research, and economic development initiatives and global, national, and local strategic alliances
- Increase research opportunities—significantly expanding research funding and involvement of graduate and undergraduate students in research and scholarship
- Strengthen stewardship—by appreciating and nurturing the university's financial assets, campus infrastructure, and people for optimal effectiveness today and tomorrow

These five imperatives, built on our historical strengths, will be used to align existing initiatives, to guide decisions on investing in new priorities, and to focus our energy as we advance the land-grant mission to new heights of academic innovation, research and discovery, and engagement with society.

OUR VALUES:

Our pursuit of our goals will always be guided by the academic heritage and values that tie the rich history of Michigan State University to our present and our future.

Foremost among our values are:

- **Quality:** dedicating ourselves to achieving excellence in all of our endeavors—good enough for the proudest and recognized among the best
- **Inclusiveness:** providing opportunity for learners from all backgrounds—bringing their passion and talent to join a vibrant, intellectual community built on mutual respect—to experience and to multiply the benefits of the power of knowledge throughout their lives
- **Connectivity:** among one another, among academic enterprises, to society and to those we serve—locally, nationally, and globally

*President Lou Anna K. Simon
The President's Address
Founders' Day
February 11, 2005*



WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPLEMENT OUR COMMITMENT

In the months ahead, President Lou Anna K. Simon and Provost Kim Wilcox, along with other members of the university leadership team, will engage the entire campus community—including the MSU Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, graduate and undergraduate students, and administrators—in work sessions to develop these imperatives into an implementation plan. They will also seek the perspectives of key external constituents to inform the planning process.

These sessions will identify and align initiatives under way with our strategic imperatives and stimulate analysis of our current position, generating new ideas, new opportunities, and new proposals that will advance us toward fulfilling our commitment.

Through these work sessions, the campus community will help develop the measurable indicators of success that we will apply to determine our progress on each initiative, on each imperative, and ultimately toward our overall goal.

Together, the strategic imperatives and measurable indicators will be used as criteria for assessing and selecting new initiatives and setting priorities for the future.

Building on established strengths, we will get down to work and move quickly. We will be ready for implementation and will release the details of the first phase of our strategic positioning on Founders' Day, February 2006.

Our plan for strategic positioning is bold. Once again, Michigan State University will march to a different step—but in step with the society we serve. Our plan will prepare us to connect our land-grant heritage and heart to address society's needs, act on today's issues, and anticipate and prepare for future challenges. We will strive to excel and sustain quality in everything we do because Michigan State University and the people we serve deserve the best.

We call upon the entire campus community for boldness—in design, implementation, and values. The combination of these three things, as we make them the hallmark of Michigan State University, will make us the leader of the next bold experiment—the prototype land-grant university for the 21st century world.



**Land-grant has become
global-grant. And as in
1855, Michigan State
University will lead the
revolution.**



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*Advancing Knowledge.
Transforming Lives.*

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