

Outreach and Engagement @ Michigan State University

Michigan State University's commitment to outreach and engagement begins with its institutional mission statement, which reflects the institution's founding designation as a land-grant college and its continued commitment to serve the public. President Lou Anna K. Simon's "Boldness by Design" initiative plays a defining role in shaping MSU. Each of the strategic imperatives President Simon articulated in "Boldness by Design" has direct implications for the University's outreach and engagement agenda.

Definition of Scholarship and the MSU Model

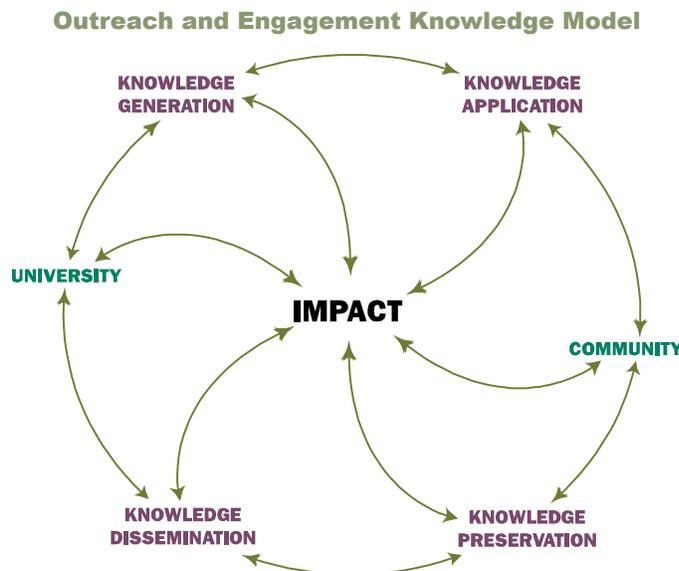
Transformational events generally emerge from an underlying Zeitgeist and, therefore, it is difficult to discern specific causal determinants of change. Such is the case with transformational movements in contemporary higher education.

The publication of Ernest Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* in 1990 was one such seminal event. Boyer challenged higher education to examine the definition and role of scholars and advanced the idea that scholarship involved four key components: discovery, integration, application, and teaching.

In 1993 the MSU Provost's Committee on University Outreach issued a report, *University Outreach at Michigan State University: Extending Knowledge to Serve Society*. The Committee defined outreach and engagement as scholarly activities embedded in the generation, transmission, application, and preservation of knowledge for the direct benefit of external audiences, rather than as a set of separate "service" activities detached from teaching and research.

Since the publication of the Provost's Committee report, Michigan State University has been deliberate and purposeful in defining, planning, implementing, and assessing outreach and engagement. This work has, in fact, become a signature area of the University.

One key foundational principle guides development of the MSU outreach model. That principle is the scholarship of engagement; that is, outreach and engagement activities should reflect a scholarly or knowledge-based approach to teaching, research, and service for the direct benefit of external audiences. We believe our knowledge model is the best fit to an increasingly knowledge-based society.



Boldness by Design Strategic Imperatives

- Enhance the student experience
- Enrich community, economic, and family life
- Expand international reach
- Increase research opportunities
- Strengthen stewardship

Critical Events in the Development of Michigan State University's Approach to Outreach and Engagement

1989	Office of University Outreach established
1993	Provost's Committee produced report defining outreach as engaged scholarship across the mission
1996	<i>Points of Distinction</i> guidebook published for planning and evaluating outreach
2000	Reappointment, Promotion & Tenure form revised
2003	Office name changed to University Outreach and Engagement
2004	Outreach & Engagement Measurement Instrument implemented to provide direct faculty input to university online data systems
2005	National Center for the Study of University Engagement established
2006	Community Evaluation and Research Center established

Outreach and Engagement as Scholarly Activities

Community-based research is one major approach that embodies MSU's scholarly model of outreach and engagement. Hills and Mullett¹ stated (p. 1):

Community-based research is collaboration between community [i.e., constituent] groups and researchers for the purpose of creating new knowledge or understanding about a practical community issue in order to bring about change. The issue is generated by the community [constituent] and community [constituent] members participate in all aspects of the research process. Community-based research therefore is collaborative, participatory, empowering, systemic and transformative.

In much the same way, the public humanities, arts, and other creative activities that link campus with community advance the fundamental premise that campus and community co-create enlightenment through scholarship.

MSU strives to construct community-based collaborations within the framework of our knowledge model. While every major academic unit articulates outreach and engagement within the perspective of its mission, there are three common foundational principles in the MSU model:

1. Outreach and engagement are *reciprocal and mutually beneficial*. There is mutual planning, implementation, and assessment among the partners.
2. Outreach and engagement *cut across the mission* of teaching, research, and service. They are not separate activities.
3. Outreach and engagement are *scholarly*. Our scholarship-based model of engagement involves both the *act of engaging* (bringing universities and communities together) and the *product of engagement* (the spread of discipline-generated, evidence-based practices in communities).

The scholarship emphasis does not mean, of course, that we ignore engagement that is service; rather, it frames service as part of the scholarly enterprise of the university.

Since outreach and engagement cut across the mission, one way to represent types of outreach at an engaged university is by examples that relate to the three aspects of the mission—research/creative works, teaching and learning, and service.

¹Hills, M., & Mullett, J. (2000, May). *Community-based research: Creating evidence-based practice for health and social change*. Paper presented at the Qualitative Evidence-Based Practice Conference, Coventry University, UK.

Types of Outreach and Engagement at an Engaged University

Engaged Research and Creative Activity

- Community-based research
- Applied research
- Contractual research
- Demonstration projects
- Needs and assets assessments
- Program evaluations
- Translation of scholarship through presentations, publications, and Web sites
- Exhibitions and performances

Engaged Teaching and Learning

- Online and off-campus education
- Continuing education
- Occupational short course, certificate, and licensure programs
- Contract instructional programs
- Participatory curriculum development
- Non-credit classes and programs
- Educational enrichment programs for the public
- Precollege programs
- Conferences, seminars, and workshops
- Service-learning

Engaged Service

- Technical assistance
- Consulting
- Policy analysis
- Commercialization of discoveries
- Creation of new business ventures
- Clinical services
- Human and animal patient care

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