MICHIGAN STATE
U N I V E R S I T Y

MSU Earns 2015 Carnegie Community Engagement Classification

"Dynamic and noteworthy community engagement" cited by reviewers from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

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EAST LANSING, Mich. – Michigan State University has earned the 2015 Community Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

MSU's application was commended for documenting the nature and extent of engagement activities, including the alignment among campus mission, culture, leadership, resources, and practices that support dynamic and noteworthy community engagement.

"This acknowledges Michigan State's focus on supporting community prosperity and quality of life from the ground up, not the top down," MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon said. "An ethos of real collaboration is not incompatible with being a top-100 global research university."

It is the second time MSU has earned the important designation. In 2006 MSU was one of the first universities to receive the classification, and the distinction as a "community-engaged university."

"Our work has helped shine a light on a truly critical mission of our storied institution. We are grateful to be recognized for the continuing commitment demonstrated by Michigan State University faculty, administration, students, staff, and our community partners. The collective effort to connect and collaborate in scholarly, meaningful ways puts us at the forefront of national and international campus-community engagement," said Hiram E. Fitzgerald, associate provost for University Outreach and Engagement.

In 2005 MSU was one of 13 colleges and universities selected by the Carnegie Foundation to help pilot a new classification around the engagement mission. The new standards were part of an extensive overhaul of the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education system that was completed in 2006.

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Unlike the Foundation's other classifications that rely on national data, this is an "elective" classification – institutions participated voluntarily by conducting a self-study and submitting required materials describing the nature and extent of their engagement with the community, be it local or beyond. This approach enabled the Foundation to address elements of institutional mission and distinctiveness that are not represented in the national data on colleges and universities.

The New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE) serves as the Foundation's "administrative partner" for the purpose of managing and administering the Community Engagement Classification process.

"The importance of this elective classification is borne out by the response of so many campuses that have demonstrated their deep engagement with local, regional, national, and global communities," said John Saltmarsh, NERCHE Director. "These are campuses that are improving teaching and learning, producing research that makes a difference in communities, and revitalizing their civic and academic missions."

Central to the classification process is a "documentation framework" developed by a national team of advisors to help applicants and reviewers assess the nature of an institution's community engagement commitments.

"This is the first time that there has been a re-classification process," said Amy Driscoll, Consulting Scholar for the Community Engagement Classification, "and we are seeing renewed institutional commitment, advanced curricular and assessment practices, and deeper community partnerships, all sustained through changes in campus leadership, and within the context of a devastating economic recession."

The current classification expires in 2025, and re-classification will again be available prior to that time by providing evidence of how MSU community engagement has become deeper, more pervasive, better integrated, and sustained.

A list of the institutions that have earned the Community Engagement Classification can be found on NERCHE's website, http://nerche.org.

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