1. **Updates/Changes to the Strategic Plan**

With the transition in leadership in the College, we have made some changes to the strategic plan. These changes are essentially additions to the current strategic plan to capitalize on new areas of strength that have evolved within the College in the last few years and to advance new areas that will firmly establish MSU as the leader within the discipline.

In our new strategic plan, we embrace our role as **Catalyst** for communication research at MSU. Given the interdisciplinary nature of our field, our faculty already collaborate with faculty across a range of disciplines. By branding ourselves as Catalysts, we underscore the importance of our role as accelerators of translational research across the university.

In recent QS rankings, the College **was ranked sixth in the discipline**, behind the University of Southern California, Wisconsin, Stanford, UT-Austin, and London School of Economics. With data extracted from Academic Analytics (explained in Section 8), it is clear that we are already ahead of these universities in key metrics. Achieving the top-ranking, therefore, depends in large part on improving our reputation by recruiting world-class faculty and launching new programs that will cut through the clutter and send a clear signal that we are a College that’s on the cutting edge of innovation.

**Updates.** Our recent investments in three strategic areas, namely HESRC (Health, Environment, Science and Risk Communication), Communication Technology, and International/Intercultural Communication have paid rich dividends in grants, publications and productivity.

In a college with 64 tenure-system faculty, 90 proposals were submitted and our faculty served as PI on 69 of these proposals. In 2015, 76% of our tenure-system faculty and 10% of our fixed-term faculty submitted at least one proposal. Although grant submissions held steady in comparison to 2014, weighted grant dollars generated by the College in 2015 fell. This drop can be attributed in part to the departure of some key grant-active faculty. In turn, these departures have opened up 16 tenure-system lines and we are actively recruiting faculty who will make an immediate impact on reputation and grants, particularly from NIH.

**Communication Technology.** In the technology area, our reputation and grants continue to grow and our researchers are leading the way in mobile health, human-computer interaction, game design (undergrad program ranked seventh by Princeton Review), cybersecurity and Internet governance, to name a few. The work in communication technology has had a significant impact both on health (e.g., American Diabetes Association grant for $600K awarded to Bree Holtz, a mobile app intervention for adolescents with Type 1 diabetes) and international development (e.g., NSF CAREER award to Susan Wyche to study mobile communication in Kenya).

**Sandbox.** In addition to the three signature areas, the College has made significant investments in the Media Sandbox, to nurture the arts, creativity and entrepreneurship. Enrollments in the Sandbox have grown exponentially and to keep pace with student demand, a new curriculum that guarantees access to all students in the college has been designed. This guarantee can be met only through innovative...
delivery models that tap new learning technologies and we are partnering with the Hub to achieve this goal.

Changes (Additions). To generate innovative scholarship and funded research and to affirm our position as a global leader in communication, we have identified three new areas for strategic investment: (1) Computational Communication, (2) Communication and Neuroscience, and (3) Creativity and Entrepreneurship. Each of these areas capitalizes on intra-College synergies that align with MSU priorities.

Computational Communication. Social computational methods, such as sentiment and network analysis on big data can lead to key theoretical and applied insights in communication science. Through collaborations with natural language processing, linguistics, applied mathematics and the new computational bioscience core, and by consolidating the expertise in the various departments and hiring new talent, we hope to become a leader in this area. In addition to leading in research, we are planning undergraduate, master’s and doctoral specializations. Through computational communication, context-sensitive, precisely tailored messages can be offered in real time, which is a promising avenue for precision medicine and environmental interventions that will be attractive to funders. This year, we will be hiring new faculty to join our growing group of faculty in the College who are pursuing research in this area. We are also negotiating with a Chaired Professor from Wisconsin to join MSU to lead this initiative.

Communication Neuroscience. In the past, communication researchers interested in biological approaches to the study of communication have relied mainly on psychophysiological measures, such as skin conductance, heart rate, EEG and eye tracking, and we have faculty in our college who rely on such measures. Though less common, fMRI also has been used by communication researchers. MSU has a distinct advantage in this area because unlike some universities in which the department of Communication Sciences and Disorders is located in a medical college, CSD is housed in the College of Communication. By joining forces with our CSD colleagues, many who are neuroscientists, faculty from other departments in the College can have a strong presence in Communication and Neuroscience. Besides fundamental insights, this area has strong potential for NIH funds and we have hired Dimitar Deliyski as Foundation Professor to lead this effort.

Creativity, Entrepreneurship and Innovation. The College is home to 75 fixed-term faculty who are accomplished professionals with award-winning records. In addition, we are home to WKAR radio, winner of the Marconi award, the highest honor in radio, and award-winning programs produced by WKAR TV, such as Curious Crew and Forte. Creativity, Entrepreneurship and Innovation in a new signature area that recognizes our strengths in media arts and sets the stage for collaborations between communication arts and communication science through new innovations, such as data visualization, as well as linkages between communication arts and the new entrepreneurship emphasis at MSU. Ten new professors of practice will be hired to move this area forward. They will also lead the way with innovative delivery of courses (e.g., Coursera) and nurture entrepreneurial activities in journalism and media arts for our students. Faculty in this area coalesce into a campus resource for STEAM projects, such as the Year of Water at MSU that is in the design phase.
2. Supporting Productivity and Instruction Effectiveness

**Recruiting a Diverse Faculty.** Recruitment is a major goal in the college this year. We hope to fill 25 positions (16 tenure-track lines and 10 fixed-term professors of practice). John Sherry, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, who also serves as the college FEA, has been actively involved in the search process to ensure a diverse pool of applications. Our primary diversity goal this year was gender balance and six out of the 11 offers thus far have gone to female candidates, including one minority candidate. We are always actively exploring opportunities for expanding diversity and the dean works closely with the chairs to help with recruitment. To recruit a talented and diverse faculty, this year we tried a novel approach titled Catalyst, which is described in Section 7.

**Supportive Work Environment.** We have a robust mentoring system in place, which includes a new faculty orientation that is comprehensive. The orientation is managed centrally by the College and offers guidance both on research and teaching. Professors of practice, who are not experienced in the classroom, receive in-depth training on various topics, including syllabus design, grading and classroom management. In addition to new faculty orientation, we hold ongoing faculty workshops on teaching and grantsmanship and offer generous support for faculty development, travel and graduate assistant support.

As part of a holistic approach to faculty and staff support, we offer various programs throughout the year. These activities include employee appreciation day, initiatives to encourage a healthy lifestyle, such as our recent summer poker walk series, and a faculty and staff resource page that offers useful information.

**Positive Campus Climate.** To examine the departure of six female faculty in one year, Kami Silk, Associate Dean for Research, is leading a task force created by the College Advisory Committee. In addition to interviews with faculty members who separated from our College, we are designing a climate survey that will be administered before the end of the year. We are sensitive to the importance of work climate and through various communiques we have encouraged faculty to reach out to Kami for confidential discussions on matters pertaining to climate. These efforts were initiated to demonstrate a proactive approach to climate and not because we believe that the climate in the college is inhospitable.

An example of a proactive project on campus climate is a book title, *Diversity in the Classroom*, which offers answers to 100 questions on diversity. This project, led by Joe Grimm and Kami Silk, was funded by the Office of Inclusion.

Other successes include the TEAL award awarded to faculty and students for raising awareness of sexual violence and learning modules on PTSD and human trafficking created by our students to raise awareness.

**Emphasize University’s Elevating Expectations.** Through our weekly High-S email to faculty and staff, we celebrate notable accomplishments to reinforce a culture of high expectations. Accomplishments are promoted widely through our website and social media, as well.

During the hiring process, the culture of high expectations for teaching, research and grants is impressed upon candidates by chairs and reinforced during the in-person meeting with the dean or associate dean. Faculty have been sensitized to AA metrics and a sample of materials shared with faculty is presented in
Section 8. To convey a culture of upward trajectory of expectations, every year the dean meets individually with each untenured faculty, accompanied by the chair of the department.

3. Expanding, Enhancing and Elevating Scholarship

*Increase Competitiveness in Key Areas.* Updates and changes to strategic plan, reviewed in Section 1, is a summary of our ongoing efforts to expand, enhance and elevate scholarship. To increase our competitiveness within the discipline and to establish our position as thought leaders, we have expanded our three signature areas to six by adding computational communication, communication and neuroscience, and creativity and entrepreneurship.

*Academic Infrastructure.* Building on the success of the Theater-to-Film project, the college is collaborating with the College of Arts and Letters, College of Music and the Honors College to create a Media Arts Collaborative, which is intended to foster collaborations among faculty and to provide a structure for students to create projects such as Theater-to-Film. We are also collaborating with CAL to raise $2 million for ongoing support of the MAC. And in the long term, our goal is to offer a cross-college minor in Integrated Media Arts.

Our Sandbox community is another example of loosely organized academic infrastructure that is achieved by bringing together faculty with an interest in media arts. The Sandbox will grow this year when 10 professors of practice are added to the group.

The College continues to play a key role in the Entrepreneurship and Innovation minor. By identifying entrepreneurship as a signature area and committing resources to faculty hires, we contribute to this interdisciplinary effort.

Two new minors -- Sports Journalism, and Animation and Cartoons – have been proposed recently. Faculty in the College are actively exploring options for badges, credentials, certifications and minors as we pivot toward more modular curricula.

In the long run, we would like to explore the possibility of a public relations major, which would be of great interest and benefit to hundreds of students currently minoring in public relations or pursuing a management track in advertising.

*Physical Infrastructure.* Three physical infrastructure projects are underway to advance scholarship and facilitate student experience through research.

Sandbox lab is an innovative space to expand, enhance and elevate teaching and student experience by offering access to communication technologies that can shape the future.

To support faculty research in biological approaches to communication, a shared research space with eye tracking, heart rate and other physiological measures is under construction.

A third physical infrastructure project is the CARISMA lab for research on augmented reality and avatars in social contexts. The lab will also focus on emerging technologies, such as Google glass and Hololens, and will be set up with a motion capture system to study dyadic interactions in virtual environments.

*Research Infrastructure.* In keeping with our Catalyst mission, we are actively engaged in various interdisciplinary activities on campus in both arts and sciences. The College leads the Trifecta as well as CFIR with Sparrow, which are beginning to bear fruit with grants. Recently, our faculty were able to
forge partnerships with faculty from other colleges to form a water cube project. In addition, our faculty continue their successful collaborations with AFRE and GCFSI. To increase competitiveness, we are exploring offers with joint appointments in the College of Engineering for new hires interested in computation or human-robot interaction in smart automobiles. Faculty in the College are exploring the possibility of a Center for Behavioral Cybersecurity.

The thrust of our plan is to leverage existing labs and Centers to elevate scholarship and we are encouraging Center proposals to NSF and NIH involving the BITlab, GEL Lab and Quello Center. We also have an active speaker series that contributes to vigorous intellectual discussions led by interesting and stimulating experts.

**Metrics.** The College is developing a dashboard to track the following metrics, which will be used to evaluate progress by departments. Metrics will be evaluated per FTE and in comparison with peer institutions, as shown in Section 8. Following are the metrics that will be assessed periodically to evaluate progress: peer-reviewed publications (in high impact journals, flagship journals in a discipline, and reputed conference proceedings), impact (measured by citations, h-index from Google and SSCI), national awards recognized by AAU, grants (PI on grants, weighted dollars, submissions), and student success (placement, conference papers, publications, awards, and grants).

The College is home to many professor of practice, whose work does not conform to peer-reviewed assessments. For these faculty members, professional awards, recognition by peers, exhibitions and other metrics of success will be employed based on the context of the faculty member’s contribution.

### 4. Student Success: Retention, Graduation and Achievement

**Analytics to understand the teaching and learning process.** Faculty use learning analytics, such as TopHat, in large courses. However, these efforts were self-initiated by individual faculty. Drawing from the insights from faculty who use learning analytics, we plan to offer best practice guidelines and encourage more faculty to use learning analytics.

Our advisors use EASE and Mapworks to reach out to at-risk student in real time. To better understand the context of student concerns about success, Kari Schueller Lopez, Director of Academic and Student Affairs, participates in meetings of the South Neighborhood Success Team. We pay close attention to placement data provided by career services and are encouraged to learn that more than 90 percent of recent graduates who respond to our survey report that they are employed. To empower advisors, who in turn can help move the needle on retention and graduation, we have a professional development program that is funded by the College. ComArtSci is eager to experiment with analytics for student success. For example, we volunteered as Phase 1 adopter of EAB. But we believe in the human touch, as well. To improve retention, one of our advisors, Lauren Gaines, meets with parents of at-risk students at Detroit Center over the holiday break.

We realize that more can be done on assessment of learning outcomes across the curriculum. As a first step, we are collaborating with the Hub to create and assess learning outcomes for our new Sandbox curriculum.

**Use technology to enhance teaching and learning.** The Department of Media and Information has organized “quality circles” made up of faculty and graduate students to share best practices and for ongoing improvements to content. We hope to expand this practice to the whole College.
We already offer hybrid and flipped courses using online learning models in many introductory courses and in the master’s program in CSD. By Fall 2016, we hope to launch an online MA program in Strategic Communication, which will be used as a platform for future online programs. In collaboration with the Hub, we are designing scalable models of delivery using appropriate learning technologies. And, we have launched a successful partnership with Coursera on a Game Design certificate, along with three other certificates. Various applications of technology enhanced learning are being explored in the College. For example, in Comm 100, students have switched to recording their speeches in Zoom, which are distributed online for peer critique.

Our recent TLE ask for a Sandbox lab aligns with our strategic vision for teaching high-end new media technology skills. In this lab, students will work in a real-world newsroom with streaming content and a full complement of social media tools. The lab will also house a motion capture system and offer a studio-like environment suitable for 3-D modeling, virtual environment design, and game development.

*Create new models for curriculum and instruction.* To modernize and streamline curricula, revisions are currently underway in all our departments. Notably, a modular curriculum has been advanced by faculty in Media and Information that is under review by Academic Governance. A new Sandbox curriculum made of five 3-credit courses with integrated software training and hand-on skills with a focus on career preparation has been submitted for review. Adv+PR and Communication also are in the process of revising their undergraduate curricula, which will be submitted for review in Fall 2016.

The faculty and staff in the College are proud of the experiential learning opportunities for our students. Internships, study abroad and study away, job fairs and speed coaching opportunities are offered every year.

*Continue to look at institutional outcomes and goals.*

Among other institutional goals, an important priority is placement of students in their chosen careers and validation of their learning by external clients and internship supervisors. We rely on end-of-semester survey of internship supervisors and external clients who sponsor our student for their capstone projects. We also solicit feedback from recent graduates through surveys on the link between their learning experience and the demands of their careers.

*5. Update on Faculty Recruitment in 2015-2016*

Through a combination of retirements and attrition, the College is in the enviable position of being able to hire up to sixteen tenure-track faculty, some as full professors. To foster collaborations across departments, we launched an integrated search designed to create cluster hires to take advantage of commonalities in position descriptions and candidates’ strengths. Departmental search committees were encouraged to identify applicants who added to our collective college strength in the six strategic areas.

*Catalyst Event.* Top candidates for the different positions were invited to our two-day Catalyst event. On the first day of the event, candidates presented TED-style talks, attended by faculty from the College as well as the candidates. This event helped departments and applicants identify potential synergies. The interactions among candidates generated a cohort effect, which has been helpful in recruiting. On the second day, longer presentations were given in four rooms, which allowed a faculty member or applicant to attend an in-depth presentation by applicants from other units. During receptions and
dinner, candidates had ample opportunities to interact with faculty and other applicants. Of the 12 candidates who attended our Catalyst event, eight received offers. Four of these offers have resulted in signed contracts and four are under negotiation. The net result has been the successful recruitment of highly qualified applicants and the emergence of cores of excellence across departments in cutting-edge areas of science consisting of current faculty and new hires.

In addition to the eight offers, 3 more offers have been extended to candidates who made a typical campus visit because they were unable to attend the Catalyst event. In addition, we are pursuing various opportunity hires through soft interviews, including a Foundation Professor candidate.

**Media Arts Collaborative.** Drawing upon the successes of the Catalyst event, we are pursuing a similar strategy for hiring fixed-term professors of practice to foster collaborations not just between departments in our College, but also among the Colleges of Music, CAL, CAS and the Honors College. Along with the 10 lines in CAS, CAL has announced four lines in media arts and Music has announced one line. All 16 lines will be advertised as a cluster-hire to strengthen integrated media arts at MSU.

6. **Academic Analytics Overview**

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Based on Academic Analytics our programs perform very favorably. **Adv+PR and Media Studies were ranked as top programs in the discipline. Communication was ranked seventh and Media and Information was ranked fifth. Even CSD, a program that was reinvigorated recently placed 7th in the discipline.**

To ensure the validity of these rankings, comparisons with peer institutions were carried out on various metrics, such as number of publications per FTE, citations per FTE, and grant dollars per FTE. These data support the favorable rankings. Our QS ranking of sixth among other institutions in the world offers additional corroborating evidence that legitimizes the AA rankings listed above.

Because the School of Journalism was compared with other institutions in which Journalism is combined with Media Studies and Mass Communication, it was at a disadvantage, resulting in a rank of 22nd in the discipline.

Collective and individual data were shared with faculty for self-monitoring and to foster a culture of elevating expectations.