

DEI STRATEGIC PLAN

GOALS, STRATEGIES, ACTIONS, AND MEASURES



School of Planning,
Design and Construction
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

A message from the director

We all know that it takes time, effort, and dedication to make great things happen. Enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is one of them. Being a young academic unit at Michigan State University, the School of Planning, Design and Construction's (SPDC) commitment to DEI can be traced back to 2013. Statements from the school and four professional programs were developed and published on the school's website, but coordination of DEI efforts diverged after the Diversity Speaker Series in spring 2015.

Among my initial actions as SPDC director in 2018, I began the school's strategic planning process that yielded five strategic directions, including school identity, student learning, funding model, resource management, and research. Then, in 2019, I set up three ad hoc committees to address key priorities, with one of them focusing on DEI. Forming a DEI ad hoc committee was based on my experience at a previous institution, in that DEI efforts helped advance excellence and address justice. Seven members were appointed to serve, including Barb Andersen, George Berghorn, Noah Durst, Mary Beth Graebert, Rex LaMore, Marcus Metoyer, and Teresa Qu.

In fall 2020, the DEI ad hoc committee developed the description of the committee and its purpose for the school's bylaws, and recommended the ad hoc committee become a standing committee of the school. The school voted to adopt the committee's recommendation during its November school meeting of that year. The DEI committee membership was expanded to include Barb Andersen, Hannah Brodhead, George Berghorn, Noah Durst, Mary Beth Graebert, Trish Machemer, Teresa Qu, Rene Rosenbaum, and Laura Winter. Two students, Wisdom Henry and Jing Zhou, were also invited to join.

In January 2021, the DEI standing committee was charged to develop the DEI strategic plan that addresses the following areas: culture and climate; faculty/staff recruitment and retention; student recruitment and retention; engagement and outreach; curriculum; and graduate student professional development. In August 2021, two new faculty, Deyanira Nevárez Martínez and Harry Shah, volunteered and were appointed to the committee.

Through a yearlong effort that included participation from school faculty, staff and students, the committee developed the plan that was formally adopted by the school in May 2022. The plan will serve as a guide for implementing recommended tactics to accomplish the seven goals clearly laid out in the report. It provides the school with a firm foundation from which to establish relevancy to the university's priorities, as well as society.

I truly believe that our collective efforts will make a difference in our school and beyond. Your trust and continuing support in this endeavor are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,



Ming-Han Li, Ph.D. (he/him/his)
School Director

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Introduction

This DEI Strategic Plan will be used as the guiding document to reflect the School of Planning, Design and Construction's (SPDC) commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The plan was prepared by the SPDC DEI committee, with extensive input from School faculty, staff, and students, as well as guidance from Michigan State University and college DEI resources.

The mission of the School is to “advance the knowledge, prepare innovative leaders, and support the practice of planning, design, and construction.” One of our core values is to “embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion” in the delivery of this mission. We are committed to preparing future planners, designers, and community leaders who work effectively with diverse populations and strive to achieve equitable and inclusive outcomes. We are committed to research that takes into account historical inequities and exclusionary practices in our society, as well as underrepresentation of some populations in the community development process. We are committed to engaging our alumni, stakeholders, and communities in outreach activities that recognize and celebrate difference and use democratic processes to achieve sustainable and healthy built, natural and virtual environments for all.

While SPDC has been engaged in discussions about DEI for many years, the SPDC DEI Strategic Plan effort was initiated in August 2019. In the spring of 2020, an ad hoc DEI committee compiled a report on DEI resources at MSU, initiatives at peer institutions, legal issues, best practices, and DEI effort in the School's four disciplines: Construction Management, Interior Design, Landscape Architecture, and Urban & Regional Planning. This report was followed by a survey of SPDC faculty and staff about proposed priority action steps

for the committee to pursue, one of which was to develop a DEI strategic plan. In the summer of 2020, the faculty and staff came together for a retreat that included training on implicit biases and a conversation about DEI in SPDC mission elements. Later that fall, the faculty voted to modify the School bylaws to create a standing DEI committee.

In January 2021, the Student Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council (SDEIC) was formed to advise the School on students' needs, concerns and vision for DEI. In August 2021, the School again gathered for a retreat and engaged in learning about DEI issues through scenarios and conversations led by MSU's Transforming Theatre Ensemble. That fall, the DEI committee conducted several efforts to gather data and input from the School's stakeholders, including a look at demographic and student success information, a survey of faculty & staff, a survey of students, and a series of focus groups with students. Finally, in the spring of 2022, the DEI committee presented the results of this assessment to faculty, staff and students and asked for input on goals, strategies, and actions that could be included in a strategic plan for the School.

The DEI committee met on March 25 and April 21, 2022, to synthesize all of the information collected into this draft Strategic Plan. Using the Michigan State University (MSU) DEI plan as a guide, the committee crafted overarching goals, strategies, action steps, timeline, and progress indicators that align with what School stakeholders identified as important to advancing DEI in SPDC. We then went through each section and discussed the elements based on our capacity, sphere of influence, existing resources, previous work, timing, etc.



DEI Definitions

There are many existing definitions of the terms: diversity, equity, and inclusion. The DEI committee discussed the following definitions offered by the university and the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. In many ways, these are broad definitions that encompass many types of diversity, equity issues, and inclusion scenarios. We recommend spending some time customizing definitions to SPDC’s reality in a way that recognizes our unique challenges and gaps, our influence and capacity to address them, and what our ideal environment looks like. We encourage the School and each program to have discussions about these definitions to craft messages that are germane to SPDC. These definition activities are included in this strategic plan.

Definitions	MSU	CANR
Diversity	DIVERSITY represents our varied collective and individual identities and differences. We recognize that diversity is a central component of inclusive excellence in research, teaching, service, and outreach and engagement. We are committed to engage, understand, promote, and foster a variety of perspectives. We affirm our similarities and value our differences. We uphold that to truly be excellent, a university must support diversity.	Diversity includes characteristics of race, age, color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, national origin, migratory status, disability/abilities, political affiliation, veteran status and socioeconomic background. It also includes differences in backgrounds, ideas, thought, values and beliefs. Embracing differences make us better learners, teachers, leaders, scholars, researchers, extension educators, employees and students. This is operationalized by embedding equity in all of our structures and practices.
Equity	EQUITY goes beyond fair treatment, opportunity, and access to information and resources for all, although these are crucial to the success the university. Rather, equity can only be achieved in an environment built on respect and dignity in an environment that acknowledges historic and contemporary injustices. We are committed to intentionally and actively redressing barriers, challenging discrimination and bias, and institutionalizing access and resources that address historical and contemporary social inequalities.	Equity requires providing justice, fairness and access to opportunities and resources for all members of the campus community. In creating and sustaining a climate where equity and mutual respect are intrinsic, we are nurturing a success-oriented, cooperative and caring college where we attract and retain people and partners who feel comfortable contributing their unique wisdom, perspectives and experiences.
Inclusion	INCLUSION actively invites all to contribute and participate. In the face of exclusive differential power, we strive to create balance. Every person’s voice is valuable, and no one person is expected to represent an entire community. We are committed to an open environment and campus where students, alumni, staff, faculty, and community voices are equally respected and contribute to the overall institutional mission.	To be an Inclusive college is to respect everyone, value differences, acknowledge the impact of differences and to capitalize on those differences by drawing on the intellectual strength that produces innovative solutions from the synergy of our people. Our aim is to foster a culture where every member of CANR feels valued, supported and inspired to achieve individual and common goals with an uncommon will.

Overview

This document provides a set of goals, strategies, actions, and measures for the SPDC DEI strategic plan. The following explains the purpose of each of these elements:

- **Goals:** These are broad categories. There is only one goal per topic (7 in total).
- **Strategies:** These are narrower than a goal, focusing on an area of importance within a specific goal. There can be multiple strategies per goal. However, strategies are still somewhat broad and may require multiple steps (actions) at different times to be achieved.
- **Actions:** These are specific, identifiable actions that could be taken by one or more stakeholders. There are likely multiple actions per strategy. All actions are accompanied by a timeline (ongoing, short, medium, long), the purpose of which is to set priorities regarding which actions we tackle first.
 - *Ongoing* refers to current actions that will continue regularly for the foreseeable future
 - *Short* refers to actions that will start within 1 year. They may be one-off actions or once started may become ongoing actions
 - *Medium* refers to actions that will start within 1-3 years. They may be one-off actions or once started may become ongoing actions
 - *Long* refers to actions that will start within 3-5 years. They may be one-off actions or once started may become ongoing actions
- **Progress Indicators:** These are outcomes that we can use to measure whether we succeed in achieving our goals. Our intention is to limit indicators to only a few measures (1-2 per goal) for manageable data collection and reporting each year, and so that the committee can focus on undertaking the actions.

In total, we developed 7 goals and 20 strategies. These strategies address DEI-related concerns from faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders. Table 1 summarizes these goals and the stakeholders they address.

Table 1. Goals and Strategies by Stakeholders Served

	Faculty	Staff	Students	External Stakeholders
Goal 1 Inclusive Culture and Climate				
Strategy 1.1	■	■	■	■
Strategy 1.2	■	■	■	
Strategy 1.3	■	■	■	
Goal 2 Curriculum and Instruction				
Strategy 2.1	■		■	
Strategy 2.2	■		■	
Goal 3 Communication, Outreach and External Engagement				
Strategy 3.1	■	■	■	■
Strategy 3.2				■
Strategy 3.3				■
Goal 4 Student Recruitment, Admission, Retention and Completion				
Strategy 4.1			■	
Strategy 4.2			■	
Strategy 4.3			■	
Goal 5 Faculty and Staff Recruitment, Retention, Promotion and Advancement				
Strategy 5.1	■	■		
Strategy 5.2	■	■		
Strategy 5.3	■	■		
Goal 6 Research				
Strategy 6.1	■		■	
Strategy 6.6	■		■	
Goal 7 Leadership and School Structure				
Strategy 7.1	■	■		
Strategy 7.2	■	■	■	
Strategy 7.3	■	■	■	
Strategy 7.3	■	■		

Goal 1. Inclusive Culture and Climate

Cultivate a school climate that is welcoming to all and promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion of all students, faculty, and staff.

Progress Indicator 1.A

Schoolwide survey question with Likert scale: "I am satisfied with the overall SPDC climate/environment that I have experienced within the past 12 months."

Strategy 1.1

Assess and monitor concerns of School members and stakeholders, an/or other relevant issues related to climate, culture, and inclusivity.

Actions

- Conduct annual climate surveys related to DEI and exit interviews with faculty, staff and students. Data generated should be tracked to understand changes in the experience of faculty, staff and students. Results should be shared with SPDC stakeholders (Timeline: ongoing)
- Identify virtual and physical spaces that are inaccessible or may not be inclusive (e.g., Human Ecology 4th floor, bathrooms, web resources). Examine the degree of accessibility/inclusivity and identify potential solutions (Timeline: ongoing)

Strategy 1.2

Foster an inclusive community and sense of belonging at SPDC.

Actions

- Embed and promote conversations about DEI across all aspects within SPDC. Classes, faculty meetings, student meetings, and SPDC events should incorporate intentional conversations about DEI (Timeline: ongoing)
- Facilitate school-wide and cross-program, non-DEI social events (e.g., coffee hour, potluck, tailgate, etc.). Make events manageable (not a lot of extra work) and communicate widely. These events should offer opportunities for students,

staff, and faculty to actively engage in conversations across differences and allow individuals to apply their learnings around DEI in authentic and meaningful ways (Timeline: short)

- Facilitate school-wide and cross-program, non-DEI professional events (e.g., school awards banquet, open house, etc.). Make events manageable (not a lot of extra work) and communicate widely. These events should offer opportunities for students, staff, and faculty to actively engage in conversations across differences and allow individuals to apply their learnings around DEI in authentic and meaningful ways (Timeline: ongoing)
- Display a list of cultural and religious holidays and observances in a prominent place on the SPDC website and distribute this list to faculty and staff annually (Timeline: short)
- Showcase and/or celebrate our diversity through our website, social media, and other internal and external-facing communications (e.g., heritage months, teaching awards, service awards, etc.). (Timeline: ongoing)

Strategy 1.3

Promote professional development opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to support and nurture an inclusive climate and culture at SPDC.

Actions

- Develop methods for engaging students in efficient and effective ways to share information and gather their feedback (e.g., Miro board, hallway monitors, email, social media, DEI slide deck that instructors can provide in D2L, etc.). (Timeline: short)
- Host workshops and training on topics such as restorative justice, conflict resolution, cultural competence, anti-racism, gender equity, and other DEI-related professional development opportunities (Timeline: ongoing)
- Identify and incorporate contributions toward advancing DEI, along with other institutional values, as required components of New Employee Orientation and student orientations. (Timeline: medium)
- Allocate or acquire funding from Program, School, College, and University, and external sources to support DEI initiatives (Timeline: ongoing)

Goal 2. Curriculum and Instruction

Modify curricula and instructional practices to ensure that course content and learning experiences reflect the importance and values of DEI.

Progress Indicator 2.A

Schoolwide survey question with Likert scale: “SPDC curricular decisions, offerings, and delivery address DEI challenges and opportunities and are responsive to the needs of an increasingly diverse community, state, national, and global context.”

Strategy 2.1

Support faculty professional development regarding instructional best practices

Actions

- Arrange and host regular workshops, as needed, to train faculty in how to embed DEI topics within the curriculum, how to facilitate difficult conversations in the classroom, or best practices for inclusive and equitable teaching (Timeline: short)
- Establish learning cohorts of teaching faculty to support knowledge and skill development regarding incorporating DEI in the classroom (Timeline: medium)

Strategy 2.2

Identify and increase access to high-impact DEI learning experiences for students.

Actions

- Revise appropriate curricula to ensure that, to the extent possible, courses instill the value of DEI, promote cultural competence, address the needs of diverse populations, and reflect the experiences and voices of diverse populations (Timeline: medium)
- Support and expand experiential learning and community-engaged learning opportunities with a focus on DEI issues or in diverse communities and with diverse stakeholders (Timeline: long)



Goal 3. Communication, Outreach, and External Engagement

Ensure that internal and external communications and outreach and engagement efforts employ DEI best practices to build and maintain relationships with diverse communities and stakeholders.

Progress Indicator 3.A

Survey of School and external stakeholders with Likert scale question: “SPDC outreach and engagement efforts engage diverse communities and stakeholders and employ DEI best practices.”

Strategy 3.1

Ensure that community partnerships and community-engaged learning/scholarship employ best practices related to DEI.

Actions

- Connect with and encourage participation in existing regular workshops to support incorporating DEI into community-engaged learning activities (Timeline: short)
- Provide resources and/or DEI training for faculty, staff, and students prior to participating in activities with diverse communities (Timeline: medium)
- Incorporate DEI values in memorandums of understanding with community partners (Timeline: long)

Strategy 3.2

Build and maintain relationships with diverse communities and stakeholders.

Actions

- Document the current membership of our alumni and stakeholder advisory groups, our outreach and engagement efforts with diverse and historically underrepresented populations, and the diversity of our vendors and suppliers (Timeline: short).
- Improve diversity of advisory board membership to obtain diverse perspectives from alumni or stakeholder advisory groups (Timeline: ongoing)

- Increase and improve outreach and engagement activities with diverse and historically underrepresented students, staff, and faculty, as well as with diverse communities served (Timeline: medium)
- Increase and promote relationships with diverse and underrepresented vendors and suppliers (Timeline: long)

Strategy 3.3

Assess and evaluate communication, outreach, and engagement efforts from the DEI perspective (every five years).

Actions

- Review stakeholder groups or populations to assess whether they represent a diverse set of backgrounds and experiences (Timeline: medium)
- Develop and employ an evaluation tool to assess external partners’ perceptions of SPDC stakeholders’ cultural competence (Timeline: long)



Goal 4. Student Recruitment, Admission, Retention, and Completion

Recruit, admit, retain, and ensure timely and equitable completion of diverse students.

Progress Indicator 4.A

Reduce the achievement/opportunity gaps (secondary admission, graduation, time to degree) for historically underrepresented student populations.

Progress Indicator 4.B

Track the proportion of historically underrepresented student populations in our program enrollments.

Strategy 4.1

Continue and expand prior efforts to collect administrative data to support informed decisions regarding student diversity and equity of outcomes.

Actions

- Identify underrepresented student populations at the school and program levels, as appropriate, to facilitate tracking of diversity and equity outcomes, recognizing that our definitions may be limited by the availability of data. Definitions may change over time (Timeline: short)
- Establish a system for collecting/tracking and analyzing administrative data on students and document data collection process to ensure continuity and consistency of data collection over time (Timeline: medium)

Strategy 4.2

Increase the recruitment of historically underrepresented students.

Actions

- Establish program-specific recruitment and admission goals, with particular attention paid toward addressing the needs of historically underrepresented students (Timeline: medium)
- Access existing scholarships and identify other funding mechanisms to further diversify the student population (Timeline: medium)

- Establish and build upon existing relationships and recruitment pathways in partnership with Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) and diverse institutions and communities from local through global scales (Timeline: long)

Strategy 4.3

Increase the retention of and equity of outcomes for historically underrepresented students.

Actions

- Regularly collect and analyze data on program access and achievement/opportunity gaps (secondary admission, graduation rates, time to degree, grading practices) to monitor and close those gaps, particularly among historically underrepresented student populations (Timeline: medium)
- Connect to and publicize existing university resources and opportunities to support student success, especially students from historically underrepresented backgrounds (Timeline: ongoing)



Goal 5. Faculty and Staff Recruitment, Retention, Promotion and Advancement

Recruit, retain, and ensure timely and equitable promotion and advancement of diverse faculty and staff.

Progress Indicator 5.A

Increase the proportion of underrepresented groups in faculty and staff populations.

Progress Indicator 5.B

Faculty and staff survey question with Likert scale: “SPDC has a strong mentoring system that is effective in supporting all faculty/ staff members, including those from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds in the career advancement process, as well as expanding their professional growth.”

Strategy 5.1

Continue and expand prior efforts to collect administrative data to support informed decisions regarding faculty and staff diversity and equity of outcomes.

Actions

- Identify underrepresented faculty and staff populations, at the school and program levels, as appropriate, to facilitate tracking of diversity and equity outcomes, recognizing that our definitions may be limited by the availability of data. Definitions may change over time (Timeline: short).
- Establish a system for collecting/tracking and analyzing administrative data on faculty/staff and document data collection process to ensure continuity and consistency of data collection over time (Timeline: medium).

Strategy 5.2

Increase the recruitment of historically underrepresented faculty and staff.

Actions

- Create and adopt faculty and staff diversity hiring toolkits and ensure that search committees actively engage with best practices (Timeline: short).

- Explore cluster hires, DEI-centered positions, strong succession plans and pathway programs. Create professorships that focus on DEI (Timeline: ongoing).

Strategy 5.3

Increase the retention of and equity of outcomes for historically underrepresented faculty and staff.

Actions

- Regularly collect and analyze data on retention, promotion, and advancement of historically underrepresented faculty and staff (Timeline: ongoing)
- Identify or develop resources to support targeted mentoring and professional development opportunities for historically underrepresented faculty and staff (Timeline: medium).
- Develop and implement process for acknowledging contributions toward advancing DEI in the reappointment, promotion, and tenure (RPT) process and in annual performance evaluations for faculty, academic staff, and support staff (Timeline: medium).
- Address inequities in the teaching evaluation process (SIRS). (Timeline: ongoing)



Goal 6. Research

Imbed the values of and content of DEI throughout SPDC's research and grant activity by supporting research focused on DEI topics or that promotes engagement with diverse scholars and communities.

Progress Indicator 6.A

Increased number of proposals with DEI element, historically underrepresented students working on research projects and other DEI-related activities (e.g., lectures, articles, hires, etc.).

Strategy 6.1

Expand funding to support research on DEI topics or by historically underrepresented scholars.

Actions

- Develop a mechanism for tracking DEI-relevant proposals, community-engaged scholarship, and research led by historically underrepresented scholars or including underrepresented students and recommend this step to colleges and the university (Timeline: short).

- Increase the number of proposals for internal and external funding opportunities relevant to DEI in the built environment, community-engaged scholarship in diverse communities, or research led by historically underrepresented scholars (Timeline: medium).
- Increase the allocation of School and Program funding to research that achieves DEI objectives (Timeline: medium).

Strategy 6.2

Elevate and promote research that addresses DEI content or promotes DEI values.

Actions

- Showcase research by faculty and students that focuses on DEI in the built environment in marketing, social media, and other outreach materials (Timeline: short).
- Prioritize research on DEI in the built environment when hiring new faculty members (Timeline: ongoing).
- Host regular lectures and panels by guests, faculty and students focused on issues of DEI in the built environment, at least once per semester (Timeline: ongoing).



Goal 7. Leadership and School Structure

Ensure that SPDC leadership and decision-making structures provide inclusive and equitable access to information, processes, and policies, as well as opportunities for stakeholders to voice opinions and concerns.

This goal addresses some themes that may or may not be perceived as being related to DEI. It is included in the DEI strategic plan to draw attention to concerns that were raised during the committee's information gathering and assessment activities in Fall 2021. Since these issues are broader than DEI, we recommend that this goal, along with these strategies and actions, be considered as an addendum to the SPDC strategic plan.

Progress Indicator 7.A

Faculty and staff survey question with Likert scale: "Administrative and leadership structures and processes in SPDC are inclusive, respectful, and supportive."

Progress Indicator 7.B

Faculty and staff survey question with Likert scale: "School and Program Directors help set the tone for creating an engaging and inclusive environment for all groups."

Strategy 7.1

Establish formal systems to ensure transparency about decision-making by SPDC and Program leadership to ensure that decisions are responsive to stakeholder concerns and that dissenting opinions are given consideration.

Actions

- Identify areas of conflict regarding School and Program decision-making processes and/or authority (Timeline: short).
- Develop written policy, including additions to the School bylaws, where possible to address these conflicts (Timeline: ongoing).

Strategy 7.2

Conduct continued outreach and research to understand and address the concerns of faculty, staff, and students regarding issues of leadership and decision-making.

Actions

- Hold discussions with faculty and staff about who should conduct this outreach and research (e.g., DEI, SAC, ad hoc committee). (Timeline: short)
- Conduct further analysis to understand and address potential inequities or perceived inequities regarding reward, recognition, and compensation of faculty and staff (Timeline: medium).
- Conduct further analysis to understand what factors impede or reduce trust or accountability, including through climate surveys and exit interviews or external review by third-party individuals (Timeline: medium).

Strategy 7.3

Develop formal systems to address conflicts, complaints, or concerns related to climate, culture, and inclusivity.

Actions

- Establish designated processes or people to report and address internal grievances, including those unrelated to DEI issues, DEI-related concerns or grievances, and discrimination or harassment (Timeline: medium).
- Increase awareness of who, where, and how students, staff, and faculty should report incidents, including those involving discrimination and harassment, and what the procedures are for addressing such incidents (Timeline: short).

Strategy 7.4

Improve the capacity of School and Program leadership to address DEI issues or personnel conflicts.

Actions

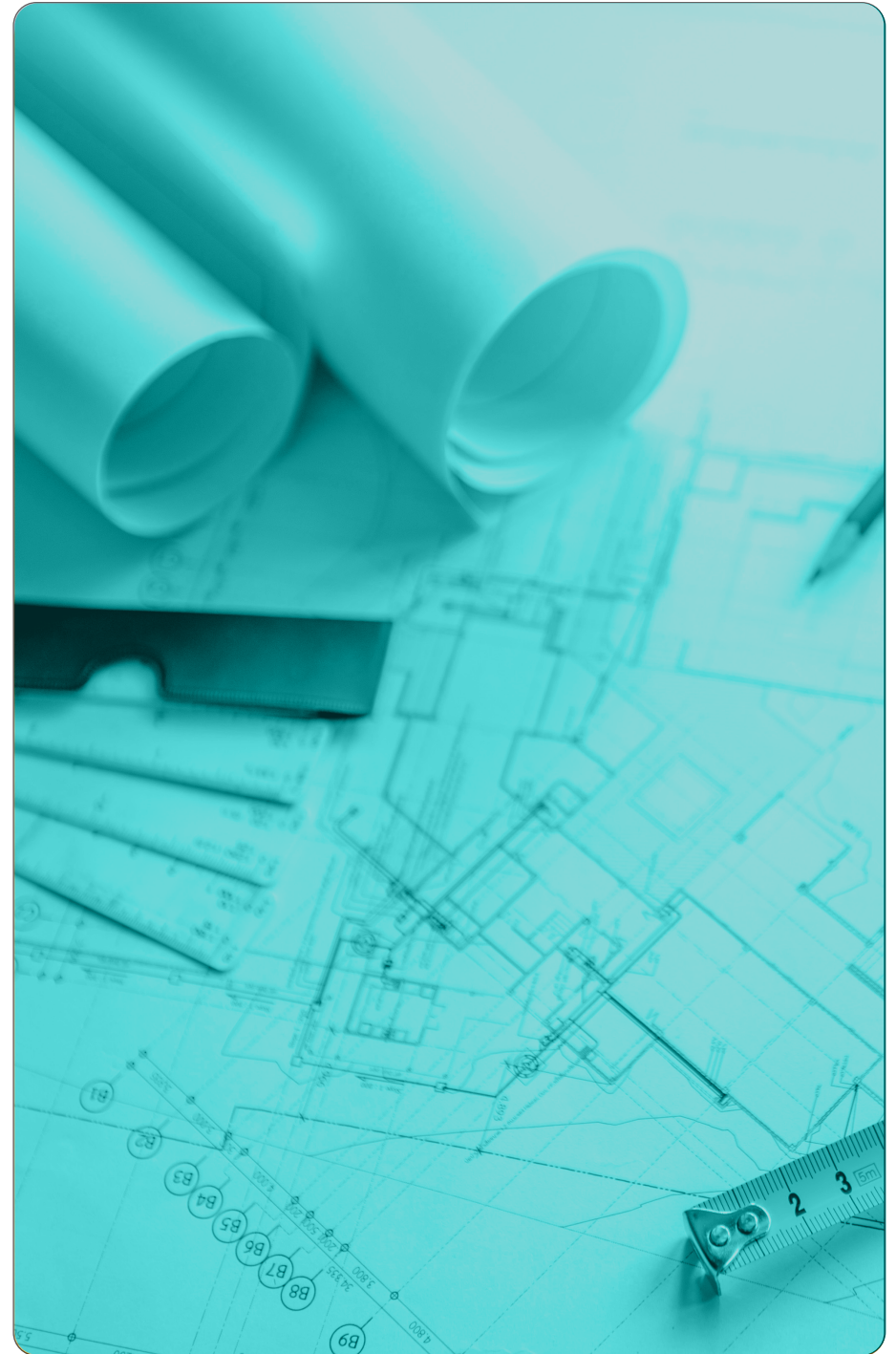
- Provide School and Program leaders with training and other resources to support DEI best practices within six months of hire, as well as ongoing training and resources (Timeline: medium).
- Hire a faculty or staff member with expertise in and responsibility for DEI issues (Timeline: ongoing).

Plan Implementation

We recognize that Michigan State University, the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the College of Social Science, and many other groups on and off campus are engaged in DEI efforts. We intend to continually monitor these activities so that we can borrow data, best practices and other resources useful to SPDC.

This strategic plan is intended to be a living document. Because our culture is not static and social structures change, we need to be able to re-evaluate and adjust our goals, strategies, actions, and progress indicators when appropriate. In that same vein, we have purposely adopted informal mechanisms to track our progress toward these goals. These are not specific numeric thresholds, but rather a comparison to our 2021 baseline. We will monitor these indicators each year to observe improvements, maintenance, and ground lost, and we will adjust our strategics accordingly.

To hold us accountable for implementing this strategic plan, we will request a standing agenda item for DEI activities on the monthly faculty & staff meeting agenda. We will also conduct regular student engagement to share achievements and assess perceptions of progress.





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