



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

TRANSFORMING MSU

Strategic Plan 2023–2028

Mid-Cycle Update • August 2026

A report on progress, achievements, and the road ahead as Mississippi State University approaches its sesquicentennial.

TAKING CARE OF WHAT MATTERS

FROM THE PRESIDENT

DEAR MISSISSIPPI STATE FAMILY,



Our university has always been an institution that looks to the future. Since our founding in 1878, the people of Mississippi State have worked to solve problems, find solutions, and create opportunities. Planning well has been essential to our success.

In 2023, we launched the Transforming MSU: Strategic Plan 2023–2028 to best position ourselves to meet many new challenges. This plan has served us well, and I am proud of the progress we have made so far in meeting the goals we set.

I am grateful for the many contributions of our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends who have contributed to this ongoing effort.

As we anticipate 2028 and our sesquicentennial celebration, I invite you to learn more about where we are with this Mid-Cycle Update and how you can help us continue Mississippi State University's transformation.

HAIL STATE!

Mark E. Keenum

President, Mississippi State University

STRATEGIC PROGRESS OVERVIEW

PROGRESS ON TRANSFORMING MSU

In early 2023, members of the Mississippi State University community joined together to redefine the institution's role in helping solve some of the world's most pressing challenges. The result, Transforming MSU: Strategic Plan 2023-2028, established five key pillars to guide collaboration and collective action while charting an ambitious path forward for the university.

In just three years, we have made tremendous progress through dedicated efforts of our faculty, staff and students and unrelenting support from university partners, alumni, donors and friends. This mid-cycle report shares information on some of our most noteworthy accomplishments to date and goals currently in progress or yet to begin. We began with 22 initiatives on our original roadmap, but the evolving higher education landscape has seen us change this number over time to 44.

While there is still important work ahead in transforming MSU, the energy, time and talent invested by the university community so far has been extraordinary. Together, we continue creating new opportunities to take care of what matters through student success, interdisciplinary academics, global engagement and innovative solutions that reflect the mission of our 147-year-old land-grant institution.



STRATEGIC PROGRESS OVERVIEW

OUR MISSION REMAINS THE SAME

Mississippi State University is a public research, land-grant university with a mission to provide access and opportunity to all sectors of Mississippi's diverse population, as well as other states and countries, and to offer excellent programs of teaching, research and service.

Mississippi State University offers a comprehensive range of undergraduate, graduate and professional programs across many disciplines.

The university embraces its role as a major contributor to the economic development of the state and beyond through targeted research and the transfer of ideas and technology to the public, supported by faculty, staff, student and alumni relationships with industry, community organizations and government entities.

Mississippi State University is committed to its tradition of instilling among its community ideals of citizenship, leadership and service.

Building on its land-grant tradition, Mississippi State University strategically extends its resources and expertise for the benefit of Mississippi's citizens, the nation and the world by offering access for working and place-bound learners through its on- and off-campus education and research sites, Extension and distance education programs.

OUR VISION SETS THE STAGE

At Mississippi State, we're redefining the role of a land-grant university. We provide an innovative, hands-on learning experience, meeting all students where they are and equipping them for a world that needs their talent. We're working to help our communities prosper while exploring cutting-edge solutions to the world's biggest challenges.

TOGETHER, WE'RE TAKING CARE OF WHAT MATTERS IN THE 21ST CENTURY – STARTING IN OUR OWN BACKYARD.





STRATEGIC PILLARS

OUR PILLARS ORGANIZE THE WORK

We have developed five key pillars to guide the collaboration and collective action that will support our university's transformation. Each pillar represents an essential focus area of our transformation roadmap, which summarizes the strategic goals of Transforming Mississippi State.

Numbers reflect total initiatives per pillar. Accurate as of August 3, 2026.

THE OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK PROVIDES THE FOUNDATION

In mid-2023, an additional collection of initiatives called the "Operational Framework" was added to the strategic plan to create the cultural, financial, operational and technological conditions that ensure MSU can thrive today and lead boldly into the future. These new ways of working are helping the institution evolve in order to deliver the strategic goals of each pillar, providing a foundation on which these pillars stand.

SERVE THE WHOLE STUDENT

Help students thrive through innovative academic programs and memorable experiences while ensuring a holistic focus on student well-being.

11

STRENGTHEN OUR BONDS

Grow and nurture relationships that further enhance our vibrant community.

9

IGNITE INNOVATION

Foster life-changing research and creative endeavors to advance our society.

4

ELEVATE OUR COMMUNITY

Serve our communities with the knowledge and experience that address critical challenges and unique opportunities.

7

TELL OUR STORY

Grow awareness and shape the perception of MSU by amplifying the stories, impacts, and excitement of our community.

5

OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

CULTURE

Nurture a sense of belonging, support innovation across teams, and respect all people and perspectives

RESOURCES

Align the right skills, talents, and financial resources to empower our people and advance our vision

INFRASTRUCTURE

Advance the physical environment and technological systems that enable our growth

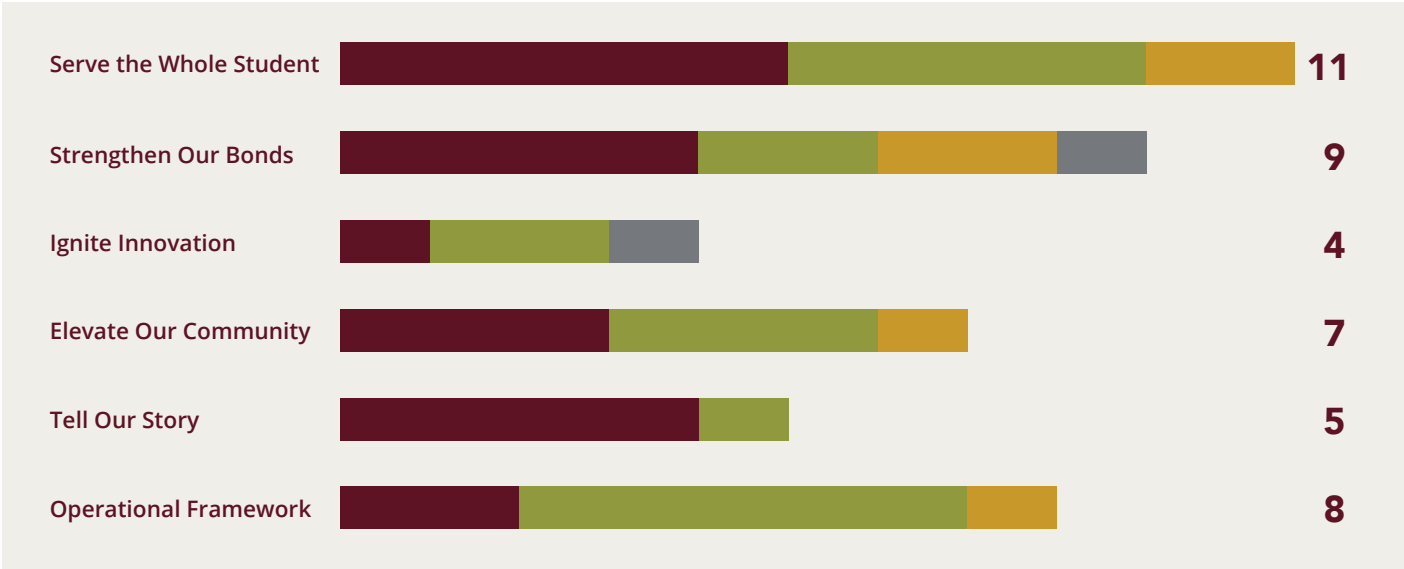
METHODS

Improve operational processes and create new opportunities to make informed, forward-looking decisions

8

DASHBOARD

PROGRESS TO DATE BY PILLAR



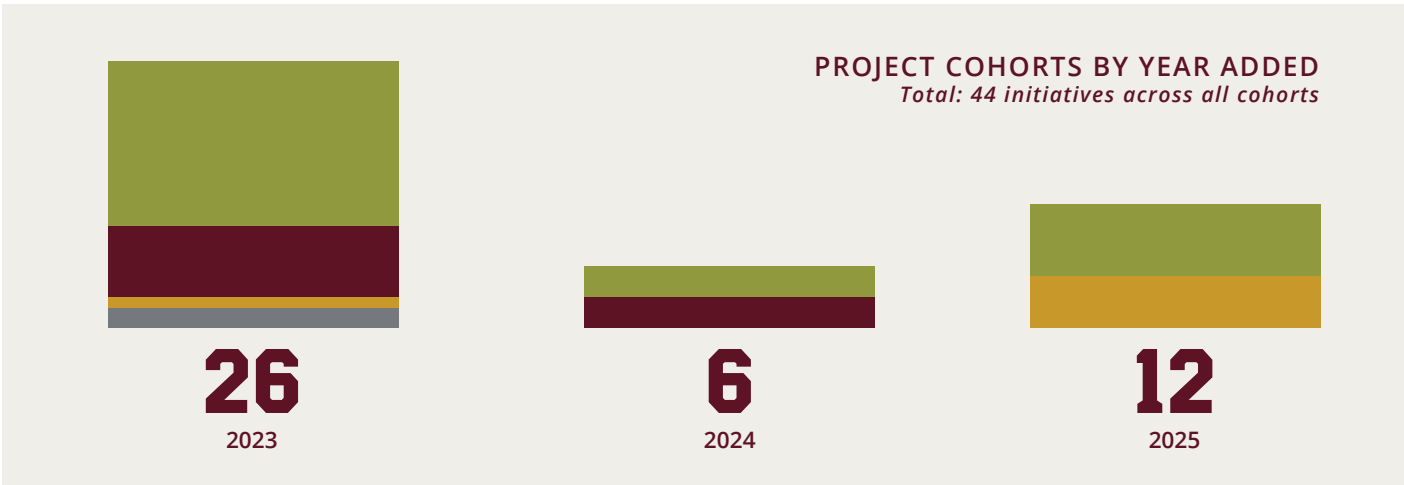
Accurate as of August 3, 2026

Steady State Active Slated Removed

GRAPH CATEGORIES

Steady State: The initial project or launch is complete and the effort is operating independently. **Active:** Project being advanced and deliverables are ongoing (Paused projects included as "active"). **Slated:** Project scoped and scheduled to begin before 2028. **Removed:** Rescoped or removed from the roadmap.

PROGRESS BY DATE ADDED



PLANS AT A GLANCE



PILLAR HIGHLIGHTS

Featured here are several “Transforming MSU” plan projects in the **Steady State** category, meaning they have been launched and are currently underway. These examples denote early progress during the first three years of the plan, solid successes or expectations for continued growth and priority.

SERVE THE WHOLE STUDENT

BULLDOG EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

Through Bulldog Experience, Mississippi State is making significant progress in expanding experiential learning opportunities for undergraduate students and strengthening the connection between these experiences and the academic curriculum. As the university’s Quality Enhancement Plan, Bulldog Experience has helped establish a more intentional framework for integrating hands-on learning into both curricular and co-curricular settings, with emphasis on student reflection as a connection back to academic learning and professional development.

Across the institution, students are engaging in a growing range of discipline-specific opportunities, allowing them to apply classroom knowledge in meaningful contexts. These experiences include undergraduate research, internships, study abroad, service learning, clinicals, practicums and capstone projects directly tied to students’ fields of study. Evidence from student reflections demonstrates that Bulldog Experience is helping our students better understand the relationship between their academic work and real-world application. Examples include undergraduate research in areas such as wildlife and equine health, applied engineering projects like athlete engineering, live case studies with local businesses, and practicums placing students in K-12 classrooms across the state and region.

In addition to academic and career-focused experiences, students benefit from engaging with Bulldog Experience through Student Experience Paths, which allow students to intentionally track involvement in areas such as student leadership, campus engagement and personal development. These pathways help students connect co-curricular involvement back to their growth as leaders and professionals through experiences in writing, creativity, nature, community and more. Collectively, these efforts reflect meaningful institutional progress in more deeply embedding experiential learning into MSU’s undergraduate experience.



GRADUATION RATE PROGRESS BY COHORT

2021–22	60%
2022–23	63%
2023–24	63%
2024–25	67%
2025–26	69%

COLLEGE OF INTEGRATIVE STUDIES

Encouraging students to pursue an academic journey combining their personal interests and career aspirations is at the center of our new College of Integrative Studies. With data science at the forefront of today's global marketplace, we have positioned this new college as the home to MSU's Data Science Academic Institute, with more than 10 program concentrations for students to choose from in earning the Bachelor of Science in Data Science degree. Additional undergraduate minors are also available within the college, including the minor in Tourism and Destination Development, which is providing students with distinct pathways for integrating their major discipline with other opportunities and areas of study. The College of Integrative Studies is a dynamic and innovative interdisciplinary approach for our undergraduate and graduate students to pursue their true interests.

We've also made it easier for our faculty to collaborate on research through the establishment of this new college and what many have labeled "convergence science." These scientists are continually advancing the work and influence of all our outstanding faculty, while escalating the reputation and presence of the university.

The College of Integrative Studies joins several expansions of our academic program offerings, including those in the College of Professional & Continuing Studies, the School

of Nursing, and the School of Health Professions. More details on these projects are included in this report.

APPRECIATIVE ADVISING

We're strengthening the student experience through a new coordinated advising model designed to provide more intentional, consistent and holistic support throughout a student's academic journey. Beginning in Fall 2026, students in the early stages of their degree programs will work closely with professional advisors embedded within colleges and departments and supported through the university's Center for Advising.

This coordinated approach emphasizes proactive guidance, early connection to campus resources, and personalized support that helps students navigate academic and personal challenges while building confidence and belonging at MSU. As students progress further into their degree programs, they will transition into increased mentorship from faculty and upper-division advisors with greater emphasis on career preparation, internships, undergraduate research and post-graduate opportunities.

Our model also expands professional development, training and advancement opportunities for advisors, helping create a stronger and more student-centered advising experience that supports achievement and long-term success for all Bulldogs.





ADDITIONAL SERVE THE WHOLE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

- Launched in 2025, the **Academic Achievement Team** brings together several key student success initiatives and support services, including the Career Center, Center for Academic Excellence, Center for Advising, Luckyday Scholars Program, Supplemental Instruction and University Tutoring, and Bulldog Rebound and Bounceback. By aligning these efforts, we're creating a more coordinated and proactive approach to supporting students, removing barriers and strengthening pathways to achievement, persistence and degree completion. This unit is also helping strengthen the integration of career readiness into the academic experience through expanded employer engagement and continued development of internship
- and co-op opportunities tied to academic credit, helping prepare students for meaningful careers and success after graduation.
- Our newly formed **Center for Innovation in Teaching Excellence** (CITE) is expanding opportunities for faculty to strengthen teaching and learning across all instructional formats. Through professional development programs, instructional resources and collaborative initiatives, CITE supports faculty in implementing evidence-based teaching practices, integrating emerging technologies and creating more engaging classroom experiences for students. From new faculty onboarding and teaching academies to
- campus-wide symposia and communities of practice, these efforts are helping foster a culture of instructional excellence that supports student engagement, belonging and academic success.
- Student Employment as High Impact Practice**, also known as Maroon LEADS, is building an accessible and positive on-campus work environment for our undergraduates which gives them hands-on, real-world job experiences in preparation for today's workforce. The purpose is to meet students where they are—engaging them in a safe environment where they gain both the career-ready skills and the university degree that positions them as top job candidates.

STRENGTHEN OUR BONDS

BULLDOG MENTORING PROGRAM

Standing out from a crowd of job applicants may be a daunting task for many soon-to-be college graduates, but at MSU we're readying students to enter the world of work through our Bulldog Mentoring Program. Matched with university alumni mentors who can offer professional experience and personal advice, students gain the tools needed to hone interview skills and resume writing, while also making business and industry connections to become top job candidates. MSU's online Bulldog Network is our exclusive networking platform that matches students with alumni, ready to offer a helping hand by supporting students through their academics and pursuit of employment that align with their knowledge, skills and aspirations.

Year	Student Mentees	Alumni Mentors	Matches
Fall/Spring 23-24	365	440	362
Fall/Spring 24-25	397	328	397
Fall/Spring 25-26	115	104	115

**Program shifted to a year-long mentoring structure in 2025-2026.*

CAMPUS SPACE UPGRADES

We're advancing an environment where both learning and living are seamlessly intertwined. Since the launch of Transforming MSU and as part of our 10-year infrastructure plan, we have completed several major projects designed to enhance both the academic and residential student experience. The new Jim and Thomas Duff Center provides modern instructional and support space for the Department of Kinesiology and Mississippi Institute on Disabilities, including state-of-the-art learning amenities to better support neurodivergent students. The new Azalea Hall strengthens the residential experience through community-style living spaces, the Luckyday Tower for MSU's Luckyday Scholars program, and expanded dining and gathering areas that encourage connection and collaboration outside the classroom. These efforts are complemented by the transformation of Perry Food Hall into a modern food hall and social hub with updated dining concepts, retail offerings, and lounge and study areas that create more inviting spaces for students to engage throughout the day. Also important to campus life and the Bulldog family experience are the new McCarthy Quad and Hardy Plaza (under construction), helping to create welcoming environments for relaxation and student engagement.

Our commitment to enhancing the student experience extends beyond the classroom and residence halls to every aspect of campus life, including Athletics. MSU is "home away from home" for student athletes in the Bulldog family, and their well-being is the No. 1 priority for our Division of Athletics. New training and





locker room amenities in Humphrey Coliseum for the basketball teams and current construction of an indoor practice field at the Leo Seal Jr. Football Complex are just two examples of Athletics' 10-year blueprint for completing projects that continue to elevate the player experience.

In Meridian, we are investing in facilities and partnerships that support academic growth and community engagement. Alongside new programs in healthcare professions and education, MSU is expanding and modernizing facilities to better serve students and workforce needs across the region. In partnership with the community and the Riley Foundation, we have plans for new academic, residential and student support spaces in downtown Meridian to create a more connected and vibrant campus environment. These investments will strengthen hands-on learning opportunities, expand access to high-demand degree programs and further position Meridian as a regional hub for education and healthcare. With the architects in place, the planning and design work is underway.

ADDITIONAL STRENGTHEN OUR BONDS ACHIEVEMENTS

- The **Faculty Success Team** was established in Fall 2024 to advance a comprehensive, coordinated approach to supporting faculty across all stages of their careers. The team's mission is to foster an environment where faculty thrive in teaching, research and service, with a focus on professional growth, well-being and a culture of excellence and collaboration. The team's overall report, informed by peer benchmarking and recommendations solicited from across the university, identified three strategic priorities for 2025. A new director of faculty recognition position aims to enhance visibility and recognition of faculty achievements, while a framework for faculty mentoring and a recruiting toolkit provides a consistent approach to growing our faculty ranks.
- MSU continues to expand **professional development** opportunities for faculty and staff through training, mentoring programs, leadership development and technology-focused learning initiatives. University-wide access to LinkedIn Learning provides thousands of courses and certifications in leadership, communication, workplace effectiveness and emerging technologies. The university has also increased its focus on artificial intelligence training and digital literacy, helping employees responsibly integrate new technologies into their work. Additional opportunities include supervisor training, conflict management programs, communication workshops and customized learning pathways through LinkedIn Learning and the PageUp Learning Management platform. Together, these efforts support a culture of continuous learning and professional growth across the university community.

IGNITE INNOVATION

VISION 2030: Keeping Mississippi's Agriculture and Forestry Value at Home

Grounded in research led by our university economists, Vision 2030 is a statewide initiative focused on keeping more of Mississippi's agricultural and forestry value within the state and transforming Mississippi from a raw-materials supplier into a value-added agriculture and forestry powerhouse. Developed in partnership with industry, agricultural and public sector leaders, the initiative addresses the challenge that, despite being among the nation's most productive sectors, Mississippi exports approximately \$10.6 billion in raw and partially processed agricultural and forestry products each year—roughly 75% of the state's commodities that could otherwise contribute to jobs, tax revenue and long-term economic growth within the state. The comprehensive roadmap will advance strategies centered on value-added processing and producer-led innovation, infrastructure and investment development, workforce and research capacity, and public policies and regulations that support long-term industry growth.

CYBERSECURITY AND COMPUTING

The Mississippi Cyber Initiative at Mississippi State began in 2021 as part of our support for Keesler Air Force Base's cyber training mission. Since then, MCI has established a digital forensics

lab supporting law enforcement partners, led cyber exercises through an existing internal cyber ecosystem, and launched K-12 outreach to develop future cyber leaders. Another outcome is regular summit gatherings of MCI partners and cybersecurity stakeholders, including business and industry, to assess the initiative's progress in championing national security, workforce development and economic growth. With Keesler as the primary training hub for the majority of Air Force cyber personnel, we're building the 100,000-square-foot Mississippi Cyber and Technology Center adjacent to the Biloxi military base as the headquarters and workforce training center for MCI. Stakeholders have set 2027 as the completion date.

ACHIEVEMENT OF ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH LIBRARIES (ARL) MEMBERSHIP

Mississippi State University Libraries was elected to membership in the Association of Research Libraries in April 2026, affirming MSU's standing among the nation's leading research institutions and recognizing our commitment to expanding access, supporting discovery and advancing research that addresses real-world challenges. This distinction reflects the continued growth of our research enterprise and aligns with a broader strategic focus on innovation, student success, community engagement and research excellence.





ADDITIONAL IGNITE INNOVATION ACHIEVEMENTS

- We continue to strengthen our national reputation as a **leading R1 research institution** through applied research and interdisciplinary collaboration focused on solving real-world challenges that matter to Mississippi and beyond. Through partnerships with organizations such as NOAA and USDA, researchers across the university are advancing work in areas including climate and weather, artificial intelligence, autonomy, cybersecurity, agriculture and simulation, while also creating hands-on research opportunities for students both on campus and across the state. That culture of innovation continues to gain national recognition. This year, an MSU researcher received one of the nation's most prestigious honors recognizing federally funded research with real-world

impact, underscoring the university's growing role in translating discovery into meaningful advances in areas such as health diagnostics and imaging. Through the Office of Technology Management, faculty, staff and students are supported in moving new ideas and discoveries beyond the laboratory and into practical application.

- The Division of Agriculture, Forestry, and Veterinary Medicine launched the **Food and Agriculture as Competitive Statecraft Collaboratory**. Our collaboratory serves as a hub for research, policy, and strategy development, bringing together researchers, policymakers, and industry leaders to explore the strategic role of food and agriculture in competitive statecraft and global security.

FY24 RESEARCH IMPACT

\$320M

MSU's research enterprise is a major driver of the university's economic impact. With \$320 million in FY24 research expenditures—more than half of all higher education R&D spending in Mississippi—MSU research generates \$320 million in income for Mississippians, supports 5,630 jobs statewide and contributes an estimated \$33.1 million in state and local tax revenue.

ELEVATE OUR COMMUNITY

UNDERGRADUATE, GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN HEALTH SCIENCES

For more than 50 years, MSU-Meridian has been providing educational opportunities for students in the East Central region of the state and beyond. MSU-Meridian has been transforming over the past five years to add degrees and programs which address a local, regional and national issue—the shortage of trained health professionals to fulfill rural healthcare needs. In 2021, we initiated the Master of Physician Assistant Studies program, setting the stage for us to develop additional healthcare programs in 2023 like two Healthcare Administration degrees—the Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Applied Science. Our Accelerated Master of Science in Nursing program accepted its first students in 2024, and we began the process to establish a hybrid Physical Therapy doctoral program in 2025. The rapid growth of our programs has seen the organization of these degree offerings under two schools: Nursing and Health Professions, and also open an Interprofessional Simulation Lab for experiential, or hands-on, learning.

In addition to physical health needs, underserved areas face significant challenges related to mental health and MSU-Meridian's new Mental and Behavioral Health Clinic is now open, accepting patients of all ages who need this type of care. Our Doctor of Psychology in Combined Health Services Psychology is positioned to increase the number of practitioners who can address a myriad of conditions, from effects from COVID-19 to emotional and psychological problems. We also offer the Bachelor of Science in Educational Psychology and Educational Specialist in School Psychology degrees.

In collaboration with the College of Forest Resources and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the College of Veterinary Medicine expanded graduate programming in One Health to prepare future leaders to address the interconnected challenges of animal, human and environmental health. The program equips students to tackle complex issues such as antimicrobial resistance, zoonotic diseases, and food safety and security while promoting healthy ecosystems.



\$1.7 BILLION AG ECONOMIC IMPACT

MSU's Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine—including MSU Extension, MAFES, the Forest and Wildlife Research Center and the College of Veterinary Medicine—generates \$1.7 billion in economic impact annually through research, outreach and support for Mississippi's agriculture, businesses and communities. Extension alone serves 90,000 4-H members and delivers research-based programs that generate millions in cost savings and economic benefits statewide.



WEST SIDE CAMPUS EXPANSION, CROSSROADS DISTRICT

With restaurants, retail and residential developments along University Drive having made the connection between our campus community and city of Starkville for years, the MSU Foundation and several private partners have announced the new Crossroads District to better define the area between MSU and the current Cotton District. This project will literally join campus to community with construction of a pedestrian land bridge across Highway 12 along with the now-underway, 122-room Hotel Madelon by Marriott Tribute Portfolio Hotels.

The planned development will progress over several phases in the next few years and include a new facility for our Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library; new business, restaurant and retail areas; housing opportunities for faculty and staff; office spaces; a 700-space parking garage, and more. Phase one's Hotel Madelon has an expected completion date of 2027.



ADDITIONAL ELEVATE OUR COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENTS

- The **College of Professional and Continuing Studies** has been established to enhance MSU's responsiveness to workforce demands and expand educational access beyond our traditional degree pathways. By coordinating applied programs, continuing education and cross-campus support services, CPCS develops and delivers career-relevant education while advancing instructional innovation universitywide.
- The university received the **Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement**, a nationally recognized designation affirming the depth and quality of MSU's collaborative work with communities across the state and beyond. In addition, MSU hosted our first standalone Excellence in Community Engagement Awards Ceremony, celebrating faculty, staff, students and partners whose work reflects the university's commitment to solving real-world challenges through meaningful community partnership.

TELL OUR STORY

UNIVERSITY BRAND HUB

To heighten awareness and continue shaping the impactful perception of Mississippi State, our Office of Public Affairs instituted an online brand hub in the fall of 2023. Working collaboratively with campus clients, this process for submission and review of external-facing communications was launched to align standardization of outward-facing marketing assets with the verbal and visual identity of the university. This includes assisting divisions with brand adherence in print and digital advertising and graphics, radio and television ads, billboards, magazines or reports (pre-publication proofs), brochures, webpages, e-newsletters, fliers and other promotional and informational materials.

Materials are submitted to the Hub by division, college, department and office lead communication personnel. Hub guidelines also provide clients with reasonable response times to their submissions. To date, OPA has reviewed 2,191 items from across campus through the Hub, an average of four items per day.

MARKET REACH EXPANSION/INCREASE

Several new admissions counselor positions have been created for strategic locations in-state and across the U.S., and marketing and other resources have been implemented in these areas. The Office of Admissions currently has 12 out-of-state counselors and eight inside Mississippi. The purpose is to expand our market reach for undergraduate admissions where we have significant market share. The end result also includes increases in branding recognition, alumni base and other opportunities.



UNIVERSITY-WIDE IMPACT
KEY METRICS REFLECTING MSU’S PROGRESS

BRAND HUB ACTIVITY

2,191

Items from across campus reviewed through the Hub since Fall 2023, an average of four per day.

SOCIAL MEDIA REACH GROWTH

Year	Instagram	Facebook	Total Reach
2023	108,282	1,648,085	1,756,913
2024	7,568,803	13,638,092	21,236,895
2025 to date	27,283,141	41,627,181	68,910,322

Reach: total unique people who see content. Reach increased +1,107% from 2023 to 2024 and +225% from 2024 to 2025.

SEC SOCIAL MEDIA RANKINGS

Top 5 SEC accounts for combined social media views across Facebook, Instagram, X and YouTube as of Dec. 31, 2025.



TRANSFORMING MSU BY THE NUMBERS

69%

6-year graduation rate
(2025–26 cohort)
Up from 60% in 2021–22

23,563

Current enrollment
(4% increase over 2 years)

17,544

Credentials awarded
2023–2025
(all degree levels)

GREAT COLLEGE TO WORK FOR

Mississippi State has been on the The Chronicle of Higher Education’s **Honor Roll** as a “Great College to Work For” continuously **since 2015**—a testament to our commitment to faculty and staff well-being and a thriving campus culture.

ADDITIONAL GOALS IN EARLY STAGES REFLECTING MSU'S VISION AND MISSION

While the accomplishments highlighted in this report reflect meaningful progress across the university, there is still significant work ahead as we continue advancing the goals of Transforming MSU. With our sesquicentennial approaching in 2028, the university remains focused on building upon this momentum and pursuing the many initiatives still ahead on our roadmap.

INNOVATIVE, HANDS-ON LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Our General Education courses are being transformed into the **AdvantaGE** program, which is designed to empower students to think holistically, creatively, and critically—preparing them not just for a career, but for leadership, contribution and lifelong-learning.

Through our **MSU Roma** partnership with Pontifical University Antonianum, we can broaden our international footprint, give our students more exposure to travel and learning opportunities, and increase opportunities for faculty partnerships across disciplines and borders.

EQUIPPING STUDENTS FOR A WORLD THAT NEEDS THEIR TALENT

To add value for students, we are assessing the implementation of **Modern Campus** to enable a co-curricular transcript/skills wallet that shows potential employers the skills and experience of our MSU graduates being honed beyond the classroom.

Updates to the **tuition and fee structure**, including the transition from capped tuition to overload tuition and the alignment of college fees with differing instructional costs across disciplines,

create greater flexibility to invest in priorities for the future. These changes will help support enhanced student services, smaller class sizes, expanded course offerings and stronger academic support while positioning MSU to continue delivering a high-value degree experience for years to come.

MEETING STUDENTS WHERE THEY ARE

We are advancing a more coordinated approach for **student financial support and intervention**. This initiative is designed for supporting students experiencing financial barriers that may place their enrollment and academic progress at risk. It aims to understand the circumstances affecting students and families with outstanding balances and connect them with support resources before challenges escalate and the evolving approach emphasizes proactive communication, individualized support and care rather than transactional processes alone. These efforts build upon broader campus-wide financial literacy initiatives focused on helping students develop skills related to managing limited income, understanding student loans and credit, budgeting effectively and planning for long-term financial well-being.





As we develop a **Senior Countdown** program designed to help students nearing graduation successfully reach the finish line, we are tapping into student data and proactive outreach. The initiative will identify seniors who may face barriers to timely graduation, including unmet credit requirements or financial challenges, and connect them with targeted support and resources. Complementary to this effort is the creation of transfer specialist and completion specialist roles within the **Academic Achievement Team**. These positions are designed to provide individualized guidance and one-to-one support for students who may need additional assistance navigating final degree requirements and completing their path to graduation.

SOLUTIONS TO THE WORLD'S BIGGEST CHALLENGES

Through a university-wide working group, we're identifying core research areas where we can make strategic investments and build national distinction for the future. Areas of emphasis that have already been identified include **autonomy and advanced systems**, where partnerships in agriculture and applied research continue to expand opportunities for innovation; **artificial intelligence**, which is rapidly transforming the pace and potential of research across every discipline; **water, energy and**

natural resources, where we are uniquely positioned to address challenges tied to our state's coastal and inland resources; and **food systems security**, where we continue to advance research and partnerships focused on the future of safe, abundant and healthy food systems that span the entire value chain.

The **Energy Resilience & Innovation Hub** is bringing together faculty, industry and state partners to strengthen collaboration around energy systems, infrastructure resilience and climate-informed risk. The hub will provide a dedicated space for sharing information, building partnerships and aligning research and development efforts across multiple sectors. As energy systems evolve, this initiative will support research, innovation and workforce development efforts that help prepare Mississippians for emerging opportunities while supporting the state's future energy needs.

Through continued emphasis and growth of experiential learning opportunities like **undergraduate research**, we are equipping the next generation of leaders to tackle complex challenges through discovery, innovation and creative problem-solving. These opportunities transform classroom learning into hands-on experience while helping students develop the collaboration, communication and critical thinking skills needed to address real-world issues impacting Mississippi and beyond.

HELPING OUR COMMUNITIES PROSPER

We continue to develop and implement a university-wide MSU **Community Engagement Framework** designed to strengthen how MSU connects teaching, research and service to communities across Mississippi. The framework expands outreach and engagement opportunities with faculty input while helping operationalize our land-grant mission. The council has identified five integrated priorities: fostering an engagement culture, strengthening infrastructure and systems, expanding learner access and experiences, deepening community partnerships, and amplifying visibility and recognition.

MSU has launched several targeted community engagement **pathfinder projects** focused on highlighting and strengthening existing community engagement efforts. These initiatives include capturing and sharing engagement stories across disciplines, developing an Engagement 101 micro-learning series for faculty, staff and students, piloting engagement mapping tools to better understand current outreach activity, and enhancing the Community-Engaged Learning Fellows program through stronger assessment and community partner feedback. Collectively, these projects are designed to demonstrate impact, test scalable ideas and build upon the university's existing strengths in engagement and outreach.



TAKING CARE OF WHAT MATTERS IN OUR OWN BACKYARD

To better support faculty success and scholarly impact, we are designing incentive and support programs, and also promoting development and retention through Faculty Success Team efforts. An example is the development of a structured, scalable **faculty mentoring program** model that builds on existing college-level programs, informed by a review of current practices, peer benchmarking and campus input to support faculty at all career stages universitywide. Additional initiatives within this team aim to expand access, improve coordination and support faculty success at all career stages.

We are expanding upon strong, division-led **leadership development programs** for midlevel managers and supervisors, including core skills training and preparation for critical conversations. These initiatives are helping shape a broader university-wide framework for developing and supporting the next generation of MSU employees and leaders.

FROM THE PROVOST

LOOKING FORWARD TOGETHER



HAIL STATE!

David Shaw

Provost & Executive Vice President

In this mid-cycle report, we've shared valuable information on how we're Transforming MSU through goals already met or underway in our Strategic Plan: 2023-2028. We've made important, noteworthy advancements through a variety of initiatives focused on academic and student success, career readiness, teaching excellence, community connection, campus infrastructure and so much more.

To date, it's been a shared journey of realizing opportunities and possibilities which wouldn't have materialized without you—our Bulldog family.

As we look forward to further application and accomplishment of what we've set before us in this plan, your comments, questions and suggestions are welcome.

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

Your input helps shape the future of Transforming MSU. Questions, comments and suggestions can be emailed to **transformation@msstate.edu** or directly to Provost Shaw at **david.shaw@msstate.edu**.



Mississippi State University is an equal opportunity institution.



MISSISSIPPI STATE
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MID-CYCLE UPDATE, AUGUST 2026
STARKVILLE, MISSISSIPPI
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