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A publication of the Division of Student Life
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INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

A MESSAGE FROM THE SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR THE DIVISION OF STUDENT LIFE & ENGAGEMENT



“TOGETHER, WE WILL CONTINUE TO BUILD UPON OUR LEGACY OF INCLUSIVITY, INNOVATION, AND A STRONG SENSE OF BELONGING, ENSURING THAT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY REMAINS A VIBRANT AND NURTURING SPACE FOR ALL GENERATIONS TO COME.”

As we wrap up another academic year, I am excited to share stories that highlight our spirited community. Student Life & Engagement recognizes a strong community thrives on diversity, so we continue to proudly advocate for a range of DEI-related efforts and partnerships.

This commitment is reflected in the initiatives and programs we showcase in this issue of *Serving State*. From innovative programs focused on well-being to initiatives that celebrate diverse perspectives, our aim remains unwavering: to cultivate a safe and inclusive environment where every student feels valued and empowered.

One of the year's highlights has been the introduction of the Office of Student Support and Accountability's Care and Intervention Team. This invaluable resource reflects our dedication to the mental health and well-being of all students and staff. Through their comprehensive services, they ensure each member of our community feels supported and can thrive.

I have also had the honor to witness countless moments of collaboration and inclusivity that have truly become hallmarks of the Spartan experience. From student organizations like ELFreeEC providing resources to the wider community to celebrations of cultural diversity like the Asian Pacific American Student Organization's Cultural Vogue, these efforts have played a vital role in creating a welcoming and supportive environment.

Moreover, I am deeply proud to celebrate the remarkable achievements of our community. Whether it is the Excellence in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Award bestowed upon Residence Education and Housing Services or how our students organized the first ever HEAL: Sexual Health Conference, these accomplishments showcase the dedication and commitment of our entire community.

As we reflect on the academic year, I am filled with immense gratitude for the unwavering support and dedication demonstrated by the entire

Spartan community. Together, we will continue to build upon our legacy of inclusivity, innovation, and a strong sense of belonging, ensuring that Michigan State University remains a vibrant and nurturing space for all generations to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vennie Gore'.

Vennie Gore
Senior Vice President for the Division of Student Life & Engagement

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Serving State is an online publication for guests and partners of the Division of Student Life & Engagement at Michigan State University. Our goal is to share divisional news and initiatives with Team MSU. Serving State is produced by Division of Student Life & Engagement Creative Services, 550 S. Harrison Road, Michigan State University, 517-353-1694.

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We collectively acknowledge that Michigan State University occupies the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary Lands of the Anishinaabeg — Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatomi peoples. In particular, the university resides on land ceded in the 1819 Treaty of Saginaw. We recognize, support and advocate for the sovereignty of Michigan's twelve federally-recognized Indian nations, for historic Indigenous communities in Michigan, for Indigenous individuals and communities who live here now, and for those who were forcibly removed from their homelands. By offering this Land Acknowledgement, we affirm Indigenous sovereignty and will work to hold Michigan State University more accountable to the needs of American Indian and Indigenous peoples.

Cover photo: Courtesy of Khalid Ibrahim, Eat Pomegranate Photography

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MSU Office of Student Support and Accountability Introduces the **CARE AND INTERVENTION TEAM**

This past August, the Michigan State University Office of Student Support and Accountability (OSSA) introduced the Care and Intervention Team. Prioritizing student safety, this new initiative uses a collaborative and proactive approach to identifying, preventing, assessing, intervening and reducing threats to the safety and well-being of the MSU community.

Consisting of university personnel from a variety of units with expertise in student affairs, mental and physical health, student conduct, human resources, and law enforcement/campus safety, the Care and Intervention Team helps to ensure a safe, supportive physical and emotional environment at the university. Goals for the team include:

- Provide a safe and supportive physical and emotional environment for members of the university community.
- Identify, assess and intervene with individuals who are struggling or who demonstrate concerning or threatening behavior.
- Provide support and resources to community members who are concerned for another individual.

“We are incredibly excited to launch the reimagined Care and Intervention Team. As an interdisciplinary team, this team will be able to support our community in new ways,” said Mackenzie Fritz, director for OSSA. “We will lead with care to help those who are struggling, while also addressing potential safety concerns.”

A REVISED APPROACH

The Care and Intervention Team combines three priorly existing teams that had similar goals and intentions: the Behavioral Threat Assessment Team (BTAT) for students, the Behavioral Threat Assessment Team for employees and the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT). This revised approach will assist in coordinating responses and, most

importantly, intervention, to produce more efficient and direct ways to support the community.

Nonclinical case managers in OSSA support the Care and Intervention Team, which meets weekly to discuss the individuals for whom a case manager has already conducted intake. The Care and Intervention Team is the larger group that comes together to discuss individuals to determine interventions. In some cases, OSSA and other campus partners will or already have implemented the interventions.

THE GREEN FOLDER

The Green Folder was developed as an informational guide designed to aid faculty and staff in recognizing and supporting students and employees of concern. Feelings of isolation and hopelessness when faced with academic and life changes can easily disrupt academic and work performance or overall functions, which may lead to serious consequences, including dysfunctional coping.

This informational guide outlines the reporting process for contacting the Care and Intervention Team regarding an individual’s health and safety. It also lists multiple related campus resources, breaks down the role of mandatory reporters, and highlights indicators of distress and risk factors for individuals of concern.

Faculty and staff can access the Green Folder at ossa.msu.edu/greenfolder.

UPDATED INTAKE PROCESS

Under the Care and Intervention Team, referrals and intake is managed by OSSA whereas previously, they were handled through MSU Police. This helps ensure police records are not created when unneeded.

The “Care” portion of the Care and Intervention Team introduces a team of nonclinical case managers in OSSA who will work to provide resources to the impacted parties

while also supporting the person of concern. They will follow up with reporting parties, make referrals to appropriate offices, and direct case management with students while coordinating with other appropriate units.

Units across campus are encouraged to invite OSSA to help train offices about this new team. Fritz believes one of the most important messages for people to know is how and what to report. Reports can be submitted via a form at ossa.msu.edu/cait. While the Care and Intervention Team reporting form is meant to refer to situations that are of concern, it is not to replace direct referrals to services such as MSU Counseling & Psychiatric Services or the Employee Assistant Program. Urgent issues should still go to 911 (including welfare checks).

WHAT SHOULD BE REPORTED?

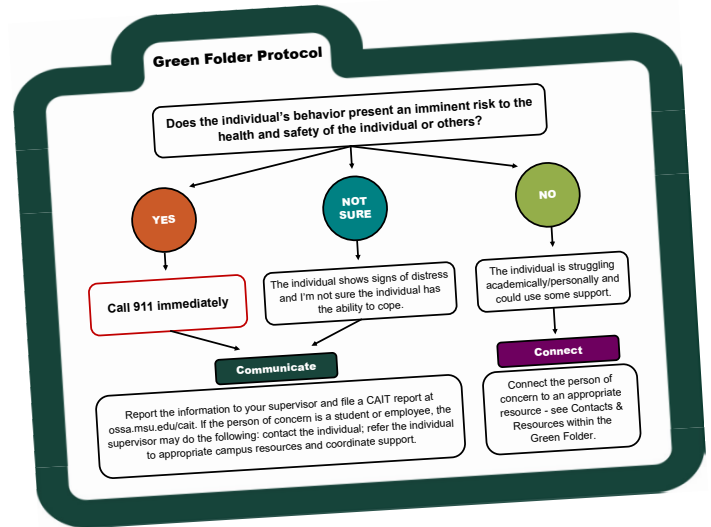
- Thoughts of suicide or harming self
- Threats or acts of violence to others
- Acts of physical harm to self
- Any behavior that is unusual or unexpected given the circumstances

After a report is made, it comes to OSSA and the case managers. The team of case managers then reach out to the appropriate unit, such as Human Resources, the Residential Care and Community Expectations (RCCE) team, or others. Outreach and follow-up are done to assess the correct resources and courses of intervention.

It is an extremely important process, one that OSSA feels allows the team to lead from a place of care to potentially meet a wide spectrum of needs.

Allyn Shaw, assistant vice president for the Department of Student Development and Leadership and dean of students, of which OSSA falls under, agrees it is important for people to know how to report and is confident the team will make big impacts.

“A safe and supportive environment for our community is paramount. We are excited about the Care and Intervention Team and are confident the updates that it provides will be beneficial for Spartans,” said Shaw. “This is extremely important work being done. It’s vital to continue progressing and updating the process to make reporting and intervention easier and more impactful. With the introduction of the Care and Intervention Team, we believe this progresses that effort in substantial ways.”



Contacts & Resources

Emergency Response - Call 911		Student Support Resources	
Non-emergencies		Associated Students of Michigan State University (ASMSU)	517-355-6286
MSU Police and Public Safety (DPPS)	517-355-2221	Council of Graduate Students (COGS)	517-353-9189
East Lansing Police Department	517-351-4220	Office of Student Support & Accountability	517-884-0789
Lansing Police Department	517-483-4600	Gender and Sexuality Campus Center	517-353-9520
Lansing Township Police Department	517-485-1700	Graduate Student Life & Wellness	517-884-1332
Meridian Township Police Department	517-332-6526	Migrant Student Services	517-433-9920
Bath Township Police Department	517-641-6271	Office for Cultural and Academic Transitions	517-353-7145
Ingham County Sheriff's Office	517-676-2431	Office for International Students and Scholars	517-353-1720
Principal Administrators		Office of Institutional Equity	517-353-3922
Associate Provost for Graduate Education	517-353-3220	Residence Education and Housing Services	517-353-8830
Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education	517-353-5380	Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities	517-884-5483
Office of Student Support & Accountability	517-884-0789	Student Health Services at Olin	517-884-7273
Consultation and Urgent Response (24-Hour Availability)		Student Life & Engagement	TY: 517-355-1293
Center for Survivors 24-Hour Crisis Line	517-372-6666	Student Parent Resource Center	517-884-6546
Community Mental Health (24-Hour Emergency Service)	517-346-8460	Student Veterans Resource Center	517-433-3745
Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS)	517-355-8270	Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities	517-884-5973
Counseling and Psychiatric Services 24/7 Crisis Line	517-355-8270, press 1	Faculty & Staff Resources	
End Violent Encounters (EVE) 24-Hour Hotline	517-372-5572	Employee Assistance Program	517-355-4506
McLaren Greater Lansing Hospital	517-975-6000	Office of Institutional Equity	517-353-3922
MSU Safe Place	517-355-1100	Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities	517-884-7273
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	1-800-273-8255	WorkLife Office	TY: 517-355-1293
Sparrow Hospital (24-Hour line)	517-364-1000		517-353-1635

This is not a comprehensive list. For additional resources and assistance, contact the Care and Intervention Team at ossa.msu.edu/cait. For emergencies, call 911.

Indicators

Know the indicators of distress and risk factors for individuals of concern. Be vigilant of patterns, duration, and severity - not just symptoms. For emergencies - call 911.

Academic	Physical	Psychological	Behavioral
Sudden decline in quality of work or grades	Significant change in hygiene or appearance	Family/relationship violence and sexual misconduct	Persistent disorderly or disruptive behavior
Repeated absences from class, lab, or other meetings	Noticeable weight loss or gain	Self-disclosure of personal issues such as family problems, financial difficulties, or grief	Unusual, atypical, disturbing behavior, or isolation from others
Disorganized performance	Significant fatigue or change in energy level	Problems with concentration or changes in mood or anxiety, such as irritability, panic, or depressed mood	Reports of suicidal or self-harmful behavior (giving away prized possessions), or thoughts of harming self or others
Multiple requests for extensions	Signs of drug or alcohol use (high or intoxicated)	Difficulty controlling emotions	Threats of violence to others
Overly demanding of faculty and staff	Visible injuries (cuts, burns, bruises)	Thoughts of suicide or harming others	Acts of violence to others
Atypical content in writings or presentations	Garbled, tangential or slurred speech	Delusions, paranoia, or hallucinations, such as hearing voices	Harassing or controlling behavior
Individual or group meetings tend to focus on personal concerns rather than academic issues	Pressured speech (loud, overly animated, agitated, or rapid)	Reported concern by peers about the mental health of the individual	Destruction of property, theft, or vandalism
	Increase in psychosomatic complaints that do not have a medical etiology	Loss of motivation, apathy or trouble looking towards the future	Possession of a dangerous weapon or firearm on campus

This is not a comprehensive list. For additional resources and assistance, contact the Care and Intervention Team at ossa.msu.edu/cait. For emergencies, call 911.

Graphics: The Green Folder provides information and resources to assist faculty and staff in recognizing and supporting student and employees of concern.



REHS EARNS EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION AWARD

Michigan State University (MSU) and the The Office for Institutional Diversity and Inclusion Excellence in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Awards (EDEIA) ceremony took place Friday, Feb. 9, at the Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center. The EDEIA recognizes the contributions of individuals and units that further diversity, equity and inclusion in:

- Teaching
- Research
- Programming
- Service
- Community Outreach
- Organizational change

During the ceremony, Student Life & Engagement’s (SLE) Residence Education and Housing Services (REHS) received the Excellence in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion award for its efforts to create inclusive spaces across its units. Several REHS team members were present to accept the award on behalf of the department.

IMPACTFUL EFFORTS

The award represents the work of roughly 300 full-time team members and hundreds of student employees whose efforts help to foster a campus

culture that empowers people to question and dismantle oppressive systems.

“It is humbling to have been recognized in such a significant way, as there is still much work to do,” said Associate Director for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for Residence Halls Education Eduardo Olivo. “I am proud of many of our REHS staff members who have made the decision to disrupt oppressive systems that negatively impact our students and staff members.”

CONTINUING COMMITMENT

REHS focuses on questioning and dismantling oppressive systems through DEI initiatives that align with the department’s culture and principles. Core examples include:

- The Racial Equity Impact
- Analysis Team
- REHS Dialogues
- The REHS DEI Dashboard
- REHS Employee Resource Groups
- The Gender-Inclusive Housing team

“It is important to recognize those who spend significant time and effort in the process of neutralizing and mitigating harm and disparities across campus communities,” said

Olivo. “This ceremony helps amplify how important it is to acknowledge the work and the voices of those who continue dreaming of a more just and equitable world.”


BEYOND MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

DEI is more than a core value for REHS, it is a collective ethical responsibility that extends beyond MSU.

“Our overall goal is to elevate critical consciousness around centering the voice of the most marginalized, creating a community sense of care and interrogating inequities,” said Olivo.

“As part of our mission, we aspire to become an anti-racist, anti-oppression department in SLE and MSU.”

Much work remains, but the department values the work already done in support of its diverse student body and team.

To read about the ceremony and the other awardees, visit 2023-24 Excellence in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Awards. 

Photo, left to right: Associate Director for DEI for Residence Halls Education Eduardo Olivo, REHS Director Helena Gardner and MSU VP for DEI Jabbar Bennet

WELLNESS KITS PROVIDED ON CAMPUS

East Lansing Free Emergency Contraceptives (ELFreeEC) is now providing free emergency contraceptives and other sexual health items to the community. The organization, founded by MSU students Harsna Chahal, Mackenzie Lovell, Julia Walters and Rylee Warner, aims to make emergency contraceptives accessible and affordable to all MSU students and the surrounding community.

Plan B or a "Wellness Kit" are available for pickup at the locations below. These campus resources prioritize privacy and confidentiality, so staff will not monitor selections.

- Gender & Sexuality Campus Center (Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.)
- Women*s Student Services (WSS) (Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Friday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.)
- Center for Gender in a Global Context (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.)

"[WSS] has a pantry in the back where you just go and grab any supplies like pregnancy tests and emergency contraception," said Chahal. "It's very private so we're not really watching to see if you're grabbing things, but more so there to direct you to the pantry if you need."

Individuals can also opt in to meeting with a volunteer at an agreed upon public location in East Lansing or on campus. To do this, individuals need to fill out the Free Emergency Contraceptive Request located on the ELFreeEC website or Instagram. This method is confidential, and any information will be deleted after the meet up.

EMPOWERING STUDENTS

While ELFreeEC was formed in fall 2023 by four students, the organization has now grown to 10 volunteers, ranging from first-year students to second-year medical students. The group has done a lot of work on campus and plans to expand its offerings.

"Since October, we've handed out 1,807 Plan Bs, which comes out to \$90,350 that we've saved students, and that's only the Plan B," said Warner. "That number has skyrocketed in the last two weeks because we had some anti-abortion protesters on campus, and we were able to handout over 256 Plan B's just by being on campus."

ELFreeEC goes beyond Plan B, offering a wider range of free items including menstrual products, sexual health products, pregnancy tests, and even food. They also go beyond immediate needs, working to ensure the longevity of affordable and accessible emergency contraceptives and other sexual health products.

"A great analogy we like to bring to this is \$50 is a lot — my utility bill last month cost roughly \$32," said Chahal. "That kind of money is so expensive because we're students, we're not full-time employees. \$50 is a lot. That pays for someone's utilities."

EXPANDING ACCESS


The American Society for Emergency Contraceptives (ASEC) is a national organization that envisions a world where everyone has access to affordable emergency contraceptives. ASEC launched the Emergency Contraception for Every Campus project to empower student advocates. Through this project, ELFreeEC can provide individuals easy access to emergency contraceptives.

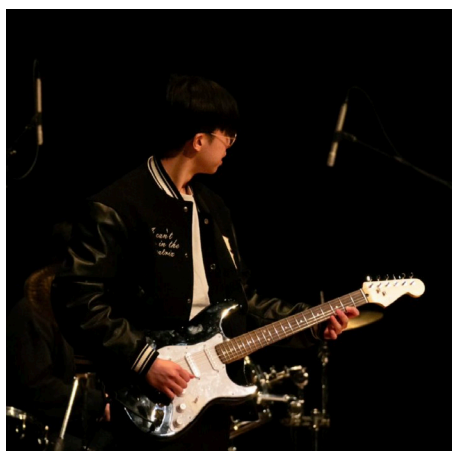
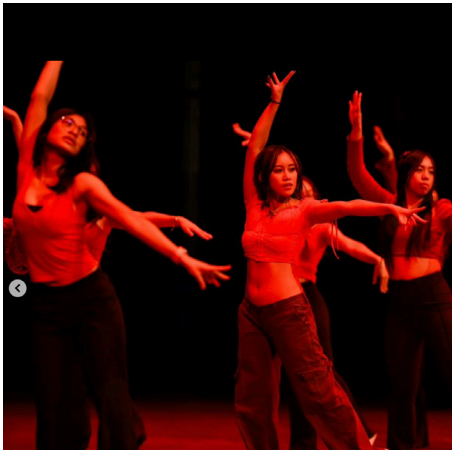
"We submit a form every single month requesting as much Plan B as we want, and there's really no limit to it," said Lovell. "It's a really good resource."

With the support of this project as well as MSU administration and stakeholders, ELFreeEC is working to install a wellness vending machine on campus by May.

"Our optimal location that we're looking at would be the MSU Union," said Walters. "It would be accessible to students, and it also would be available past the normal business hours, which is a really big concern of ours." The wellness vending machine would contain reduced price Plan Bs, condoms, personal lubricant, Tylenol, and additional wellness materials and products, providing students with the access they need.

GET INVOLVED

ELFreeEC works to ensure long-term access to affordable sexual healthcare for all students. To learn more about ELFreeEC and to get involved with their student advocacy efforts, visit their Instagram or website. 



APASO HOSTS 21ST CULTURAL VOGUE: MSU'S APIDA/A COMMUNITY CELEBRATES IDENTITY UNAPOLOGETICALLY

On Feb. 17, hundreds of high-energy attendees filled the stands of the Wharton Center for Performing Arts to watch a variety of Asian Pacific American Student Organization (APASO) affiliates perform at the 21st Cultural Vogue. The event is the MSU APIDA/A community's primary talent showcase, held annually.

"The purpose of Cultural Vogue is to be a showcase of our APIDA/A diaspora," said comparative cultures and politics junior and APASO President Hanaa Yoo. "That's done through dances, skits, singing and other performances. So, it's a great way to bring the community together."

For each performance, cheers and roars came from various ends of the crowd for their favorite student groups, friends and even siblings. Some attendees brought signs in support of the clubs. At the end of the show, performers earned awards such as Audience's Choice. It was the first time in Cultural Vogue history these awards were handed out.

"I think the event went really well. Our turnout was great! I feel like the crowd was super involved. We had so much energy the entire time," said political science, economics, and history senior Megan Smejkal, who served as the APASO Cultural Vogue chair. But it wasn't just the crowd that brought the energy: "There was so much life in every performance!"

The energetic mood was fitting, considering the event's theme: Unapologetic. Along with cultural exhibitions and contemporary performances, skits and spoken word helped tell an important story of cultural enrichment and pride in APIDA/A identity.

Performances ranged from a rock act by Thai Club, spoken word by the APASO, an acapella medley from Spartan Sur, and choreographed dances from several groups, including the Korean Student Association and the Chinese-American Student

Coalition. There were also traditional dances from the Hmong American Association and PERMIAS. Traditional Tinikling was performed by the Pilipino American Student Society and Spartan Diabolo amazed with an acrobatic set of traditional Chinese yo-yo. Twinjabi, a music duo of two Punjabi brothers, served as keynote speakers, sharing how their personal journeys into music meant remaining true to themselves.

Beyond celebrating culture and camaraderie, Yoo said the timing of

"I really liked the message, and I think that's something we can take even after college into our careers — just appreciate ourselves for our fullness. We're not just one thing," Schurman said.

this event held special and particular significance for this branch of the Spartan community.

"When we first put out the date for Cultural Vogue, there were some who wondered if that would be the best time because it follows so closely the remembrance events of Feb. 13," explained Yoo. "But really, what this event does is bring community together. We thought that was exactly what we needed this week. Cultural Vogue helps build community."

For psychology sophomore Maddie Schurman, building community and becoming exposed to other cultures was precisely why she attended Cultural Vogue for the first time.

"I thought it was amazing. It was really cool to see all the Asian-based clubs and organizations come together to celebrate our diversity, especially because we're a predominately white

institution. So, it was great to see ourselves band together and celebrate our differences," she said.

Schurman added that, as someone of Chinese descent, she had been exposed to the Chinese Student Association and was also aware of the Korean Student Association. However, she had not been exposed to many of the other groups.

"Being able to witness the different dances and performances today opened my eyes to their cultures," she said.

As chair for the event, Smejkal said exposure is a goal for Cultural Vogue, with the understanding that being Asian or Pacific Islander or Desi American or however one identifies, is not about being recognized as a monolith nor conforming to societal expectations. An event such as Cultural Vogue shows, in front of glaring lights, the rich variety and depth of APIDA culture as well as intersectionality in APIDA/A identity.

"What does it mean to be 'Asian enough?' Why are we always falling into this archetype of oriental mythology? We don't need to be that. So, Unapologetic [as a theme] was telling everyone regardless of age, regardless of their nationality, that you can be who you are," said Smejkal. "No matter what. You don't have to prove yourself. You can just be you, whoever you want to be."

For attendees like Schurman, the message was received loud and clear.

"I really liked the message, and I think that's something we can take even after college into our careers — just appreciate ourselves for our fullness. We're not just one thing," Schurman said. "We're not just students at Michigan State. We're Chinese or Vietnamese, men, women, all those things. It's about expressing our identities and not apologizing to the world for who we are." 🗨️

Photos previous page: Performances at the MSU APIDA/A 21st Cultural Vogue



INAUGURAL HEAL CONFERENCE

Successfully Spotlights Sexual Health

When two Women*s Student Services interns pitched the idea of sexual health conference last fall, Director Dr. Heather Shea understood the benefits immediately. And while Shea agreed to help with the event, she says the students handled the bulk of the planning. They just needed the green light.

About six months later, nearly 200 people attended the inaugural HEAL: Sexual Health Conference at the MSU Union in March. Healthcare Education Advocacy Leaders, or HEAL, was created to bring awareness to and encourage sexual health research, advocacy and education.

Master of Public Health graduate student Harsna Chahal and pre-med senior Nupur Heria were the interns who came up with the idea and served as the conference organizers.

“We’ve both been involved in health equity initiatives at MSU. We’ve connected with so many organizations here and so many amazing individuals doing similar work,” says Heria about how the idea for HEAL came about. “But we’ve never seen a singular platform for all these people to come together. So, we thought, ‘What if we have a conference where we could bring together not only research professionals but also those in community engagement and advocacy?’”

Heria says, in today’s environment, sexual health is no longer just a medical issue. It’s also an education, advocacy and political issue. So, on top of producing a well-rounded approach to sexual health, she also says the conference allows people to feel comfortable simply talking about sexual health aloud.

By providing evidence that challenges misconceptions, sexual health research dismantles stigma. This knowledge empowers the creation of effective policies, education and advocacy efforts to prevent issues and promote inclusivity. The HEAL Conference capitalizes on this by offering participants the opportunity to explore different types of research and resources and get involved in the movement.

The conference hosted various speakers and panel discussions on topics such as emergency contraception, mental health and more. Additionally, student researchers exhibited project posters alongside nonprofit organizations from around Mid-Michigan. Organizations like Planned Parenthood of Michigan, Helping Women Period and the Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health were among the groups present.

Along with MSU students and professionals, students and partners from the University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University and even a few local high schools were on hand



Photo: HEAL: Sexual Health Conference at the MSU Union

to showcase their work, helping to ensure the dialogue extends far and wide. The organizers think this dialogue and conferences like these can have a large impact.

Hailey Grabowski was one of those students. The Monroe County Middle College student presented their research project on bi+ (plurisexual) identities at the conference. Their school is a five-year program that culminates in a high school diploma, up to 60 transferable college credits, a professional certificate and/or an associate degree. They're happy to get the opportunity to gain experience before entering college and to present their work in a welcoming and fitting environment.


"A lot of [sexual health] research has very sexist roots and monosexist roots. So, studying plurisexual identity is so important," says Grabowski. "As a bi+ individual myself, it has been so incredible to be part of that change that will later inform things like healthcare, education and future research."

Grabowski plans to continue to be part of that research in the future. In college, Grabowski aims to study psychology and gender studies. But first, they acknowledge how much of a privilege it is being able to present their work at an event like HEAL at the world-class, renowned research institute that is MSU.

"It is such a big deal, especially not having graduated high school yet. I never would've predicted that I'd have the opportunity to do something like this," Grabowski says. "It's intimidating because, as a first-generation student and young person, I don't have a lot of background in this or experience doing anything like this."

Now Grabowski can say they do have some experience. It's stories and ultimately paths like theirs that the HEAL organizers intended to impact and make visible when they envisioned the conference.

"We wanted people to interact and be able to share their data. They can talk about their programs and their initiatives — spark ideas at other colleges and universities," Chahal says. "That's a major takeaway I really hope individuals take from here — that it sparks ideas for new programs, new advocacy legislation. With a collective voice, we can help other institutions and other student organizations on their campuses."

To make the event possible, the conference is sponsored by various organizations on campus, including Student Life & Engagement (SLE), Women*s Student Services (WSS), the Associated Students of Michigan State University (ASMSU), among others. 



WHARTON CENTER PARTNERS WITH MSU CULINARY SERVICES FOR **SMALL ISLAND BIG SONG**

This March, the Wharton Center for Performing Arts collaborated with a number of campus community partners to showcase Small Island Big Song, a multi-platform project uniting the seafaring cultures of the Pacific and Indian Oceans through song. This contemporary and relevant musical statement comes from a region that is at the frontline of the climate crisis.

Small Island Big Song connects the islands of the Pacific and Indian oceans through artistic collaboration to present the music of a region connected by an ancient seafaring heritage. Live performances, like the one presented at the Wharton Center March 21, feature a roster of respected islander artists performing a mix of music and spoken word paired with footage collected during a three-year trip through 16 countries guided by the artists on their homelands.

The Wharton Center team had been working with community partners since November to plan what became a four-day residency for Small Island Big Song. One highlight of the residency featured a partnership with MSU's Department of Student Life & Engagement's (SLE) Culinary Services (CS).

The evening of March 18, MSU students and guests were invited to attend a special dinner at The Edge at Akers dining hall, during which, they could enjoy a screening of the short film "Small Island Big Song: An

Oceanic Songline" in Akers Auditorium. Those who attended the screening had the chance to win two tickets to that Thursday's Wharton Center performance.

The CS team offered a themed dinner menu inspired by Small Island Big Song. Executive Chef Kevin Cruz, who oversees MSU's East Neighborhood dining halls, watched the short film before he began considering menu items that could represent the various countries featured.

"I noticed that many flavors and spices I utilize in my Hispanic cooking were intermingled with the Asian Pacific Islander recipes, so it came together perfectly," shared Cruz.

To ensure the most representative menu, after conducting research on and outlining initial food items, Cruz and the culinary team worked with SLE Inclusive Campus Initiative Program Director Meaghan Kozar to organize a tasting event. Community partners, including representatives from the Asian, Pacific Islander, Desi American/Asian Faculty and Staff Association (APIDA/AFSA), the Asian Pacific American Student Organization (APASO), and the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community were invited to participate. They shared valuable feedback on the authenticity of menu selections, which allowed chefs to adjust the recipes before the event. A few highlights of

the final menu included chargrilled fish wrapped in banana leaves, rendang beef, turon, and tropical smoothies.

Kozar, having attended the event following the preparatory test tasting, recognized the consideration put into representing the cultures depicted in Small Island Big Song's performances.

"It was absolutely apparent how the culinary staff listened to our recommendations and applied them," she said.

She was also quick to add how this attention to detail carries weight beyond just the taste of the food. "This is a wonderful example of a successful collaboration that brings together diverse communities while embracing the expertise and influence of lived experiences."

The attention to detail didn't go unnoticed by Joy Hannibal, Detroit M.A.D.E. Scholars Program director and interim director of Pathway Programs in MSU's Neighborhood Student Success Center, who attended the dinner and screening.

"As someone of Pacific Islander heritage, I appreciate the effort, research and time spent to identify and prepare foods from island cultures represented in Small Island Big Song," said Hannibal. "It is meaningful to see food on the menu that utilizes ingredients connected to home."

Interim Corporate Executive Chef for Culinary Services Bryan Latz also believes deeply in the positive impact events and partnerships like this can have. "It's so important that we create events and experiences like Small Island Big Song for our students. Many of them are far from home, and we want to make them feel comfortable and welcome."

In addition to the dinner and film screening with CS, the Wharton Center partnered with the Residential College in the Arts and Humanities (RCAH), College of Music, Asian Studies, the Native American Institute – MSU, Nokomis Center, and LATTICE Teacher Network.

Monday saw members of the Small

Island Big Song company visiting the Pattengill Biotechnical Magnet School to present to 75 first graders. The company then visited Professor David Mcarthy's class in RCAH, attended a welcome potluck at the Nokomis Center, and then led a drumming event at Wharton Center for 45 attendees.

On Tuesday, the company visited two MSU College of Music Classes, followed by a visit with McCarthy's class to the Ingham County Youth Center as part of its Incarcerated Arts program. Next, the visiting performers participated in a climate activism panel at the Erikson Hall Kiva attended by members of the public. Wednesday, the company presented a lecture/demonstration at Murphy Elementary in Haslett for about 75 fifth graders.

Senior Education Program Manager for the Wharton Center Institute for Arts & Creativity Kelly Stuible-Clark expressed her pleasure with the success of this not only fun but impactful partnership.

"We were thrilled at how eager SLE and Culinary Services were to partner with this, and the way it was handled was outstanding. I think about when I was in college, how cool a dining experience like this would have been," Stuible-Clark said. "I hope that the students learned more about what offerings we have here at Wharton, and I hope that we're able to partner with the SLE team for future events!"

And did the assorted menu satisfy?

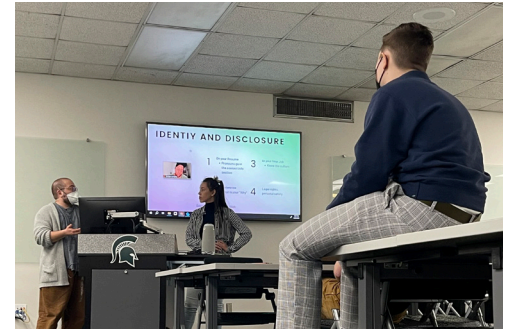
"The consensus at our table was that the huli huli cauliflower and the pork belly on the bao bun with the pineapple slaw were the best of the evening," Stuible-Clark said. "You could tell how the culinary team put so much work into making these delicious, authentic recipes."

Visit eatatstate.msu.edu and whartoncenter.com to learn about upcoming on-campus events. 🍷

Photos: Small Island Big Song-themed dinner at The Edge at Akers; Previous page, performance by Small Island Big Song



CSN AND GSCC WORK TO FILL GAPS WITH CAREER FOR QUEERS EVENT



Career Services Network (CSN) and the Gender and Sexuality Campus Center (GSCC) hosted MSU's first Career for Queers event March 26.

Career Adviser in CSN Ashley Bustamante and Coordinator in GSCC Morgan Doherty had been discussing the gaps in programming regarding careers and MSU's Queer community and how to help fill them. Together, they conceptualized an event that could help better inform Queer students about the transition from college to the workforce.

Doherty is happy to share they didn't experience too many challenges in getting Careers for Queers, held in the Student Services Building's Career Exploration Center, off the ground. They added; however, "There are still many obstacles toward finding employment for students with marginalized gender and sexual identities. Students regularly visit the GSCC seeking assistance in searching for jobs where they will be able to work and live safely."

Both Doherty and Bustamante saw a clear need for an event such as this after hearing from several students requesting support.

"An event like this is crucial because people do not often talk about the Queer experience when it comes to job searching, applying or interviewing, nor even what it's like once you have the job. We live in a world that discriminates if you include your pronouns on a resume — something so simple that can have your application denied," says Bustamante.

To help guide the journey and answer some of those questions, the duo invited several Queer and trans recent MSU grads. In discussing their experiences, they'd also be imparting important wisdom about learning how to move into a career with security and authenticity.

Elliot Bennet, a zoology and neurobiology senior, heard about the event from Doherty. Knowing Bennet would be graduating soon, Doherty believed the event would be especially helpful to Bennet, considering one of the panelists would be in their chosen industry.

Bennet shares, "This was very helpful and just comforting to hear that someone who identifies like me has found success in my field of interest. I rarely hear about gender non-conforming biologists/zoologists, which makes me feel like an outcast. Meeting someone who is around my age, working in this field and identifying like me just makes me feel all warm inside. This makes me feel less alone."

Bennet also says it was helpful to hear about the various resources available to support trans and gender non-conforming people as they enter the workforce. Unfortunately, support is not something they had yet experienced in the field.

"When I interned at a zoo, they didn't have gender-neutral spaces. I was given the option of having to choose a gender or go to a space in the basement of a building that I don't work in," Bennet recalls. "Then it becomes more stressful for me. So, it

was helpful to hear others' suggestions on what could be done to help this [in] the future. I now understand that it's also important to learn of groups that could even speak up for me if I did not feel comfortable doing so."

Bustamante and Doherty say it's important to do research and understand if a company has policies or structures that protect its LGBTQIA2S+ community. They also suggest making sure people at the company/organization adhere to calling one by their preferred name — human resources should help to ensure dead names are no longer part of the work environment.

Having information like this and other resources shared at Careers for Queers that can go a long way in helping someone feel comfortable in their career. With this in mind, Bustamante and Doherty hope to continue the event annually and that students become more aware of opportunities like these.

Bennet is appreciative of the opportunity. "The fact that official MSU offices are taking the time to facilitate these discussions shows that LGBTQIA+ folks are seen and cared about in those offices. Additionally, this shows that folks care about our future just as much as other people's," Bennet says, adding, "There is a lot of hate going on in the world, and it can make it a lonely place. Having events like these shows that people care and that you are not alone." 🗣️

Photos: Career for Queers event March 26

GSCC'S STRONGER TOGETHER DINNER SERIES FOSTERS INCLUSION

The Gender and Sexuality Campus Center (GSCC) launched its Stronger Together dinner series last fall with a focus on building community and fostering inclusion.

The first dinner was held Monday, Oct. 30, 2023, from 6-8 p.m. in the Student Services Building, Room 6.

Funded through a Creating Inclusive Environments Grant (CIE) from the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion (IDI), the program brings together student, faculty and staff leaders for insightful discussions and relationship building. The CIE program aims to improve the campus experience for students, faculty and staff by supporting initiatives in diversity, inclusion, equity and outreach.

Through the work of GSCC Assistant Director Oprah Jrenal, GSCC was able to secure the grant over the summer. The money is used to cater the meetings and to provide snacks and supplies for all the participants.

LEARNING AND SHARING

Over the course of four dinners, participants can grapple with new concepts, build connections with other leaders, and learn from other leaders about the major concerns for their communities.

“Our conversations range from different topics every month or so, and we wanted to create a safe space to have them,” said GSCC Graduate Intern Daisanay Ward. “It is nice to do it over a meal. It feels like we are ensuring that we are being taken care of while creating a community.”

The topics at each dinner range from how identities shape everyday life to concepts like cancel culture. There are also speakers who provide a deeper connection to the topics.

“We do have speakers that talk about their experiences as like queer people and as people with multiple identities, and how we can work together to support each person’s identity and each person’s right to live a normal and happy life,” said Ward.

Each participant received \$25 in Spartan Cash as encouragement to meet up between dinners to put what they are learning into action.

“Every time we have a dinner, we encourage [participants] to meet up with one or two friends before the next dinner and share what they learned,” said Ward. “We have had some people bring friends from that which is nice to see.”

GET INVOLVED

The dinner series is a chance to connect with other participants and experience what the program has to offer. For more information on the Stronger Together dinner series, follow @msugsc on Instagram or visit gsc.campus.msu.edu. 🌍





RESIDENCE EDUCATION AND HOUSING SERVICES HOSTS **Living-Learning Communities and Residential Colleges**

Residence Education and Housing Services (REHS) hosted two webinars for fall 2024 admitted students to learn about Living-Learning Communities and Residential Colleges. The first session, held Feb. 19, showcased the benefits and community spirit of living-learning programs at Michigan State University. A follow-up webinar April 16 focused on communities that were still recruiting students. In total, 384 unique viewers attended the webinars and submitted 156 questions.

“Our mission is to provide access and information to as many prospective and admitted students as possible so that they know that this exists from day one,” says REHS Assistant Director of Outreach Linda Karbo. “The more people we can reach, letting them know that we have these opportunities available, we might aid in their decision process, and they’ll be a future Spartan.”

BUILDING COMMUNITY AND ACADEMICS

Living-learning, academic and special interest programs offer students with shared academic passions or a desire for multicultural living experiences the opportunity to reside together in designated residence halls or on specific floors.

These communities often provide students the chance to attend classes with the same group of peers, fostering friendships, networking, and easy collaboration for studying and socializing. There are three kinds of Living-Learning Communities and residential colleges:

- Degree-granting residential colleges
- Residential communities
- Special-interest communities

“These communities allow students to carve out a bit of campus for themselves,” says Karbo. “They can really work to foster connections and friendships through those experiences, while being supported by academic staff and different resource staff.”

A VARIETY OF CULTIVATED EXPERIENCES

There are currently 15 Living-Learning Communities and residential colleges available to students, each catering to specific interests and fostering a unique learning environment.


“Each community brings different things. You have programs like the Residential Initiative for Sustainable Environments (RISE), which allows for students to actually learn in their residence hall,” says Executive Director of REHS Ray Gasser. “There’s a greenhouse right outside the building where students are able to produce foods that are actually used in our culinary operations. So there’s a lot of learning that occurs.”

Degree-granting residential colleges, which include James Madison College, Lyman Briggs College, and the Residential College for the Arts and Humanities, have classes and faculty offices within the hall where their respective students live. Within a residential community LLC, like the Cornerstone Engineering and Residential Experience, first-year students with a College of Engineering major are automatically enrolled to become a part of the community and engage with peer mentors, tutoring services and corporate representatives.

Then there are special interest LLCs, such as Recovery Housing, which provides a housing option that offers a safe and supportive living environment for students in recovery from a substance use disorder, and the College Assistance Migrant Program, which assists migrant and seasonal farm worker students with academic, social, and financial support to best enable them to complete their first year of college. As REHS Associate Director for Communications Bethany Balks explains, for any LLC format, “It’s important in our commitment to the student experience that there is intentional programming and engagement happening in the halls, and we appreciate our partners providing these experiences.”

THRIVING TOGETHER AT MSU

With a commitment to fostering communities and providing ongoing support, the program offers students a unique opportunity to live, learn and grow alongside like-minded peers. It also empowers students to delve deeper into their passions and pave a path for their academic journey.

For more information on Living-Learning Communities and residential colleges, watch the webinar on the Live On YouTube channel or visit the Live On website. 



Photos, top to bottom: Student study group; Students in the 2016 cohort of the Biomedical Research for University Students in Health Sciences (BRUSH) Summer Research Program; Student study group; Bee keeper, Residential Initiative on the Study of the Environment (RISE)

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