Engagement is one of MSU’s strengths. We have been lauded for our ability to involve undergraduates in research. We have created many lasting relationships with communities across the state through our numerous outreach programs. Most notably, Engineers Without Borders, one of MSU’s many incredible student organizations, was recognized this year with the C. Peter Magrath Community Outreach Award from the APLU, an honor that is a testament to the desire and ability of MSU students to contribute to the research and outreach missions of this land-grant institution.

As we construct the university’s strategic plan, we have a unique opportunity to improve on this success by making engagement and experiential learning a core component of what MSU has to offer to all of its stakeholders. We believe that a focus on engagement in all aspects of the university will both improve the educational experience for our students, but also uniquely define and distinguish MSU to the outside world.

**What does “engagement” mean at Montana State University?**

Engagement is collaboration between students, faculty and community partners within and beyond the university for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.

Engagement is characterized by:

- That aspect of teaching that enables experiential learning beyond the classroom.
- That aspect of research that makes what we learn useful beyond the academic community.
- That aspect of service that creates relationships between students, faculty and the community that are characterized by reciprocity with real responsibility that prepares students to become active citizens and leaders in their communities.

**What are possible goals for Montana State University in the field of engagement in 5 years?**

1. We want to create a culture of engagement through incentives and practices that encourage and motivate faculty and students to participate.
   - Create incentives for faculty to participate in engagement through tenure and funding.
   - Start an “engagement fair”, or improve mechanisms to celebrate faculty and students that are participating in engagement activities.
   - Possible metric: # of faculty teaching service learning courses

2. We want to measure and fund MSU extracurricular programs and professional development opportunities that include engagement activities.
   - Possible metric: # of student organizations and programs.
   - Possible metric: Hours spent by students in extracurricular service activities
• Possible metric: # of opportunities for staff and faculty that go beyond traditional professional development to engaged development, thus inspiring faculty and staff to discover their connection to engagement activities at Montana State University and beyond.

3. We want to improve strategically and operationally how we leverage, broaden and communicate engagement.
   • Create an “engagement advisory council” that will prepare a strategic plan for the university’s engagement efforts.
   • Leverage our engagement programs, expertise and knowledge to strengthen MSU’s overall brand

4. We want to increase the number of students participating in engaged research, which includes involving students in the outreach and mentorship components of the research enterprise.
   • Possible metric: # of undergraduate students participating in research, USP
   • Possible metric: # of research projects that have community partners or an outreach component

5. We want to integrate engagement into MSU’s curriculum through an increased focus on service-learning and engaged leadership in the classroom.
   • Possible metric: # of service learning courses offered
   • Possible metric: % of students with a rigorous experiential component to curriculum
   • Possible metric: # of courses offering curriculum specific to becoming successful professionals and engaged citizens

6. We want to create new and lasting partnerships with industry, non-profit organizations and communities that increase meaningful engagement opportunities for MSU students while addressing community-identified needs.

What may be the next steps?

1. Conduct focus groups to gauge perception of goals thus far and brainstorm appropriate metrics.
2. Gather data related to engagement in order to create definitive metrics.