

March 30, 2007

POLICY GUIDELINES FOR INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES AT MSU

I. Rationale

The international dimension of a modern university has numerous expressions. Levels of involvement include scholars, teams, departments, area centers, institutes, colleges, and intercollegiate consortia. Although much University effort relating to international areas has historically been and continues to be carried out by individuals and without formal institutional agreements, it is felt that the effectiveness of University efforts in the international arena can be enhanced through formal institutional arrangements of the University with the appropriate host countries or agencies. In such instances, contracts and agreements should spell out the nature of the involvement of the University, the benefits or services expected by the host country and/or its institutions, and the benefits expected for the University's programs in teaching, research and outreach.

Each Michigan State University international project should seek to foster partnership and collaboration that foster mutually beneficial intellectual and scholarly exchange and exploration. In this respect, MSU's international projects should provide genuine benefits to the host country, to the university's academic programs, and to the wider intellectual community. It is in keeping with the philosophy and tradition of the University to be concerned with the well-being of the people of other countries, to render productive service when desired and feasible, and to seek new knowledge about important problems. Generating lessons from experiences gained from exchange programs and project work abroad and bringing these lessons back to further improve MSU programs is emphasized. As Michigan State University faculty engage in international projects, they must be sensitive to the moral, ethical, and legal impact of their activities and the image of Michigan State University.

II. MSU's Direction for the Future

In 2006, Michigan State University defined five strategic imperatives that define the relevance of the land-grant mission for the 21st century world. These include:

- Enhance the student experience—by continually improving the quality of academic programs and the value of an MSU degree for undergraduate and graduate students
- Enrich community, economic and family life—through research, outreach, engagement, entrepreneurship, innovation and diversity
- Expand international reach—through academic, research, and economic development initiatives and global, national, and local strategic alliances
- Increase research opportunities—significantly expanding research funding and involvement of graduate and undergraduate students in research and scholarship
- Strengthen stewardship—by appreciating and nurturing the university's financial assets, campus infrastructure, and people for optimal effectiveness today and tomorrow. (Boldness by Design).

III. University Responsibilities

As the University moves increasingly towards the vision of a “world-grant” university put forward by President Simon in her “Boldness by Design” agenda, faculty will continue and expand their involvement in international activities. With such involvement comes responsibility.

The following policies and considerations apply when the University becomes engaged abroad as an institution.

University international exchange relationships, not necessarily involving assistance or funded contracts, will be encouraged with institutions and with research and educational institutions in any country of the world and in any discipline or field in which MSU has competence. Since the flow of knowledge and of scholarship should not be inhibited by political or ideological boundaries, the University is prepared to enter into formal exchange agreements with institutions in countries of various political persuasions if those faculty members who would be most affected consider such relationships to be professionally useful. If conditions of work as experienced are such that MSU personnel cannot pursue activities up to professionally acceptable standards or if conditions of the exchange agreement impose unacceptable restrictions on the University or its personnel, the University will not enter into or continue the exchange program.

Michigan State University may enter into funded cooperative programs and technical assistance projects in any country in which (a) the conditions of work would permit performance up to the professional standards of the faculty; (b) the opportunity to contribute toward educationally desirable goals exists; and (c) MSU personnel are available and interested in participation. If, on the basis of experience, it becomes clear that a contractual activity imposes unacceptable burdens or restrictions on Michigan State staff, or involves them in work situations which are not sufficiently free to meet necessary standards, the University will not continue the project.

No international program will be initiated or continued if it: (a) requires MSU to violate the laws or regulations of the United States, the University, or those of the host government; (b) subjects U.S. participants or host country nationals to undue physical danger or harassment; and (c) directly benefits instruments of repression in any country where the civil liberties of its citizens are materially compromised.

The willingness of Michigan State to accept contract obligations in a foreign setting will depend on the availability of personnel in the particular fields involved and in the type of assistance to be rendered as well as the nature and characteristics of the institutions to which MSU personnel will be attached directly. Our internationalization mission strongly encourages research that is committed to the global consciousness emerging among all peoples around the world that reflect pluralist democracy and human rights values. Our goal is to foster intellectual partnerships with peoples, groups, and institutions that share such values. In light of this, in other countries, we encourage MSU faculty to undertake projects that will provide peoples in the recipient country and the United States the mutual improvement of their lifestyles and well-being.

In all international contexts, but particularly in those which are most sensitive to the subversion of these values, the University will carefully monitor the project progress toward explicit goals in order to be confident that useful work is not impeded by unacceptable restrictions.

As it enters into exchange relations or technical assistance contracts in foreign countries, Michigan State University in no way endorses the government or other components of a society, except insofar as the contract attests to the University's judgment that worthwhile work with the designated area has a reasonable chance of accomplishment with MSU participation, that conditions of work or contract will meet necessary standards, that the University--and its staff--has something to give and to learn in the process.

IV. Faculty Responsibilities

The following guidelines are to be followed:

Faculty engaged in international activities shall carefully scrutinize and monitor/evaluate such activities for their likely effect on the lives, livelihoods and lifestyles of the people in the recipient country.

International projects should, where possible, be associated with bona fide educational and research institutions. In implementing this guideline, however, recognition is given to the fact that in many developing countries, the programs of government and education and research institutions are closely intertwined and that to work solely and unilaterally with the latter may be difficult.

International activities that lead to the development of reciprocal relationships with foreign institutions and to activities that foster faculty and student exchanges on a continuing basis are preferred and should be encouraged.

Overseas involvement should be limited to projects in which members of the University's faculty and administration have a genuine interest and competence. To strengthen the positive effects on the MSU campus of such projects and to help assure responsible performance abroad, overseas activities should be staffed predominantly by persons regularly appointed at and returning to MSU. Leadership of MSU projects abroad should always be in the hands of regular MSU staff.

No one should be designated to serve on an overseas project without genuine interest in the project and willing consent to participate at home and/or abroad. Faculty who consent to participate in international activities should find their standing within the University enhanced by this involvement. The University should conduct itself in such a way as to encourage professional growth and support department criteria that include overseas activities.

Information pertaining to all aspects of international activities administered by the University shall be fully disclosed to all interested faculty members and students in accordance with procedures worked out by the Dean of International Studies and Programs. This guideline does not pertain to personnel matters, beyond the provision of information relating to adherence to University policies.

For reasons both of principle and self interest, the University shall not undertake any activity that has concealed funding or undisclosed purposes or sponsors, or is classified in such a way as to restrict publication and general dissemination of all facts resulting from and about the activity.

International projects and activities shall follow the principle of inclusion, such as women and members of under-represented groups.

No international activity shall be initiated or continued if it: (a) requires MSU to violate the laws or regulations of the United States, the University, or those of the host government; (b) subjects U.S. participants to undue physical danger or harassment; and (c) directly benefits instruments of repression in any country where the civil liberties of its citizens are materially compromised.

These guidelines apply to any individual faculty member or university entity and any individual working in a consultative capacity that has any affiliation with the University.

In all cases, the University including the Advisory Consultative Committee to the Dean of ISP shall promote and monitor adherence to these guidelines and progress toward the explicit goals of projects, programs, and linkages.

Faculty participating in international activities are required to gain the necessary approvals from the appropriate offices:

The University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS). UCRIHS is responsible for reviewing, approving and monitoring all projects that involve the use of human subjects. (<http://www.humanresearch.msu.edu/>).

The Office of Intellectual Property Rights (OIP). This office is responsible for oversight and protection of intellectual property rights pertaining to MSU and to partner institutions. (<http://www.oip.msu.edu>).

The Office of Export Controls and Trade Sanctions. This office is responsible for monitoring the export of sensitive technologies, equipment, software, biological agents and related data and services. (www.msu.edu/unit/vprgs/expregs/overview.htm)

The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). IACUC is responsible for the oversight of animal use. (http://www.iacuc.msu.edu/iacuc/iacuc_index.htm)