

Director of Recruitment – Vision Statement

Planning for the future of higher education today could make anyone long for a crystal ball. Current trends in our economy, technology, medical system, climate, and diplomatic relations will impact each of our individual lives and the careers available to our students.¹ These challenges will demand that they not only develop competencies that appeal to employers but also continue learning and adapting throughout their careers, integrate skills across disciplines, extrapolate them to new contexts, market their abilities and contributions effectively, collaborate with teams that may span the globe, and think critically about the ethical and personal implications of their work. Every major in CAL can shape that kind of graduate, and yet MSU undergraduates tend to choose majors in the Colleges of Social Science, Natural Science, Engineering, or Business.² Their graduates apparently have higher rates of employment and average wages at six months,³ but are they better prepared for the rapid change and complex problems that they are likely to face throughout their careers? In the eleven years since I came to MSU, total MSU graduates each year have gone up by twenty percent, while CAL graduates have decreased by twenty percent.⁴ To turn that pattern around and ensure that the incoming students represent an array of diverse identities and perspectives, we need a vision that looks *inward*, *outward*, and *ahead* to identify both aspirational goals and feasible tactics.

Vision Inward. Our vision, and our strategic steps, must begin with a clear and thorough look at our own students, curricula, co-curricular programs, and procedures. Before taking any steps to add or increase strategies, we need to engage in thorough analysis of the data already available and the tasks involved in the admissions process including event planning, overseeing applications, and onboarding. In my role as MAFLT Director, I already maintain my own databases for communication and advising and use Slate for three rounds of admissions each year. Also, my academic background in ethnography, pedagogy, and linguistic analysis will serve me well as I explore the various communities of practice within CAL. Given that CAL departments and centers are all developing new strategic plans this year, valuable early steps will be to compare those plans, consult with department leadership about recruitment challenges and opportunities, and seek alignments among the stated goals. By first looking inward, we can optimize and consolidate our existing recruitment procedures, which will in turn facilitate greater participation from faculty and students.

Vision Outward. Subsequently, we should focus on existing and potential alignments and collaborations across MSU colleges, offices, and initiatives. Coordination with campus-wide recruitment efforts, including promotional campaigns and events, is essential. The new Arts, Humanities, and Healthcare (AHH) program represents a visionary interdisciplinary effort, and it will need its own promotional campaigns and smoothing of potential friction such as Natural Science courses' laboratory requirements competing with studio and rehearsal expectations in the arts. Other campus-crossing opportunities include improving coordination with the College of Education to support teacher candidates and working with Education Abroad to strengthen language learning before, during, and after students go overseas. The vision outward also extends beyond campus in that outreach and community engagement support recruitment. They are particularly essential for encouraging higher enrollments from under-represented groups. Events and programming that appeal to a wide range of ages, including summer camps, Grandparents University, virtual class visits, public research forums and project showcases, and opportunities to engage with artists and performers, also create opportunities to capture leads with integrity, which we can then cultivate using tools like Slate and Campaign Monitor. By looking outward, we can expand opportunities with less labor and reduce the barriers to choosing CAL majors and minors.

Vision Ahead. Once we have analyzed and optimized existing procedures, coordination, and outreach, then we can consider new initiatives that increase the appeal and flexibility of CAL programs. We cannot ignore the influence of generative artificial intelligence, but AI is not marginalizing our fields in favor of STEM. An agile and innovative response will articulate the increasing importance of the humanities in guiding the human-computer interface. Most importantly, the vision ahead is a vision of purpose and career preparation that we convey to students and deliberately train them to convey to their parents, future employers, and other stakeholders. Although our fields do not have obvious ties to particular jobs (which is indeed a strength when job titles and duties are evolving so rapidly), the Excel Network already emphasizes and enhances career readiness through workshops, experiential learning, and internships. By focusing on the vision ahead, we can show students that we are preparing them to support themselves and to continue growing.

Lacking a crystal ball to enhance our predictions, I can offer instead a fresh perspective inward, outward, and ahead that is grounded in years of experience running the largest graduate program in CAL and my own liberal arts education. We are not just maintaining a pipeline of applicants into the college. We are preparing the global citizens who will help us to face inevitable challenges with ingenuity, flexibility, and compassion. Guided by that vision, we can find the synergies that make the much-needed collective work of recruitment meaningful and sustainable for all of us.



Notes and Sources

¹ **Deloitte Insights:**

<https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/public-sector/latest-trends-in-higher-education.html>

² **MSU Fall 2023 Enrollment Report:**

<https://ir.msu.edu/-/media/assets/ir/docs/fall-enrollment/EnrollmentReportFall.pdf>

³ **MSU Career Services Network: Outcomes for CAL Graduates:**

<https://careernetwork.msu.edu/outcomes/#!/Arts%20and%20Letters>

⁴ **MSU Institutional Research:** <https://ir.msu.edu/explore>

Resources

- **MSU Strategic Plan 2030:** <https://strategicplan.msu.edu/strategic-plan>
 - **CAL Undergraduate Education** including list of 25 Majors: <https://cal.msu.edu/academics/undergraduate/>
 - **University Advising:** <https://advising.msu.edu/>
 - **State of Slate User Group:** <https://michiganstate.sharepoint.com/sites/SlateUserGroup/StateOfSlate>
 - **CAL Excel Network:** <https://excelnetwork.cal.msu.edu/>
 - **National Center for Educational Statistics** > National Training, Education, and Workforce Survey (NTEWS): <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ntews/>
 - **MAFLT Program > Admissions Guide:** <https://maflt.cal.msu.edu/admissions>
 - LanierLingvista > **Advocacy Resources:** <https://lanierlingvista.org/teaching-teachers/advocacy/>
 - LanierLingvista > **Program Administration:** <https://lanierlingvista.org/program-administration/>
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