# Gauging University Outreach: A Dashboard of Indicators

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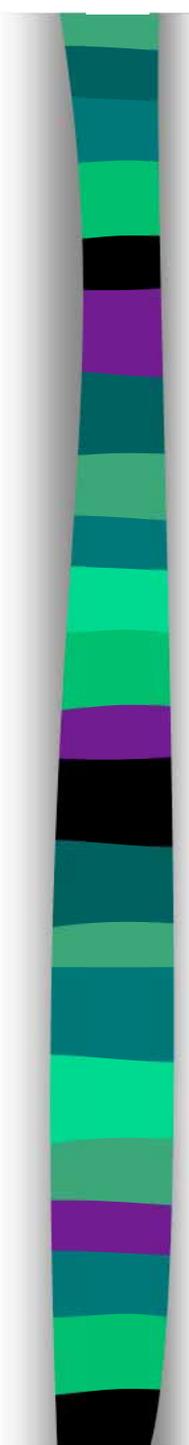
# Responding to Calls for Greater Accountability

- Moving beyond input measures
- Internal management
- Benchmarking with equivalent institutions
- Getting credit—rankings/money game

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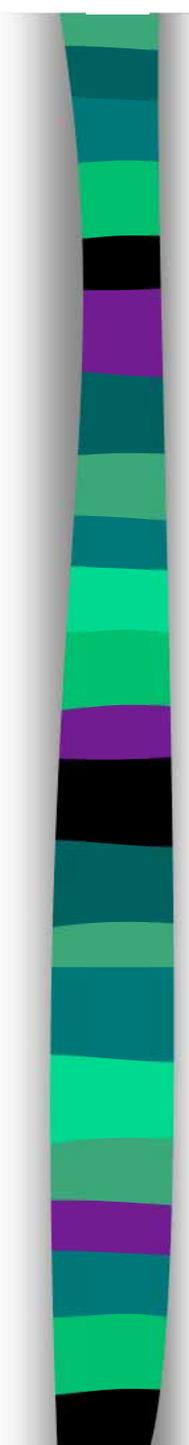
# Gauging University Outreach: A Dashboard of Indicators

- ◼ Overview of MSU's framework
- ◼ Characteristics of quality outreach
- ◼ Discussion of indicators and measures

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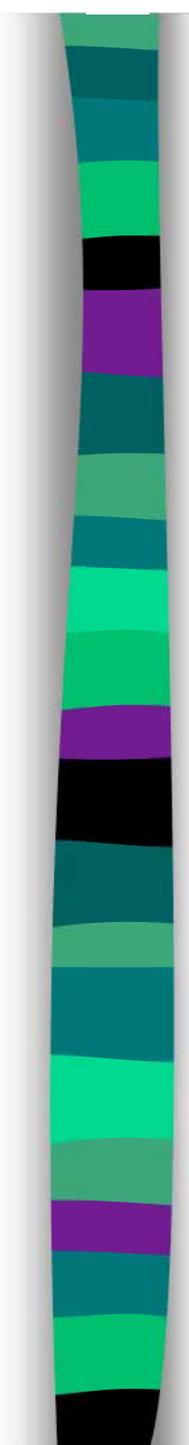
*We believe that the essence of scholarship is the thoughtful creation, interpretation, communication, or use of knowledge that is based in the ideas and methods of recognized disciplines, professions, and interdisciplinary fields.*

Report by Provost's Committee on University Outreach, 1993, p.2

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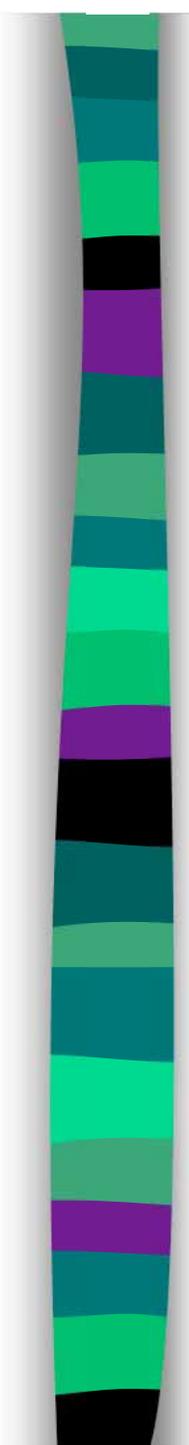
*Outreach is a form of scholarship that cuts across teaching, research, and service. It involves generating, transmitting, applying, and preserving knowledge for the direct benefit of external audiences in ways that are consistent with university and unit missions.*

Report by Provost's Committee on University Outreach, 1993, p.1

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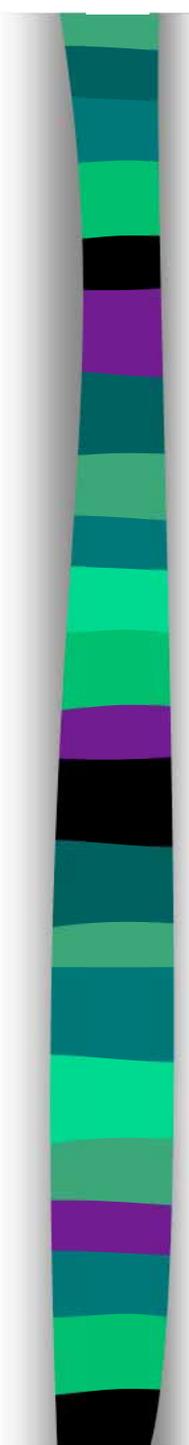
# Representing the Quality in Outreach Work

- Framework—heuristic that pushes toward better measurements; goals of measurement
- Categories—areas to measure
- Characteristics of quality outreach
- Dimensions of quality — the *Points of Distinction* matrix
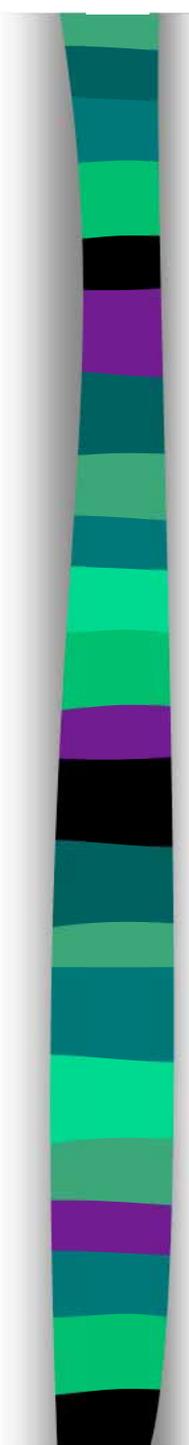
# MSU's Incremental Process

- Defining outreach
- Defining and operationalizing quality outreach
- Engaging support
- Leading departmental chair and faculty forums addressing outreach scholarship
- Aligning institutional planning
- Aligning evaluation of faculty work
- Documenting quality outreach—faculty and institutional level

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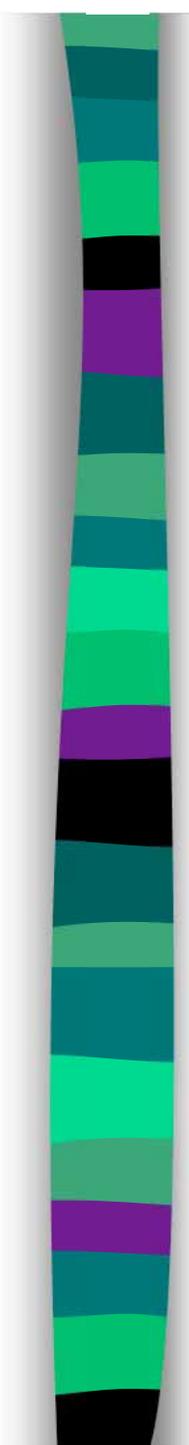
# Outreach Categories

- Instructional Outreach
- Outreach Partnerships (University-Community Collaborations)
- Clinical Services
- Service Learning
- Resources for the Public
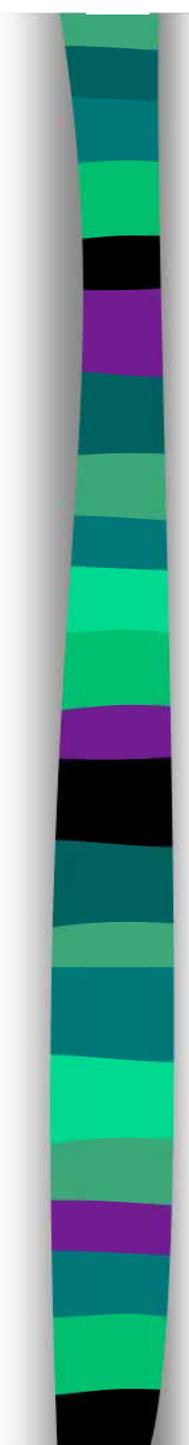
# Characteristics

- Contributes to Key Societal Issues

- Is Based on and Contributes to Scholarship

- Fosters Reciprocity of Learning

- Is Responsive to Public Need

- Benefits the University

- Generates Public Satisfaction

- Provides Broad Access

- Engenders Broad Faculty and Student Involvement

- Strengthens Institutional Visibility
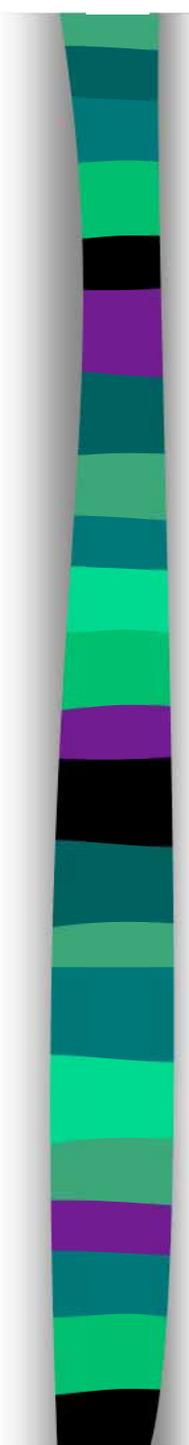
# *Points of Distinction:*
# Dimensions of Quality Outreach

- ■ Significant

- ■ Appropriate to Context

- ■ Scholarly

- ■ Impact

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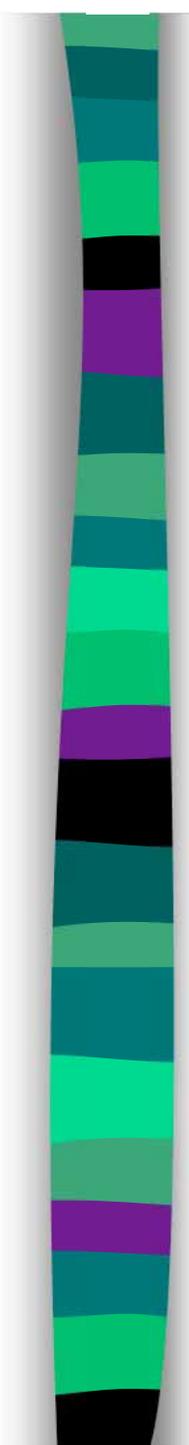
# Indicators and Measures for Quality Outreach

- Linking categories and characteristics with indicators
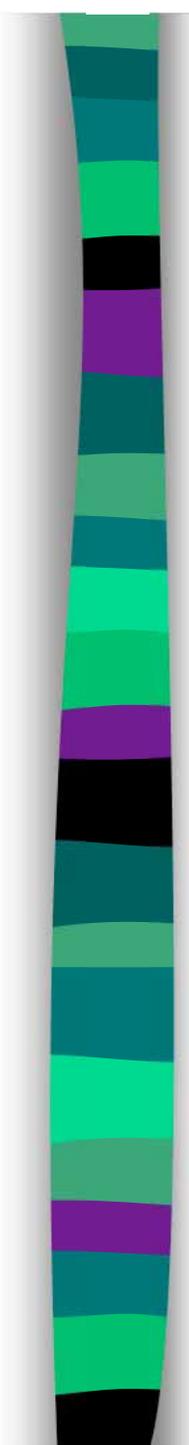
# Balancing Tensions - The Key to the Implementation Process

- Dealing with multiple (possibly conflicting) purposes
  - benchmarking internally
  - benchmarking externally
  - competing for rankings
  - public relations
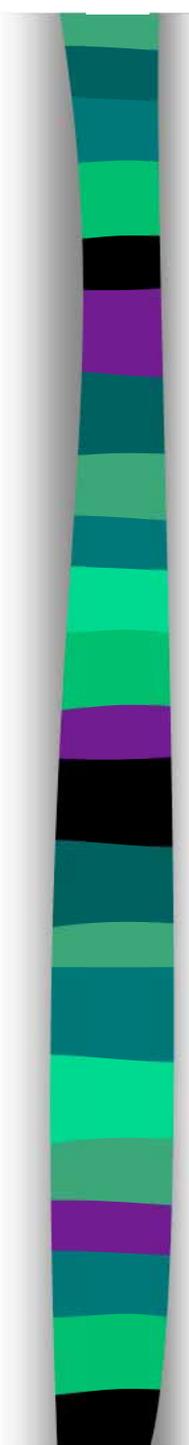
# Balancing Tensions (continued)

- Played out on several dimensions
  - quantity *v* quality
    - numbers *v* anecdotal evidence
    - risk of oversimplifying *v* risk of overcomplicating
  - input *v* impact
  - costs *v* benefits
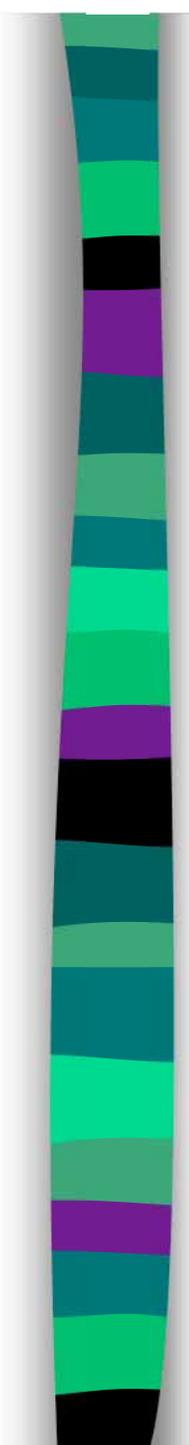
# Balancing Tensions (continued)

- Balancing institutional and community perspectives
  - taking individual credit in a collaborative enterprise
  - representing faculty and community contributions accurately
    - representing reciprocity between university expertise and community expertise
  - honoring scholarly and community outcomes appropriately

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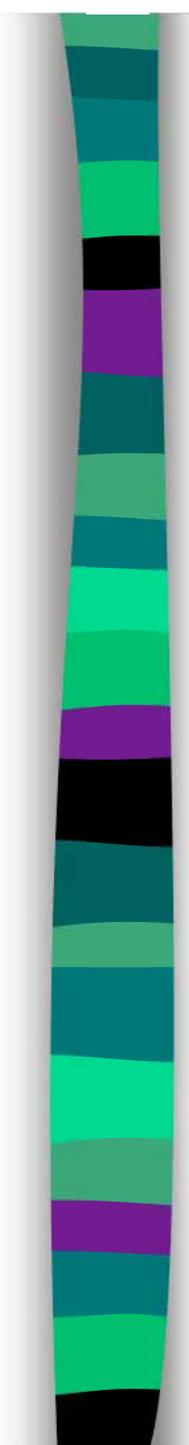
# Balancing Tensions (continued)

- Danger of separate measurements for an activity embedded in the institution's overall teaching and research missions

- Keeping the desire for perfection from being the enemy of the good
  - will trying to do everything mean we do nothing?
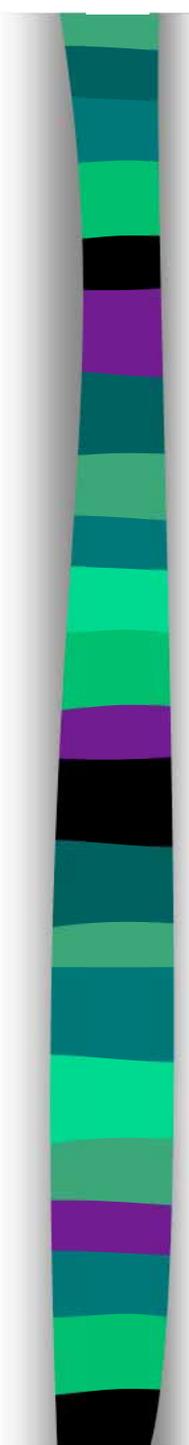
# Draft Data Collection Instrument

- Project name
- Sponsoring unit
- Type of outreach project
- Project complexity
- Project duration
- Geographic context
- Project characteristics
- Number/kind of personnel
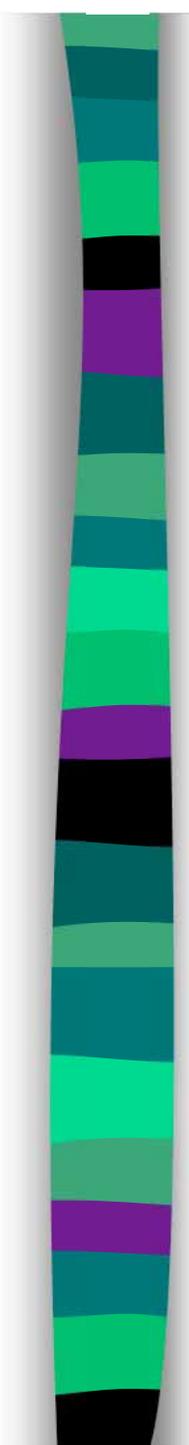
# Draft Data Collection Instrument (continued)

- Co-sponsors

- Number of attendees/participants

- Number of contact hours

- Project description narrative

- Project significance narrative

- Project context narrative

- Project scholarship narrative

- Project impact narrative
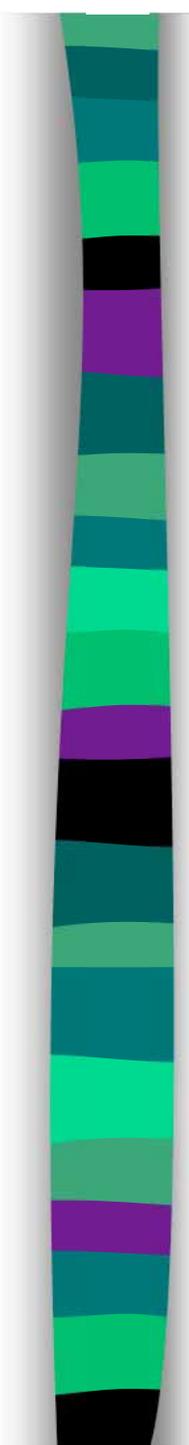
For more information about Evaluating Quality Outreach at Michigan State University, please contact:

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