

## **My Spartan Story**

Research continually demonstrates students gain dynamic learning from co-curricular engagement throughout their college experience. Historically, the curricular experiences of students have been tracked and documented through an academic transcript, with co-curricular experiences not traditionally having a formal tracking system or document. In 2016, Michigan State University (MSU) began exploring what a co-curricular record could look like for a large, decentralized campus to capture learning experiences that occur outside the classroom. Led by the MSU Hub for Innovation in Learning and Technology, colleagues led a Human-Centered Design process to find answers to our most pressing questions: What is the academic rationale for a co-curricular record at MSU? How can we define a way to track the out-of-class learning experiences of 40,000 undergraduate students throughout MSU?

The research process included discussion and brainstorming with over 200 MSU faculty, staff, and students. The conversations led to not only answering our questions but defining solutions that have the power to impact students, the MSU community, and higher education regarding how we understand co-curricular learning. A key need was identifying a data solution; in 2017, MSU began working with Orbis Communications, a higher education engagement platform. As our work evolved, other campus units joined the project, including Information Technology, Undergraduate Research, and Community Engaged Learning. Our partnerships led us to formally name our co-curricular record and platform My Spartan Story. My Spartan Story is accessible to all members of the MSU community, giving voice to all constituents in a very large, decentralized environment. Colleagues also worked with the Registrar's Office to create the Spartan Experience Record, a new official university document recognizing validated co-curricular learning experiences that students can customize. Experiences that can be included in My Spartan story must be 1) MSU sponsored, and 2) align to our definition of co-curricular, which is "an experience not bearing academic credit that has articulated learning outcomes which are assessed." My Spartan Story creates a new, centralized database of co-curricular experiences that has never existed.

My Spartan Story centers its primary value propositions on learning. Our team engaged in a research clustering process that examined existing learning outcomes generated by different campus units, such as career services and undergraduate education. A total of 140 outcomes were identified and clustered into 29 learning outcomes. The experiences placed into My Spartan Story are then reviewed for alignment to our requirements by the Advisory Committee, a group composed of nearly 20 faculty and staff throughout the institution. The learning outcomes for each experience are included on the Spartan Experience Record, empowering students to expand their learning through synthesis and reflection. The learning outcomes and data collected through My Spartan Story allow faculty and staff to learn information on out-of-class learning that has never existed and expands potential for how we approach, shape, and execute students' holistic learning experiences.

My Spartan Story is now an official unit within the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, and will be fully launched to MSU Fall 2020. Our immediate return on investment will be recognizing student learning through the Spartan Experience Record. In time, we will be able to learn from the various co-curricular experiences within the platform and the students participating within these experiences, specifically mapping pathways of engagement and student success. We hope the information we learn will allow us to transcend how we understand out-of-class learning, both to empower the MSU community and higher education as a whole.