Together these foundations are working with MSU to invest $10 million into the MSU STEM Center, which will be located at the former Michigan Molecular Institute in Midland.

“We are proud to strengthen our already significant collaborations with MSU, which consistently ranks high in the nation for its educational programming,” said Andrew N. Liveris, Dow chairman and CEO. “By enabling our youth to become STEM problem solvers, we are investing in the shared future of our company, our community and even our planet.”

The center’s curriculum will be targeted at K-12 learners. It will also include select MSU courses for college students as well as innovative teacher enrichment programs in collaboration with MSU’s College of Education. Students, teachers and administrators from Great Lakes Bay Region school districts, including Midland Public Schools, will be engaged in programming and implementation.

“With MSU’s growing presence in Midland with the Midland Research Institute for Value Chain Creation and ongoing community investments through Momentum Midland, this partnership was a natural fit as we pursue more ways to broaden our research, educational and economic impact in Michigan,” MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon said.

A variety of concepts are under consideration as part of the overall STEM program offerings. They include a Dow scientists-in-residence program that offers learners access to Dow science professionals; laboratories equipped with global communication technology to enable connectivity around the world; and state-of-the-art STEM programming. Initial programming is expected to be launched in May 2016.

The center is a further example of philanthropic and business support for Midland community development, similar to its support of Momentum Midland’s effort to enhance downtown Midland and the surrounding community, said Mike Whiting, president, The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation.

“The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation has a 45-year legacy of supporting scientific education and research in that very facility since the building opened in 1972,” he said. “This gift builds on that legacy and is further evidence of our desire to collaborate on community priorities, to make a collective and lasting impact.”

George Lucas Educational Foundation
Grant Supports Science, Math and Literacy Education

Michigan State University researchers and their partners plan to create a model for teaching elementary students science while also improving their skills in math, reading and writing.

The project is funded by a five-year grant from Lucas Education Research, a division of the George Lucas Educational Foundation. Executive Director Kevin DiVivo said the goal is to bring the benefits of project-based learning (PBL) — an approach that encourages kids to explore real-world problems — to more classrooms throughout the nation.

“Educators are in agreement based on classroom experience that project-based learning keeps students engaged and promotes deeper understanding,” said DiVivo. “However, very little research currently exists to prove the benefits of PBL, and also to help educators develop and implement this kind of leading-edge curriculum. This grant supports a team with exceptional credentials and ideas.”

Joseph Krajcik, director of Michigan State’s CREATE for STEM Institute, will lead colleagues from MSU and University of Michigan as they design and develop materials for Grades 3 and 4. Teachers working in under-resourced communities will assist in testing and enacting the new learning units with as many as 1,800 students over the five years, focusing not only on making the curriculum effective but also personally relevant to students’ lives.

Krajcik said the project will build on previous research and help teachers make stronger connections between two sets of education standards now being implemented in most states: the Next Generation Science Standards and the Common Core State Standards in language arts and mathematics.

“We are pleased that Lucas Education Research shares our excitement about what project-based learning can do for our schools and our students,” said Krajcik. “This grant makes it possible for us to design a curriculum that will bring science to life for young learners with thoughtful incorporation of literacy, mathematics and learning technologies to promote collaboration and agency.”

“Michigan State University is at the forefront of conducting research on STEM education and applying the results — a pressing need in our state, across the country and around the world,” said MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon. “We are grateful to the George Lucas Educational Foundation for partnering with us in our quest to enhance STEM skills in students of all ages.”

Literacy researcher Annemarie Sullivan Palincsar, a professor at U-M, is co-principal investigator on the project. Other team members include Deborah Peak-Brown of MSU, Elliot Soloway of U-M and Emily Miller of the University of Wisconsin.
Imagine what would happen if science was taken out of the laboratory, put on display, and explained by a professional, passionate about sharing the wonder and excitement of a science career.

"This is the MSU Science Festival: a celebration of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) that gets everyone involved and inspired.

"We make connections," says Renee Leone, coordinator and co-founder of the MSU Science Festival. "We connect scientists with the public, professionals with other professionals, and disciplines with other disciplines. We connect people with educators, mentors and career options. We connect STEM with everyday life."

'The Science Festival happens, in large part, thanks to sponsors. "Sponsors make everything possible," Leone says. "They're the reason the festival has grown so much and will continue to grow. Most importantly, they're the reason we're able to make every single event free of charge."

Media partners like the Lansing State Journal and local TV stations help get the word out about the festival. Some partners contribute goods. Dean Transportation and CATA provide free rides between venues. Sponsors help offset costs for running the festival.

Some corporations take their sponsorship a step further by bringing in display booths of their own to discuss their STEM career opportunities and bring awareness to their work. One such company is Johnson Controls, which specializes in battery optimization and sustainability. "Johnson Controls is only happening to you."  "You can see that life is more accessible has gained traction around the world.

"MSU's 2013 inaugural Science Festival attracted 10,000 people. In both 2014 and 2015, it brought in more than twice that number. The festival's physical presence has grown, too. Initially concentrated on campus and venues around Lansing, the 2015 festival expanded to Detroit for a day, with help from the MSU Detroit Center.

"It featured events at the Charles Wright Museum of African American History, the Scarab Club and the Michigan Science Center in Downtown Detroit. Visitors could choose to attend sessions in topics ranging from genomics to vehicle technology to inspiring stories of African Americans who have made great contributions to science. Detroit Day was so successful that an entire week of Detroit events has been added to the 2016 lineup. Five years from now!" "We want to make the MSU Science Festival the statewide," Leone says, and this state, with its large network of museums and universities, is equipped for it.

"The 2016 MSU Science Festival will take place April 12-16 on MSU's campus, April 17-24 in Detroit, and will have a statewide astronomy night on April 15.

Visitors might be curious college students, parents wondering how to foster a child's interest in science, or children having their first opportunity to engage with a science professional or discover an untapped love for STEM.

"There may be no better way to understand your world than by having an understanding of science," Leone says, "because it makes you an active participant. You can see that life is happening around you, rather than feel like life is only happening to you."

As the emphasis on STEM grows, the movement to make science and technology more accessible has gained traction around the world. Leone's inspiration came from a visit to the UK, where she saw how the Cambridge University Science Festival sparked conversation and curiosity in its visitors.

Now, MSU and more than 60 others in the Science Festival Alliance across the U.S. and Canada collaborate to bring the best science and technology offerings to their communities each year. At times, the festival's physical presence has grown, too. Initially concentrated on campus and venues around Lansing, the 2015 festival expanded to Detroit for a day, with help from the MSU Detroit Center.

"It featured events at the Charles Wright Museum of African American History, the Scarab Club and the Michigan Science Center in Downtown Detroit. Visitors could choose to attend sessions in topics ranging from genomics to vehicle technology to inspiring stories of African Americans who have made great contributions to science. Detroit Day was so successful that an entire week of Detroit events has been added to the 2016 lineup.

Five years from now! "We want the MSU Science Festival to be statewide," Leone says, "and this state, with its large network of museums and universities, is equipped for it."

The 2016 MSU Science Festival will take place April 12-16 on MSU's campus, April 17-24 in Detroit, and will have a statewide astronomy night on April 15.
Using Math Models to Study Patterns in Ecological Community

Understanding the overall structures of ecological communities is crucial to maintaining the health of ecosystems. One such complex but vital community is the plankton in freshwater lakes. Combining mathematical models with experiments and analysis of field data, two MSU professors are working to discover the causes behind some of ecology’s most widespread structural patterns by studying the structure of plankton communities in lakes and oceans.

The work has received support from the Simons Foundation of New York, which has awarded in first major grant to Michigan State University to support the work of Dr. Christopher Klausmeier and Elena Litchman to study how interactions between species scale up to determine why most species are often based on unrealistic biological assumptions of how species interact. One key is embedding a local community in the broader landscape through immigration of individuals.

In addition, these existing explanations have been applied to SAD theories. Litchman and Klausmeier are involved in other ongoing projects, such as: (1) developing and testing models of the vertical distribution of phytoplankton; (2) understanding the role of spatial heterogeneity on species competition and coexistence; (3) determining the causes of seasonal succession in plankton communities; and (4) applying game theoretical approaches to models of community assembly. Finally, the team will test using controlled experiments, a more powerful form of model testing than has been applied to SAD theories.

Klausmeier and Litchman are involved in other ongoing projects, such as: (1) developing and testing models of the vertical distribution of phytoplankton; (2) understanding the role of spatial heterogeneity on species competition and coexistence; (3) determining the causes of seasonal succession in plankton communities; (4) applying game theoretical approaches to models of community assembly. Lastly, the researchers will test using controlled experiments, a more powerful form of model testing than has been applied to SAD theories.

Making “Living with IBD” a Thing of the Past

CCFA research grant helps MSU scientist continue his quest for an innovative treatment.

For Dr. Brian Gulbransen—a researcher in MSU’s neuroscience program and Department of Physiology—understanding the actions of the enteric nervous system, especially as they apply to Crohn’s and other inflammatory bowel diseases, is a daily pursuit.

Though these diseases are treatable, current treatments are only temporary. They lose effectiveness over time and bring along a list of potentially dangerous side effects. The research being done in Gulbransen’s lab, bolstered by a recent $350,000 Senior Research Award grant from the Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation of America (CCFA), has the potential to change that.

Supporting Sufferers by Supporting Science

The Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation of America is a non-profit, volunteer-driven organization committed to finding a cure for Crohn’s, ulcerative colitis, and other inflammatory bowel diseases by supporting research efforts like Gulbransen’s. The CCFA’s Senior Research Award is for established researchers who seek funding to gather enough critical preliminary data to become competitive for funding from the government, such as through the National Institutes of Health.

“NIH funding is hard to get,” Gulbransen says, “and it’s usually enough to completely run a lab, which is why funding from other places—like the CCFA—is absolutely necessary at every stage of research.

“Support, at various points in my career, has allowed me to go down this whole line of work, from the beginning to where I am now,” he added. Gulbransen’s earlier work was a postdoctoral position at the University of Calgary was supported in part by a grant from the Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation of Canada. In addition to its mission to find a cure, the Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation, which has more than 40 volunteer chapters nationwide, provides resources and support to the more than 1.4 million individuals of all ages, in the United States alone, living with inflammatory bowel diseases.
Studying Controversial Aspects of Social Inequality

The topic of inequality has garnered considerable prominence and stoked passionate debate across the country in recent years. The Russell Sage Foundation and the William T. Grant Foundation have awarded grants to study aspects of social and economic inequality.

How Do the Rich Gain Political Influence?

One complex topic people are debating is just how much influence the wealthy have on decisions politicians make. Through a grant from the Russell Sage Foundation, Associate Professor Matthew Grossman of the MSU Department of Political Science, who is also newly appointed director of MSU’s Institute for Public Policy and Social Research, will examine how high-income citizens influence policymaking in the U.S., a study entitled “How Do the Rich Rule?: Public Opinion, Parties, and Interest Groups in Unequal Policy Influence.”

Dr. Grossman will investigate how high-income citizens and particular groups influence policy, to find out whether the decisions government leaders make on public policy follow the opinions of the affluent more often and to a greater extent than the broader public. Also, the study will look at the channels the affluent use to translate their ideas and opinions into legislative and executive actions.

Number of Millionaire Households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

People often think that campaign contributions play a huge role in political influence, but Grossman explains that the issue is much more complex. “American policymakers are more responsive to the opinions of rich citizens, but it may not be due to belles or campaign contributions. Both political parties represent the views of the rich on different issues and both may succeed more when they speak for the rich. We look forward to investigating whether and how American politics reinforces political and economic inequality.”

Low-Income Students and Elite Universities

Another topic concerning inequality is the college success of low-income students. The Russell Sage Foundation, along with the William T. Grant Foundation of New York, have made grants to support the work of MSU Professor Scott Imberman, who is studying whether going to an elite university makes a difference in the lives of low-income students. The study, entitled “Does Attending an Elite University Help Low Income Students?” will use data gathered in the Texas Longhorn and Texas A&M Century Scholars Program.

Data from the Census Bureau show that the economic benefit of a college degree as compared to a high school degree have increased while the number of students at training post-secondary degrees, particularly low-income students, has changed little. Dr. Imberman is seeking ways for policy-makers to intervene that make it more likely for low-income students to enroll in and earn degrees at higher-quality educational institutions.

Imberman’s team will try to answer these questions by studying the effects of the State and Texas 1997 ban on the use of affirmative action in college admissions decisions. (The co-investigators are Michael Lovenheim of Cornell University and Rodney Andrews of University of Texas, Dallas). Following the implementation of the 10% Rule, which allowed students in the top 10% of their high school class to attend any Texas public university, many more students were admitted, but overall minority enrollments at UT and A&M fell steeply. Texas then began the Longhorn Opportunity Scholarship program and the Century Scholars program to increase the enrollment and success of low-income students.

Dr. Imberman will study the effects of these interventions in helping UT and A&M address the disadvantages faced by low-income students. Professor Imberman said the grants will help us deepen our understanding of college achievement. “The grants from the Russell Sage and Grant Foundations have been instrumental in helping our work progress. We are required to travel to work with the data on-site, and to hire research assistants as well. There are also substantial up-front and ongoing fees to maintain access to the data. Our work would not be possible without the funding.”

The study will look in particular at whether the interventions increase the likelihood that low-income students enroll at UT or A&M; whether enrolled students experience better educational outcomes—in terms of such outcomes as college majors, GPA, graduation and time to degree—and whether greater success in college translates into the students getting higher paying jobs.

The Russell Sage Foundation

The Russell Sage Foundation is the principal American foundation devoted exclusively to research in the social sciences. Located in New York City, it is a research center, a funding source for studies by scholars at other academic and research institutions. It publishes, under its own imprint, books deriving from the work of its grantees and visiting scholars.

The William T. Grant Foundation

The William T. Grant Foundation was established in 1936 by the founder of the W.T. Grant Stores. Grant believed that human relationships and the environment were powerful forces in shaping our abilities to lead successful lives. Building upon the legacy of its founder, the foundation invests in research with the potential to advance theory, policy, and practice related to children and youth in the United States.

Detroit Students Learn from Career Journalists

Crain Communications and the MSU School of Journalism have come together to support journalism in Detroit high schools. The Crain MSU Detroit High School Journalism Program will use journalism as a tool to enrich the educational experiences of students in Detroit area high schools. The program will bring together students from participating schools with professional journalists, MSU faculty and MSU journalism students to produce a newspaper and website about issues affecting the students’ schools, their peers and the community.

Fourteen high schools and about 300 students are expected to take part in the program this academic year. Participating students print at least four issues of the “Detroit Dialogue” magazine each year, with sections for each school, post stories online, and learn how to research and publicize stories through social media.

“Crain Communications is proud to support the Detroit High School Journalism Program, guiding, assisting and inspiring young minds to become critical thinkers, better writers and more actively engaged in their schools and community,” said KC Crain, executive vice president and director of corporate operations for Crain Communications and group publisher of the Automotive News Group.

The partnership with Crain, which will be led by Detroit-based Automotive News, builds on the spirit of a program established in 1989 with support from former Detroit Free Press managing editor Neal Shine. The MSU School of Journalism took over management of that program last year.

“The School of Journalism is pleased to work with Crain Communications to carry on a strong legacy of high school journalism in Detroit,” said Lucinda Davvors, director of MSU’s School of Journalism. “We look forward to continuing to give students an opportunity to get hands-on experience with writing and visual communication for print and online news.”

As the lead sponsor, Crain Communications will provide financial support to help operate the program over a multiyear period. Crain journalists and staff also will work with MSU to assist students and teachers in creating high school publications at least four times per year. The company will be actively engaged with students from storytelling throughout production, including providing meeting spaces for training and design sessions.

Headquartered in Detroit, Crain Communications is a privately held media company, which publishes a variety of trade newspapers and periodicals, including Automotive News, Crain’s Detroit Business and Advertising Age.
The Joyce Foundation and the A-CAPP Center at Michigan State University have formed an important partnership with companies across many industry sectors. Every one of these partnerships is important, and most—like UL—grow stronger and more multi-dimensional.

UL, which began as Underwriters’ Electric Bureau in 1894, has been conducting tests and providing certifications for over 100 years, helping keep people safe worldwide. “The company has been involved in anti-counterfeiting efforts since the early 1990s and appreciates the value that a strong academic approach can bring to its work,” UL’s vice president of Global Security and Brand Protection, Brian Monks, said.

At the event in St. Petersburg, UL honored Wilson with an award in recognition of his support and commitment to protecting the integrity of the UL mark.

The Joyce Foundation works with grantee partners to discover, develop and advance innovative and effective policy solutions for the central challenges of our time. With a focus on the Great Lakes region and also achieving national impact, Joyce strives to improve quality of life, promote community vitality and achieve a fair society.

April M. Zeoli, PhD, MPH, is an associate professor and coordinator of undergraduate studies in the School of Criminal Justice at Michigan State University. Her research brings together the fields of public health and criminology and criminal justice. Her main field of investigation has been the prevention of intimate partner violence and homicide through the use of gun law and policy. Specifically, she has studied the close relationship between access to firearms and intimate partner violence, as well as the civil and criminal justice systems responses to intimate partner violence. Using an infectious disease model, she also has studied the spread of homicide over time through-out Newark, New Jersey.

The Chicago-based Joyce Foundation has supported dozens of projects to help law enforcement, policy makers and advocates develop common sense laws and policies that keep communities safe. The foundation recognizes that this work is an urgent matter. Gun violence reflects a heavy toll on families and communities in many ways. More than 100,000 Americans are killed or injured in gun violence every year.

A growing body of research shows that strong gun laws correspond with lower rates of gun death and injury. The Joyce Foundation’s support for Dr. Zeoli’s work is part of its effort to expand on this research, building awareness about the problem of gun violence in America, and to educate the public, policy makers and the media about the effectiveness of policies intended to improve public health and safety.

The Joyce Foundation
The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

The MasterCard Foundation

Amita Chudgar is leading an effort to improve our understanding of why students in developing countries don’t stay in school. Chudgar received a $200,000 grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to study the home and community life of youth in India, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. It will be the first in-depth analysis of large existing datasets that can provide insights for improving secondary education outcomes for youth ranging from 12 to 24 years old. For two countries, India and Nigeria, they use additional data to create a more detailed profile of enrollment and retention patterns.

“Until recently, Chudgar said, researchers have focused on how to get children to start school. "In the last 10 to 15 years, we have had, as a global community, quite a bit of success in that initial goal," said Chudgar. "But now we have another set of issues to think about. We don’t see that many children making it through primary and into secondary schools. Once enrolled, retaining children in secondary education is also a challenge."

Assisting with the research are Alyssa Mosley, Pablo Bezam and Young Ran Kim, all students in MSU’s Educational Policy doctoral program. Chudgar and her team use nationally representative Demographic and Health Survey data to identify how factors such as health, gender and family circumstances affect secondary education outcomes for youth ranging from 12 to 24 years old. For two countries, India and Nigeria, they use additional data to create a more detailed profile of enrollment and retention patterns.

Chudgar, an associate professor of educational administration and policy, is committed to encouraging her students and colleagues around the world to explore similar research projects with publicly available resources. "There are so many existing good datasets that are underutilized and could be used to address questions for which we know very little," she said. "Our job is to generate findings that are relevant and that can be used by governments and policymakers to make a difference."

The MacArthur Foundation funded the project as part of the Partnership to Strengthen Innovation and Practice in Secondary Education, a collaborative that seeks to increase secondary education access and improve learning outcomes for marginalized populations. The partnership works toward this goal by funding in-country interventions that accelerate innovation, support evidence-based policy reforms, and capture and disseminate learnings to key stakeholders. The partnership is led by a group of private donors and donor advisors, including the MacArthur Foundation, The MasterCard Foundation, Human Dignity Foundation, Intel Foundation and an anonymous donor.

MasterCard Foundation Scholars Gather in NYC

Every year, about 10 scholars from the MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program’s participating institutions across Canada, the United States and Costa Rica take part in its annual partner appreciation dinner in New York. Scholars are selected from a pool of nominations based on the uniqueness of their backgrounds and a well-defined giveback plan. The Annual Partner Appreciation Dinner is an opportunity for partners and scholars present to inspire one another. This year, successful scholars were invited for a three-day event, which included a daylong boot camp on social and business entrepreneurship with successful entrepreneurs such as Miki and Radha Agrawal, Andrew Horn and Doug Akin. The scholars also spent time connecting with counterparts from other universities and countries across Africa (Burundi, Ghana, Lesotho, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe) to share their personal education and leadership journeys and their giveback projects with one another. It was also an opportunity to explore New York City and meet with the foundation partners who are thought leaders in education, including university presidents from across the scholars program partnership.

In their opening remarks at the Annual Partnership Appreciation Dinner, Reeta Roy, president and CEO of the MasterCard Foundation, and Jim Leech, board chairman of the MasterCard Foundation, acknowledged the contributions of partners who work tirelessly to fulfill the vision of the Foundation in providing university education to academically talented young people in Africa who show a commitment to giving back to their communities. Together with the audience, they recognized the scholars with a standing ovation. In response, scholars expressed their gratitude and shared personal and inspiring stories about their background and life journeys prior to their MasterCard Foundation Scholarship awards.

Caroline Latona, a graduate scholar in advertising who was selected to represent Michigan State University commented that, “every MasterCard Foundation scholar has an interesting and inspiring story, including all 83 of us at Michigan State and others I have met these past three years. Our experiences have motivated us to reach where we are now and to continue to forge ahead despite the challenges. Not only do we get a first class education at Michigan State, we also get to take part in leadership and personal development trainings that prepare us to become well rounded professionals.” Scholars urged the foundation for continued support, as there is so much more to be done in addressing the imbalances in access to education, particularly for the girl-child, the stigmatization of mental illness, unemployment and other concerns based on their experiences.

“For me, it was really a pleasant experience networking with top officials in partner organizations with the MasterCard Foundation, but more importantly being inspired by the stories of the scholars who were represented. Sometimes you think you have experienced the worst of things but when you listen to others who have experienced much more, you get really motivated to do more with what you have,” Caroline said.

MasterCard Foundation Scholars' Annual Partner Appreciation Dinner.

Amita Chudgar with a colleague.

Caroline Latona, Reeta Roy, joined by Joao Kalombo, manager of the MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program at MSU.
Visionary Network Strengthens Michigan Food Businesses and Access

Food hubs are emerging win-win innovations: a business model that makes healthy local food products available to diverse markets and offers a way for small producers and value-added food businesses to succeed.

“The MSU Center for Regional Food Systems (CRFS) has received a $450,000 continuation grant from the Kresge Foundation to expand the Michigan Food Hub Network, the nation’s first statewide learning community that helps food hubs become profitable while supplying healthy food to low-income communities.

“With this renewed award, we will build on the network’s unique infrastructure, which gathers food hub managers and business partners to develop strategies for business viability, reaching new markets and increasing food security in the state,” said Rich Ping, senior associate director of CRFS. “The center will also collaborate with neighboring states to help them learn from our model.”

Over the next three years, the project will increase buyer-seller relationships and specialized assistance, emphasizing business collaborations between food hubs and food service directors of institutions (e.g. schools and hospitals).

“Institutional food service directors and buyers across the state continue to express great interest in purchasing Michigan foods, but face challenges in sourcing the foods they want at a local or regional level,” said Colleen Marte, farm to institution specialist and co-founder of the Michigan Food Hub Network’s Institute Network. “Food hubs are in a position to fill that critical gap to help meet institutional demand.”

Helping Small Food and Farm Businesses

“With the network’s support I was able to attend the University of Vermont’s food hub management certificate program, participate in network meetings, and collaborate with other Michigan food hubs in an IT feasibility study,” said Rita O’Brien, associate director of Lansing’s Allen Market Place. “These experiences helped us to develop a stronger business model which has set our hub on a path of success.”

Throughout Michigan, representatives gather three times per year to build peer relationships and share lessons learned. The network also collaborates to address regional food value chain challenges.

For Natasha Lantz, co-founder of the Upper Peninsula Food Exchange, these partnerships have been important. “The Michigan Food Hub Network has been invaluable in helping us to establish, develop, and continue to grow our food hub. The statewide meetings allow us to share resources, get new ideas and see the groundwork to coordinate efforts. The network takes our needs seriously and works with us to obtain resources and find solutions to common challenges. This is evidenced by attention to both farm food safety and food hub technology, two issues that are proving to be challenges to food hubs in our state.”

Expanding the Network

Michigan’s food hubs are well positioned to expand connections between the state’s producers and markets. Over 1.8 million Michigan residents, including an estimated 300,000 children, live in low-income communities with limited supermarket access.

“We have seen too much emphasis on getting local food into the transparent large distribution system rather than doing the work to build a side-by-side local system that is traceable and trustworthy,” said a participant at a network meeting.

Eighty-two percent of Michigan school food service directors reported interest in purchasing local foods in a 2013 survey. Their top logistical challenges were lack of labor to prepare local foods, lack of storage and lack of a distribution method to get local foods to their programs. Working together to turn these challenges into opportunities is the Michigan Food Hub Network’s philosophy. “Strong, collaborative relationships are key to the success of any business; building such relationships across hubs and their business partners is what the Michigan Food Hub Network does best,” said Ping.

United Shore Gift Creates Faculty Fellow Position In Sales

A former Michigan State University basketball player turned business executive is training up with the Eli Broad College of Business to enhance sales research and education.

Mat Ishbia, president and CEO of United Shore, a Troy-based mortgage lender, created a new faculty fellow position with the Department of Marketing through a gift of $500,000.

“Talent and workforce development are major issues that Michigan companies are facing,” said Ishbia, a 2003 graduate of the Broad College. “At United Shore, we have a huge passion for the quality of programs and curriculum at Michigan State University, and are committed to investing in their efforts.”

Ishbia, a former basketball player and student assistant coach under Head Men’s Basketball Coach Tom Izzo, was a member of the 2000 national championship team. He said the donation creates a platform for partnership with MSU.

“It’s a platform to developing a best-in-class sales program as well as a pipeline between MSU and the exciting opportunities that exist in the mortgage industry,” he said.

Following graduation, Ishbia joined United Shore and gained experience in each area of the company as he climbed to the position of president and CEO. With a vision to create a more perfect mortgage world, Ishbia has changed the game in the mortgage industry from a commodity to a service focused on relationships, knowledge, and speed to market.

Today, United Shore is home to 1,200 of the mortgage industry’s most skilled and knowledgeable experts, and has grown into an award-winning top national workplace and home of the nation’s top wholesale lender. Ishbia’s focus on attracting and developing the nation’s top sales talent played a significant role in the company’s investment in the resources and bright minds at Michigan State University.

“Fellow positions enable us to recruit and retain the very best up and coming faculty members,” said MSU Provost June Pierce Youatt. “We are grateful to United Shore and Mat Ishbia’s leadership, which will help keep MSU at the forefront of knowledge and teaching in sales to help develop new generations of sales leaders.”

The United Shore gift will allow the Department of Marketing to provide support for a faculty member—even as an assistant professor level—who has exhibited leadership in sales research and teaching. A leader in wholesale mortgage lending, United Shore believes in sales as a pivotal and critical aspect of business.

“The United Shore gift demonstrates confidence in the Broad College and our ability to graduate strategic thinkers who have a business acumen and can make an impact on the business world from day one,” said Sanjay Gupta, Eli and Edythe L. Broad Dean of the college. “This gift helps us in our commitment to develop transformational thinkers and doers who make business happen.”

About United Shore

Founded in 1986, United Shore is home to United Wholesale Mortgage, the top lender among America’s independent mortgage brokers. In addition to receiving the Crain’s Cool Place to Work in Michigan award, United Shore has been named a Best and Brightest Company to Work For and a Detroit Free Press “Top Workplaces.”
34 businesses and organizations sponsored MSU’s 2015 Science Festival

300 H.S. journalists helped by Crain Communications

197 members in the MSU STEM Alliance improving STEM education