



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Associate Vice President for Research Infrastructure and Capacity Building

Leadership Profile

Summer/Fall 2026



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Executive Summary

Michigan State University (MSU) invites nominations and applications for an entrepreneurial, strategic leader to serve as the Associate Vice President for Research Infrastructure and Capacity Building (AVPR) within the Office of Research and Innovation.

Michigan State is the nation's premier land-grant university and one of the top research universities in the world. As a member of both the Association of American Universities (AAU) and the Big Ten Academic Alliance, MSU is nationally recognized for its academic excellence, impactful research, and global outreach. It is also known for its Spartan grit and resilience. MSU is stronger because of its community, which includes more than 51,000 students, 5,600 faculty and staff, and a network of over half a million living alumni who are extremely loyal supporters and cheerleaders for the university. In 2025, Michigan State had \$992M in research expenditures and was ranked #1 nationally in Department of Energy expenditures. Multiple major capital projects are also underway – the [Plant and Environmental Sciences Building](#), the [Leinweber Center for Engineering and Digital Innovation](#), and the [Health Sciences Research Center in Detroit](#) – all of which will significantly expand MSU's research capabilities.

The Office of Research and Innovation (OR&I) advances MSU's research mission by supporting excellence across the full spectrum of scholarly, creative, and scientific activity. OR&I delivers comprehensive research support services; safeguards the safety, integrity, and ethical conduct of research; fosters technology transfer and strategic external partnerships; supports shared research resources and core facilities; and implements university policies that guide and strengthen research and creative activity.

The next AVPR serves as a senior leader and steadfast advocate for MSU's shared research infrastructure. Working in close collaboration with the Vice President for Research and Innovation (VPRI), academic colleges, research institutes and centers, core facilities, museums, libraries, external and industry partners and administrative partners, the AVPR helps shape and coordinate strategic investments in people, infrastructure, and shared resources that advance MSU's research enterprise forward. The AVPR provides executive oversight and strategic leadership for university's portfolio of shared research resources (SRRs), including direct administrative responsibility for the Research Technology Support Facility (RTSF), the MSU Bioeconomy Institute, and the St. Andrews Facility at the Midland site.

After an extensive two-year initiative involving over 180 community members, MSU has developed a comprehensive blueprint to transform their [shared research resources \(SRR\) ecosystem](#). This collaborative effort establishes a clear vision for coordinated, sustainable, and world-class research infrastructure that will drive discovery and innovation for decades to come. Central to this work will be establishing a long-term, sustainable financial model, in partnership with the university's CFO and Contract and Grant Administration, for MSU's core facilities, expanding utilization and broadening the user base internally across the institution and externally through partnerships with industry and universities across the state.

The successful candidate will hold a terminal degree (Ph.D., M.D., D.O., D.V.M., or equivalent), be a tenured professor or possess equivalent senior academic standing, and a sustained record of federal research funding, with demonstrated experience working within or alongside shared research infrastructure environments. Candidates should bring prior experience in central research administration—such as service as a core facility director, center or institute leader, associate dean for research, department head/chair, or in a comparable administrative role—along with a demonstrated ability to oversee shared research facilities, including responsibility for financial sustainability, asset management, personnel management, and strategic planning. The successful candidate will also possess exceptional relationship-building and facilitation skills, with a proven capacity to lead through influence in complex, decentralized academic environments.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see Procedure for Candidacy at the end of this document.

Role of the Associate Vice President for Research Infrastructure and Capacity Building, Office of Research and Innovation

The Associate Vice President for Research Infrastructure and Capacity Building reports to Shashank Priya, Vice President for Research and Innovation, and will join his [senior leadership team](#) of five fellow Associate and Assistant Vice Presidents. The AVPR will have a team of eight direct reports. The portfolio includes:

- [Center for Statistical Training and Consulting](#)
- [Bioeconomy Institute](#)
- [MSU St. Andrews](#)
- [Institute for Cyber-Enabled Research](#)
- [Research Technology Support Facility](#)
 - [Transgenic and Genome Editing Facility](#)
 - [Mass Spectrometry and Metabolomics Core](#)
 - [Elemental Health Institute – QBEAM](#)

The next AVP's roles and responsibilities will include:

Strategic Leadership of Shared Research Infrastructure

- Implement the strategic vision of [MSU's research infrastructure program](#), ensuring strategic alignment with university research priorities, faculty hiring plans, and external funding opportunities.
- Develop and implement a forward-looking strategy to prioritize investments in research infrastructure, aligning these investments with strategic faculty recruitment to accelerate progress on institutional priorities and strengthen MSU's research enterprise.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive performance and impact framework that integrates scientific, operational, financial, outreach and training metrics, supported by robust systems for continuous monitoring and data-informed decision-making.
- Advance and elevate MSU's standing as a leading global research university and premier land-grant institution, driving discovery, innovation, and societal impact.
- Advance MSU's partnership with industry, academic institutions, national laboratories, and other research institutions.

Oversight of OR&I Core Facilities and Coordination of Shared Research Resources

- Provide executive leadership and administrative oversight for the Research Technology Support Facility (RTSF), a multi-core facility delivering cutting-edge capabilities in genomics, proteomics, metabolomics, cryo-electron microscopy, flow cytometry, advanced imaging, gene editing, and other transformative research capabilities.
- Ensure the operational excellence, financial sustainability, and long-term strategic vitality of RTSF, with a focus on optimizing cost recovery and recharge models, strengthening workforce capacity, and contributing to the forward-looking capital investment and infrastructure planning.

- Foster strategic coordination across MSU's broader ecosystem of shared research resources, including those that reside outside of OR&I, to minimize duplication, maximize efficiency, and ensure alignment with the university's strategic research priorities.
- Establish and advance policies, governance frameworks, and performance standards that promote broad accessibility, operational efficiency, and world-class scientific excellence across MSU's shared research infrastructure to internal and external users.

Capacity Building

- Lead transformative initiatives to modernize, expand, and optimize MSU's shared research instrumentation, equipment, and infrastructure, ensuring the university remains at the forefront of scientific discovery and technological innovation.
- Partner strategically with faculty, colleges, advancement and research units to secure major external investments in instrumentation and infrastructure, positioning MSU for success in highly competitive programs such as NSF Major Research Instrumentation (MRI), NIH S10 Shared Instrumentation Grants, and instrumentation initiatives supported by the DOE.
- Identify emerging federal, foundation, and industry funding opportunities and catalyze cross-campus collaborations that enhance MSU's competitiveness and amplify the impact of its shared research resources.

Visibility, Accessibility & Engagement

- Advance the visibility, accessibility, and impact of MSU's SRRs by leading the development of a user-centered online portal or research services marketplace that enables intuitive discovery of expertise, instrumentation, and services, while providing transparent information on access, availability, and cost structures.
- Strengthen coordination across MSU's life sciences and biomedical research cores spanning all campuses, fostering consistent branding, enhanced internal and external visibility, and greater operational efficiencies while preserving the distinctive strengths and identities of individual facilities.
- Develop and implement strategic initiatives that expand faculty engagement with existing SRRs, leveraging internal grant programs, incentive structures, and targeted outreach to colleges and departments to maximize utilization and research impact.
- Establish proactive planning practices that align SRR capabilities with faculty recruitment priorities, ensuring that newly hired faculty have immediate access to the advanced infrastructure and shared resources necessary to launch and sustain cutting-edge research programs while minimizing bureaucracy.

Oversight of Midland Research Operations

- Provide strategic leadership and coordinated oversight of MSU's Chemical R&D and education initiatives and partnerships in Midland, ensuring strong alignment with institutional priorities while advancing regional innovation, economic development and K-12 STEM education..
- Cultivate and strengthen collaborative relationships with industry leaders, community partners, and regional stakeholders to expand MSU's research presence, deepen translational partnerships, and amplify the university's economic and societal impact.

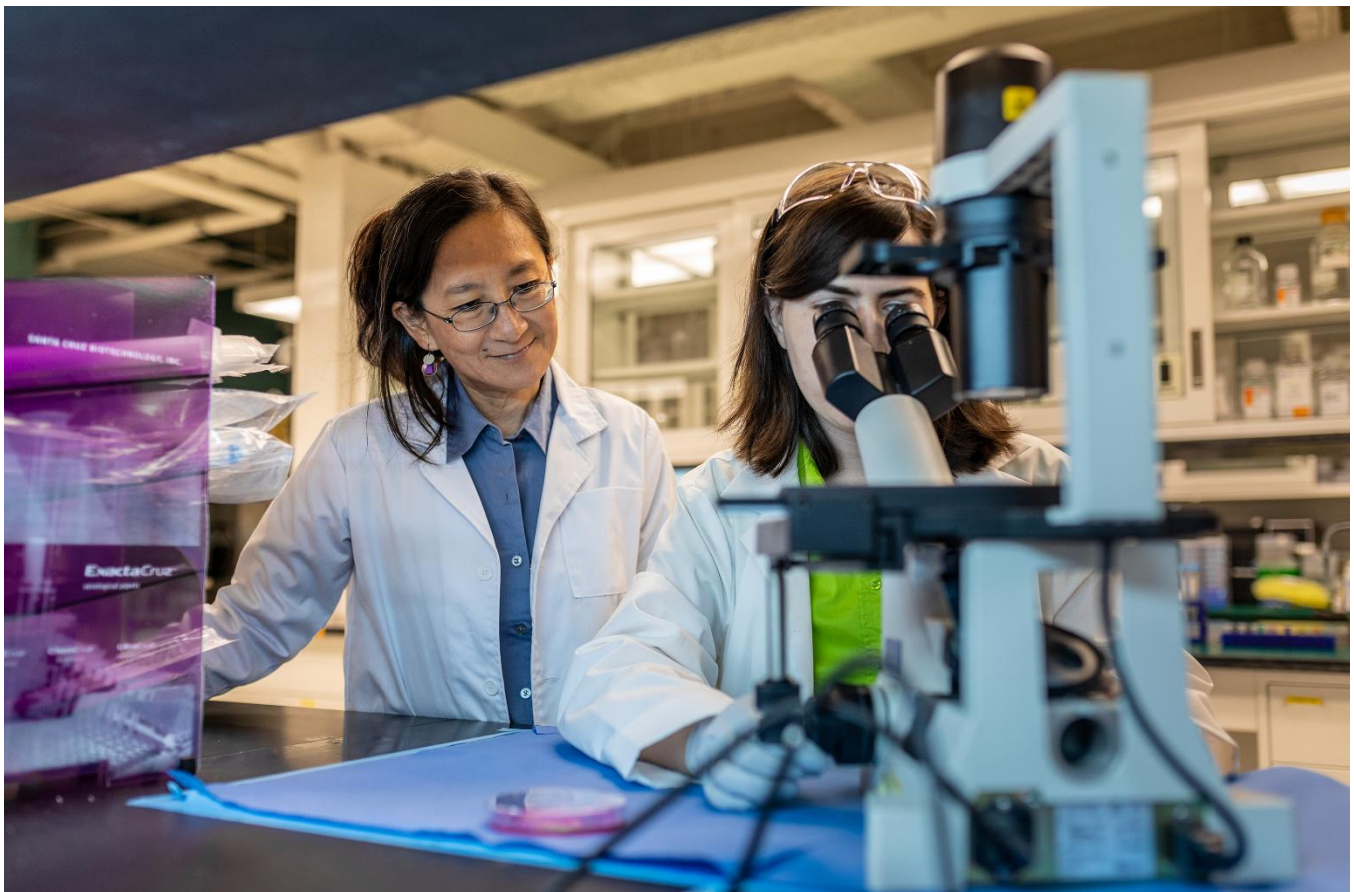
- Advance faculty engagement, strategic infrastructure planning, and program development to support and grow Midland-based research and education initiatives, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and positioning MSU as a catalyst for regional discovery, innovation, and opportunity.

Leadership of Bioeconomy Initiatives

- Provide visionary leadership for the Bioeconomy Institute's role in facilitating advances and growth in the bioeconomy through use of its infrastructure and expertise to support biobased process development, scale-up, and small-scale production.
- Raise awareness of the Bioeconomy Institute's capabilities to catalyze interdisciplinary collaboration across the MSU ecosystem as well as the wider academic community and develop a business model that supports this work.
- Continue to grow the Bioeconomy Institute external client base to drive revenue to support investment in equipment and people.

Organizational Leadership & Collaboration

- Cultivate strong, collaborative relationships with deans, institute directors, department chairs, and administrative leaders to advance a shared vision for research growth, innovation, and institutional excellence.
- Champion leadership development across MSU's shared research resource ecosystem by fostering mentoring, professional development, and thoughtful succession planning that strengthens organizational capacity and long-term sustainability.



Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

Lead Implementation of the Shared Research Resources (SRR) Roadmap

As an immediate priority, the AVP will partner with campus leaders to operationalize Michigan State University's [Shared Research Resources \(SRR\) roadmap](#), translating strategy into clear governance, investment priorities, and measurable outcomes. This includes aligning infrastructure planning, service delivery models, and business practices across core facilities to ensure sustainability, transparency, and equitable access, while strengthening MSU's competitiveness for sponsored research. Central to this work will be establishing a long-term, sustainable financial model for MSU's core facilities, expanding utilization and broadening the user base internally across the institution and externally through partnerships with industry and universities across the state. This critical work must be done in partnership with the office of finance and the office of research innovation. The AVP will bring an entrepreneurial mindset and a strong understanding of core facility business models, advancing innovative approaches to cost recovery, investment, and growth.

Build an Integrated, Sustainable Research Infrastructure Ecosystem

The AVP will advance a coordinated, institution-wide approach to research infrastructure that integrates core facilities, digital research platforms, data ecosystems, and physical assets. This role will establish scalable funding models, optimize utilization, and promote lifecycle planning to ensure long-term sustainability, operational efficiency, and high-quality service delivery across MSU's research enterprise and external partners.

Enhance Research Capacity and Competitiveness

Working closely with faculty, college leadership, and central administration, the AVP will identify and address gaps in research capacity—particularly in emerging, interdisciplinary, and high-growth areas. The role will prioritize investments that expand technical capabilities, support team-based science, and enable faculty to compete successfully for large-scale funding opportunities, including center grants and multi-institutional collaborations.

Foster a Collaborative, Service-Oriented Culture

The AVPR will cultivate a culture of collaboration, shared governance, and customer service across research support units. This includes engaging stakeholders across faculty, administration, and external partners; establishing clear communication channels; and promoting professional development for research infrastructure staff. Through inclusive leadership and strong partnerships, the AVP will ensure research infrastructure is responsive, accessible, and aligned with institutional priorities.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

Minimum Requirements

- Ph.D., M.D., D.O., D.V.M., or equivalent terminal degree.
- Tenured full professor or equivalent senior academic or professional standing.
- Sustained record of federal research funding, with demonstrated experience working within or alongside shared research infrastructure environments.
- Prior service in central research administration such as core facility director, center or institute leadership or university leadership roles including ,, associate dean for research, or equivalent administrative positions.
- Demonstrated experience managing or overseeing shared research facilities, including financial sustainability, personnel management, and strategic planning.
- Exceptional relationship-development and facilitation skills, with a proven ability to lead through influence across complex, decentralized academic environments.
- Demonstrated experience leading or implementing a university-wide or multi-unit coordination initiative, including stakeholder engagement, governance design, and change management.
- Demonstrated inclusive and innovative leadership.
- Strong communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills.
- Proficiency in strategic planning, mentoring, and program development.
- Demonstrated agility and flexibility in leading organizational change.
- Commitment to advancing equity, inclusiveness, and cultural richness in the research environment.

Preferred Qualifications

- Experience overseeing or evaluating shared research facility business models, including cost recovery structures and capital planning, with demonstrated ability to hold directors accountable for financial sustainability.
- Experience developing or leading career pathway or workforce development initiatives for research support personnel.
- Experience with federal instrumentation and infrastructure grants, such as NIH S10, NSF MRI, NSF Mid-scale, or equivalent programs.
- Experience bridging academic research infrastructure with industry, contract research, or commercialization partnerships.
- Demonstrated success in building professional communities and advancing workforce development for research personnel across the university.

About Michigan State University

Michigan State University has been advancing the common good with uncommon will for more than 165 years.

The nation's premier land-grant university, MSU, was founded with the goal of democratizing higher education and bringing science and innovation into everyday life. Today, MSU makes an impact in communities from East Lansing to East Africa as it pushes the boundaries of discovery, expands opportunities, and advances equity to create a better, safer, and healthier world for all.

One of the world's leading public research universities and a member of the Association of American Universities, MSU offers nationally ranked and recognized academic, undergraduate research, residential college, and service-learning programs, and is a leader in study abroad among public universities.

A diverse and inclusive academic community, MSU enrolls more than 50,000 students from all 50 states and nearly 140 countries, employs nearly 2,000 tenure-system faculty members, and offers more than 400 programs of study in 17 degree-granting colleges.

An indication of MSU's excellence and impact is its selection by the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Science to design and establish the Facility for Rare Isotope Beams - the preeminent user facility of its type in the world. Opened in 2022, the facility provides research opportunities for scientists from around the globe, fueling breakthrough applications while developing the next generation of scientific leaders.

Mission

MSU is an inclusive, academic community known for its traditionally strong academic disciplines and professional programs, as well as its liberal arts foundation. MSU's cross- and interdisciplinary enterprises connect the sciences, humanities, and professions in practical, sustainable, and innovative ways to address society's rapidly changing needs.

As a public research-intensive, land-grant university funded in part by the state of Michigan, MSU's mission is to advance knowledge and transform lives by:

- providing outstanding undergraduate, graduate, and professional education to promising, qualified students in order to prepare them to contribute fully to society as globally engaged citizen leaders;
- conducting research of the highest caliber that seeks to answer questions and create solutions in order to expand human understanding and make a positive difference, both locally and globally;
- advancing outreach, engagement, and economic development activities that are innovative, research-driven, and lead to a better quality of life for individuals and communities, at home and around the world.

MSU Strategic Plan 2030

The strategic plan articulates a shared vision for MSU, shaped through an inclusive process that incorporated the input of many voices. It focuses on six major thematic areas that will guide the University's collective efforts moving forward. More information can be found here: [Overview](#) | [Strategic Plan](#) | [Michigan State University](#)

Leadership



Shashank Priya was named vice president for Research and Innovation in 2026. In this role, he oversees strategic initiatives and support for MSU's multimillion-dollar annual research programs that work to advance discovery, innovation and enduring global societal impact. He brings exceptional leadership experience as a scholar, researcher and senior administrator to MSU, along with a deep enthusiasm for fostering creativity, research excellence and innovation enterprise. He has served on the board of various national organizations including UIDP, MBOLD, Greater MSP, and MN National Security Ecosystem. He has served on the executive committees of AAU, APLU and CECE.

Prior to joining MSU, Priya served as vice president for research and innovation at the University of Minnesota in addition to serving as special advisor and founding executive director of the National Security Research Institute and as the strategic advisor to the chancellor at the University of Minnesota Duluth. His tenure was marked by record growth in research funding, expansion of industry partnerships, and a surge in startup creation. Earlier, at Pennsylvania State University, he led strategic interdisciplinary initiatives that significantly increased large-scale research funding and strengthened global research collaborations. An internationally recognized expert in materials engineering, bio-inspired systems and energy harvesting, Priya has established himself as a visionary inventor, innovation strategist and ecosystem builder whose work continues to shape both scientific progress and societal well-being.

Priya earned a doctorate in materials engineering from Pennsylvania State University, an integrated master's in engineering from the Indian Institute of Science and a bachelor's in math and physics from the University of Allahabad. He is a fellow of the American Ceramic Society and National Academy of Inventors.



East Lansing, Michigan

Michigan State is in East Lansing, a vibrant college town just three miles from Michigan’s capital, Lansing, the hard-working heart of Michigan.

The area offers a multitude of things to do, see, and experience, from art galleries, concerts, and restaurants to gardens, parks, and trails. And you do not have to venture far to discover Michigan’s sandy beaches, ski slopes, and metropolitan life.

As the seasons change, so does Michigan State University. From vibrant fall color to blankets of fresh snow to spring blossoms on MSU’s sprawling park-like campus, you will never tire of the scenery.

Discover more about Michigan [here](#).

Learn more about East Lansing [here](#).



Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting Michigan State University in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by **September 1, 2026**.

Application materials, inquiries, and nominations should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#).

Nominations and inquiries can also be directed to:

Jessica Herrington at jherrington@wittkieffer.com and Natalie Song at nsong@wittkieffer.com.

All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, citizenship, age, disability, or protected veteran status.