A Proposal for Effective Expansion of the Lyman Briggs School
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Executive Summary

The Provost’s draft report *Realizing the Vision: Liberal Arts in the 21st Century Land Grant University* acknowledges the role that residential programs currently play at MSU, calling them “a vital asset in attracting a wide range of academically talented students,” and noting that they “provide a more personal undergraduate experience” which is “the benchmark for the kind of rigorous, high-quality practical liberal education we aspire to provide.” The report calls for MSU to “improve the quality, breadth, and community of the undergraduate experience by expanding degree-oriented residential options and doubling the number of students participating in these options.” The Lyman Briggs School looks forward to working with the University to make the most of this exciting opportunity.

In creating a plan for expanding the Lyman Briggs School, the challenge will be to maintain the aspects of LBS which the draft report praises: “more writing, hands-on lab experience, critical thinking experiences, small classes, and individualized faculty mentoring.” These characteristics, along with the strong sense of community, the interdisciplinary curriculum and undergraduate engagement in the faculty’s disciplinary scholarship are what the students find especially valuable. Sustaining, indeed expanding, these facets of the Briggs experience will require an investment in faculty and staff, in physical plant, and in SS&E. As the draft report emphasizes, however, it is important that these initiatives “take full advantage of joint appointments and generate new revenues that might help cover program costs in the long term.”

To summarize the main points of the proposal:

1. Expansion will afford opportunities for strengthening the academic community while meeting specific university goals including diversity, ties to the professional schools, internationalization, and an even more interdisciplinary curriculum.
2. Continuing to provide the current number of students with a rigorous and interdisciplinary academic experience requires adding faculty lines to make up for recent loss of FTEs (at constant enrollment) due to retirements and departures.
3. Expansion of the student body of Lyman Briggs will require the addition of faculty and a professional advisor in order to maintain academic standards and the “more personal undergraduate experience”.
4. Swift renovation of the teaching laboratories, including the addition of a second chemistry laboratory, will be needed in order to offer all Briggs students a challenging modern laboratory experience within Holmes Hall.
5. Additional housing, classroom, and office space in Holmes Hall will be required to provide the residential academic experience to an expanded community.
6. Increases to the recurring supplies, services and equipment budget will be needed to facilitate recruitment of an increasingly diverse student body, the continued presence of undergraduate learning assistants in labs and recitations, and more effective use of technology in the classroom.