

ABSTRACT: 2014 ELAM Institutional Action Project Poster Symposium

Project Title: Part of the Solution: A Health Equity Research Center

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Background, Challenge or Opportunity: A strategic imperative for Michigan State University (MSU) is to increase research opportunities by significantly expanding funding and involvement of graduate and undergraduate students in research and scholarship. The NIH Health Disparities Strategic Plan and Budget is the national blueprint for research to eliminate health disparities; for the educational and outreach efforts needed and; to translate research advances to health improvements. Additionally, the College of Human Medicine (CHM) being ranked 6th among the 141 medical schools as having a *social mission* for producing minority physicians who practice primary care in underserved areas. It appears as MSU through CHM has an opportunity expand its research infrastructure in the area health disparities.

Purpose/Objectives: The purpose of this project was to conduct a research readiness assessment of the MSU faculty to collaborate around the formation of the health equity research center.

Methods/Approach: Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to conduct the readiness assessment which was done in three phases. Phase I included using the MSU Scholars data base to identify MSU researchers who published in the area of health disparities and calling the research deans of the three health professional colleges to get a listing of faculty who were identified as health disparities researchers. The two lists were combined. Phase II involved conducting five stakeholder interviews with faculty of color, three clinicians, one biostatistician and one epidemiologist. The purpose of these interviews was to solicit their perspective of research collaboration on the topic and the structure of a proposed center. An additional key informant interview was conducted with the director of a MSU center to gain an understanding of how that center was developed. Data from this phase informed the survey design. In the final phase I designed and conducted a survey utilizing Survey Monkey. I selected faculty based on their faculty health disparities research profiles. They represented additional five colleges.

Outcomes and Evaluation Strategy:

The overall outcome is to prepare a *white paper* for the Dean to share with Provost to get resources for a health equity research center that is multidisciplinary. The analysis of the survey and the stakeholder interviews will be included in the white paper. Funding opportunities as well as a start up budget will also be included. This will be completed by mid-summer.

BACKGROUND

- A strategic imperative for Michigan State University (MSU) is to increase research opportunities by significantly expanding funding and involvement of graduate and undergraduate students in research and scholarship. It plans to do this by supporting cross-university, interdisciplinary research initiatives in health and biomedicine.
- Of the 71 centers and institutes at MSU none is focused on health disparities research.
- The National Institutes of Health's Disparities Strategic Plan and Budget is the national blueprint for research to eliminate health disparities. It highlights the educational and outreach efforts needed to translate research advances for health improvements.
- The College of Human Medicine (CHM) is ranked 6th among the 141 medical schools as having a *social mission* for producing minority physicians who practice primary care in underserved areas.
- *It appears as if MSU has an opportunity to expand its research infrastructure in the area health disparities research for health equity.*

PURPOSE

- ✓ Conduct a research readiness assessment of the MSU faculty
- ✓ Gage their readiness to collaborate around the formation of the health equity research center

METHODS

The Readiness Assessment was conducted in three phases

PHASE I

- Identified faculty who published in the area of health disparities
- Called deans from the three health professional colleges
- Lists were combined in preparation for Phase III survey

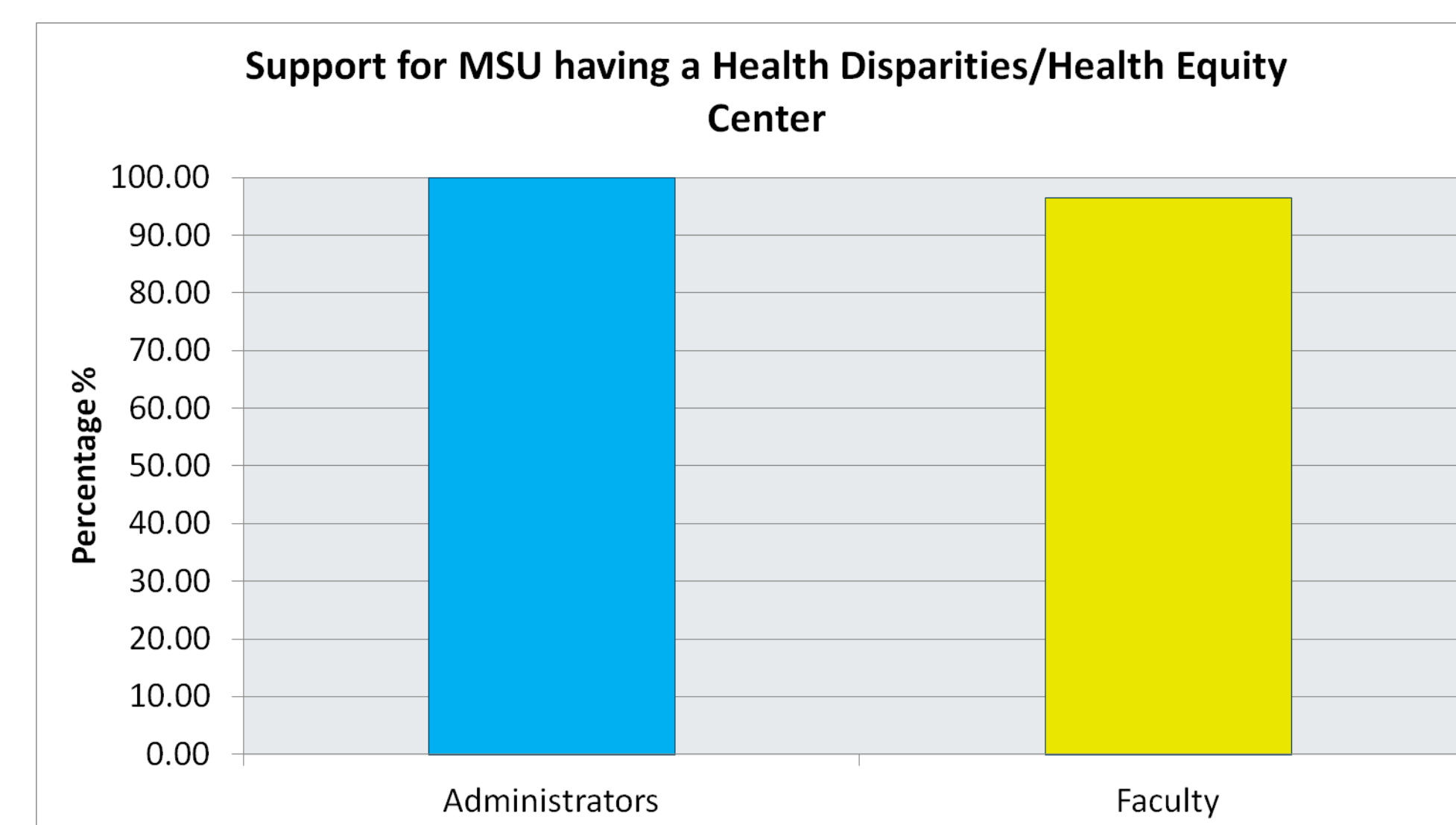
PHASE II

- Conducted five stakeholder interviews with faculty of color (3 clinicians, 1 bio statistician, 1 epidemiologist)
- Conducted one key informant interview with a MSU center director
- Qualitative Data were analyzed to inform the Phase III survey questions

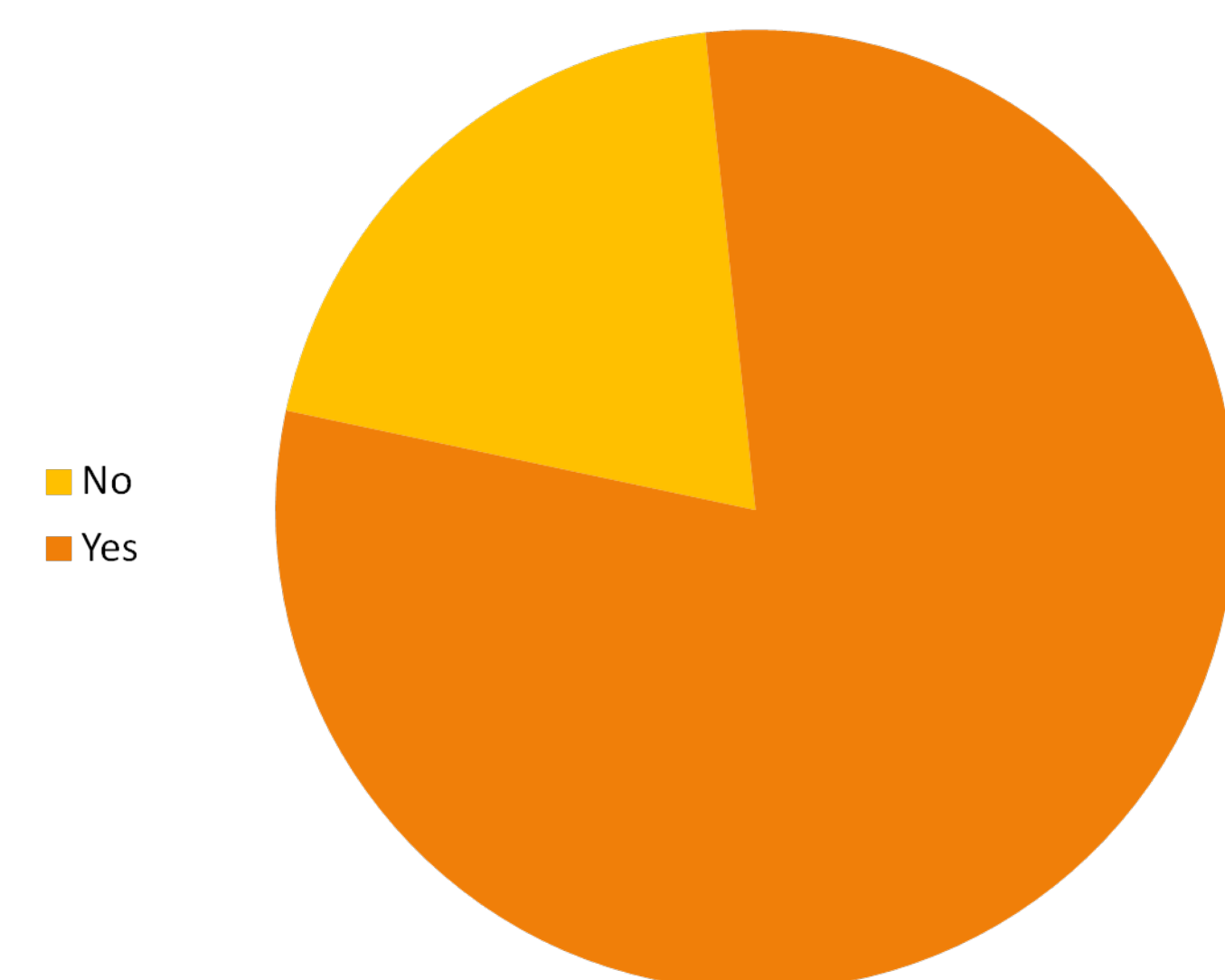
PHASE III

- Survey was administered to faculty and administrators representing five MSU colleges

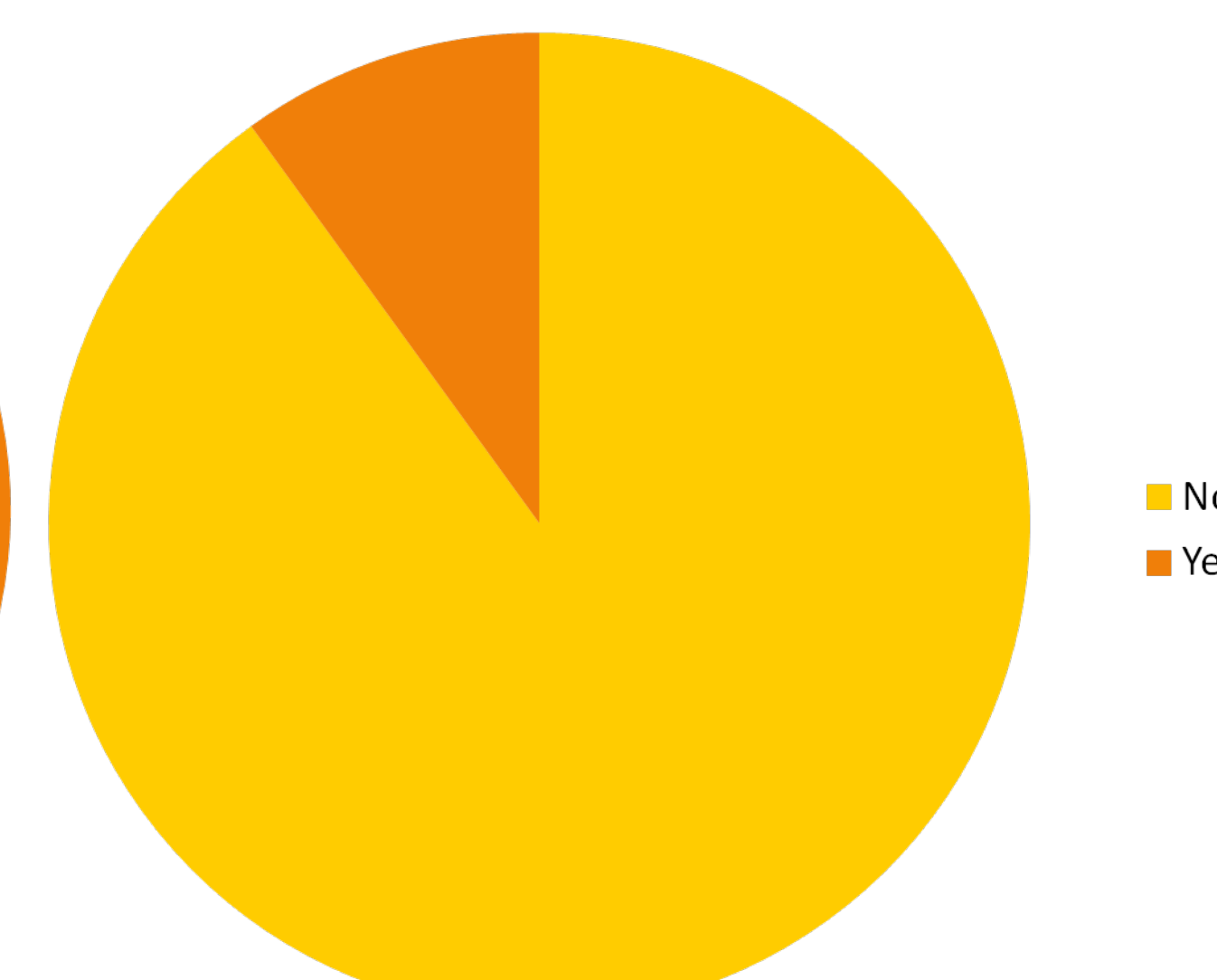
RESULTS



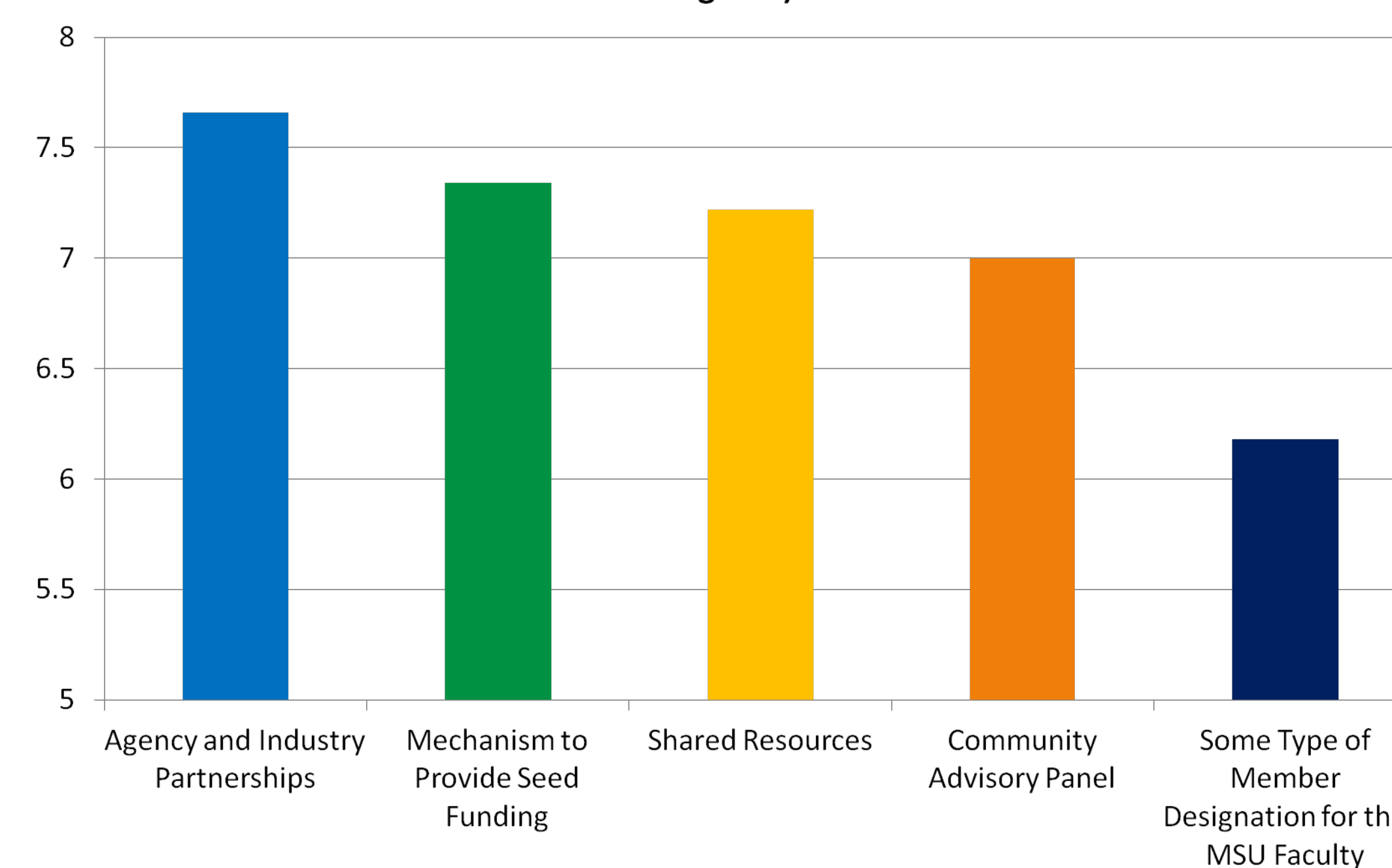
Are you interested contributing to a Health Disparity/Health Equity Center?



Should The Center be Disease Specific?



Average Faculty Rank of Center Structure Components (10 being the Highest)



DICUSSION

- Faculty (96.5%) and administrators (100%) were supportive of Michigan State University having a health equity research center. Additionally with 80% of faculty indicated they wanted to be part of a proposed center. Thus it appears as if the faculty in the health professions are ready to collaborate to advance the science of health disparities in an effort to create solutions that lead to health equity for medically underrepresented residents in Michigan.
- Ninety percent of the faculty respondents indicated that the center should not have a disease focus. However, 20% of the respondents cited a disease or theme: cancer, heart disease; diabetes or women and children health. Building support for a collaborative research around chronic disease might be plausible.
- Eighty percent of the faculty indicated they wanted to be involved in the center. The contributions listed varied, thus providing a strong foundation for a multidiscipline approach. This explained their responses with regard to the core components necessary for a solid health disparities/health equity center: community based research, health services research, basic science, behavioral and prevention science. This could be interpreted as have a center that conducted translational research.
- Faculty thought it was important for the center have a strong agency and industry partnership, have a mechanism to provide seed funding and have shared resources. These responses address infrastructure. Faculty appear to understand what is important to continuously develop and implement research.

SUMMARY

- Discuss the findings, and funding opportunities with the Dean
- Prepare a briefing paper for the Dean to share with the Provost and Vice President for Research to secure internal resources