Research-to-Impact Partnerships Workshop: Translating Grand Challenge Research into Real-World Impact

Call for Applications

Workshop Date: Oct 22 – 23, 2026 in Merten Hall

APPLY HERE

The **Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Impact** is inviting applications to participate in a 2-day interactive workshop focused on building the partnerships needed to *Translate Grand Challenge Research into Real-World Impact.* The workshop will be held in person on **October 22 and 23.**

Led by the **Saath Partners,** this workshop is designed to strengthen the ability of faculty to create impact through their research. Participants will gain practical concepts, tools, and peer-learning opportunities needed to strategically identify impactful partners, successfully initiate and sustain partnerships, and productively manage those partnerships. Through facilitated group discussions and applied exercises, faculty will have the opportunity to use these concepts and tools to further develop their own partnership strategies to support research translation.

This workshop is being offered in support of the Grand Challenge Initiative (GCI). Faculty leading or participating in currently funded GCI teams will have the opportunity to hone their partnership strategies and strengthen their tactics for securing partners. Faculty interested in submitting future GCI proposals will gain the practical knowledge and frameworks needed to present strong partnership development strategies in their upcoming proposals. However, all faculty interested in developing partnerships to translate their research into impact are encouraged to apply!

What You'll Gain:

- **A shared language and research- informed foundation** for understanding how effective partnerships support research translation and real-world impact.
- **Practical tools and frameworks** for identifying, initiating, designing, and sustaining productive cross-sector and interdisciplinary partnerships.
- **Strategies for articulating the relevance and value of your research** to diverse stakeholders and cultivating partnerships that can strengthen impact, visibility, and future opportunities for support.

- **A partnership - building roadmap** that can inform a future GCI proposal, strengthen the implementation of a funded GCI project, or advance other transdisciplinary research efforts.

Who Should Apply:

- Faculty leading or participating in funded GCI teams
- Faculty who are in the process of preparing a GCI proposal or interested in preparing a future GCI proposal.
- Faculty interested in building transdisciplinary partnerships to support the translation of their research into impact.

Space is limited. PI-eligible faculty (as defined by University Policy 4012) and participants willing to commit to participation in both workshop days will receive priority. **Applications must be submitted by 5 PM on Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2026, via this application link.**

The workshop will be facilitated by:

Dr. Priyanka Brunese - Founder & CEO, Saath Partners
Priyanka has over 15 years of experience researching and publishing on partnership and research translation approaches and enabling effective collaboration across sectors. She has guided global organizations in app lying these approaches to design holistic partnership strategies and build collaboration capacity. Priyanka founded Saath Partners to make the practice of partnering more intentional, systematic, and transformative across sectors.
priyanka@saathpartners.com

Ms. Pallavi Gupta - Co-Founder & Exec. Dir., Saath Partners
Pallavi is a strategist and systems thinker with deep experience helping researchers and institutions build partnerships that scale. She has led USAID global initiatives, advised governments and donors, and guided universities in translating research into impact across 25 + countries. At Saath Partners, she equips leaders with practical frameworks to create collaborative, high-impact research ecosystems.
pallavi@saathpartners.com

Saath Partners is a mission- driven firm that helps institutions translate bold research into real-world impact through purposeful collaboration. The firm specializes in research impact, partnership strategy, and systems approaches across academia, philanthropy, and the public sector.

saath partners

STRATEGY. DESIGN. TRAINING

Use this link to submit application!

If you are interested in this workshop but are not available on the days it is scheduled, email Jessica Zelt (jzelt@gmu.edu) and we will reach out if this workshop is offered again.