

# Sue Nichols

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## Strategic champion of research

**Academic empowerment.** An innovator and NSF co-PI who guides researchers to better grants and publications, sharpens presentations, formulates communication strategies that make science stronger, increases citation rates and creates distinctive broader impact proposals.

**Savvy across campus, federal agencies and continents.** Worked extensively in disciplines from biology to engineering, in social and natural sciences. Long record of experience with national organizations such as the NSF, USAID, DOE, DOD, World Bank and AAAS. Documented field work in eight countries on six continents.

**Strategic leverage.** More than two decades' experience in strategic positioning, leveraging brands and creating tools to align research distinctions and strengths with messages to increase competitiveness. Award-winning writer, effective and engaging speaker who delights in deploying technology to apply build-once, use-many ethos.

## Experience

**Michigan State University**, East Lansing (October 2010 – present)  
Center for Systems Integration and Sustainability

### **Assistant Director**

- Key contributor to research. Funded co-PI on \$1.9 million NSF grant. Edit, for content and prose, grant proposals and manuscripts. Assist faculty and students in creating articulate and compelling presentations and posters.
- Represent at national conferences and create development strategy.
  - **Result:** Supported NSF by creating a popular booth at the USA Science and Engineering Festival in Washington, D.C, attended by more than 350,000 people.
  - **Result:** Organized and presented two AAAS symposiums, including one scheduled at 2019 annual meeting.
- Formulate and execute comprehensive multi-channel communications strategy for a major research center that comprises a key segment of the university's sustainability research effort.
- Generate national and international media presence with multiple placements in high-profile venues, including *New York Times*, *BBC*, *Time Magazine*, *Smithsonian* and *Biden's Briefing* podcast.
- Revitalize and execute a comprehensive communication strategy for the 1,800-member International Network on Research in Coupled Human and Natural Systems Network ([CHANS-Net](#)) a \$500,000 NSF initiative. Creating international database of sustainability scholars for future action.

**University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (June 2008 – September 2010)**

Michigan Energy Institute

***Marketing and Communications Director***

- Formulated and executed comprehensive strategy for the university's energy institute, which articulated, promoted and coordinated \$60 million in energy research among 100 faculty.
- Created strategic communication plan, revamped and revitalized the institute's online presence, produced bi-weekly electronic newsletter with 1,800 subscribers.
- Assisted university administration to integrate energy into institutional messaging.
- Led development of Innovate! institution-wide branding campaign linking messages of research excellence with economic development.

**Michigan State University, East Lansing (July 1993 – June 2008)**

Media Communications, a division of University Relations

***Senior Communications Manager for Science and Research (2002 - 2008)***

- Led integration of messages for one of the nation's largest research universities with 45,000 students and 4,500 faculty.
- Developed and executed communication plans for long-term projects pointed directly at results.
  - Contracted with World Bank to develop and launch campaign to position for grant to develop coffee in Burundi. **Result:** Received \$5 million grant.
  - Promoted international development campaign project for USAID-funded Rwandan coffee project. **Result:** International visibility, strong branding to the university and the local sale of some 2 tons of coffee – with \$0 marketing budget.

***Science Writer (1993 – 2002)***

- Also served as interim director of the media communications office supervising a staff of eight and serving as the university's media contact.

**USA Today, Arlington, VA, (1988)**

Daily newspaper with a circulation of 2.3 million

***Reporter***

**Lansing State Journal, Lansing, MI (1984 – 1993)**

Daily newspaper with a circulation of 72,000

***Reporter/Editor***

**EDUCATION**

**Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI**

Bachelor of Arts in Journalism

**Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA**

Institute for Research in Higher Education Executive Education program

**Write Winning Grant Proposals seminar. MSU VPRGS, 2018**

**AWARDS AND MEMBERSHIPS**

- American Association for the Advancement of Science
- National Association of Science Writers
- National Alliance for Broader Impacts Network

- UM-SMART (Sustainable Mobility & Accessibility Research & Transformation) Steering Committee
- Council for the Advancement and Support of Education Silver Award
- National Headliner Award for feature writing
- MSU Special Recognition Award for Promoting International Understanding Michigan
- Associated Press and Gannett writing awards