After a decade, President Simon isn't slowing down

Greater Lansing owes gratitude to the efforts of Michigan State University President Lou Anna Simon. Her influence on the university, the region and the state will be evident for years to come.

Having passed her 10th anniversary as MSU president, Simon shows no sign of slowing down or stepping back. At 68, she's still intently focused on the university's future, the speed of change and the economic benefits that MSU can provide across Michigan.

MSU's reach is broader and deeper thanks to her efforts. The university has headquartered its College of Human Medicine in Grand Rapids and is adding a medical research facility there, working in close partnership with that region's health care sector. It's anchored a public health research center in Flint. It has made sizable investments in the main campus in East Lansing, from upgrades to residence halls and dining halls to the addition of everything from a bio engineering research facility to the Broad Art Museum.

And one of its most important investments in decades is the new Facility for Rare Isotope Beams, an internationally significant research facility that will keep MSU at the forefront of physics research. Set to open between 2020 and 2022, the FRIB will bring top scientists to live and work in the region. Working to make sure Greater Lansing is up to the task of attracting such talent is among Simon's key concerns.

Local economic development officials already have focused on creating a new segment of the local economy aimed at the science of accelerators and the research that can spin off from the FRIB. Meanwhile, Simon and her MSU team work to keep the project, done in partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy and the state of Michigan, on pace. A federal budget proposal that includes the full $100 million planned for construction next year is helpful.

MSU has been led by 20 presidents since its founding in 1855. Simon is the sixth MSU president to serve a decade or longer, but she's been on campus for a career stretching 40 years in a variety of roles. She is focused on elevating the university, gathering top talent and setting high standards but won't discuss retirement plans.

Her legacy will be best measured in the future. For today, Greater Lansing can be confident that a visionary leader has cast an eye over the campus, the region and the state — with a goal of strengthening all.

An LSJ editorial

Greater Lansing and Michigan benefit from the leadership of Michigan State University President Lou Anna Simon.

Read or Share this story: http://on.lsj.com/1DOdlOe