Announcer:

The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

Emily Yeap:

In a climate of ever-deepening divides in the United States, talking about issues in our communities isn’t enough. We must take meaningful action by bringing together multiple voices to address the challenges we face in our country.

Missouri State University’s 2022-2023 [public affairs](https://publicaffairs.missouristate.edu/) theme, “[From Words to Deeds: Creating Collaborative Communities](https://publicaffairs.missouristate.edu/from-words-to-deeds-creating-collaborative-communities.htm),” seeks to inspire action through collaboration. I’m Emily Yeap.

This fall, the university will host its 19th annual [Public Affairs Conference](https://publicaffairs.missouristate.edu/2022/?orig-url=) Sept. 20-22. Free and open to the public, the conference will feature in-person events and live, virtual programming.

Joining me today to share more about the conference are [Dr. Shannon Wooden](https://publicaffairs.missouristate.edu/provost-fellow-for-public-affairs-2022-23.htm) and [Stacey Trewatha-Bach](https://search.missouristate.edu/people/staceytrewatha). Wooden is the 2022-23 provost fellow for public affairs and professor of [English](https://english.missouristate.edu/) and Trewatha-Bach serves as public affairs special programs coordinator.

Wooden elaborates on the theme.

Shannon Wooden:

The theme for this year is From Words to Deeds: Creating Collaborative Communities.” It builds on the last couple of years that focused on finding one's voice and being able to communicate sacross the aisle, so to speak with different perspectives.

But we have a real emphasis this year on that “Words to Deeds.” We wanna talk a lot about how to actually do things in the community to make changes, to propose concrete solutions to complex problems. And for me, that's all rooted in that word collaborative. And when we build collaborative communities, we're not necessarily just collaborating between organizations or agencies, but we need to collaborate between ideas, different ways of thinking, different perspectives, different sort of lived experiences on the planet. So, we're really looking at an interdisciplinary focus and a richly diverse focus on all of the sessions so that we can see real world problems from as many different perspectives as possible.

Emily Yeap:

How were the topics and panel sessions chosen?

Shannon Wooden:

We ask all of the colleges on campus to send representatives to our committee. And then those representatives propose sessions that are specifically of interest to their colleges. What we did this year, when we got those sessions, was examined them for sites of overlap. And we mixed a bunch of them together, sort of created hybrid sessions that would speak at the same time to a couple of different colleges.

So we've got a topic on housing for instance, but on the housing panel, we may speak to racial equality and we may speak to gender equality, we may speak to disability access. So in addition to just being about providing housing, which is a big enough issue, we also have these other voices kind of participating in untangling that conversation

Emily Yeap:

According to Trewatha-Bach, the conference features more than 40 speakers from across the country and overseas.

Stacey Trewatha-Bach:

This year, we have 19 virtual sessions, as well as four in-person speakers. So we have something for everyone. All of our events are free, open to the public. No tickets are needed. So it's a very accessible way for not only our campus community, but our Springfield community and beyond to be able to participate in the conference.

Emily Yeap:

The conference kicks off at 7 p.m. Sept. 20 with keynote speaker [Marlee Matlin](https://publicaffairs.missouristate.edu/2022/session.aspx?SessionID=698) in Juanita K. Hammons Hall. Matlin is an Academy Award-winning actress, producer, author and lifelong advocate for the deaf and hard of hearing.

This event is made possible by the [Missouri State Foundation](https://www.missouristatefoundation.org/) with support from KY3/KSPR.

The Missouri State Foundation will host a [VIP reception](https://maroonation.missouristate.edu/s/1691/foundation/interior.aspx?sid=1691&gid=2&pgid=2810&content_id=2547) with Matlin before her speech at 5:30 p.m. in the Meyer Alumni Center. Tickets are $125 and can be [purchased online](https://maroonation.missouristate.edu/s/1691/foundation/interior.aspx?sid=1691&gid=2&pgid=2810&content_id=2547).

There will be four plenary sessions – two on Sept. 21 and another two on Sept. 22. Wooden highlights two of them.

Shannon Wooden:

We have Liz Ogbu, who is an architect and a self-proclaimed spatial justice activist, where she doesn't just build buildings. She sort of imagines spaces in a way that are more inclusive and more concretely productive for social justice.

I'm also really excited about Zach Anner. He's a writer and he's a comedian and he's an activist. He does work for the Cerebral Palsy Foundation, but he writes also for television and he is written a memoir called, “If at Birth, You Don't Succeed.”

Emily Yeap:

Wooden explains what outcome she’d like to see from this year’s conference.

Shannon Wooden:

I would love to see partnerships. I would love to see the people on our campus and in our community talking across disciplines, across colleges or across industries and building things that actually benefit from their different kinds of expertise.

Emily Yeap:

You can find more information about the conference, including a full schedule, at [publicaffairs.missouristate.edu/2022](https://publicaffairs.missouristate.edu/2022/).

I’m Emily Yeap for the Missouri State Journal.

Narrator:

For more information, contact the Office of Strategic Communication at 417-836-6397. The Missouri State Journal is available online at ksmu.org.