



April 11, 2019

My report this morning begins with recognition of an individual whose work will enhance the lives of students for generations to come. Bob Martin, our vice president for advancement, has announced his retirement, effective June 30, following the successful conclusion of the Fire Up for Excellence capital campaign.

Bob joined CMU in February 2016. When he interviewed for the position, he said we needed to create a culture of philanthropy.

And during February's Board of Trustees meeting, we saw evidence of the culture he has created as he and campaign chair Mike O'Donnell announced the campaign had surpassed its \$100 million goal, three years ahead of schedule. Some had said the goal couldn't be met. Bob said he could do it. He said CMU could do it. Our alumni, friends and supporters could do it.

Bob launched CMU's culture of philanthropy and showed us all how to make it happen.

Bob, thank you for your leadership, your vision and your contributions. I now ask you to join me to receive a Proclamation of Recognition.

On the enrollment front, I want to applaud the efforts of more than 60 faculty who recently helped prospective students experience the value of a Central Michigan University education. During their telephone outreach campaign, faculty placed 2,669 calls, left 1,313 voice mails and had 365 conversations. They generated about 60 new deposits from students deciding to join the fall 2019 class.

Anthony Feig, a geography and environmental studies faculty member and president of the Faculty Association, started the effort by asking me how faculty could help. Leading by example, Dr. Feig was among those who made calls. He speaks enthusiastically about a one-hour conversation with a student from Detroit, who asked him what course titles mean, how to get around on campus, and what life in Mount Pleasant might be like for a black woman. He helped resolve scholarship issues for her in real time and then continued the interaction via email. The student has informed Dr. Feig his interactions helped her decide she'll attend CMU this fall.

JoDell Heroux, from counseling and special education, and Al Nowak, in the School of Health Sciences, shared their phone numbers in case students had further questions. And faculty from the College of Business Administration turned their calls into a friendly competition.

Deb Gray, from marketing and hospitality services administration, teamed with Bruce Marble and Jeff Thomas, from our entrepreneurship program. Bruce worked with an admissions representative on duty in the call center to help a student get answers to unresolved questions about his application.

These efforts show students who we are at Central Michigan University. They prove again that our faculty are highly accessible and take a vested interest in student success.

Those who participated are genuinely excited about making a difference in the lives of students with whom they connected. Such impact is the foundation of everything we do at CMU, and I thank each and every faculty member who participated.

Such efforts to improve our student recruitment yield will positively affect our enrollment this coming semester and even more so in fall 2020.

As discussed previously, this fall's enrollment will bring budget ramifications, which we will manage carefully to maintain our educational service and excellence. As happens every semester, our colleges are managing their budgets through actions such as aligning the number of course sections to the number of students. Our service departments are examining their budgets for efforts that are less essential to student learning and curtailing expenses where it makes the most sense to do so.

This is a tough reality. At this point, we likely will see a 4 to 5 percent revenue decline in the coming fiscal year, and we will need to adjust our budgets accordingly. While some factors — including enrollment and state funding — will not be known until late summer or fall, our planning efforts will include determining our greatest strengths and opportunities. In my February 8 communication to faculty and staff, I note we must be aggressive in:

- Recapturing lost market share, especially in Detroit and Grand Rapids.
- Growing our reach to other states.
- Attracting more international students.
- And attracting adult learners, the largest growing market, through our online programs and satellite locations.

As we move forward, we will uphold excellence. We will not sacrifice quality in pursuit of a quick fix nor lower our academic standards to attract more students. Instead, we will expand high quality among our educational offerings and continually analyze our efforts to remain relevant to students, employers and communities. We will be innovative and adaptable in reaching milestones such as:

- An incoming class of 3,500 freshmen and 1,500 transfer students.
- A first-to-second-year retention rate above 80 percent.
- 6,500 adults and students enrolled online and at satellite locations.

I will say again that boldness in our decisions and actions is not only possible, it's essential.

Our new provost and chief academic officer will play a key role in pursuing that boldness, and I am pleased to report that 10 semifinalist interviews wrapped up earlier this week. I met with all of the candidates and can say we have a strong, diverse pool. To call them impressive is an understatement.

Search committee co-chairs Dean Janet Hethorn and Dean Richard Rothaus intend next week to name dates and times before semester's end for on-campus interviews.

In other matters, I want to recognize CMU's third residency Match Day for future physicians. Significantly, 71% of the class matched specifically into primary care residencies, and 45% matched to programs in Michigan. Nearly all of our students were placed, even though the National Resident Matching Program expected 10,000 more applicants than available residencies.

The fact that CMU-educated physicians continue to fare so well speaks volumes about our program and about our value to the state, especially in rural and urban communities that are medically underserved and experiencing a drastic shortage of physicians.

Next, I want to acknowledge the efforts of faculty, staff and students from the colleges of the Arts and Media, Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, and Science and Engineering who recently combined to create an interactive escape room based on Emily St. John Mandel's award-winning novel "Station Eleven."

The room was set up as if you'd survived the end of the world. The future of your fellow survivors depended on your ability to work together to solve a series of puzzles while crammed in a room with only one hour to escape.

The effort was part of our Critical Engagements program, which prompts the campus community to consider challenging societal issues.

I also want to extend awe-filled congratulations to about 200 students and faculty, primarily from the College of Education and Human Services, who this past weekend put on the amazing Threads Fashion show. The talented designers and models included students from multiple colleges, showing creative, fascinating and impressive apparel. Their runways were created by our interior design faculty and students in a fantastically transformed Bioscience Building.

The precisely choreographed experience made it feel like we were in New York or Paris. Congratulations again to all of those involved.

And finally, as we wrap up another semester, I will highlight a few of Central Michigan University's extraordinarily gifted faculty and students.

I'll start with recognizing **two Fulbright Scholars and a Newman Fellow**.

Joshua Briscoe, a senior from Limerick, Pennsylvania, has been awarded a Fulbright to teach English in South Korea. Joshua, a third generation CMU student, is double-majoring in international relations and cultural and global studies.

He plans to pursue a Ph.D. in political science and said the Fulbright experience will help shape his future research on human rights, forced migration and conflict.

Grace Pawluszka, a senior from Warren, has been awarded a Fulbright to teach English in the Slovak Republic. Grace is a music education major with a minor in business administration. She plans to be a music educator or business professional in the music industry, both of which require collaboration across diverse backgrounds.

Congratulations, Joshua and Grace. We are proud of you and look forward to hearing about your Fulbright experiences and your future careers.

Also this spring, **Megan Lawrence**, a senior from Grand Rapids, was named a Newman Civic Fellow and accepted into a cohort of exceptional students from 262 Campus Compact member colleges and universities. This fellowship supports students in their personal, professional and civic growth as the next generation of public problem solvers.

Congratulations, Megan. Thank you and best wishes on your fellowship and your subsequent endeavors as a leader.

Next, let's recognize management faculty member **Misty Bennett**, CMU's nominee for the Michigan American Council on Education Distinguished Woman in Higher Education award. Dr. Bennett was the first female tenure-track faculty member in the management department. She developed the Women in Business Mentoring Program for students, an initiative that pairs them with successful female alumni. She has supported female faculty by creating the Women's Research Network for the College of Business Administration. She has presented at the Michigan ACE Annual Conference and her work has been distributed at other universities. Congratulations and thank you, Dr. Bennett, for all you do for CMU, our students and our faculty.

I also want to recognize **faculty members recently honored with awards here at CMU** for their excellence in research and teaching.

Ute Hochgeschwender, from the [College of Medicine](#), is a pioneer and leader in the emerging field of optogenetics, using light from biological enzymes to actuate individual neurons in the brain. This manipulation of neurons could advance the treatment of brain damage and research into brain function.

She also has collaborated on research to develop reprogrammed pluripotent stem cells in animals, advancing an important tool for biological and biomedical research.

Since joining CMU in 2014, Dr. Hochgeschwender has been part of research grants totaling more than \$13 million and has published 15 peer-reviewed articles. She is a gifted teacher who inspires students' attention to detail and their passion for research.

Guy Newland, chair of [philosophy and religion](#), translated the teachings of the Dalai Lama when he lectured in the United States on the most important work by the founder of his sect of Tibetan Buddhism.

Dr. Newland is internationally respected for his contributions to the study of Tibetan Buddhism. His multiyear project translating one of Tibet's most important and challenging philosophical texts produced a work that peers consider a masterpiece.

He is known for his collegiality, creativity, intellectual rigor, and skills as a scholar and storyteller.

Julien Rossignol, from the [College of Medicine](#), leads a team working to deliver cell therapy and genomic editing to the brain through human-made dendrimer molecules. Their approach could improve treatment of conditions such as stroke, Alzheimer's disease and Huntington's disease.

Dr. Rossignol received his first early-career research grant of \$30,000 in 2012. A \$450,000 grant announced last month from the National Institutes of Health brings his total awards to nearly \$1.5 million.

Since joining CMU in 2007, Dr. Rossignol also has supervised and mentored more than 30 graduate students and an even larger number of undergraduate students in the neuroscience program.

Alicia Marie Valoti, from the [School of Music](#), conducts research that brings new appreciation to the musical heritage of the viola. Her performance repertoire includes challenging contemporary works and compositions by women, Latin-American composers and little-known historical figures.

She is an avid performer, taking the stage in Iceland, Denmark, Germany and Brazil since joining CMU in 2016, as well as performing on campus and in the Saginaw Bay, Midland and Lansing symphony orchestras and the River Raisin Ragtime Revue.

Her master classes in countries such as Brazil, Ecuador and Colombia take high-caliber instruction to often under-resourced students, many of whom she has recruited to study at CMU and play in prestigious American and international festivals.

Robert Fanning, from the [English language and literature](#) department, founded and facilitates The Wellspring Literary Series. He has brought more than 50 nationally prominent and diverse Michigan authors to Mount Pleasant over the past 10 years to read original poetry and fiction.

April Burke, also from [English language and literature](#), is praised by fellow faculty and students for using a variety of teaching methods to engage, inspire and empower.

Brian DeJong, from the [School of Engineering and Technology](#), is described as understanding and kind, who always has a smile and is willing to help all students excel and prepare for their careers.

Natalie Douglas, from [communication sciences and disorders](#), teaches through "transformative learning" that helps students find meaning through task-oriented problem-solving, cause-and-effect relationships, and reflection. Students say Douglas is a mentor, giver, motivator and leader.

Carolina Gutiérrez-Rivas, from [world languages and cultures](#), finds novel ways to stimulate imagination and curiosity, promote critical thinking, and apply classroom content to real life.

Amy Beth McGinnis, from the [management](#) department, instills a deep appreciation for learning and collaborates with students as equals.

Shane Cavanaugh, from [teacher education and professional development](#), builds community, respect and rapport in her classes.

And Rachael Barron-Duncan, from [art and design](#), supports students inside and outside the classroom, connects them with opportunities, and challenges them to think differently.

Speaking of students, I will conclude my report featuring **two more individuals whose achievements are among the best in the nation.**

Reyna Frost and **Presley Hudson** have been leaders in the most successful four-year run in the history of CMU women's basketball. They are joined here today by Coach G – Sue Guevara.

Reyna, a 6-foot senior from Reese, recently was named an All-American. She has achieved a MAC-record 1,526 rebounds and scored 1,794 points — third most in CMU history. Her 733 points this season are the most for a single season at Central Michigan.

Reyna ranked fourth in the nation this season in rebounding and posted 29 double-doubles. She earned the MAC Player of the Year Award, having been named the MAC West Player of the Week an incredible 11 times, including seven consecutively.

A mathematics major with a 3.68 grade point average, Frost is known for her dedication to homework during road trips, once working math equations on foggy bus windows.

Presley, a native of Wayland, is a self-described gym rat, spending time daily in the practice gym, often on a solitary mission to perfect her game. Her tenacity has thrilled us all with never-fail free throws and remarkably long three-pointers.

Last Thursday, during the @CollegeSlam Three-Point Challenge in Minneapolis, Presley showed the nation what we've long known: she's ... the best. With Coach Sue Guevara, Reyna and her dad in the audience, she hit 77 of 100 triples — the most in event history. She won the women's competition *and* resoundingly beat the male champion, too. She's one of just seven players in NCAA Division I women's basketball history to hit at least 400 3-pointers.

Today, Presley holds the leading spot in CMU record books — for men and for women — having scored 2,309 points.

During Reyna and Presley's four years here, the Chippewas won multiple Mid-American Conference championships and a league tournament title. They made two NCAA Tournament appearances and last year, Reyna and Presley led the Chippewas to the Sweet Sixteen, a thrilling program first.

Beyond their possible pro basketball careers, Reyna intends someday to work for NASA and Presley intends to coach.

Reyna, Presley, with quiet humbleness and remarkable talent, you have put an incredible stamp on Central Michigan University. We thank you for your contributions to CMU, applaud your phenomenal successes and look forward to your achievements for years to come.

Trustee Keith, there's just one more comment to make this morning: Fire Up Chips!