



September 19, 2019

Thank you, Chair Keith. Good morning, trustees, faculty, staff, students and guests.

We start today by welcoming our [new vice president for advancement](#), **Heidi Tracy**, who officially begins her role Oct. 1. Heidi is an independent advancement consultant who provides support and guidance to organizations and has held roles in academic advancement and development for more than 20 years.

She served as a consultant for advancement strategy and vice president for university advancement and executive director of the TWU Foundation at Texas Woman's University; vice president for institutional advancement at Otterbein University; and assistant vice president for individual giving at Carnegie Mellon University.

Heidi has a proven record of innovative development leadership and a thoughtful approach that will position us extremely well for our next major campaign and beyond. Welcome to CMU, Heidi!

Also, thank you to Director of Athletics **Michael Alford** for his dedicated service and leadership as interim vice president for advancement during this transition.

I also would like to introduce and welcome two interim cabinet members who began their roles July 1:

- **Tony Voisin** is serving as interim vice president for enrollment and student services.
- **Heather Smith** is serving as interim associate vice president for university communications.

Additionally, I would like to recognize the two faculty members I appointed to the university's Administrative Fellows Program.

- **Luis Perez-Batres**, chair of the management department in the College of Business Administration, was appointed as a senior administrative fellow.
- **Nicole Sparling Barco**, director of the cultural and global studies program and previous chair of the English language and literature department, was named an associate administrative fellow.

Through the program, now in its fourth year, faculty fellows explore administrative leadership within the university. They attend formal training and complete an independent project of their choosing with guidance and mentoring from university leaders, including the president, provost and senior administrators.

Dr. Perez-Batres and Dr. Barco began their appointments this fall. Welcome!

As we kick off a new academic year, I'd like to welcome more than 3,400 new Central Michigan University Chippewas — more than 2,517 new freshmen and nearly 900 transfer students.

I once again had the opportunity to participate in the excitement of IMPACT and Leadership Safari in August. These innovative and inspiring programs offer Central's new students opportunities they would not get at many other places, maybe nowhere else.

They meet peers and supporters. They engage in conversations, some easy, some difficult. They are pushed outside of their comfort zones.

Most importantly, they have fun while becoming fully immersed in college life and the culture of Central Michigan University before classes even start.

Thank you to everyone who attended those programs and especially those students who volunteer weeks of their time to make them happen. This is an outstanding highlight of servant leadership.

I'd also like to welcome nearly 100 new faculty members to Central. Each of you is now part of the foundation for our students' academic success, and I look forward to seeing what you accomplish here at CMU.

As of Sept. 1, I have officially been president of Central Michigan University for one year.

This past year has been filled with new adventures, new opportunities and, of course, some challenges.

I spent the first several months on a listening and learning tour. As a new president, it was vital to spend as much time as possible hearing from faculty, staff and students to truly understand what makes CMU tick.

I have attended hundreds of campus events, from student musicals to research presentations. I frequently dine in campus residential restaurants so I can engage with students, faculty and staff. It is important that I am visible, and the constant conversations I've had have been invaluable.

I ask what they love about CMU. I also ask about what they feel we can do better.

This experience was extremely eye opening and has paved the way for the momentum we have going into this new academic year — and going into the next decade.

I will share more about the progress we've made over the past year and the strategic envisioning of CMU's future in the year-end report of university priorities and initiatives later in this meeting.

It has been an outstanding and exciting year, and I cannot wait to see what the future holds here at Central Michigan University.

Trustees, I hope all of you have taken time while on campus this week to take a look around, as much progress was made this summer. Just to our east, the new Center for Integrated Health Studies is nearing completion. This 55,000-square-foot, \$26 million Health Professions Building expansion will empower students from multiple high-demand fields of study to learn and practice together in flexible state-of-the-art facilities. Classes are scheduled to begin in January.

Just to our west, a walking path curves through the green space where Barnes Hall once stood. Contractors salvaged a number of bricks from the building for future use by the CMU Alumni Association and mounted a metal plaque from the building for display.

Elsewhere throughout campus, building signage upgrades continue. These signs reflect our brand and also our commitment to helping new students, faculty and staff, visitors, and returning alumni find their way across campus. Additionally, several sidewalks were replaced, and new crosswalk markings and locations are stepping up pedestrian safety.

To the south at Kelly/Shorts Stadium, you will see CMU's new videoboard — the largest in the Mid-American Conference — and progress on the new Chippewa Champions Center at the north end zone.

Through this entire project, we discussed the engagement of students. I'm happy to report that the videoboard was utilized for several activities as we welcomed students to campus, including Leadership Safari and a movie we hosted for our students and the surrounding community.

These efforts represent ongoing progress on our campus.

Declining enrollment continues to be a chief concern for CMU and will be a key focus for our entire university for years to come. This too will be addressed further in my year-end report.

As we address enrollment, we also must adopt practices to better serve current and incoming first-year, transfer, nontraditional and international students.

We are setting a very aggressive goal of 2,850 new students for fall of 2020. We are not standing still; we are taking these issues very seriously.

Thus, we are adjusting our organizational structure to help the university better meet the changing needs of our global society and the students we serve. The following changes are being made to leadership positions throughout the university:

- The former position of vice president of enrollment and student services will become two new positions: a vice president of student recruitment and retention and a vice president of student affairs. The search for the recruitment and retention VP will be underway soon, with the other to follow.

- The position of associate vice president of university communications will become vice president of university communications and chief marketing officer. This is an active search, with hopes to make a hire by December.
- The position of executive director of the Office of Civil Rights and Institutional Equity will change to an assistant vice president position reporting directly to the president.

I look forward to how these leadership changes will move the needle on strategic objectives of enrollment, marketing and branding.

Switching gears, I would like to note a few important recognitions today.

Australyah Coleman, a senior from Grand Rapids and president of CMU's NAACP chapter, received the Organizer of the Year award for Region 3 of the NAACP Youth and College Division.

The Organizer of the Year award is given to a member who has stepped up in the community. As part of the nomination, Coleman shared work she's done for the Mount Pleasant Area Diversity Group, as well as the four initiatives she and other multicultural student organizations developed in response to a hate message left in a residence hall in November 2018.

At the organization's 110th national convention in Detroit in July, Australyah co-facilitated a workshop on racism on university campuses and how to utilize an institution's resources.

Congratulations, Australyah. I am proud of the work you're doing here on our campus and beyond. You are making a difference, and I look forward to seeing what your future holds!

First, political science faculty member **David Rutledge**, former state representative for Michigan's 54th District and current Griffin Endowed Chair in American Government, has been appointed by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to the Michigan Veterans' Facility Authority Board of Directors.

The board consists of nine members who have professional knowledge, skill or experience in long-term care, health care licensure, finance or medicine. The director of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and eight members appointed by the governor are responsible for governing the Michigan Veterans' Facility Authority.

Congratulations, David, on this prestigious honor. You will represent CMU well.

CMU students **D'Shyla Hodge, Cara Thomas and Darius Washington** were awarded the prestigious Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship to help fund their 2019 summer study abroad programs:

- Hodge, a psychology major from Flint, Michigan, traveled to South Africa as part of her In the Footsteps of Nelson Mandela class.
- Thomas, an advertising major from Warren, Michigan, worked with a nonprofit organization on fundraising, health education and promotion in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

- Washington, a psychology major from Chicago, studied global health psychology and international organizational behavior at Chiang Mai University.

Congratulations to each of you on this outstanding honor.

Last but certainly not least, I'd like to recognize **U.S. Army Spc. Shayn Lindquist**, a senior from Clarkston, Michigan, who was named Military Times' Soldier of the Year. He was actively engaged at CMU — participating in ROTC, Model United Nations and the university's DII hockey club — and training with his U.S. Army Reserve unit when he was diagnosed with brain cancer in 2017.

But Shayn's diagnosis didn't stop him from continuing his education, serving his country or helping others.

He volunteered with Special Days Camp, working with children with cancer. He also organized a charitable ruck event, carrying a heavy load more than 150 miles, raising thousands of dollars for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and Special Days Camp.

This, trustees, is the true spirit of who we are here at CMU. Congratulations, Shayn, what a tremendous and prestigious honor.

Chair Keith, that concludes my report.