

Board of Trustees

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

April 22, 2021

Thank you, Trustee Studley. Good morning to all who are joining us today: our trustees, faculty, staff, students and guests.

I am delighted to welcome the two newest members of our board, Trustees Regine Beauboeuf and Sharon Heath.

Trustee Beauboeuf is senior vice president and director of engineering operations at HNTB Corporation. She is a licensed professional engineer and president of the Michigan Chapter of the Conference of Minority in Transportation Officials. She also is a member of the American Council of Engineering Companies Institute of Business National Management Committee and National Transportation Committee.

Trustee Heath is a CMU alumna and recently retired as Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan's director of customer experience. She worked for BCBSM for 35 years, holding numerous leadership roles with the company throughout her tenure. She received her undergraduate degree in professional and technical writing from Madonna University and a master's degree in health services administration from CMU.

Like their predecessors, Trustees Beauboeuf and Heath were appointed by Michigan's governor. They will be vital members of this board, guiding the future of our institution and upholding our commitment to rigor, relevance and excellence.

I welcome your engagement and invite your counsel. I look forward to partnering with you, and the rest of this board, to move our university forward.

You join our university at a pivotal time. Soon, you will hear about our university's response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which has significantly changed everything about life on our campus. I believe you will be impressed by what you learn about the ways we have innovated and adapted to continue our mission of education, research and service.

This also is an **exciting** time for Central Michigan University. Tomorrow, we are holding a mass vaccine clinic in Finch Fieldhouse, with capacity to deliver nearly 3,000 first doses of the Moderna vaccine to our students, faculty, staff and community members.

Together with our partners in the Central Michigan District Health Department, we have

hosted approximately 30 clinics and helped to distribute over 9,000 vaccines since March. We are excited to continue our important role in slowing the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

This also is a time of *celebration* on our campus.

We recently celebrated another outstanding Match Day event for our College of Medicine students. Nearly half our graduates will remain in Michigan, including several with CMU Medical Education Partners in Saginaw and the CMU branch campus at Ascension St. John Hospital in Detroit. More than 60% placed in primary care residency programs, helping to address our state's critical need for knowledgeable, compassionate health care providers serving rural and underserved populations.

This week, many of our academic colleges and programs are holding end-of-the year activities, exhibitions and performances, allowing students to showcase what they have learned throughout the year.

The Mary Ellen Brandell Volunteer Center is celebrating National Volunteer Week by recognizing the thousands of CMU students who have volunteered their time and talents in service to the community. Students dedicated thousands of hours to helping others through programs such as America Counts and Reads, our Student Food Pantry, blood drives and more. Even a global pandemic could not deter their drive to make a difference.

Tonight, our University Theatre Dance Company begins its annual Spring Dance Concert with a series of livestreamed performances. CMU students and faculty will present their work, representing a variety of dance styles, as a concert of solo performances.

This week is our annual New Venture Competition. For the better part of the year, more than 60 students have been working with mentors from around the state to develop their business plans and pitches. They have submitted their final pitches and prototypes and are anxiously awaiting the awards ceremony tomorrow, where \$100,000 will be presented to the winners.

This competition prepares students to become the entrepreneurs and business leaders needed to drive our state forward, and also helps them develop skills that can be applied in any profession. Students who participate in the New Venture Competition become better critical thinkers and problem-solvers, more concise communicators and more confident leaders.

This Saturday, students from our fashion merchandising and design program will present the annual Threads Fashion Show. This virtual event showcases the skills and talents of student designers, and allows our students to network with industry professionals.

And, in just a few short weeks, we will host a series of outdoor commencement ceremonies to honor nearly 2,800 May graduates and more than 600 graduates who were unable to walk in 2020. They have worked incredibly hard throughout their years at CMU, especially in the last year, and these ceremonies are a fitting tribute to their achievements.

Our graduates are not the only students deserving of our praise. Students representing every academic college have set the leadership standard in the classroom and in the community. Several have received prestigious national and international awards for excellence in academics.

- **Lauren Hull**, currently a sophomore, has just been selected for a Humanity in Action fellowship. She is one of only 22 students selected from the United States to pursue this yearlong global studies fellowship.
- **Katherine Pulaski**, a senior Honors student majoring in anthropology and public and nonprofit administration, received a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant grant to Thailand.
- Three CMU students — senior **Michael Buzzy**, junior Alexandra **DeLellis** and graduate student **Emily Dimet** — have been selected for the highly competitive Critical Language Scholarship.
- **Chloe Pestrue**, a senior Honors student majoring in biomedical science, received the Barry Goldwater Scholarship — only the fourth student to do so at Central Michigan University.

Earlier this month, Provost Schutten and I also recognized 10 undergraduate students for their research and creative work. You can find their stories, and many more, on CMU News.

Our students also are receiving recognition for excellence in professional competitions. For example:

- **Ahsha Davis**, graduate student in electronic media studies, and **Kasey Davis**, a broadcast and cinematic arts student, received top honors from the Michigan Association of Broadcasters in the annual Michigan Student Broadcast Awards.
- Honors students working with Will Anderson received a Best of Competition Award in the Broadcast Education Association's annual Festival of Media Arts for their audio program, *School Spirits*.
- Two CMU students became national debate champions in the Pi Kappa Delta National Comprehensive Tournament. **Tyler Tobias**, a junior majoring in environmental studies and philosophy, and **Natalie Bryant**, a freshman majoring in international relations and philosophy. Several other members of CMU's debate team also took top awards in the competition.

I also want to congratulate the student journalists and staff of Central Michigan Life, which was recently named the regional Best All-Around Student Newspaper in Mark of Excellence Awards given by the Society of Professional Journalists. We wish them the best of luck as they proceed to the national competition.

Our students achieve success because they are passionate, dedicated and creative, and also because they have the support of our outstanding faculty and staff. Last month, we honored eight faculty members for their work to prioritize and promote student

success. These individuals have truly set the leadership standard by fostering community in the classroom and providing exceptional learning experiences for students.

The following faculty members were nominated by their peers and students and then selected for recognition by the awards committee.

This year's Excellence in Teaching Award winners are:

- Emily Bloesch, from the Department of Psychology.
- Caroline Gwaltney, from the Department of Physical Therapy.
- Alexandra Mascolo-David, from the School of Music.
- MaryBeth Smith, from the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders.
- Michelle Steinhelb, from the Department of Biology.

Mark Potts, from the Department of Finance and Law, was selected as this year's Lorrie Ryan Memorial Excellence in Teaching Award recipient. Bernard Kerr Jr., from the School of Health Sciences, received the Student Choice Award, and Donna Ericksen, from the Department of Mathematics, received the Faculty Distinguished Service Award.

Support for students comes from outside of the university as well, especially from our loyal alumni. This spring, we have seen our alumni step forward to mentor and guide students in several new and exciting ways. Over the past several months, alumni have participated in live panel discussions, offering students guidance on everything from ethics in business to navigating conversations about diversity and equity in the workplace. They have dispensed advice on making a career plan, finding work in creative fields, and much more.

These alumni demonstrate what our graduates can achieve with the knowledge and experiences they gain at CMU, and their willingness to reach back to support current students demonstrates their love and commitment for their alma mater.

Despite continuing to weather this pandemic, there is a lot happening here at CMU.

We recently announced an effort to update our campus master plan, which was developed in 2013. The campus master plan update will align with the Strategic Envisioning Process. It will guide future physical changes needed to facilitate meeting our goals and objectives, and will help CMU adapt to anticipated upcoming changes. The update is well underway and the planning team is currently engaging and seeking feedback from key stakeholders throughout the campus community. The process should wrap up in August.

We also continue our intense focus on enrollment. As we see from statewide and national reports, enrollment patterns have changed significantly across the board, and typical trends and predictors are no longer dependable. While we have seen an increased pool of admitted students, deposits are far short of last year. This is the case

for many of our peer institutions as well. Competition for new students is more intense than ever. We have initiated an extensive outreach and marketing effort, and we continue to communicate the value of a CMU degree. We focus on our student-centered approach and our sense of community. We show, not tell, prospective students how they can learn to make a living doing the things they love. We demonstrate how we set the leadership standard and help students become more engaged citizens. We focus on hands-on learning with real-world results. In short, we show them how, at CMU, they will learn to lead in life.

The Strategic Envisioning Process continues to move forward. While the past year has provided many challenges, this important strategic design thinking work leading to transformational change for our university remains a priority. Each of the five pathway groups are meeting regularly, mapping out the road ahead. In addition, we are sharing updates on near-term goals and action steps with internal stakeholder groups, including a presentation to our Academic Senate with an additional meeting for questions and answers.

As part of strategic envisioning, Provost Schutten discussed the Academic Prioritization Process in yesterday's academic and student affairs committee meeting. This process was launched last fall in response to changes in budget and enrollment that continue to require that we, as a university, adapt accordingly.

During this time, we are also going through our budgeting process. As we discussed previously, we are not using the Responsibility Center Management model for this year; instead, we are using a Strategic Allocation Process. This change was necessary due to the continued decade-long decline of enrollment and the fiscal challenges posed by COVID-19. While many believe federal funds, allocated through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund, mitigated or offset the decline in revenues brought on by the pandemic, they did not cover the entirety of the additional costs incurred.

Nick Long, our chief financial officer, is in the process of detailing past trends of expenses and also projecting revenues, which we know will be less than last year. Additionally, we are identifying key areas of strategic importance that will grow enrollment, areas and programs which differentiate CMU, and services required to meet the needs of our university.

Before I close, I want to acknowledge some of our outgoing leaders.

On behalf of the entire university community, thank you to outgoing Student Government Association leaders, president Katie Prebelich and vice president Brandon McDonald for their service and leadership. You have helped to make the living and learning experience at CMU better for your fellow students, and I have enjoyed working with you immensely. I look forward to working with your successors, Kate King and Dylan Baker, in the year ahead.

I would also like to acknowledge the upcoming retirement of a CMU legend, Mr. Tony Voisin, currently the leader of student affairs. Tony came to CMU as an undergraduate student in 1980 and decided to stick around for a while. Since then, he received two degrees and has given our university nearly four decades of outstanding

service in positions ranging from residence hall director to director of alumni relations to interim vice president for enrollment and student services.

And, in every role, Tony has been committed to our students. In every decision he has made in his many years here, Tony has put students — their well-being and their success — first. He helped to develop CMU's first student success center, bringing together support services such as academic advising, counseling and career advising. He helped to establish the Campus Programming Fund, which allows members of student organizations to receive, manage and budget funds to pursue their passions. And, he has broken down silos within the student affairs division, increasing collaboration and partnership to improve service to students.

As a member of the president's cabinet, Tony has offered valuable guidance and insight as we navigated the early months of the pandemic. His leadership has been instrumental in our ability to remain open and operational to meet our students' needs.

Tony, we will be sure to embarrass you again in June, a little closer to your official departure in July, but I wanted to take a moment now to thank you for all your service to the university. You leave very big shoes to fill at CMU.

In just a few weeks, our students will complete final projects and papers and wrap up their final exams. Many will begin jobs and internships, and some will remain to take advantage of our Summer Extra Credit Program. While they are hard at work building their knowledge and experience, we will be here, preparing to welcome them back to campus for a robust and engaging fall semester.

Chair Studley, this concludes my report.