

Board of Trustees

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

April 21, 2022

Thank you, Chair Studley.

Before I begin my report, I would like to take a moment to introduce a special guest: CMU's next provost, Dr. Nancy Mathews. Although Dr. Mathews' official start date is August 1, we are pleased to have her here with us today.

Welcome, Dr. Mathews.

Dr. Mathews comes to us from the University of Vermont, where she serves as dean of one of the colleges. She also has a long history with the University of Wisconsin-Madison. We are excited to welcome her into our community.

I also would like to recognize and thank Dr. Richard Rothaus for his service in the interim provost role.

The end of the semester, the end of an academic year, is always a very busy time at Central Michigan University. I call it our "white water rapids" time because we are moving so quickly.

Our students and faculty are wrapping up final projects and papers, and preparing for exams. Our staff are supporting dozens of academic-year-end events and activities, and helping graduates prepare for life after Central. It is an exciting, happy time of year on our campus.

Over the past few weeks, I had the pleasure of attending final performances, recognition ceremonies and other celebrations with members of our community. Everywhere I go, I see the strength of our university. I see the rigor, relevance and excellence of our academic programs. I see the impact of our faculty's research, creative activity and service to CMU and the community. I see the tenacity and resilience of our students, as well as the compassion and care of our staff.

Our university is strong. It is strong because of the efforts of our faculty, staff, students, alumni, supporters and partners.

We are viable, and the work taking place at our university every day is vital to our community, our state and the people we serve.

Today, I will use this report to reflect on all the good that has happened on this campus, just within these last four months.

I will begin with the good news about enrollment. For the first time in many years, the number of new students who have committed to attend CMU next fall has increased. We are projecting increases in first-time-in-any-college students, as well as increases for transfer and international students. And we are seeing these increases for both our main campus and our Global Campus programs.

These increases tell us that our outreach and recruitment efforts, and our efforts to increase brand awareness, are having the desired effect. We also owe our thanks to the faculty, staff and students who have contributed to our recruitment efforts. These individuals have been making personal phone calls, participating in Maroon and Gold events and making prospective students feel welcome at CMU.

As an example, faculty volunteers from each of our academic colleges made over 2,000 calls to prospective students. In addition, students enrolled in several marketing and sales classes helped to make over 3,000 calls, and students in our call center have made more than 10,000 calls this spring. There is no doubt that this has been a tremendous team effort, and we can all take pride in their hard work.

We can and should celebrate these first steps in the right direction, but we are not yet out of the woods. I want to be clear that these numbers are projections, they are preliminary numbers, and they could change. We also know the incoming class will still be smaller than our graduating class, and we will still feel the impact of previous declines on our budget for the upcoming year.

Division vice presidents and deans are currently in discussion about our budget for the coming year. We know we will have to make some difficult choices because of lower revenues, and all areas are looking for ways to gain efficiencies and reduce expenditures. We will present a balanced budget proposal, with a strategic focus on our future, to the board at the June meeting, and we will keep our university community informed of any necessary changes to our operations and plans.

As we have said before, it will take time to reverse the decades-long trend of declining enrollment. We are rebuilding our campus steadily, implementing strategies designed for both short- and long-term success. We will continue our hard work to recruit new students and also to retain the students who currently call CMU their academic home. We will continue to offer the highest quality educational experiences and supports so that every CMU student, current and future, can achieve their goals and earn their degree.

Let us move on to more good news.

Based on gifts and commitments received to date, CMU is trending ahead of the last three years in philanthropic support. Our alumni and friends have demonstrated incredible generosity this year, giving about 4 percent more to date this year than at this same time last year. As an example, our supporters have contributed almost \$400,000 this year to programs that directly, positively impact students, including the Student Emergency Fund, the Student Food Pantry, and the Finish Up Chips scholarship fund.

We are fortunate to have supporters who are Fired Up to see our students succeed, and we plan to continue to grow the culture of philanthropy at CMU.

It also has been a record-breaking year for faculty research and creative activity.

For the past several years, scholarly output at CMU has been on the rise. Faculty have set university records for the last two years, and this year, we are proud to note that CMU is first among our peers in the Mid-American Conference for growth in scholarly output. This means that, each year, our faculty are contributing more articles, book chapters, research presentations and doing more to contribute to the creation and sharing of knowledge.

In addition, in the first half of this year alone, CMU has generated \$17.1 million in grants — more than the total grants awarded in the previous fiscal year. One of the grants is a first-of-its-kind, \$400,000 grant from the National Science Foundation for earthquake engineering research, awarded to Dr. Chans Jeong from the School of Engineering and Technology.

We are deeply proud to be home to outstanding faculty who are leaders in their fields of study and who are doing so much to contribute to the improvement of lives and communities through their vital work.

Our students also are being recognized for excellence in research and creative activity.

More than 140 undergraduate and graduate students participated in this year's Student Creative and Research Endeavors Exhibition. We will recognize winners of the President's and Provost's Awards for outstanding undergraduate research and creative work in early May. We also have held research symposiums, recitals, exhibitions and conferences in several academic areas, including health professions, graphic design, communications, music, psychology and more.

The ability to participate in this kind of creative activity and hands-on research at the undergraduate level is unique and can lead to other outstanding opportunities.

We are proud to announce that one of our student scholars, junior Macy Knoblock, was recently honored with the prestigious Goldwater Scholarship. Macy received guidance and support from mentors Dr. Ute Hochgeschwender, CMU College of Medicine; Dr. Xantha Karp, Biology; and Dr. Maureen Harke, director of CMU's National Scholarship Program. The Goldwater Scholarship will provide financial support as Macy continues to pursue her interest in biomedical research next year at CMU. Congratulations, Macy!

In just the last four months, our students, faculty and staff have been recognized for leadership and excellence in competition, in the community and in the classroom.

Every week, CMU student-athletes demonstrate true leadership in competition and excellence in their classes. Our gymnastics team closed its regular season as MAC champions, and other teams continue to turn in outstanding performances this month. They also are successful in the classroom, setting the leadership standard for high GPAs among their peers in our conference. We are proud to have these student-athletes as our ambassadors on regional and national stages.

The 13 members of CMU's chapter of Pi Sigma Epsilon once again took top honors at the PSE National Conference in Sales Management and the Pro-Am Sell-a-Thon. This marks the fifth year

in a row that CMU students have set the leadership standard — or, as the competition refers to it, the GOLD standard — for excellence at this event. The team brought home many honors, among them awards for sustained excellence, top salesperson, strategy awards and top faculty advisor for Nick Hussein. While we cannot list all the many awards and winners, please know how proud our community is of all your efforts!

Third-year student Christa Paull was named a Newman Civic Fellow in recognition of her outstanding commitment to community service and leadership. The fellowship will provide Christa with training and resources necessary to continue to pursue her passion for social change. Congratulations Christa, and thank you for your important work!

Dr. Carl Lee, chair of the Department of Statistics, Actuarial and Data Sciences, was named a Distinguished Professor of the Year by the Michigan Association of State Universities. Dr. Lee is known for his commitment to his students and innovation in teaching, as well as his contributions to program development and scholarship. Congratulations, Dr. Lee, on this well-deserved honor.

And, finally, School of Music's Dr. John Nichol was named a recipient of the Mid-American Conference Outstanding Faculty Award for Student Success. This award recognizes one faculty member from each of the 12 MAC institutions for their outstanding effort in supporting and developing students both inside and outside of the classroom. Thank you, Dr. Nichol, for your dedication to your students.

We continue our commitment to the health and well-being of communities in Michigan and beyond.

In March, the CMU College of Medicine celebrated another very successful Match Day for 105 fourth-year medical students. Approximately half the class will remain here in Michigan to complete their residencies and 67 percent accepted residencies in primary care, upholding our commitment to educate and train providers in high-need disciplines for underserved areas.

We also are turning our attention to solving one of the most pressing issues of our time: health disparities. CMU's Center for Children, Families and Communities recently hosted a Summit on Innovative Solutions for Health Equity, bringing together researchers, community partners and students to discuss ways to address the challenges faced by patients and their families.

This is vital work for our region, and we are proud of the positive impact it will have on lives and communities.

As the pandemic continues to move toward the endemic phase, we have seen the return of some of our favorite CMU events.

Earlier this month, we welcomed guests back for the annual Threads Fashion Show. This event spotlights student designers while providing unique hands-on learning experiences for students in several academic programs, including fashion merchandising and design, integrative public relations, broadcast and cinematic arts, event management, nutrition and dietetics, and more. Over 200 students and dozens of faculty and staff members were involved in this incredible event, and many alumni returned to participate as judges and guests.

We recently held CMU's first Process Data Mining Conference and case competition, which brought more than 150 CMU students together with industry partners for friendly competition, professional development, networking and learning. You may remember that CMU is now one of only 14 universities in the world to be recognized as a Celonis Academic Center of Excellence, and we are currently certifying the largest cohort of students in process mining in the nation.

Tomorrow, we will celebrate the 2022 New Venture Challenge, which had a record number of student teams competing this year. Out of the 51 competitors, the top nine have been chosen to compete in the main event, and another 20 teams will compete in our pitch competition. This university-wide challenge brings together students from many academic programs and engages alumni, entrepreneurs and local business leaders as mentors and judges.

We also have had the opportunity to come together to celebrate the diversity of our campus community.

Earlier this month, I had the honor of attending the closing ceremony for our First-Generation Week Conference, hosted by faculty members Brittany Fremion and Alejandra Rengifo from the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences.

I also attended the International Cultural Expo, hosted by CMU's International Student Organization. CMU is proud to be the academic home for hundreds of students from around the world, and it was wonderful to share in their culture through food, music, dance and more.

Next week, we will host our first-ever Diversity Gala and recognize students, faculty, staff and community members who are taking bold action to make CMU a truly inclusive and welcoming place. The gala is the closing event for our annual Diversity Symposium, which will focus on "calling IN the culture," and features presentations by several CMU faculty, staff and students. We have much to celebrate.

On a final note, I would like to acknowledge the 2,509 students who will be earning their CMU diplomas in May. In 16 days, they will move their tassel from the right to the left and become CMU graduates.

Earning a college degree is never a small feat; earning a college degree during a global pandemic is truly a monumental achievement. Our graduates have shown remarkable grit and determination, and I am looking forward to congratulating them in person on May 6 and 7.

As you have heard in this report, it has been an exciting, busy semester filled with student success, faculty excellence and staff support. We are entering the slower months of summer, but our rigor, relevance and excellence never stops. Students will be attending classes, engaging in internships, partnering with faculty for research, and welcoming new students and families into our university community. Our faculty and staff will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that we continue to provide the exceptional learning experiences, and the compassionate support our students need to succeed. And we will continue to share this good news with you, and our entire university community, as we move forward together.

Chair Studley, this concludes my remarks.