

Board of Trustees

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

February 16, 2023

Good morning, Trustee Oliver, and good morning to everyone joining us here in the Bovee University Center and on the livestream.

Before I begin my formal remarks, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the tragic violence that took the lives of Arielle Anderson, Brian Fraser and Alexandria Verner, and that left five more critically injured at MSU this week.

Please join me in a moment of silence.

MSU is our close neighbor, located less than 70 miles from our campus, and many of us have friends, neighbors and colleagues, as well as family members, who are part of that community. This tragedy affects us all, and we will continue to offer support to students, faculty, staff, alumni and others who are grieving.

Emergencies like this also can raise questions about our own preparedness to respond in a crisis. I want to reassure you that CMU *does* have protocols and processes in place in the event of a similar shooting incident on our own campus. The university's emergency preparedness plan, which includes functional steps to take in the event of a variety of potential incidents, is regularly reviewed and updated by a multifunctional Emergency Management team.

We are constantly reviewing and revising that plan. In fact, over the past few weeks, we have engaged a national leader in emergency preparedness to review our existing plan, and we will conduct trainings and tabletop exercises later this spring. This will ensure that CMU remains ready to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies on our campus.

We also have the benefit of coverage from five outstanding law enforcement agencies. In addition to our own Central Michigan University Police Department, we also are served by the Mount Pleasant Police Department, Isabella County Sheriff, Saginaw Chippewa Tribal Police, and the Michigan State Police. These agencies regularly collaborate and train together, and we have seen how effectively they operate in partnership.

We want to help our community feel confident in their ability to plan for and respond to emergencies. Even before this incident at MSU, University Communications had planned for a social media campaign to point students, faculty and staff to our "[Get Ready and Take Action](#)" webpage, which provides clear, specific information about what to do in the event of six different types of emergencies. At my direction, UCOMM will launch that campaign earlier than originally planned; we also will send that message via email. You should see that information out next week.

As a final note on this topic, I want to thank our incredible faculty, staff and students for all they have done to support each other this week. The outpouring of kindness was remarkable, and truly shows that this is a community that lifts up and supports every individual. Multiple campus offices and academic areas hosted gatherings with counselors, social workers and mental health professionals available to provide support. In several of these gatherings, members of our community wrote messages to be delivered to our neighbors at MSU, sharing thoughts of solidarity and support.

And last night, students from Greek Life, Residence Housing Association and Student Government Association hosted a solidarity gathering and candlelight vigil to honor the victims and the MSU community. More than 500 individuals attended to gather in compassion and support. I am grateful for everything our community does to support each other.

Now, as we turn our thoughts to the vital work that lies ahead of us, I would like to welcome our two new Trustees, Denise W. Mallett and Todd J. Regis. I look forward to working with you both in the eight years ahead as we position our great university for continued success and sustainability.

We are a university that is measured by two important factors:

- The success of our students while they are here and when they graduate.
- How we positively impact communities through our research, teaching and service.

I also want to acknowledge Trustee Isaiah Oliver in his new role as chair. Trustee Oliver was a student leader on this campus 20 years ago and was a part of many important initiatives that impact our students today.

I also want to acknowledge Trustees Todd Anson and Sharon Heath as our new vice chairs. I look forward to your continued leadership and partnership.

Today, my remarks will provide updates on our strategic planning process, recruitment and enrollment efforts, Innovation and Online Unit, as well as advancement and grantsmanship. I will close with several notable achievements by CMU community members.

At the board's December meeting, I announced the formation of several working groups that would provide guidance and leadership for our strategic planning process. Since that announcement, each of the groups have met to establish goals and priorities, and the process to solicit feedback from our community is underway.

The Strategic Planning Team has plans for several dozen targeted engagement sessions for CMU stakeholder groups, including the Academic Senate and individual academic colleges, the Student Government Association, alumni and donor groups, local and state community partners and more. In addition, this month we have held or will soon hold open sessions for any students, faculty or staff who wish to participate.

It is impossible to overstate how important it is to hear from students, faculty and staff throughout this process. We are developing a plan that will guide the immediate and long-term future of our institution, right down to consideration of our mission and vision statements. These guiding documents will impact every member of our community, and it is therefore vital to hear from many voices.

Please plan to attend an engagement session. Dates for sessions have been announced via CMU News, Our CMU and CMU Today. You also can share your thoughts via online feedback forms housed on the strategic planning website, and there are QR codes posted across our campus that will allow you to access those forms via your smartphone as well.

Once again, I have exciting news to share on enrollment. Compared to this time last year, overall new student enrollment for spring is up 18 percent, and we expect that number to climb slightly higher after the start of the Spring II session next month. Enrollments were higher both on our main campus and through our Innovation and Online programs; these higher numbers reflect increases in undergraduate and graduate international students, traditional first-year students AND in students completing dual-enrollment.

We also are seeing positive signs for fall. As a result of highly targeted and personalized recruiting efforts, enhanced technology and improved communications, we are seeing increases in the number of applications, admissions, deposits, housing deposits and registrations for orientations over this same time last year.

We are proud of these gains, and we have exciting marketing and outreach campaigns launching in the months ahead to continue to build on our success.

I want to acknowledge the outstanding work of the admissions and marketing teams, and also recognize the significant contributions of other faculty and staff who have participated in the recruitment process. This truly has been a community effort.

In January, US News and World Report released its 2023 Best Online Program rankings, and CMU ranked third overall in Michigan for Best Online Undergraduate Programs. In addition, several of our programs outpaced our competitor institutions. CMU ranked first in the state for the online bachelor's program for psychology; second in the state for both online bachelor's program for business and online MBA for Veterans; and third in the state for best online master's in education.

We have been a leader in distance learning since the 1970s, and we are proud to offer flexible, high-quality learning opportunities to students everywhere.

As we continue to seek new ways to serve learners, we also have expanded our presence in new key areas of the state. Last month, we opened a new Innovation and

Outreach Hub in the heart of downtown Saginaw. This new space, located within the CMURC Saginaw Riverfront center, allows us greater engagement with business and community partners in the region. From this new hub, we will identify and deliver targeted learning and professional development programs that meet the unique needs of students, employers and lifelong learners in the Great Lakes Bay area.

CMU plays an important role in strengthening the economy here in Mount Pleasant, throughout our region and in the greater state of Michigan. We are making exciting progress, and there is more to come.

We continue to lobby for increased public support for higher education from our state leaders. While I am encouraged by recent steps taken by the governor and the state legislature to provide additional public funding for higher education, much more is needed. And while we await that increased support, we must become more aggressive in developing and pursuing other funding sources.

Private philanthropy is vitally important for CMU and our students. And on that front, we have more good news to share: Total fundraising is up 28% from this time last year, and we also have seen an increase in the number of individuals choosing to support CMU with philanthropic gifts.

Our Alumni Relations and Advancement teams and our alumni volunteers have been working together to engage donors and friends nationwide. Their efforts resulted in a successful annual giving campaign and fall mini campaign, both of which benefited critical student support funds, including student scholarships, the Student Food Pantry and the Student Emergency Fund.

The need is great, and our alumni and friends are reaching back to help our students and to support our exceptional academic and cocurricular programs.

There also is excellent news to share about CMU's growing research enterprise. We ended 2022 with a new record for scholarly output and one of the largest-ever years for research grant funding. We are on track to meet or exceed those great achievements again this year. We have had strong increases in our international research collaborations, and for the first time ever, we were included in the QS World University rankings – a positive step for the visibility of our university's research enterprise on a global scale.

Our university is known for outstanding teaching **and** outstanding research and creative activity. Our faculty truly set the leadership standard for engaging students in the creation and sharing of new knowledge, and their work has a significant, positive impact on communities here in Michigan and around the world.

I want to end my remarks today by highlighting some of the outstanding individual and team accomplishments of our students, faculty and staff.

This year's celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Week was one of the best I have ever had the pleasure to attend. From the passionate speeches made by our Oratorical Contest winners to the performances by the choir and even the basketball game Friday evening, it was a very moving way to celebrate the life and legacy of one of the world's

greatest servant leaders. Many thanks to the students and staff in Multicultural Academic Student Services and University Events for putting together a wonderful program to engage our entire community, including our neighbors in the Mount Pleasant and Isabella County area.

I want to congratulate creative writing graduate student Edwin Williamson, who recently won the 2022 Dan Veach Prize for Younger Poets for his poem “Each Day I Press My Ear to the Ground.” This is one of many accolades Edwin has achieved during his time here at CMU. He also received a fellowship from the Pierce Cedar Creek Institute last year and won a national “promising young poet” award, sponsored by the Academy of American Poets, in 2021. Edwin completed his bachelor’s degree at CMU and will graduate in May with his master’s degree in creative writing.

Edwin, congratulations on all your successes – I cannot wait to see where you will go and what you will accomplish next.

I also want to congratulate another creative writer – English faculty member Jeffrey Bean, who won the 2022 Poet’s Corner Contest for his book of poems, “Ella’s Plan.” The award included a cash prize and a set of printed copies of the book, which is now available for sale online and in our local bookstore, Sleepy Dog Books.

Congratulations, Jeffrey!

Dr. Jim McDonald, a faculty member in the department of Teacher and Special Education, was recently named the 2023 Outstanding Mentor of the Year by the [Association of Science Teacher Education](#). Over the course of his career, Jim has mentored thousands of CMU students and future teachers, helping them apply research to their teaching, encouraging them to engage in professional associations, and providing opportunities for continued professional growth.

Dr. McDonald, thank you for all you do for our students and for the profession of teaching.

Dr. Katie Strong, faculty member in Communication Sciences and Disorders, has been awarded the State Clinical Achievement Award for Recent Clinical Achievement by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Foundation. This is the latest accolade in a long string of awards and achievements Dr. Strong has earned in recent years. She is truly setting the leadership standard for contributions to the aphasia community.

Congratulations, Dr. Strong.

In January, CMU Libraries opened a new Family Study Room to provide a flexible, self-contained space for students and their young children. The room includes study space and a computer for the adult student, as well as a dedicated play space for young children. I applaud the library staff for their continued efforts to be creative and meet the changing needs of our students and their families.

Another exciting accolade goes to the CMU Weather Team and to meteorology professor Jason Keeler. Dr. Keeler and his team of students were contacted by NASA to assist with the IMPACTS field campaign, which is gathering storm data. It is exciting to

know that our students are so skilled and so well-prepared for their field of work that a top federal agency is leaning on CMU for support!

Well done, Weather Team!

2023 is off to a wonderful start at CMU, and there will be much more to share in the months ahead.

Chair Oliver, this concludes my report.