

Board of Trustees

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

June 29, 2023

Thank you, Chair Oliver.

We have several important issues to address today, but I would like to begin my report today by addressing the Supreme Court's ruling earlier today banning affirmative action in college admissions. As I shared with our community earlier this month, there has been a ban on affirmative action in admissions here in Michigan since the passage of Proposal Two in 2006 – today's ruling is not new for our state. However, we are carefully reviewing the Court's decision to understand if there are any further implications for our university.

Now, I would like to share some wonderful updates since the last time we met in April.

At that time, I was proud to share with you the tremendous success of several of our students who were awarded prestigious national scholarships and grants.

I have one more to share with you today. May graduate Chloe McKinley was awarded a prestigious Fulbright grant, CMU's second student Fulbright this year! Chloe's interest in South Korea began in CMU's Honors Program, and her passion for music and philosophy grew during her time studying abroad. Now she will take that passion and a CMU degree back to South Korea to teach English as a Fulbright scholar. Congratulations Chloe!

Earlier this month, two of our outstanding student-athletes, gymnast Hannah Demers and football player Robi Stuart, earned the Mid-American Conference's most distinguished award for academics and athletics – the Medal of Excellence. Congratulations to Hannah and Robi on being recognized for their dedication in the classroom and in competition.

There is good news about faculty and staff to share as well.

We are welcoming an alumnus back to our campus. Former CMU Chippewa baseball player and 2011 graduate Jake Sabol is returning to CMU as our next baseball coach. Jake brings with him a track record of success coaching at the collegiate level, and a commitment to ensuring students earn both a CMU degree and a championship ring. We are happy to welcome him back to the diamond at CMU.

I am delighted to report that Dr. Patty Williamson has agreed to serve as the permanent director of the CMU Honors Program. Patty has done wonderful things as the interim director and will continue to engage our students in creative and comprehensive learning. Thank you, Patty.

Also, the Association of International Certified Public Accountants honored CMU professor of accounting Thomas Weirich with the 2023 Distinguished Achievement in Accounting Education Award. He literally wrote the book on accounting and is a tremendous educator deserving of this national award. Congratulations Dr. Weirich!

I want to share with you some of the exciting things happening in our College of Medicine and in The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow College of Health Professions.

CMU is proud to bolster its commitment to ensuring access to high-quality health care services for Michigan's rural residents with the launch of the CMU Rural Health Equity Institute. The institute will focus on rural health priorities and will join forces with local communities to promote well-being, quality of life and improve overall health. CMU has distinct capabilities and expertise in rural health care. The institute uses that strength to provide an innovation and collaboration hub serving Central and Northern Michigan.

The college also is addressing mental health needs in underserved parts of the state. Through the MIDOCS program, medical school residents are incentivized to practice psychiatry in underserved areas in exchange for significant loan forgiveness. The college also is a partner in the Michigan Ace Initiative which aims to raise awareness about Adverse Childhood Experiences, prevent and reduce childhood trauma, and foster trauma-informed healing.

With the unanimous approval of the Board of Trustees, an expansion of several health care professions programs is well underway on campus. The College of Health Professions is increasing the cohort size of our outstanding physical therapy program pending approval by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education this fall. In May, they also expanded the cohort size of the physician assistant program.

While more students are working toward careers in the health professions, another group of students is getting more support for their educational journey here.

CMU prides itself on meeting the needs of first-generation college students. Nearly 20% of CMU's student body identifies as first-generation, a population that can often face additional challenges when entering college.

In recognition of our commitment to improving their experiences and outcomes, the Center for First-generation Student Success selected CMU to join the First Scholars Network. This tremendous resource will bolster existing programs to ensure first-generation students have what they need to succeed at CMU.

CMU students graduate with the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to pursue their personal and professional goals.

According to our most recent First Destination Survey, nearly 94% of CMU alumni are employed, entering a service program or pursuing additional education within six months of graduation.

Graduates from two colleges – the College of Business Administration and the College of Health Professions – reported the highest rates of employment at 95 percent or higher. They also reported earning an average annual income of nearly \$49,000. That is \$14,000 higher than the average Michigan income, as reported in the latest Census.

Not only are these employment rates for recent CMU graduates the highest in the last 10 years, but based on currently available information, we also are among the highest ranked institutions when compared to outcomes at other state universities in Michigan. It is one more indicator of the value of a CMU degree.

With an eye toward CMU's future success, we are making great progress in the development of a new strategic plan for CMU. We are developing a plan that not only defines who we are, but also who we will strive to be in the next five years, and the priorities we will emphasize to meet our goals.

After months of input from stakeholders, the Strategic Planning Executive Committee has drafted proposed mission and vision statements and strategic priorities. In addition to defining CMU's strengths and goals, the proposed plan truly focuses on student success.

While the plan remains a work in progress at this point, I can say the priorities it outlines will be ones that put students first and stress the creation of leaders, ensuring inclusion and having a positive impact on communities we serve – all while being good stewards of our resources.

I have been engaging with the Board of Trustees about where we are in the drafting process, and the Strategic Planning Team will share an update with the campus community in late August. I would like to thank Trustee Heath and Trustee Anson for their leadership in this process. We anticipate the final proposed strategic plan will be presented to the Board of Trustees in September for approval.

Looking ahead to fall, we continue to see positive signs for enrollment. Key indicators such as deposits and housing contracts are up for incoming first year and transfer students compared to last year at this time.

Orientation sessions on campus have also been *filled* so far this summer with incoming students Fired Up to start in the fall.

We have also improved first-year retention from the previous year and continue to see increased interest and applications from potential online and international students.

While numbers can change over the summer, I am very encouraged that we are on the path to meet our enrollment expectations for fall.

We will hear more today about the proposed operating budget for the upcoming fiscal year. A great deal of thought and collaboration went into this process, which was even

more challenging due to the cuts we made in previous years. After making \$16 million in budget reductions in 2022, CMU was already a lean operation.

Additionally, multiple years of inflation have impacted every aspect of CMU operations. Costs have significantly increased in areas such as food, supplies and equipment, contract services and other areas.

In preparation for this year's proposed budget, we asked leaders across campus to undertake the difficult task of identifying ways to streamline operations and increase efficiency. The result of their hard work found opportunities to even more strategically allocate our resources.

We appreciate all the departments and divisions who found ways to reduce expenses while still prioritizing the needs of our students. These adjustments do not come without some pain but they do ensure we are operating efficiently and being good stewards of the resources entrusted to us.

Part of the budget proposal includes allocating funding *to* services that meet the needs of our students and community including counseling programs, campus safety and information technology.

There is also a proposed raise for CMU staff members, who are impacted by the rising costs of inflation. We believe in doing everything we can to ensure that CMU remains competitive for outstanding talent among our faculty and staff. They are essential in creating a positive student experience that leads to successful outcomes.

At the end of the day, a budget is a plan to achieve our priorities. Our most important goal is student success, and the proposed budget aligns our resources with that goal.

Part of creating a responsible and balanced operating budget is looking at the revenue generated by tuition, housing and food, and other student costs. In a few moments, the Finance and Facilities Committee will meet as a committee of the whole to consider those rates.

As our team drafted these rate scenarios, our goal was to address the growing costs associated with providing high-quality learning, living and dining options while keeping CMU an outstanding value for students.

CMU is one of the best values in higher education – here in Michigan and beyond. Our university offers amazing academic programs and student services that help students achieve their personal and professional goals.

The leadership team and the Board of Trustees are committed to ensuring it will remain that way.

Chair Oliver, this concludes my report.