



Board of Trustees

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

April 18, 2024

Thank you, Chair Regis.

I would like to thank Chair Regis and the entire Board of Trustees for their strong condemnation of the upsetting, deplorable and intolerable incidents that recently occurred on our campus.

Over the past several days, our students, faculty, staff, alumni, supporters and friends have been navigating an incredibly challenging and difficult time — and they have done so with incredible compassion, candor and respect.

Let me be blunt. Racist, discriminatory language has no place in our university community – it directly conflicts with our core values of inclusiveness, compassion and respect. It also is contradictory to our mission of education and supporting all.

Incidents of bias and discrimination do not represent who we are, and they do not embrace the vision of the community we aspire to be now and in the future. This language and this behavior will not be tolerated. It will not be tolerated.

An individual in the initial video incident who was identified as a CMU student has been suspended and is no longer on campus, and the staff member involved in the listening session incident has separated from the university.

While we are actively addressing recent events, we know that there are broader, longer-term issues that also demand attention and action. Many of these issues are addressed by our recently adopted 2023 through 2028

DEI Strategic Plan. It offers specific, measurable action steps designed to guide our efforts.

At the same time, there are shortcomings in it, and they too need to be addressed. They will be. Specifically and especially when we have this dialogue.

We know that change to policies and procedures does not happen as quickly and as visibly as everyone would like. Let me assure you that this work is happening, and that we will never stop looking for ways to make our community more inclusive, more supportive and more empowering.

ALL of our students, faculty and staff deserve to live, learn and work in a community that empowers and supports them – and we are going to create that environment together.

We are proud of and grateful to the members of our university community — particularly our students — who have demonstrated incredible leadership this week in the form of petitions, demonstrations and participation in our listening sessions.

To our students, faculty, and staff: Thank you for engaging in this dialogue and seeking ways we can move forward as a community. As Trustee Regis has stated many times, the board and I are committed to take action. The president's cabinet is committed to take action, as well as multiple leaders throughout the institution.

Please know that we will take action and continue to seek ways to better serve our community.

Those in the room and watching online may notice that we have on display not only flags representing the United States, the State of Michigan and Central Michigan University... but also the flag representing the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe.

We are meeting on ancestral Tribal lands, and we want to express our respect for the Tribe and its Tribal Leaders. We are proud to be partners as we strive to better our shared community. Chi Miigwech, and thank you to Chair Regis for making this recommendation.

I am shifting to some of the positive news of the institution. I think it is important to talk about the positives. But do not let this shift diminish – in any way – the comments that have been made or the dedication of this institution to do better.

One of my favorite times at this institution is coming up in about two weeks as we go into commencement ceremonies. The spring semester at CMU is flying by, partly because of the outstanding events we enjoy on this campus.

There truly is something for everyone – from sports and science to culture, music and business – we offer many opportunities to enrich the lives of students, faculty, staff and the entire community. I would like to highlight just a few:

We were honored to once again host the Celebrating Life Pow wow in its 35th year. It is always an exciting celebration of Indigenous culture, heritage and tradition. The Pow wow was a tremendous opportunity to be immersed in the cultural diversity of our community through the important traditions of music, dance, art and food. It also showcases our strong partnership with the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe to foster greater cultural understanding and collaboration.

CMU was chosen as the venue for the FIRST robotics competition this spring. It was our first time hosting this exciting competition for high school robotics teams, providing a fun hands-on opportunity to put STEM lessons into action. It also allowed CMU to showcase our science and engineering programs to hundreds of potential students.

Last week, our annual Student Creative and Research Endeavors Exhibition once again showcased the outstanding work of undergraduate and graduate students who are exploring fascinating topics with the support of CMU faculty. SCREE celebrates their innovative work and allows them to share their research and scholarly and creative endeavors with the university community.

And tomorrow, I am excited to once again participate in the annual New Venture Challenge. NVC is a signature program allowing students from all our colleges to develop entrepreneurial skills and pitch a start-up business venture. The participating students spent months using their knowledge, creativity, leadership skills and determination to look for ways to improve the world around them, identify a challenge and seek a solution.

April also is the time of year we learn of the prestigious national and international grants, scholarships and fellowships CMU students are earning to build on the education and experience they are gaining with us.

I'm delighted to report that two CMU students have been honored with prestigious Goldwater scholarships.

CMU junior Jimmy Haugh is an Honors Program student studying biology and geographic information sciences. Jimmy is currently studying abroad in the Ecuadorian Amazon, researching reptiles and amphibians that are indicator species for climate change. Jimmy is truly passionate about science. He collaborates with faculty mentor Dave Zanatta, who also played a role in securing the Goldwater scholarship. Congratulations to Jimmy!

Junior Regan Kopesky is an Honors Program student studying biology and biochemistry. Regan is passionate about her research into animal development after periods of suspended development. She is working with research advisor Xantha Karp on experimental trials, and Dr. Karp helped her secure the Goldwater scholarship. Congratulations, Regan!

You may recognize the name of CMU graduate student Annabelle Fortine, recipient of a 2023 Fulbright English Teaching Assistant grant. Well, Annabelle has done it again! She received a 2024 Fulbright to continue her studies in Bulgaria. Congratulations to Annabelle!

CMU once again has a Critical Language Scholarship winner! Senior Calvin Older worked with Dr. Christi Brookes in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences to win the CLS award from the U.S. Department of State. He will use the award to study the Russian language in the country of Georgia. Congratulations, Calvin!

Vocal music major Mario Sangret-Savalle is one of 75 American students to win the prestigious Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange for Young Professionals Fellowship. The award will allow Mario to spend a year in Germany attending a university and completing an internship in the music field. Congratulations, Mario!

I would like to take a moment to again acknowledge Dr. Maureen Harke, director of the CMU National Scholarship Program for her tireless work and guidance to help our students be successful in obtaining all of these tremendous awards. Thank you, Maureen.

More national attention is focused on CMU thanks to the efforts of our outstanding vice president for Inclusive Excellence and Belonging, Shawna Patterson-Stephens.

In this academic year, Shawna was named one of Crain's Detroit Business Notable Leaders in DEI, was recognized as an American College Personnel Association Diamond Honoree, received the 2024 National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Bobby E. Leach Award, and most recently was selected for the Pan African Network's Anne S. Pruitt Foundation Award.

At the heart of her ongoing work is a desire to create a sense of belonging for everyone at CMU. Congratulations, Shawna... and thank you for improving the experiences of current and future students, as well as faculty and staff.

I am happy to report that CMU's division of Student Affairs is under the capable leadership of two familiar faces. Mr. Stan Shingles, who recently announced his retirement from student affairs has returned on an interim basis to serve as its vice president. Dr. Erica Johnson will resume her role as interim assistant vice president. Thank you both for taking on these leadership roles to ensure student success, health and well-being remain our top priorities at CMU.

And CMU's Detroit office is experiencing success in spreading awareness of CMU in the heart of the city. Executive Director of Detroit Outreach, Rhonda Welsh reports that traffic into the office is on track to be double what it was in just two years ago. Thank you, Rhonda, for your continued effort to spread our message in the state's largest market and connect potential students to CMU.

In athletics, there are victories to celebrate this spring. Under the guidance of coach Tom Borelli, CMU's wrestling team performed at an extremely high level and won the MAC championship! Congratulations to the entire team that displayed tremendous grit on the mat.

Coach Borelli also won MAC Coach of the Year honors for the 15th time in his career at CMU, which dates back to 1991. Tom is one of the all-time winningest coaches in college wrestling, and highly respected among his peers. Upon his retirement, I would like to thank Coach Borelli for his dedication to CMU and all the student-athletes and colleagues he has impacted over the years.

He obviously has a tremendous winning record on the mat, but his student-athletes have also gone on to do amazing things. They have a very high graduation rate from CMU, and they have entered into professions and been very successful. That is a tribute to Tom and his leadership, giving them the grit and determination to move forward to further success. Congratulations again, Coach Borelli, an outstanding individual.

As we look for more ways to make a positive impact in underserved communities in Michigan, CMU's College of Education and Human Services recently announced the formation of the Michigan Consortium for Addressing Rural Education Expansion and Retention – or MiCAREER – Resource Hub.

With a new \$15 million grant from the Michigan Department of Education, CMU will help meet the demand for qualified teachers in rural districts through the innovative MiCAREER credentialing hub. It will offer teacher certification and ongoing professional learning opportunities at no cost to the future educator.

Through the MiCAREER Hub, existing rural school staff who are not yet certified are eligible to work toward initial certification and ongoing professional learning. Prospective teachers also will be eligible. With rural school districts comprising 65% of the state's school districts and 31% of its students, the hub's impact will be far-reaching.

In the classroom – both real and virtual – CMU continues to gain recognition for the quality and value of our programs. CMU's online bachelor's in business and bachelor's in psychology programs were ranked first in the state in the U.S. News 2024 Best Online Programs. Six other online programs placed in the top five among Michigan schools. Those include: Master's in education, MBA Programs and MBA Programs for Veterans.

In the publication's ranking of Best Specialty Graduate Programs, two CMU programs are ranked in the top 100 in the United States. Not only are the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology programs ranked nationally, Audiology was named best in the state of Michigan. Thank you to the dedicated faculty and staff in all our ranked programs for always striving to improve the quality and impact of a CMU education.

CMU's College of Medicine has some great news to report this spring. The class of 2024 achieved a perfect 100% match rate, just above the College's historical match rate of 98% over the past three years. In keeping with our mission to educate doctors to serve in Michigan communities, 58% of these graduates will enter residency training programs here in Michigan and 62% will be practicing in primary care.

Our alumni and supporters are literally investing in supporting our success. University-wide over the last 2 years, CMU has experienced an increase in engagement of volunteers, and an increase in giving that directly impacts students in all of our programs.

University Advancement continues to break records, with four gifts of more than \$1 million during the first two quarters of this fiscal year... and over \$22 million raised in the last three quarters. In just the last month, we have been ecstatic to announce several major gifts that will bolster CMU's mission and help create successful futures for our students and programs.

University Advancement expects more exciting major gift announcements as we embark on a new comprehensive capital campaign under the leadership of our recently named vice president for University Advancement, Jenn Cotter.

In closing, the support we are garnering to fulfill our mission is growing. The commitment of everyone in this room to ensure the success of our graduates is unquestionable.

CMU's mission statement says we are defined by the success of our students, alumni and the collective impact we have in the communities we serve. This means every student needs to be supported within our community.

On May 3rd and 4th, it will be my honor to bestow degrees and certificates upon the 2,443 members of the CMU class of 2024. At commencement, I will encourage them to reflect on their journey with us, and to look forward to using their knowledge, experience and determination to make a difference in our world.

I believe now more than ever, CMU is laser-focused on our commitment to the success of our students and alumni, and our collective impact in the communities we serve.

To end where I began: I look forward to being with you, to stand with you, and I will walk with you on Saturday.

Thank you.