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## Office of the President

Thank you, Chair Regis, and congratulations on presiding over your first formal session of the Board of Trustees.

Good morning and welcome to everyone joining us in the room and online today.

It has been – and continues to be – my honor and privilege to serve as the president of Central Michigan University. Even after nearly six years on this campus, I still marvel at the passion of our students, faculty, staff alumni and supporters.

That fired-up energy, that drive and dedication is what made the decision to step down as president at the end of this year so very difficult. However, knowing the full accomplishments of this university, I know I am making this decision at the right time for myself and my family... and for CMU.

With your support, our university has achieved remarkable things, and we continue to build the momentum of our success. Every day, we are working to increase enrollment, enhance academic quality, increase scholarly activity and improve our service to communities throughout our state and region.

Over the last several days, the outpouring of support from students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members has been immense. I've been asked what accomplishments over the last six years that I am most proud of. One moment. And that was last May 6, at 1:15 in the afternoon, when I was able to hand my daughter her diploma from this fine university. That symbolizes all that we stand for.

So, as we build on our success, the work we have done together fills me with pride, and we still have a great deal of work ahead of us.

Now, however, I wish to focus on some of CMU's outstanding achievements in the past few months.

Shortly after our last meeting, CMU celebrated the accomplishments of 1,201 graduates at December commencement. They earned a degree and demonstrated leadership, resilience and courage along the way. Now they are taking those qualities – along with the knowledge and experience gained at CMU – and unleashing their talent on the world!

We are off to a terrific start in 2024. The new semester has already included many exciting events for students, faculty and staff. The community joined us in January for our annual observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. The Community Peace Service was well-attended and offered an outstanding way to honor Dr. King's legacy. Student orators

Ku'Juana Quinn, Christian Toney and Tiarra Weddle gave powerful and inspiring speeches on the meaning of Dr. King's work, and where the culture stands in making progress toward his dream.

The peace service was just the start of an entire week of events celebrating Dr. King's legacy. I want to thank Multicultural Academic Student Services for their hard work to make the week a successful one.

CMU Detroit also hosted students and teachers from the Plymouth Educational Center charter school for our 3rd annual MLK Day event. I want to thank the CMU alumni who made time to read to the fourth graders about Dr. King at this wonderful event.

Our student-athletes have had an incredible start to the year. In January, CMU Women's Basketball hosted their annual Hoops for Hunger game. They encouraged local elementary and middle school students to collect food items for donation and then invited 3,000 of those students to attend the CMU game against Ball State. Not only did Hoops for Hunger provide a thrilling experience for young students, it collected tens of thousands of pounds of food to help those in need. I am tremendously proud of our student-athletes for making a positive impact in the community.

And a time-honored CMU tradition will be celebrated on February 17 in McGuirk Arena. The famous Toilet Paper Toss game returns for the second consecutive year when our men's basketball team hosts – beats – rival Western Michigan. It is truly something you have to experience to fully appreciate!

CMU students continue to achieve on a national level, showing what a Fired-Up attitude can do. Senior Melissa Navarre was awarded the 25th Annual Regina Brown Undergraduate Fellowship by the National Council on Education in the Ceramic Arts. Only three undergraduate students in the country earn this distinction each year. It also includes a scholarship to pursue research. Congratulations Melissa!

With the mentorship and encouragement of Professor Jeffrey Bean, CMU Senior Weston Wise will once again have his poetry included in a national publication. Weston had already been selected for publication by the National Federation of State Poet Societies, and he will have a new collection of 12 poems published in *Beyond Words Magazine* this month. Congratulations on your outstanding accomplishments Weston!

CMU faculty and staff also continue to garner national attention and awards. Congratulations to history professor Andrew Wehrman on winning the Peter J. Gomes Memorial Book Prize. It is another well-deserved honor for his book "The Contagion of Liberty," which explores the American Revolution through the lens of public health during a smallpox epidemic.

A CMU legend – football coach Roy Kramer – was welcomed into the College Football Hall of Fame in Las Vegas in December. It is a well-deserved honor for Coach Kramer who led CMU to a division two national championship in 1974. Congratulations to Coach Kramer. CMU is proud to be a part of his legacy. I would also like to thank Trustee Todd Anson for spearheading that opportunity for Coach Kramer to be recognized at the national level.

The team at University Communications has much to be proud of, after winning several

international awards for CMU's "We Do" brand campaign, and for their work promoting CMU on social media. The Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals honored University Communications with two Platinum A.V.A. Digital Awards. They also won a gold level Viddy Award and MarCom Award for the "We Do" campaign.

These awards recognize not only the **creativity** of the work, but also the **effectiveness** of the campaign, which drove significant increases in visits to CMU's website as well as application completions. I also must note that the organizations they compete against are not other universities. They are national and international firms, some of which have paid very large sums for advertising campaigns and studio time and everything else. All our work is done in-house. Congratulations to University Communications for this amazing achievement.

We also have exciting growth in health professions education. Since our founding in 1892, CMU has been committed to meeting the needs of Michigan. We are proud to continue that legacy with a new academic degree program to address our state's growing need for health care professionals.

Last week, we were thrilled to announce that CMU will offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree through The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow College of Health Professions. The need for well-trained nurses is tremendous... and growing. An academic planning analysis found a national increase of more than 25% in unfilled nursing positions in recent years, while the number of people earning a nursing degree increased by only 4%.

The new nursing program also fulfills a core mission of CMU's health and medical programs: Meeting the needs of rural and underserved communities throughout the state. The first students will enter the new Bachelor of Science in Nursing program in the January 2025 spring semester. We welcome the new director of the BSN program, Dr. Nel Martinez, who brings to CMU a rich and diverse experience that will truly enhance the quality of education in this new program.

Although it is less than a year old, CMU's Rural Health Equity Institute is already experiencing success. The institute is demonstrating the power of championing the interests of rural and under-resourced communities through collaboration. Their work also is demonstrating progress on CMU's priority to engage communities, part of our new strategic plan.

The Academic and Student Affairs Committee heard yesterday about the institute's work with partners to improve access to high-quality health services and education in rural areas throughout the state. Under the leadership of Executive Director Alison Arnold, the institute is also using telehealth resources to expand access to mental health services.

Dr. Arnold also will represent CMU on two special committees formed by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services working on statewide healthcare strategies. Thank you and your team for your important work, Dr. Arnold.

As we work to make a difference in our state, some individuals are stepping up to make a real difference for our students. With action by the Trustees today, and through the great generosity of one of our esteemed emeritus faculty members, a highly regarded program

in CMU's College of Business Administration will get a new name. I am excited to announce the School of Accounting will become the Philip L. Kintzele School of Accounting.

Dr. Kintzele is here with us today.

Dr. Kintzele served as a faculty member in the School of Accounting from 1982 to 2019, ten of those years as chair of the department. He now serves as an emeritus professor, continuing his years of support for our students. In addition to his decades of inspiring thousands of students and preparing them for success in the business world, he has given back generously to CMU.

Dr. Kintzele has committed to a lifetime total of \$2 million in giving to support CMU students and student-athletes. The funds will be allocated to the Philip Kintzele Accounting M.B.A. Scholarship. In honor of his support, we are pleased and honored to celebrate the naming of the School of Accounting in Dr. Kintzele's name. Please join me in thanking Dr. Kintzele for his overwhelming generosity and strong commitment to CMU and our students.

Dr. Kintzele's commitment is one of four gifts of more than \$1 million during the first two quarters of our fiscal year. In total, these principal gifts add up to more than \$7 million. With these gifts, University Advancement raised over \$17 million in the last two quarters – which sets a new fundraising record at CMU. Thank you to the entire University Advancement team for the outstanding work you do to secure this level of support for CMU, our students and our scholarly efforts.

It has long been a goal at CMU to ensure that degree attainment remains within reach for every Michigan student. In our effort to ensure affordable access to a CMU education for as many students as possible, we are implementing the new CMU Tuition Advantage program, which replaces the previous CMU Traditions program.

With CMU Tuition Advantage, we've made it easier than ever for Michigan students to qualify to attend college tuition-free. It all begins with filling out the new simplified FAFSA. New eligibility requirements mean the program will benefit even more Michigan students.

We are proud to be able to offer this pathway to the benefits of a college degree. We have more information on our website today, and we will be communicating more about the program to our students and families.

We are making it easier to access an outstanding CMU education.

We are engaging communities and seeking partnerships to move forward on our strategic plan.

We are effectively telling the stories of CMU to attract and retain new students.

We are adding programs – like the Bachelor of Science in Nursing – to meet the changing demands of our state.

And we are securing the generous support of donors who see our value and want to

promote CMU's future success.

We have achieved so much, and yet there is so much more to be done — in my remaining time in this office and beyond. Be assured that I will remain an active, engaged and enthusiastic proponent of this work.

I am proud to continue to work alongside this board, and with our entire university community, to focus on growing enrollment, advancing academic excellence, building a robust culture of philanthropy and moving forward on our new strategic plan.

It is indeed an exciting time for CMU.

Before I end my remarks, I want to express my deep appreciation for the dedication of everyone in this outstanding university community who is contributing to our vision of preparing innovators, learners and leaders who positively impact their local and global communities.

Chair Regis, this concludes my report.