



# Board of Trustees

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

February 13, 2025

Thank you, Chair Regis, and welcome to everyone joining us today in person and on the livestream.

I would like to begin today by welcoming two impressive individuals who have joined the CMU Board of Trustees.

Dr. Ashok Kondur joins us from the metro Detroit area, where he is an interventional cardiologist. Along with his medical expertise, Dr. Kondur also has a degree in finance and marketing and will bring his valuable perspective to this board.

Jeff Stoutenburg returns to CMU as a two-time graduate with a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in public administration. He currently is director of state government affairs at Dow and serves as president of the Michigan Economic Development Foundation.

And, today I also thank Paula Lancaster, who has agreed to remove the word "interim" from her title and officially serve as CMU's Provost and Executive Vice President. I am grateful for Dr. Lancaster's work over the past few months in the provost's position to keep our focus on academic excellence and student success. I look forward to working with Provost Lancaster to ensure we are delivering excellent and relevant experiences for CMU students to prepare them for successful careers.

Many in our university community have expressed concern about actions being taken in Washington, D.C., that could affect universities. It is absolutely understandable for students, faculty and staff to feel concerned. We, too, are concerned. We care deeply about this university community, and we are committed to our mission, vision and values.

Every member of the President's leadership team is working with our professional organizations and peers in higher education to understand what the recent changes mean for our university. It is still very unclear if, how and when many of the orders will be applied to higher education.

We are reviewing currently released and rescinded orders and tracking the release of new orders. It is vital that we do not take any action until we are certain that we are taking the right actions. We developed a new webpage to keep the community updated on changes, and we will be communicating via email weekly to ensure everyone feels as informed as possible.

CMU's strategic plan aligns with our values and has entered its second year of implementation. The hard work continues to meet the plan's four priorities:

- Inspiring student and scholarly success.
- Engaging communities.
- Enhancing organizational culture.
- Ensuring institutional sustainability.

While progress is being made on these priorities and their associated goals, I felt we needed a way to build momentum, backed by the resources to make an impact. That's why on Tuesday, during my First 100 Days Reflection, I announced the launch of "Go Grants" to broaden campus involvement in strategic planning efforts in meaningful ways.

Faculty, staff, administrators and students are encouraged to submit proposals that can help generate momentum on achieving plan priorities and goals.

"Go Grant" proposal amounts can range from \$5,000 to \$50,000, and we intend to select between 20 and 25 awards spanning the four strategic priorities. A one-time funding pool of \$500,000 has been set aside for this initiative, and funding will come from the president's investment fund.

Proposals should be focused on a positive, meaningful impact on our students and the communities we serve. Proposals should:

- Align with plan priorities and SMART goals.
- Articulate the impact on students and the communities we serve.
- Demonstrate a positive return on investment.

All campus stakeholders interested in submitting a proposal may do so by completing a simple web-based form. The proposal window is now open and will close on Friday, March 21st.

I would like to share with you some of the recent progress we are making toward actualizing CMU's strategic plan, starting with Priority One: Inspire student and scholarly success.

CMU just had a record year of research-related funding, which aligns with priority one's goal of growing our research and graduate enterprise. Already this year, CMU and research partners secured a \$3 million NIH grant to investigate proteins that are key players in Alzheimer's disease and other neurodegenerative disorders.

We learned in December that CMU's approach to helping students in health programs build competitive applications is placing them at higher rates than national averages in advanced health programs.

According to the Centralized Application Service for Physician Assistants:

- 63% of all CMU students who apply to dental school are accepted, compared to a 56% national average.
- While only about 22% of applicants from across the U.S. are accepted into veterinary programs, about 55% of all CMU graduates who apply are accepted.
- 47% of all CMU students who applied to a physician assistant program are accepted, compared to the national average of 32%.
- 62% of CMU students who applied were accepted to traditional medical schools, compared to the national average of 41%.

Thank you to faculty and staff who are focused on helping students find ways to be competitive, leading to high-wage jobs in high-demand careers.

Successful students become successful alumni, making a positive impact in their communities and here at CMU.

The Michigan Lottery recently honored Roy Davis, Jr. with the Excellence in Education Award. Roy earned his bachelor's degree in music education from CMU in 1997. He is currently the band director at St. Johns Public Schools, where he helps his students grow as individuals and achieve their high potential through music.

CMU alumna Kara Agby has been honored by Forbes magazine as a 30 Under 30 in Sports recipient, alongside professional athletes such as Caitlin Clark, Jayson Tatum, and Christian McCaffrey. Kara is a 2018 graduate and is now Director of Partnership Development for the Golden State Warriors.

CMU alumni recently launched a fraternity and sorority alumni chapter to connect alumni to each other and to our undergraduate fraternity and sorority student community.

CMU Athletics has been experiencing some recent successes I would like to highlight.

In January, we welcomed our new Head Volleyball Coach, Arielle Wilson. We are thrilled to welcome a coach and mentor of Arielle Wilson's caliber to lead our student-athletes to further success in competition and in the classroom.

We are so proud of our men's basketball team and the entire community who showed up for their annual Toilet Paper Toss game at McGuirk Arena against Western Michigan University. The game was sold out, bringing together more than 5,000 people to cheer on the CMU Chippewas and continue a fun campus tradition.

Priority Two of our strategic plan is focused on engaging communities to cultivate and enrich partnerships with university stakeholders.

CMU's new Community Relations Committee met for the first time in January. The group seeks to further strengthen community relationships, focusing on collaborative projects that positively impact students, families, community residents and visitors.

Members of the committee include CMU faculty and staff, along with representatives of the City of Mount Pleasant, Isabella County, the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, Mount Pleasant Public Schools, United Way, local businesses and more.

The committee's objectives include identifying initiatives that promote local economic growth and community well-being. They plan to meet monthly and will provide updates to university and community leaders on goals and progress.

The third strategic plan priority is strengthening institutional culture. This involves raising our national profile as a vibrant and nurturing university community.

CMU's Multicultural Academic Student Services and Office for Institutional Diversity, Equity & Inclusion are creating learning opportunities to celebrate diversity and build community.

A week of events on campus in January celebrating the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. demonstrated what it means to be an inclusive community that values respect and compassion. The ideals Dr. King implored us to embrace are, in many ways, very much represented in CMU's core values. We embrace respect, compassion and inclusiveness. MLK week demonstrated once again that we have the power to create the environment in which we want to live, work and play.

February has wonderful opportunities to participate in events celebrating Black History Month. A calendar of events is available on the MASS office webpage.

Today is day two of the Klymyshyn Symposium on Inclusive Excellence and Social Justice – previously known as the annual Diversity Symposium. It is a chance to learn about national research efforts centered around equity, inclusion, belonging and social justice. Members of the campus and community are learning how CMU faculty, staff and students are dedicated to research and activism for diverse populations.

Several Central Michigan University faculty members have been ranked among the top 2% of scientists worldwide, according to the 2024 Stanford/Elsevier rankings. The rankings evaluate scientists across 22 scientific fields based on several scholarly metrics to determine overall influence.

U.S. News and World Report ranked CMU's online bachelor's in psychology program FIRST among all Michigan colleges and universities. Four additional online programs ranked second in the state.

University Communications continues to garner accolades internationally for the creative ways they are marketing CMU. The team recently added these awards to its trophy case:

- A Gold Marcom for the We Do brand campaign
- A Platinum Viddy for the We Do brand campaign
- A Gold Viddy for 2024 application fee waiver campaign



Due in part to these campaigns, CMU saw a 59% increase in ad clicks, a 39% increase in traffic to the campaign webpage and a 110% increase in engagement on that page.

The fourth and final priority of our strategic plan is to ensure institutional sustainability.

Enrollment and sustainability are deeply interconnected. In the past, CMU faced more than a decade of declining enrollment, creating financial challenges. Efforts to stabilize enrollment and to grow enrollment again are beginning to show positive results, as Vice President DeHaemers shared yesterday.

Looking at total enrollment on the 10th day of this semester, we have a nearly 1.5% increase, or 201 more students, over the same day in the spring semester of 2024.

These are modest gains, but positive nonetheless, and necessary to build a foundation for future growth.

We are in the process of developing and implementing a strategic enrollment management plan to guide us toward further enrollment growth, and I hope to be able to report even larger gains in the future.

Improving events on campus aligns with the fourth priority in CMU's strategic plan, by embracing sustainable campus operations that ensure wise stewardship of our resources.

Last year, CMU convened a task force to look into the challenges with event reservations. That committee presented recommendations and, in September of last year, CMU announced plans to purchase a software program. The process to implement the new software is underway.

This semester, we are reflecting on the past and how far CMU has come over the years while we also look ahead to the future of our great institution.

I hope you will help us celebrate one of our campus' most historic and versatile buildings on March 22 for the 75th anniversary celebration of Finch Fieldhouse.

I would also like to personally invite everyone to a very special day for me: my investiture as CMU's 16th president on April 4 at 10:00 a.m. in Plachta Auditorium.

In conclusion, the momentum we are building in implementing our strategic plan will drive our progress and meet the mission of our university.

Our efforts to grow enrollment are yielding positive results, with more concentrated efforts underway to attract more students.

Our commitment to fostering a welcoming and inclusive community strives to make every student, faculty, and staff member feel valued and supported.

Together, we are strengthening our institution while embracing new opportunities for innovation and growth.

I look forward to all that we will accomplish together in the months and years ahead.

Fire Up Chips!

Chair Regis, this concludes my report.