



President Robert O. Davies

Robert O. Davies became the 15th president of Central Michigan University Sept. 1, 2018. Following a unanimous appointment by the CMU Board of Trustees, Davies immediately undertook a listening and learning tour to assess challenges and identify opportunities to strengthen the university.

Within the first year of his tenure at CMU, Davies launched a Strategic Envisioning Process designed to prepare the university for rigor, relevance and excellence in 2030 and beyond. Based on the Strategic Design Thinking model, this process engages multiple stakeholder groups including students, faculty, staff, alumni and members of the Board of Trustees in an ongoing and iterative reimagining of the university's goals, offerings and operations. Participants have identified five key strategic priorities, called pathways, and are developing near-term goals and action steps for each. The pathways focus on increasing overall academic quality and excellence in co-curricular and extracurricular programs; maintaining and building upon CMU's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion; fostering an ecosystem that promotes innovation, economic development and cultural enrichment with partners throughout the state; addressing the changing needs of current and future students; and expanding CMU's business model.

In addition, during his 2021 State of the University address, Davies unveiled additional "moonshot" goals for the process, aligned with the strategic pathways. These goals establish CMU's unique identity and role in the state; promote greater diversity and inclusion at the university while focusing on student success; and address the changing needs of students and stakeholders. They also showcase the unique value CMU offers for students, families, communities, employers and our state; significantly increase and equalize degree attainment rates; and extend the reach of the university.

As universities nationwide struggle with declining enrollments, Davies has expanded CMU's marketing, outreach and recruitment efforts, including an expansion into new markets, an increased presence in key underserved markets, and the launch of a new brand focused on hands-on learning and real-world results. He also has increased focus on student retention and success including proactive multi-semester advising, increased mentoring, and support services for students, such as a campus food pantry and financial wellness coaching.

During the 2020-21 academic year, Davies led the university through the global COVID-19 pandemic. Under his leadership, and with the partnership of the Central Michigan District Health Department and other community institutions, CMU remained open for in-person living and learning opportunities throughout the entire year, shifting to remote-only

learning for only a brief period when mandated by state leaders. With health and safety as top priorities, CMU was able to offer on-campus experiences for students while also maintaining among the lowest number of positive cases among institutions of higher education statewide.

In addition to his position as CMU's president, Davies also serves as board chair of the [Central Michigan University Research Corp.](#), a business incubator with locations on CMU's campus in Mount Pleasant, as well as in Bay City, Midland and Saginaw, and the No. 1 SmartZone in the state for job creation and companies formed. Davies also serves on the [CMU Medical Education Partners](#) board of directors and is a member of the board of directors for the [Great Lakes Bay Regional Alliance](#).

In June 2020, Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer appointed Davies to serve on the newly created [Michigan Workforce Development Board](#), a panel of state leaders focused on increasing access to education, creating jobs and growing the economy statewide. Davies' participation on the board aligns with CMU's priority to offer education focused on real-world results that meets the needs of students and employers, as well as other stakeholders.

More recently, Davies was appointed the Mid-American Conference representative on the [NCAA Division I Presidential Forum](#) and to the [NCAA Division I Committee on Academics](#). He also accepted a position on the Board of Trustees at [The Children's Foundation](#).

Immediately prior to his arrival in Michigan, Davies served as president of Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky. He also previously served as president of Eastern Oregon University. Over the course of more than 25 years in higher education, Davies also held leadership roles in university relations, alumni relations and advancement.

Davies received a Bachelor of Science degree in management from the University of Nevada, Reno. He also holds a Master of Business Administration degree in finance and marketing from the University of Oregon and a doctoral degree in higher education administration from the State University of New York at Buffalo. He attended the prestigious Harvard Institute for Educational Management as well as leadership seminars for both new and experienced presidents.

Davies and his wife, Cindy, have one daughter, Katie, currently a student in her third year at CMU. The Davies enjoy cheering on CMU Chippewa student-athletes in a variety of sports and attending outstanding performances by students involved with the CMU School of Music, University Theatre and more.