

**Central Michigan University  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Higher Education and Community Colleges  
Thursday, March 7, 2019 - 9 a.m.**

Good morning Chair VanSingel, Vice Chair Bollin and Minority Vice Chair Anthony, and members Huizenga, Green, Slagh and Hoadley.

Thank you for the invitation to speak today. I am proud to represent the students, faculty, staff, alumni and the Board of Trustees of Central Michigan University and to share our story with you.

Central is a partner to the state of Michigan — to its residents, its communities and its businesses.

Our university was established more than 125 years ago to meet the state's need for teachers and business leaders. Today, we continue meeting Michigan's needs through high-quality academic programs designed to address talent gaps in critical areas.

While we have students from 47 of the 50 states and 21 countries, nearly 85 percent of our more than 20,000 students come from Michigan, representing all 83 counties.

Some of our 225,000 Central Michigan alumni are in this room today, including the chairperson and other sitting members of this subcommittee.

Central Michigan University is part of Michigan's economic backbone — a major driver of our state's economy. A recent report showed that our university is responsible for creating nearly 12,000 jobs and generating more than \$1.2 billion each year in economic impact for the state.

In 2002, a Michigan Chamber of Commerce study ranked our state 47th in the nation for economic competitiveness. Today, we sit at number 20.

We are proud of the role Central is playing in this great economic comeback.

**To continue this climb, Michigan relies on institutions like Central Michigan University to prepare students for high-demand careers in fields such as engineering, accounting, information technology, education and health care.**

For example, 51 of Michigan's counties are designated as health professional shortage areas. We opened our College of Medicine in response to that shortage, with a mission to prepare diverse, culturally competent physicians who will provide high-quality health care, especially to residents in our most vulnerable rural and medically underserved urban areas.

Today, our students are putting that mission into action. Students from the College of Medicine and several of our other health professions programs are taking medicine to the streets with our mobile health clinic, treating patients in need at local homeless shelters and human services agencies. They also visit elderly residents at home in three local counties to provide health screenings, and are training to fight the growing opioid addiction crisis.

That kind of interprofessional collaboration — physician assistants, doctors, social workers and others working together to improve the health of Michigan residents — is a national best practice **you** helped make possible with your support of Central Michigan University.

We are grateful to the state Legislature for the funding granted to construct our soon-to-be-completed Center for Integrated Health Studies, which will advance interdisciplinary learning. That investment in Central is an investment in the health of Michigan's citizens. And for that we thank you.

We also are preparing students for promising careers in math and engineering.

More than a decade ago, we added an engineering program in response to student and employer demand. Today, this program is at capacity, and our students are actively recruited — before they graduate— for outstanding careers.

We also are national leaders in research, sustainability and the environment.

Our faculty and students are preserving and protecting Michigan's most valuable natural resource: our Great Lakes. We currently are leading our second \$10 million grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to monitor and assess Great Lakes coastal wetlands.

And while we're preparing students for new and fast-growing STEM careers, we have never forgotten our roots.

Even after 126 years, we are still meeting Michigan's need for ethical business leaders and exceptional teachers.

Our College of Business Administration was selected by international software giant SAP to serve as one of its premier NextGen Innovation Labs. CMU faculty provide leadership in areas such as industrial innovation and infrastructure.

We're also guiding Michigan's next wave of entrepreneurs and small-business owners. Students participating in our New Venture Competition are mentored by business leaders and industry experts for almost the entire academic year as they bring their small-business ideas to life.

And we partner with the Central Michigan University Research Corporation, a business incubator established with support from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

Our CMURC is the number one incubator in Michigan for job creation and companies formed and has recently added locations in Bay City and Saginaw to expand its services.

Central remains one of the state's largest teacher education programs — and we are growing. On average, we graduate between 300 and 350 new teachers each year, and we again have seen a dramatic enrollment increase in this program in the last year.

We graduate **extraordinary** teachers.

Our students spend a full year working in classrooms alongside veteran teachers before graduation, more than **almost any other program in the state**.

During a recent visit to our Center for Excellence in STEM Education, one school superintendent gave his business card to each of our students telling them, “When you are ready, we want to hire you.”

Additionally, we are partnering with Mott Community College to help meet demand for qualified early childhood education providers. It's part of an effort to make Michigan a “no-wait state” for low-income children enrolling in preschool and Head Start programs.

**Such partnerships — with businesses, community organizations and schools —set CMU students apart.**

We are not just graduating knowledgeable students, we are working with our partners to ensure we are graduating the skilled, civic-minded leaders the state needs **now** to fill talent gaps.

No matter which degree they pursue, all students receive the benefit of a well-rounded liberal arts education. Disciplines such as history, political science, sociology and the arts help students develop the leadership skills employers say they urgently need, including communication, critical thinking, problem-solving and teamwork.

And we hear over and over again from employers that CMU students **have** these skills, which prepare them not just for their first jobs, but for their careers. We are incredibly proud of this.

I'd like to share with you something I heard from one of the executives at General Motors last semester.

He said, “I want every business professional in every industry to see the assets coming out of Central Michigan University. They should see that these students can help them solve business problems.”

A hiring manager from Gentex Corp. told us Central is in their top five of more than 50 recruiting universities nationwide and, currently is the top in Michigan.

The quality of the education and experiences we provide at Central Michigan University make our students a **top choice** for employers.

**This is true in part because CMU offers students more leadership development programming than any other college or university in the country.**

This programming helps students see the power of using their skills, knowledge and talents for the benefit of others. What's more, they come to understand their responsibility as leaders, regardless of their job titles.

Last year, we were third in the nation for the number of students who participated in Alternative Breaks, volunteering to assist others instead of taking time off during the holidays or spring break. Their projects could be focused on natural disasters, depressed socio-economic areas or other places and people in need. So not only are students making an impact here in Michigan, they are traveling all over the world to make a difference.

That dedication to careers, leadership and community engagement is the hallmark of our current strategic plan, Advancing Excellence.

This plan is centered around supporting our students and providing the highest-quality education. We look to you — our partner — to help us make it possible.

We can't talk about higher education today without also talking about cost. Many families want a college education for their children but cannot afford the growing investment of a four-year degree.

**Through our partnership, we *can* keep education within reach for Michigan families.**

We know that education has the power to transform lives and communities. Working together, we can keep it accessible and affordable.

We're doing our part to keep costs low. Among Michigan's 15 public institutions, Central has had the lowest cumulative tuition increase the past nine years. Our total cost for a four-year degree is 10th out of the 15 public universities. And I am proud to say our students graduate with less debt than the national average.

I am also proud to say that in the past decade, we've increased student scholarships and financial aid by 87 percent — an investment of roughly \$24 million. Most of our students receive some sort of financial assistance.

Higher Education is at the beginning and at all intersections along the Road to Opportunity. Higher education is an investment in the present and the future of our students and is in need of additional support from the state to continue to serve Michigan families.

Funding from the state represents less than 17 percent of Central's operating budget. In less than two decades, we have seen the state's investment in Central Michigan University fall from more than 80 percent to below 20 percent. While we continue to perform admirably, the potholes are growing.

Additionally, per-student funding at Michigan's public universities ranges from \$2,957 to nearly \$9,000. Central Michigan receives an amount of \$4,227 — the sixth lowest in the state.

We appreciate, and obviously support, the Governor's recommended budget increase of 3 percent for higher education. We also appreciate the administration's words of support in recommending that the higher education funding formula be analyzed. I urge you to find a way to change the funding method for higher education, so that all undergraduates, especially those from Michigan, at all institutions receive equal support.

The formula should focus on the ability of universities to move Michigan forward and be based on academic quality, rigor and results. As noted, nearly 85 percent of our students come from Michigan and a survey of CMU graduates from the past five years shows over 80 percent remain in Michigan.

Our students, our graduates, have enormous impact on the economy and civic engagement within our communities. The future students of Michigan deserve your investment.

We are committed to providing access to higher education.

At Central Michigan, Pell-eligible and first-generation students are a top priority. Often, they are taking the first step in breaking a cycle of poverty in their families, and they carry the dreams of their parents with them to our campus. We provide programs that bridge the gap between Pell funds and the full cost of tuition for many Michigan students.

Our college-readiness programs — Upward Bound, TRIO and Educational Talent Search — support middle and high school students in low-income areas with tutoring, advising and test preparation.

Our Pathways program connects first-generation, Pell-eligible and multicultural students with on-campus mentors who encourage and support them. This connection dramatically increases the likelihood they will complete their degree.

The fact is, we surround **all** students with support from the moment they become part of the Chippewa family.

Each year, all incoming freshmen and transfer students are invited to our IMPACT and Leadership Safari programs, where they explore ways to get involved on campus and excel there, connect with services and with each other, and explore hundreds of academic and volunteer opportunities.

Many of our students' needs are changing, and we are changing with them. We are proud to serve individuals who are balancing degree attainment with jobs, military service and families.

CMU offers a military reduced tuition rate – not only for those who have served in the U.S. armed forces, but for their spouses and children, who have sacrificed as well. The real-world experience of military personnel and veterans often translates into credits upon enrollment.

We offer 46 degree and certificate programs online and at more than 30 satellite locations in North America. These programs offer great flexibility for nontraditional students, and many, such as our Master of Science in Administration, can be highly tailored.

We partner with major employers throughout the state, including Quicken Loans and the State of Michigan, to offer tuition discounts and professional development so that working adults can advance their knowledge, their careers and their employers' goals.

Many students also come to us from our state's network of community colleges. Partnerships with these institutions help students transition smoothly into a four-year program at Central.

Again, whether it's working with businesses to build employee talent or collaborating with community colleges, **our university is proud to be a premier partner in education** for the entire state of Michigan.

I want to leave you with one final thought.

When I spoke to our students during this year's Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration, I shared King's observation that the true goal of education should be intelligence **and** character.

We need to educate students who will be changemakers, innovators and visionaries. We need individuals who will not simply be great at their jobs, but who will work hard to improve their communities through civic engagement and service.

We empower students to use their knowledge to improve the lives of others. There is a major emphasis in our country that higher education is about getting a job. At Central Michigan University, we don't stop there.

We prepare our graduates -- your sons and daughters -- for their entire careers and position them to be life-long learners. We help them develop the communication, critical thinking and logic reasoning skills, the global and cultural awareness, understanding and sense of responsibility required to compete and collaborate in our interconnected and interdependent global society.

That is why, on graduation day or within six months of it, 92 percent of Central Michigan University students have a job or have been accepted to graduate school, and nearly 95 percent would recommend Central Michigan University to a friend.

I am proud of the role Central Michigan University plays in our state, and I thank you for inviting me to share our story with you. I look forward to working with you to invest in the residents of Michigan and the future of our economy.

At this time, I am pleased to answer your questions.