

Board of Trustees

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

June 25, 2026

Thank you, Chair Mallett.

Good morning and welcome to everyone joining us today here and online. We have many important items on today's agenda, but I would like to take a few minutes to highlight and celebrate some of the great things happening at Central Michigan University.

The summer is a particularly beautiful time on campus. Even the various construction and maintenance projects – that can make things messy and inconvenient at times – are great because they represent progress.

We began the season by sending 2,468 CMU graduates into the world at five commencement ceremonies in May. Once again, student speakers impressed us with their insight and enthusiasm, while alumni speakers shared their wisdom and passion with our graduates. We are excited to watch the success they have with their CMU degree.

CMU once again proudly hosted the Special Olympics Michigan State Summer Games, bringing thousands of athletes and their supporters to campus for fun and competition. CMU is the perfect place for the Summer Games because we share a common core value with Special Olympics – inclusiveness.

We have another reason to celebrate this summer, with the 80th anniversary of our Summer Specialty Clinic. Since 1946, the clinic has served children and supported the development of future speech-language pathologists. The clinic provides individualized services for children ages 3 to 13 with articulation, language, hearing, and communication issues. The program also continues its longstanding

tradition of offering supervised, hands-on clinical training for future speech-language pathologists.

We are joined today by the Summer Specialty Clinic coordinator, Amy Durkin, and Susan Naeve-Velguth, Chairperson of the Communication Sciences and Disorders department. Amy and Susan, will you please stand and be recognized for your continued dedication.

We are also celebrating the appointment of the new dean of the Covenant HealthCare College of Medicine at Central Michigan University. Dr. Joshua Nosanchuk comes to CMU after more than three decades with the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, where he developed a reputation as a highly regarded medical researcher and practicing physician. Dr. Nosanchuk will join us July first to lead the growth of our medical education programs and research activity, while energizing our mission to expand healthcare access in Michigan.

Meanwhile, Provost Lancaster continues to build out her team as the search has begun for the next Vice President of Research and Sponsored Programs after the retirement of Interim Vice President Brad Swanson. We are deeply grateful for Dr. Swanson's support of the university's research mission and collaboration in supporting innovation across campus over the past 25 years.

Progress toward achieving the goals of our 2023-2028 Strategic Plan is getting another boost this summer with the awarding of a second round of Go Grants. These are initiatives proposed by faculty, staff and students that received funding – and a big check – of \$247,875 in total.

New Go Grant initiatives connect to all four priorities of the strategic plan, and include a leadership camp, recruitment technology upgrades, Indigenous storytelling, neurodiversity affirming student support, a mentoring program, and much more.

On top of the new Go Grant initiatives, we encouraged several previous Go Grant recipients to continue their work with Keep Going Grants, totaling \$151,000. These include the Charter to CMU Chippewa program, Paint the Town Maroon, Student Activity Center enhancements, Fire Up Fest, and more.

It also includes the COMPASS program. COMPASS stands for Community Outreach Mental Health Persistence And Student Success, and it is an outstanding program that builds a community of peer support and connection. Last year, I met with the student leaders who were trained

as part of this program, and it was evident to me how they could have a huge impact on their fellow students.

After just one year of Go Grant funding, it is proving to be a vital and effective initiative overseen by the CMU Counseling Center. The COMPASS program's ability to advocate for student well-being caught the attention of a proud CMU alumnus who has just made a generous commitment to further fund and expand the program.

That alum, Bob Oros, joins us today.

Together with his wife Lisa, Bob has pledged \$650,000 to support what we will now call the "COMPASS: Oros Well-th Scholars Program." His support will allow COMPASS to hire one full-time employee and a graduate assistant, as well as fund scholarships for students admitted into the COMPASS cohort.

Please join me in thanking Bob and Lisa for their incredible support of a program that will truly have a positive impact on CMU students!

This is a perfect example of what can grow from the seeds we are planting with Go Grant funding.

Another initiative that began with Go Grant funding that stands to have an impact across our university is "Embracing AI at CMU," led by Special Advisor for Artificial Intelligence Ben Andera.

The initiative focuses on creating recommendations for clear university policy on AI; recommendations for training programs to prepare faculty, staff, and students for ethical and responsible AI use; and strengthening AI infrastructure through a campus-wide pilot program.

Earlier this week, I was pleased to join the inaugural meeting of the CMU AI Advisory Board. With Ben Andera serving as chair, the committee's goals include publishing AI standards for use university-wide and coordinating the use of AI tools.

In the fall of 2025, CMU added a minor in applied artificial intelligence to allow a wide range of students to prepare for the impact AI is having on many career fields. And, to continue our effort to offer degrees and certificates that align with both student interest and workforce needs, we are proud to offer several other new programs beginning in Fall 2026. These include:

- Digital Strategy minor

- Applied Forensic Studies minor
- Cybersecurity minor
- Applied World Languages and Cultures major
- Teaching Collegiate Mathematics graduate certificate
- Advanced Historical Studies undergraduate certificate
- Health Communication undergraduate certificate
- Early Childhood Leadership master's degree

The Master of Arts in Early Childhood Leadership takes place fully online, and will prepare graduates to cultivate environments where children, families and educators can ALL feel deeply valued and successful.

Speaking of success, in our continuing effort to address student enrollment and retention, our Strategic Enrollment Management Plan is making tremendous progress on its five strategies. As of this month, the University Transformation Office reports that the SEM plan is 51.8% complete, meaning we are halfway to full implementation of our 34 strategies.

Not every facet of the plan will yield immediate results. It *will* pay off in the long run, and I am extremely grateful for the valuable work being done by individuals and groups across the university.

Today, Trustees will be asked to adopt a resolution to fully fund and begin construction on the new medical education building in Saginaw. With input from our medical faculty and staff, and with the leadership of the Advancing Health Together steering committee, we've made great progress in moving the project forward.

If the Board approves this resolution, our goal is to break ground on the new medical education building in September. That should allow CMU to remain on course to open the new facility in time for the fall 2028 semester.

It may seem strange to be talking about putting up a new building after several months of discussing our financial challenges. During today's meeting, Trustees will be discussing the budget for the coming year, and the draft we will share for consideration does reflect lower revenues and lower expenditures.

It's important to note that CMU is a financially strong and stable institution because we operate within the scope of our budget. When revenues go down, we make appropriate reductions in our expenditures to maintain a balanced budget.

At the same time, we cannot cut our way to higher enrollment and growth. While we have made difficult decisions to reduce expenses, we also have made strategic investments in key academic areas, student support services, and infrastructure.

To remain competitive and to ensure we are offering our students an incredible educational experience, we must continue to invest in areas that will strengthen the university over the long term.

Senior leaders from across the university participated in budget reduction scenario planning and members of CMU's Executive Budget Committee worked with senior leaders to identify opportunities for BOTH budget reductions and strategic investments.

The budget we bring forward today reflects our commitment to financial responsibility without compromising our promise to deliver on our mission of teaching and learning, research, and service. It also reflects our commitment to our employees, who are the lifeblood of this university.

Because we are a Caring University, CMU will continue to provide fair compensation to its faculty and staff, including modest pay increases this year to assist with the rising cost of everyday living. It is important to note, however, that Senior Officers are joining me in not receiving salary increases this year.

We understand that budget reductions pose challenges for our faculty and staff, and, as the leaders of the organization, we want to demonstrate our commitment to alleviating some of the pressure. To our faculty and to our staff: Know that we see and deeply value the work you do to make CMU an extraordinary place to live, learn and work. Thank you.

As we continue to offer students the highest quality academic and student support programs, we have also seen significant increases in the costs of our operations. External pressures, such as rising insurance costs and uncertainty about public funding, have made it necessary to raise tuition rates for the 2026-2027 academic year.

In today's meeting, we will present Trustees with our recommendations for tuition rate adjustments. It is important to note that, even with these adjustments, CMU will continue to offer one of the state's lowest undergraduate tuition rates, and will remain competitive for graduate and doctoral tuition rates as well.

We do not make these decisions lightly. We know that the cost of higher education is a major concern nationwide, and that, for many families, the "sticker price" of college can appear daunting. However, the true cost of attendance is often *much* lower.

A recent study from the Michigan Association of State Universities found that the cost of a Michigan public university education has actually fallen dramatically as a percentage of household income.

The Michigan Association of State Universities also found that nearly 60% of students who graduate with a bachelor's degree from a Michigan public university have no student debt.

We appreciate the efforts of our state leaders and their investment in the Michigan Achievement Scholarship, which has helped more people in our state invest in their futures, and in the future of their communities.

Here at CMU, our undergraduate students received more than \$58 million in scholarships and financial aid last year, including scholarships from our university.

But the cost is only one part of the equation. Not only are we working to keep education affordable, we are ensuring that it is IMPACTFUL, too. Our graduates go on to outstanding graduate programs, or they launch successful, well-paying careers in high-demand fields. They are the innovators, educators and leaders who lift communities and drive Michigan's economy forward.

The success of our students offers an optimistic view of our university as we navigate the current challenges facing higher education.

As Chair Mallett and I wrote in a recent editorial in *The Midland Daily News*: the door to opportunity is open at CMU, the path is clear, and the value remains undeniable.

Thank you, Chair Mallett, that concludes my report.