



University Advancement **ANNUAL REPORT**

July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025



CENTRAL
MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

A Message from
VP Jennifer Cotter



“Fired Up” reached an unprecedented level in fiscal year 2025, as donors supported Central Michigan University and its students through gifts of \$79 million.

Shattering last year’s \$25.9 million record, alumni, faculty, staff, students, families and friends increased their gifts by 205%. It’s a new day at CMU, with impact at its core.

Our donors are passionate about ensuring everyone who wants to earn a degree can do so. They enthusiastically support real-world learning opportunities that set CMU students apart in interviews for internships and jobs. These same experiences position alumni to excel throughout their careers.

Donors want CMU to expand its reach as a top academic and research university. They value CMU’s long history of addressing the need for teachers and business leaders. And they are proud that legacy now includes the training of a new generation of doctors and nurses who are committed to serving where the need is greatest: in our rural and underserved communities.

Giving back and paying it forward — however you want to look at it — is personal for our supporters. We in Advancement know first-hand the joy and fulfillment that happens when their stories and their purpose come together.

Consider, for example, a donor who lives and works in Japan and generously helps make study abroad opportunities possible for CMU students. For the first time, a recipient of his scholarship was studying and working in his home country. We connected them, and both will cherish forever the lunch meeting that followed. Lives changed that day.

I want to thank all of our donors, the entire Advancement team and our many campus partners. You’ve come together to light an extraordinary 79 million sparks for Central Michigan University, its students and the communities in which they will have boundless impact.

You’ve moved the bar. “Fired Up” has never been so big, so transformative.

Sincerely,

JENNIFER COTTER
Vice President for Advancement

Advancement team and partners across CMU
SECURE HISTORIC \$79 MILLION

Central Michigan University donors gave \$79 million to the university and its students in fiscal year 2025, shattering last year’s \$25.9 million record.

“CMU donors exceeded the 2024 record by a landmark \$53 million, more than tripling our previous all-time high,” President Neil MacKinnon said. “Their belief in CMU is forging the way to an ever-stronger future for students, the university and for Michigan.

“I thank our incredible corporate partners, alumni, faculty, staff and friends for expanding CMU’s impact on students and communities,” MacKinnon said.

The lead gift is \$5 million each of the next eight years from Covenant HealthCare in Saginaw, in support of the College of Medicine’s Advancing Health Together initiative.

Advancement Vice President Jennifer Cotter said Covenant’s

leadership reflects its mission of providing excellent care for every generation and positions CMU to further strengthen its medical education and training.

Two anonymous gifts totaling \$9 million also will support the college in consolidating most of its educational activities in one location. The effort will advance the college’s mission, student experience and impact on underserved populations, including in rural communities across Michigan and beyond.

“Donors are lighting the way forward with energy and excitement for CMU and its real-world experiences, which help students learn to innovate, lead and drive solutions.”

Cotter applauds all donors, including CMU faculty and staff, for gifts that will benefit students forever.

“Our faculty and staff are well known for their deep connection to students. Their relationships with students and alumni, and their gifts, make CMU a truly special place,” she said.

This year’s donor generosity supports students across CMU’s seven colleges and athletics programs. Other highlights include:

- » A \$2 million gift from retired physician and professor Marilyn Haupt to establish a faculty chair in medical research and a College of Medicine student research endowment.
- » CMU’s first nursing scholarship, created by former health department chair Sydney Walston in honor of his wife, Mary, who pushed as a faculty member for a nursing program. They put \$160,000 into two endowments.
- » Naming of the Otteman Memorial Greenspace behind Finch Fieldhouse, honoring \$100,000 in lifetime giving and a legacy gift from RPL Department Chair Tim Otteman.
- » A \$5 million anonymous gift for construction of an indoor/outdoor, year-round campus golf facility for the men’s and women’s golf teams.

Private support of
Central Michigan University

- » FY25 - \$79,084,126
- » FY24 - \$25,910,336
- » FY23 - \$21,548,522



Legacy gifts have LASTING IMPACT

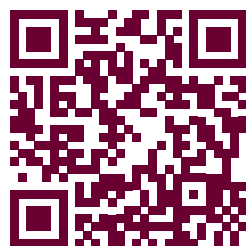
Planned giving is one way for universities to help donors enhance their philanthropic support for students and programs. At CMU, efforts expanded in 2025 to help prospective donors understand legacy gifts and the impact they can have for generations to come.

Donors want to help students pursue a degree and gain résumé-building, real-world experiences that let them excel in the job market. They also like knowing their gifts will address community needs in fields such as health care, business and education.

“Alumni value the unique experiential learning opportunities they had at CMU, and faculty and staff value the relationships they’ve built with students while shaping countless lives,” said Joseph Halewicz, executive director of principal/planned gifts and regional development. “As donors, they’re excited to provide similar experiences to current and future students.”

Halewicz said supporters of the university appreciate talking with an Advancement team member to explore ways of giving back, such as designating CMU in their wills or trusts or naming the university as an IRA beneficiary.

“Donors often think there’s not much they can do,” Halewicz said. “It doesn’t take long for their eyes to light up with the realization that they actually do have the resources to change lives.”



Visit
our new
Giving
website



FY2025 planned giving by the numbers

- » 30 proposals presented
 - » 20 gifts documented, totaling \$6.5 million
 - » 7 proposals still in consideration
 - » 3 proposals declined
- » 22 estate gifts realized, totaling \$1.2 million

FY2026

- » 57 proposals already in development

Corporations, foundations enhance their SUPPORT OF CMU

The power of collaboration between business and higher education is at the heart of a new CMU initiative — the Industrial Affiliates Program — that launched in March 2025.

The effort engages partners with academic programs and students, offering tailored opportunities to advance their companies, recruit talent and invest in the future of their industries. In return, CMU students gain scholarships, professional experiences and problem-solving skills through projects and research. Metro Detroit’s SAPA Transmission, a leader in advanced transmission technology solutions for military vehicles, is CMU’s first affiliate partner.

“The Industrial Affiliates Program provides an exciting platform for companies to invest in their businesses and communities,” said Dana Doman, CMU’s director of corporate and foundation relations.

Additional highlights of corporate and foundation support during FY25:

- » \$5 million a year for eight years from Covenant HealthCare and two anonymous gifts totaling \$9 million will support the College of Medicine.
- » The Children’s Foundation awarded \$90,000 in support of the Schotanus Family Pediatrics Chair within the CMU College of Medicine.
- » Carhartt gifted \$50,000 to the fashion merchandising and design program to support future CMU students, including those who dual enroll or attend Fashion Camp.
- » The PNC Foundation awarded \$35,000 in capital support of the Child Development Learning Lab in the College of Education and Human Services to enhance play-based, outdoor learning opportunities.

Doman engages with academic and department leaders across campus to identify and develop the concepts that become funding proposals for support.

Advancement, Alumni Relations harness new technology

Fiscal year 2025 brought the launch of sophisticated new giving and alumni websites and implementation of powerful Blackbaud software. The latter organizes and tracks donor and alumni relationships, fundraising efforts and engagement activities.



GOAL ACHIEVED:

Donors set another annual giving record

Our donors fired up once again for CMU's annual giving campaign to support students. They gave an all-time high of nearly \$5.9 million throughout fiscal year 2025, through gifts of \$1 to \$9,999.

Donations from alumni, faculty, staff, students, family members and friends exceeded the 2024 record by almost \$109,000. It's the fifth year in a row a new record was set.

The 2025 annual giving campaign highlighted needs such as the Student Food Pantry, which served 1,900 unique student visitors from August through May — a 26% year-over-year increase.

Donors responded by giving a record \$217,300 to support students dealing with food insecurity.

"CMU donors have huge hearts. They'll do anything to help students make it through college — in this case, with enough food to be able to focus on their studies," said Bryan Griffin, director of annual giving.

The food pantry recently relocated to the first floor of Robinson Hall, where it has more space, a waiting area and improved refrigeration.

Giving Tuesday also set a new record, raising \$544,000 for academic programs, athletics, experiential learning opportunities and causes such as the Food Pantry, Student Emergency Fund and Finish Up Chips Scholarship. The latter assists students within 25 credits of graduation who are at risk of dropping out for financial reasons.

Annual giving total

- » FY25 - \$5,890,325
- » FY24 - \$5,781,726

Giving Tuesday

- TOTAL GIFTS**
- » FY25 - \$543,557
 - » FY24 - \$520,725
- TOTAL DONORS**
- » FY25 - 1,500+ donors
 - » FY24 - 1,200+ donors

Student Food Pantry support

- » FY25 - \$217,300
- » FY24 - \$182,924

Role of the food pantry

- » Serves 350-500 students a week
- » 1,900 unique visitors in 2024-25 academic year



“When you put a food pantry central to your community ... when it’s a part of campus life, it helps to normalize seeking help when you need it.”

SYMANTHA DATTILO, Interim Director
Mary Ellen Brandell Volunteer Center

Alumni make connections NEAR AND FAR

CMU Alumni Relations hosted more than 150 events and activities throughout the U.S. and internationally in FY25.

The goal was to bring alumni together near and far, including in locations such as France, Germany and Amsterdam during a Rhine River Cruise, in Michigan sites such as Frankenmuth and Traverse City, and out-of-state destinations such as Florida.

“People want to travel because it’s exciting and fun to go to favorite spots and to destinations where they’ve never been,” said Marcie Otteman, deputy chief of alumni relations and constituent engagement. “These trips allow our alumni to travel with other people who share a common connection to a special place.”

The Alumni Relations team also helped coordinate opportunities for CMU students to gather with and learn from dedicated alumni in cities across the U.S., such as Atlanta and Minneapolis.

This past year, the Alumni Relations team also launched a new and improved alumni website, with everything alumni need to connect with each other, find event opportunities, access benefits and resources, and so much more.

Reconnecting alumni with CMU — and connecting them with each other — is what the Alumni Relations team does.

Social media connections

- » **Facebook:** 53,000 followers, posts reached over 695,000 people, with over 65,000 interactions
- » **Instagram:** 4.3k+ followers, reach up 161%, interactions up 100%
- » **LinkedIn:** 4,376 followers (up from 3,000 in January 2024)

Total alumni events

- » 153 events hosted
- » 9,200+ attendees



Visit the new CMU
alumni website



Stewardship efforts engage, celebrate those who **GIVE BACK**

CMU's Stewardship team took special recognition of donors to new heights in FY25. Through special events and personalized outreach, donors were celebrated for their generosity throughout the year.

Hillary Williams, director of stewardship and donor relations, said that while she's only been in her role for a few months, she's proud of the work from the past year and has big plans to expand stewardship and donor engagement in FY26.

FY25 stewardship by the numbers

180
major donors and prospects visited the President's suite during football games

200+
attended the Scholarship and Endowment Celebration (50 more than FY24)

850
endowment reports sent to donors

350+
letters sent to first-time donors



Advancement, Alumni boards **DEEPEN CONNECTIONS**

The Advancement Board and Alumni Association Board of Directors play key roles as leaders, champions and relationship builders for CMU's fundraising and alumni engagement activities.



Nate Tallman, '07, '09, chairs the Advancement Board. He is vice president of Metro Wire & Cable Corp. and is past president of CMU's Alumni Board.



Erica Romac, '13, is president of the Alumni Association. She is the lead of technical development at MISO, the electric grid operator for the central United States.

Advancement Board highlights

- » Collaborated with Advancement staff and university leadership to raise a record-breaking \$79 million in FY25, supporting students, faculty, key initiatives and programs.
- » Aligned board resources to further implement our strategic plan, including the launch of new guiding principles in June 2025.
- » Partnered with President Neil MacKinnon to ensure alignment between the Advancement Board's strategic direction, his vision and CMU's strategic plan.
- » Championed the implementation of a new, industry-leading CRM system for Advancement and Alumni Relations, launched in early 2025 to enhance internal operations and drive greater organizational efficiency.
- » Provided feedback to CMU leaders and Advancement staff on key pillars and areas of focus for quiet-phase efforts for the next comprehensive campaign.

Alumni Association highlights

- » Participated in 15 of 18 Maroon and Gold dinners hosted by Admissions to recruit prospective students.
- » Participated in most of more than 150 events hosted by Alumni Relations for CMU alumni and friends.
- » Awarded 2025 Alumni Gold and Charles L. and Mary Fisher scholarships.
- » Served as commencement ambassadors, checking students in, straightening their caps and tassels, firing them up to walk across the stage, and handing out CMU flags as the new alumni left the arena.
- » Reviewed and selected 10 Within 10 award honorees and National Alumni Award winners.
- » Supported the growth and success of several Alumni Association affinity chapters.
- » Wrote postcards to welcome 2,000 admitted students to the CMU Chippewa family.





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