

# President's Report to the Board of Trustees



**February 16, 2017**

Welcome Chair Weideman, trustees, faculty, staff, students and community members.

I especially want to welcome Dr. Michael Sandler, who, along with Joseph Anderson Jr., was appointed to the board at the end of January by Gov. Snyder. We appreciate your commitment to Central Michigan University and your dedication to students. We look forward to working with you.

We meet today with renewed realization that our teaching must go beyond chemistry or psychology or engineering or entrepreneurship. One week ago today, we launched an inquiry into an anti-Semitic Valentine card created during a student organization event.

While the individual who made the card was not enrolled here, the point remains: something happened here at CMU that caused pain across our campus, community, state and nation. Ignorance is no excuse. Lack of intent is no excuse.

In that instant, we were reminded that education must teach us how to be beacons of peace, respect, inclusivity and civility. It must teach us how to be role models of integrity, dignity and leadership.

While we will never be immune to the ugliness that is far too common today, we must find expanded opportunities to teach ... and share the responsibility for doing so.

Chair Weideman, trustees, students, faculty and staff, we have work to do.

I want to thank the many individuals who investigated, coached, communicated and led through last week's ordeal. Thursday's inquiry was finished Friday. Students were counseled. Educational programming was planned. Our communications reached worldwide. Faculty members issued a statement against hate and intolerance.

Most inspiring of all: student leaders came together Friday to create a video that shows solidarity in who we really are. In them, we truly can embrace our future.

I also want to mention that one week ago, we announced the outcome of the Federal Communications Commission's broadband spectrum auction as it pertains to CMU. We issued our news release after the FCC lifted the anti-collusion ban that for the past year has restricted broadcast station owners across the country from making any comments.

Through the auction, we will receive \$14 million for our Flint station, which we purchased for \$1 million in 2009 from the University of Michigan.

Board members will remember that when we discussed possible participation in the auction, one of the deciding factors was the fact that nearly all Flint station viewers — 99 percent — live in areas also served by other public broadcasting stations.

Know that CMU also will encourage cable and satellite companies serving the region to continue to carry CMU programming.

CMU Public Broadcasting will continue to operate its eight radio stations and four TV stations across central and northern Michigan. Our 50-year commitment to public broadcasting remains strong.

The rest of my remarks this morning will focus on four key endeavors for this spring:

**The first endeavor is budget planning**, as we grapple with a current shortfall of \$14 million. Efforts to make base-budget cuts are real ... and difficult.

They also push us to identify, protect and invest in priority programs and services.

These will be academic programs in high demand by students and employers. They will be programs in existence, and others — both on campus and online — that are in development.

The priorities will include student recruitment and services that help them succeed. They also include our capital campaign, which is a fiscal necessity as we continue our 125-year history of graduating students prepared to fill critical needs of the communities we serve.

**Enrollment management is the second endeavor.** A new report from the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education captures the decline in U.S. high school seniors. It shows:

- smaller classes each year through 2023;
- the greatest decline this year;
- the Midwest being the hardest hit; and
- Michigan and New Hampshire having the largest decrease.

CMU's freshman class this past fall defied the odds and was almost 30 students larger than the previous year. Transfers, however, were down more than 200, mirroring precipitous declines at nearly all Michigan community colleges each of the past few years.

Another challenge will be in international students, given the uncertainty of rulings being pursued in Washington. While our international student enrollment topped 1,200 this past fall and represents about \$17 million in revenue, we anticipate those numbers will drop.

The bottom line is this: Recruitment is a forever campaign. The competition is intense. All of us — admissions and marketing teams, faculty, and staff — have combined forces in recent years to keep enrollment relatively high. And now, we will redouble our efforts.

**Strategic planning is the third endeavor.** Provost Michael Gealt and Academic Senate Chair Melinda Kreth are leading the way, joined by Trustee Rich Studley and 10 faculty, staff and students. They are circulating a first draft of the plan, which includes three *imperatives* — so named because they must be achieved.

The imperatives focus on:

- ensuring student success;
- promoting scholarship; and
- developing and strengthening community and corporate partnerships.

Trustees, you can expect to review the new plan at your April meeting. We look forward to your input and your wisdom as we finalize our strategic direction.

**Equity and inclusion are the fourth endeavor.** Our ad hoc equity and inclusion recommendation team is being co-chaired by Dr. René Shingles, professor and program director in the School of Rehabilitation and Medical Sciences, and Shaun Holtgreive, executive director of student affairs. I will announce the faculty, staff and students who will complete the team early next week.

This team will review our assessment report and survey data from the past few years, related services, current and future needs, budget, and the alignment of resources.

It will evaluate programs, initiatives and funding, and how we're structured, and then develop recommendations. Campus leaders, in turn, will use their insights to inform our collective path forward.

Those four endeavors — budget planning, enrollment management, strategic planning, and equity and inclusion — will shape Central Michigan University for years to come.

Before wrapping up, I will recognize a dynamic young man with whom I had the privilege of spending some time recently in a rather unlikely place.

Ben Moxon often spends his evenings in the not-so-auspicious basement of Carlin Alumni House. He calls up to 250 alumni a night, asking for donations to help our students.

Ben, a senior from St. Clair Shores majoring in marketing and logistics, is one of more than 1,500 students who have made these calls during the past 19 years. In total, they've raised nearly \$9.5 million.

Ben taught me how to make calls, and it was pretty cool when I secured \$100.

But Ben? *He's the boss.* He's secured more than \$96,000 in pledges and gifts — the fourth-highest amount ever, and he's not done yet! He's seen projects come to life and knows he's a part of them, including the Biosciences Building, Grawn renovation and scholarships.

Ben, congratulations. You are an outstanding Chippewa. Thank you for all that you do.

Chair Weideman, that concludes my report.