

President's Report to the Board of Trustees



April 27, 2017

Thank you, Vice Chair Keith. And good morning, trustees, faculty, staff, students, community members and guests.

If you walk around the Bovee University Center or out on campus today, you'll no doubt notice an extra level of excitement among our students. Some are wrapping up a semester and heading into exams. And more than 3,100 students are nine days away from commencement and the next stage in their lives.

Before we send them out into the world a week from Saturday, I will remind our graduates that during their time here at CMU, they have been armed with the knowledge, tools and perspectives to think beyond the intellectual, emotional and yes, beyond the political limitations of our time.

They have been armed to encourage and embrace change and learn from their mistakes. They are armed to improve life for others. And they are armed with the tenacity, ability to think critically, the skills of influence, and the inherent values of hard work, dedication and inclusivity.

Next week's graduates will include our first class of physicians.

Yes, CMU's first class of medical doctors, all of whom have earned coveted residency placements. Dr. Sandler can attest that our 100 percent placement rate is quite the feat, as there are hundreds more med school graduates than there are residencies.

This accomplishment says much about Central Michigan University, our medical curriculum, our mission to provide care in rural and medically underserved communities, and the 62 pioneering members of this first class.

Also among this year's graduates is CMU's 10th class of engineering students. They include Katherine Kolar, an electrical engineering major from Brighton who did an internship in Japan after her sophomore year and a second internship last summer at General Motors.

Proving the power of a degree and of a hands-on education from CMU, Katherine was offered a job at GM when her internship ended.

She returned to campus last fall, focused on accelerating her skills and being fully prepared when she begins her job at General Motors on May 15. She'll start by working on propulsion in electric and hybrid vehicles.

Our engineering program, just like our College of Medicine, was created to fulfill great need across the state and nation — just as we were founded 125 years ago to prepare students to become teachers.

Yes, we have garnered a few headlines recently with our 4 percent operating budget alignment of expenses to revenue. This 4 percent budget alignment is for two fiscal years, 2017 and 2018. And yes, we're helping some members of our campus community navigate the evolution of higher education in the face of demographic challenges and student, parent and employer demands.

Yet, we will have a balanced budget, and CMU will remain a strong, major, national university, with progress that continues at a steady pace.

Besides the graduation of our first class of physicians and 10th class of engineers, CMU this summer will complete the modernization of Grawn Hall, our grand, elder statesman of academic facilities. Grawn is home to the College of Business Administration, which now boasts more student majors than any of our six other colleges.

As you heard during committee meetings yesterday, planning work also is continuing on our new Center for Integrated Health Studies. This \$26 million facility will be 75 percent funded by the State of Michigan. Located near the colleges of Health Professions and Medicine, it will expand our health professions corridor and increase our graduates in high-demand health care careers.

Likewise, we will invest more than \$1.5 million this summer in labs and equipment to enhance students' educational experiences. We also will welcome more than 40 new faculty members later this summer and fall to fill critical vacant positions.

All of those signs of progress document CMU's long-term fiscal stability, our focus on student success and our commitment to academic excellence in high-quality, high-demand fields.

In one other advancement, I'll report that several of us at CMU are actively engaged in expanding our partnership with Quicken Loans and the related 100-plus Dan Gilbert-owned and controlled companies. We already place more than 70 interns with Quicken Loans each summer and several hundred more alumni are employed at Quicken companies.

I expect we'll see further developments in our relationship later this year. This effort is thanks in great part to John Fikany, a proud CMU alum who is an extraordinary, accomplished leader and serves as vice president of strategy and development for Quicken Loans.

I'll wrap up today with a few quick stories.

First: While in New York City this past Saturday morning — on a drizzly, overcast day — I was carrying a maroon umbrella with our trademark action C. Sure enough, it didn't take long before I heard a familiar and enthusiastic "Fire Up Chips." Who says New Yorkers aren't friendly?

Next, it's noteworthy that 11 IRS special agents from across the state descended on campus two weeks ago for a clandestine operation. They were here to help students in a forensic accounting class conduct a criminal investigation into a mock fraud case.

And now, I'd like to recognize Ms. Morgan Hummon. Morgan is a master's student slated to graduate in May, who is working as a graduate research assistant for the Great Lakes Institute for Sustainable Systems and the Facilities Management department.

In July 2016, Morgan was registered to participate in the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System – or STARS. STARS is a tool to help colleges and universities track and measure their sustainability performance. STARS is a transparent, self-reporting framework for the more than 800 registered colleges and universities around the world to help gauge our progress toward sustainability. STARS was developed by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education in an effort to empower higher education to lead the sustainability transformation.

As the STARS liaison, Morgan has reached out across all areas of the university to gather and then enter information about Central Michigan University. Thank you Morgan, for your efforts on behalf of CMU!

Finally, I'll share a bit about triplet valedictorians from Bath Township.

Provost Gealt and I had the privilege last week of meeting Katelyn, Cole and Case Trevino. They'll all be Central Michigan University freshmen in the fall, joining older sister and current CMU junior, Kwyn, who also was valedictorian of her high school class. Their parents clearly raise terrific kids, although it's disappointing that the triplets are the last ones!

There's more to this story, however. We'll also have a chance soon to meet another set of triplets — identical triplets — from a community southwest of Chicago. These incoming freshmen and their family had no connection at all to CMU, but fell in love with the campus when they came for a visit.

Vice Chair Keith, that concludes my report.