

President's Report to the Board of Trustees



June 24, 2014

Good morning. Welcome trustees, and welcome audience members.

As CMU prepares to launch fiscal year 2015 on July 1, we today will address the annual operating budget. Proposed at nearly \$462 million, this is a significant matter.

For our students and for Michigan taxpayers, all of us at CMU have tremendous responsibility for every dime we spend.

This is why the Board adopted a modest tuition increase during our last meeting in April. It's why board members sent the strong message that we believe in keeping a CMU education as affordable as possible for students and families. We've held firm for years, maintaining CMU's place with the lowest cumulative tuition increase, now over the last four years.

It's because of accessibility that today's budget cements an almost \$7 million increased investment in financial aid. This move is 100 percent about students, about families, and about doing everything we can to help students graduate, in timely fashion, with debt that is contained as much as possible.

That's a priority. In fact, it's priority 1 (student success) *and* priority 5 (infrastructure stewardship) in CMU's strategic plan.

This morning, I would like to recognize two of our deans.

Dr. Ernest Yoder, founding dean of the College of Medicine, announced his resignation Friday, after four years leading the creation of America's 137th medical school.

Since starting at CMU in 2010, Ernie and his leadership team have built an innovative curriculum designed to prepare generalist physicians who will serve the patients and families of rural and medically underserved urban areas.

They have built relationships with partner hospitals. They have achieved critical accreditation milestones. And they have seated the college's first two classes, with 168 exceptional individuals who share a great collective heart for the individuals and families they someday will serve.

Ernie played a critical role in the history of the college, and in the history of CMU. We wish him the best.

I also want to recognize Dr. Salma Ghanem, who has been dean of the College of Communications and Fine Arts for the past five years.

Salma is leaving to become dean of the College of Communication at DePaul University, a role she begins Aug. 4 and a move that takes her closer to her family and grandchildren.

Here at CMU, she helped develop an online program in social media, and oversaw programs in art and design, broadcasting, communications, music, journalism and public relations. She's a spirited leader and devoted life-long learner, as proven by her stage debut last semester in the musical, *Carousel*.

Salma, we wish you, too, all the best as you continue your vibrant career.

A few other highlights:

The board this morning will be asked to renew its agreement with the Central Michigan University Research Corp. The CMURC is a separate entity that works closely with CMU, with the community and region, and with business leaders and entrepreneurs to create a robust economic environment.

Under the leadership and vision of Erin O'Brien, its president, the CMURC is making great strides. She and her team in the last calendar year helped create and launch 27 new companies and create 62 new jobs right here in this region.

Importantly, the CMURC team is fueling an energized, innovative spirit on campus and in our community. Erin and her team are showing us how to be entrepreneurs ... how to excel in a world that moves swiftly, that's built on an ever-expanding web of relationships, and that in many ways is America's future as it is our future here in middle Michigan.

The organization's impact reaches from angel investors, serial entrepreneurs and developers, to CMU faculty and students.

It's through our support and collaboration with the CMURC that we uphold strategic priority No. 4 — community partnerships.

In other news, I hope all of you take a moment today to walk past what used to be Washington Court Apartments. Demolition is well underway as we prepare for the construction of our new Biosciences Building ... the largest construction project ever in the history of CMU.

This \$95 million state-of-the-art facility will be built with a combination of state appropriations, bonds, reserves and fundraising.

With high-tech lab and learning spaces, the Biosciences Building says much about Central Michigan University and its place on Michigan's higher education landscape.

I close today with a note about CMU in metro Detroit.

Last Wednesday, along with Trustee Tricia Keith, we hosted 150 guests in our new downtown Detroit location. On what began as a rainy, gray day, the sun came out just before we welcomed alumni, business leaders, and political and community leaders.

They gathered in a space branded in bold maroon and gold. And they couldn't help but catch our spirit, both through large photos of the campus and people of CMU and through a 6-foot, lighted action C on the wall.

I've attended three events in our Detroit office, and I have to say: there is remarkable agreement that CMU is exactly where it belongs: on Woodward Avenue, across from Campus Martius.

There is a natural fit there, a sense of community, a belief in great potential of Detroit and the continued potential and development of CMU.

With that, I conclude today's remarks.