

President's Report to the Board of Trustees



September 18, 2014

Good morning. Welcome trustees, and welcome audience members to the 122nd academic year at Central Michigan University.

We meet today to continue shaping this great university, mindful of generations to come. At the same time, we weigh our decisions to serve and support all of our 27,069 students — including more than 3,800 freshmen this fall. That last number is almost a 27 percent increase over last year and defies the shrinking classes graduating from Michigan high schools.

CMU also increased its international enrollment by nearly 20 percent and its on-campus minority enrollment by 11 percent.

Folks, these are impressive numbers achieved by an *entire campus* of dedicated individuals.

You'll hear more during my Oct. 8 State of the University address, but know this: We achieved this together — faculty, staff and students — by acting as one Central Michigan University. We achieved this by upholding our academic excellence and our strong sense of community, which combine to set us apart from our peers.

Yesterday morning, we celebrated the groundbreaking of the largest construction project in CMU's history.

And in a follow-up action, the trustees this morning will be asked during the Finance and Facilities Committee report to vote on \$49.5 million in general revenue bonds for the Biosciences Building and other projects. This funding will combine with private donations, internal reserves and \$30 million from the Michigan Legislature. The result will be a building critical to the biosciences programs that serve more than 7,500 students a year.

During the same committee report, trustees will consider a College of Medicine Phase II building at St. Mary's of Michigan in Saginaw. This building is part of the plan for our third- and fourth-year students as they move into their clinical rotations and become fully immersed in the world they soon will serve as physicians.

Our second class of 104 CMED students began in August, reminding us again of the tremendous interest tomorrow's doctors have in the college's unique mission. They chose CMU because they are committed to serving rural and medically underserved communities. In fact, we attracted 3,007 applicants for those 104 seats.

Applications for the *third* class are due Nov. 30, and we're already 350 above last year's total. That's 3,357 so far for 104 seats, with two more months to go.

These students are determined to serve not necessarily where they will achieve the largest personal income. Rather they are choosing CMU to serve residents and families who most desperately need their care and expertise.

We're like that at CMU. Community matters deeply. Community has been the reason we exist from the early days in 1892, when we opened our doors to fill a great, unmet need for qualified teachers.

It's simply — yet indelibly — who we are. Our friends and partners in the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe tell us that when we uphold community ... when we take care of each other and those around us ... we uphold their culture as well.

Before I move to recognitions, I would like to spend a couple of minutes talking about our strategic plan. Near the end of today's meeting, we will look briefly at metrics that show our progress during this past year as well as reviewing the priorities and corresponding measures for this year.

Thanks to focused, collaborative efforts, you will see that we've made progress. In just one year, CMU's six-year graduation rate climbed from 57.7 percent to 59.5 percent.

Staff agreement that CMU is a good place to work has increased from 84 to 88 percent, a number that says much about how we all treat each other ... and how we treat students.

In 2013, 69 percent of our staff said health and wellness was perceived to be a key part of CMU's culture. That number climbed to 74 percent this past year.

That's huge. Because as we all go about the daily priority of creating extraordinary educational experiences, we need to take care of ourselves, also.

It's why we're setting records through our new wellness program by wearing Max fitness devices to track our steps. It's why we're tracking our workouts, and our food intake ... It's why we're reminding ourselves to stretch, and drink lots of water, and get more sleep ...

Nearly 70 percent of fixed-term faculty, medical faculty and staff — those who are members of CMU's self-insured health plan — are participating. Together, they and their spouses or other eligible individuals have walked ... now get this: ... 574,029,162 registered steps since July 1. That's almost 230,000 miles.

Those numbers are important in a big way. Because the lifestyles they represent fuel our energy, our ability to think, and our happiness ... at work *and at home*.

You know, a strategic plan lets us avoid obstacles by keeping our attention on the goals and initiatives that matter most.

In the words of Henry Ford, “Obstacles are those *frightful* things you see when you take your eyes off your goal.”

Armed with our strategic plan, it appears we’re making a habit of avoiding the frightful and instead are pursuing the important and the great.

And now, for what is one of my favorite parts of these reports, let’s do a couple of recognitions.

I would like to welcome to today’s meeting **Dr. Adrienne Wiley**, professor of piano and pedagogy. Dr. Wiley recently received the Touchstone Award from Michigan Youth Arts. Touchstone awardees represent the best teachers and advocates in art education who endow Michigan’s children with a lifelong capacity for innovation. Dr. Wiley was one of two nominees by the Michigan Music Teachers Association, and winning this award also results in a nomination to serve as Michigan Teacher of the Year. Congratulations, Dr. Wiley. Thank you for being here today and for all that you do to inspire our youth in the arts.

Also joining us today are **Dean Thomas Moore; Kari Chrenka**, Libraries’ Graphic Designer; and **Juwan Holley**, Library Student Staff Member. Because of the creativity and excellence of Kari and Juwan, with a few others, the CMU Libraries were awarded two “Best of Show” marketing awards from the American Library Association. The first, for a video starring Juwan promoting the Libraries’ “QR Code Project,” won in the category of Services and Resources. The second, in the Advocacy category, won for print materials promoting the Clarke Historical Library’s digital newspaper project under the heading “Chronicling America: Michigan Newspapers Published between 1836-1922.” Nearly 345 entries in print and electronic formats were submitted from more than 110 institutions including public, academic, school, state and special libraries. Entries were judged on the quality of content, format, design, creativity and professionalism. The winning entries were displayed at the 2014 ALA annual conference. Congratulations on receiving this honor.

Finally, Central Michigan University has been chosen for inclusion in The Princeton Review’s Guide to 332 Green Colleges: 2014 Edition. In collaboration with the Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council, the fifth annual edition salutes the most environmentally responsible “green colleges.” CMU is one of 330 schools profiled in the United States and two in Canada that demonstrate exemplary commitments to sustainability in their academics, campus infrastructure, activities and career preparation. This is the second consecutive year CMU has been included in the guide. It is the result of the combined efforts by many people on campus, including:

- **Tom Rohrer**, chair of the Campus Sustainability Advisory Committee, which is the primary advocacy group for sustainability on campus (who is currently traveling out of the country)
- From Facilities Management—Associate Vice President **Steve Lawrence; Mike Walton**, director of Energy and Utilities; and **Jay Kahn**, who coordinates our green cleaning, waste management, recycling and composting programs.

- Members of the Campus Sustainability Advisory Committee, including **John Fisher** representing Residences and Auxiliary Services
- **Mariah Urueta**, Student Government Association vice president and **Krista Testolin**, Chair of the SGA sustainability committee
- Dean **Pam Gates**, for her support of sustainability efforts.