

President's Report to the Board of Trustees



December 5, 2013

Good morning, trustees, and those of you in attendance from the university community.

Thank you for taking time from your active lives and careers to help guide CMU in the noble effort of educating students and preparing tomorrow's leaders.

As we look toward the second semester of the academic year, I'll report on a half dozen initiatives and achievements. Each exemplifies the application of our strategic plan as we work to shape the Central Michigan University of the future.

First: We recently announced a **\$6 million increase in financial aid**. These funds were recommended by the Enrollment and Student Services division after the preparation of an extensive financial aid plan. It was vetted through the Budget Priorities Committee and Council of Deans.

The added investment will reward about 800 more high-achieving incoming freshmen than our previous \$55 million allowed.

For the first time, CMU merit scholars will include students with GPAs between 3.0 and 3.49. Previously, these merit scholarships were available only to those with GPAs of 3.5 or above.

By encouraging more students in the A to B range, we will increase the academic profile of our total student body.

This initiative supports Strategic Priority 1 — which focuses on student success — and Strategic Priority 5 — which calls for us to align our resources with CMU's mission and vision.

Indeed, giving a greater number of students and families greater access to higher education lies at the heart of all we do.

Second: CMU's undergraduate neuroscience program has been named No. 1 in the nation. That's No. 1, outperforming the likes of the University of Michigan and Michigan State.

What's more, CMU students in the last five years have outshone their peers from those institutions to win nine of 10 awards for Michigan's outstanding undergraduate neuroscientists.

The No. 1 ranking and the student awards are from the national Society for Neuroscience. You'll be interested to note that Gary Dunbar, director of CMU's neuroscience program, and his research team — including students — currently are studying ways to reduce cognitive deficits after a stroke.

CMU's neurosciences program upholds Strategic Priority 1 — student success — and Priority 2 — promoting excellence in research and creative activities.

Third: Today we will ask the board to approve a \$25 million **capital project request** that we submitted to the state Legislature last month, which seeks funding for the CMU Center for Integrative Health Studies.

This center was identified through our campus master planning process. It is designed to address significant, unmet demand among prospective students, employers and Michigan residents and families seeking greater availability of quality health care.

The center would allow the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow College of Health Professions to expand its programs in physical therapy, physician assistant, speech-language pathology and audiology.

Our students in these programs are known for 100 percent first-time pass rates on national certification exams and typically enjoy 100 percent job placement.

Unfortunately, they've been at capacity for several years because of spatial limitations. The new center would address that.

It also would allow collaboration with other colleges for programs in biomedical engineering (with the College of Science and Technology) and Health Information Management (with the College of Business Administration).

Other programs to be reviewed for possible implementation through the center include clinical laboratory sciences, occupational therapy and respiratory therapy.

You'll see the CMU Center for Integrative Health Studies on your consent agenda today, upholding all five of our Strategic Priorities:

- *student success,*
- *research and creative activity,*
- *quality faculty and staff,*
- *community partnerships, and*
- *infrastructure stewardship.*

Fourth: In a continuation of our master planning efforts, we began work last month on a **campus identity project**.

This initiative invites students, faculty, staff and community partners to provide input regarding the physical identity and features of CMU's campus.

It's designed to enhance the outdoor environment, appearance and usage of campus through:

- signs, maps and other means of directing visitors;

- transportation routes for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians;
- open-space features; and
- a cohesive landscaping plan that would accent the university's best features.

The initiative would be a 10-year project funded primarily by donations. The results would convey academic excellence and leadership and allow us to forge an even greater sense of community.

As Provost Michael Gealt has said, "By expanding our visually interesting, dynamic spaces, we'll continue to fuel greater achievement, creativity and pride."

Just like the Center for Integrative Health Studies, the campus identity project upholds all five Strategic Priorities.

Fifth: A pilot dual enrollment program between CMU and Shiawassee Regional Educational Service District is allowing 49 students this fall to earn both high school and college credit.

Their CMU psychology class gives them a taste of university life, will apply toward a degree and comes at no cost to them or their families.

This initiative upholds Priority 1 — student success — and Priority 4 — community partnerships.

And **sixth**: CMU has announced **plans to become one of nearly 800 tobacco-free colleges and universities across America**. This policy upholds our commitment to ensuring a healthy environment for learning, living and working.

Yes, I've had a few complaints, although the majority of our constituents who've responded to me and to the university endorse the move.

Yes, I've been asked if we'd reconsider our decision. My answer is certain: going tobacco-free is about our health, something each of us should protect and preserve ... because without your health — and I know this from personal experience — you have nothing.

Going tobacco-free is, quite simply, the right thing to do ... especially if we're serious about Strategic Priority 4, which calls on us to support and sustain healthy environments as part of our community partnerships.

The strategic plan and priorities were created during the course of two years, with widespread input from faculty, staff, students and community partners. They're our roadmap. It is our future.

They advance our strengths and the unique values that are the CMU brand.

They push us toward ever-greater excellence and ever-greater service to students and the state of Michigan and our country.

These six initiatives, launched or achieved this fall, show how actively the campus community is pursuing the future.

Before we move to the agenda, let's recognize one of our outstanding students:

The National Association of Broadcasters Education Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation honored Central Michigan University broadcast and cinematic arts student **Mark Hurrish** with first place in the radio category for the 2013 Freedom of Speech Public Service Announcement contest.

The Oxford senior was recognized for the award at the Society of Professional Journalists annual conference in Anaheim, Calif., with School of Broadcast and Cinematic Arts faculty member Heather Polinsky. Along with the award, Hurrish received a \$3,000 scholarship, and his 30-second spot was aired during National Freedom of Speech Week in October.

Chair Fannon, that concludes my report.