

President's Report to the Board of Trustees



September 17, 2015

Good morning, Trustees and audience members. Thank you for being here today, as part of Central Michigan University's 123rd year.

It is no small feat to have served this state, its residents, its communities and its employers for more than a century. To have grown from 31 students to 27,000 and from six students in our first graduating class to more than 6,000 graduates this year.

To have grown from a teachers' college, to a major national university graduating excellent teachers, but also preparing students who go into the world as leaders in:

- Neuroscience
- Logistics
- Medicine
- Biology
- Information Technology
- Accounting
- Sales
- Entrepreneurship
- Fashion Merchandising and Design
- Broadcasting
- Public Relations
- Dietetics
- Physical Therapy ... and
- Speech-Language Pathology, to name just a few.

At CMU, we graduate leaders committed to the communities they serve, as well as to their alma mater.

Last week, René Shingles, who directs our athletic training program and chairs our School of Rehabilitation and Medical Sciences, received an email from one of our alums.

Phillip Adler earned his degrees from CMU in 1998 and worked as an athletic trainer with the Chippewa football team for seven years. Today, he is manager of the sports medicine program for Spectrum Health Medical Group/Spectrum Health in Grand Rapids.

Phillip was touching base, letting us know they had hired CMU alum Alyssa Baker as a clinical athletic trainer and that she would be forging new ground with Spectrum's orthopedic trauma team.

Phillip then listed **seven** other alums, including:

- Megan Sawasky, who's supporting hand and sports orthopedic surgery;
- Crystal Miller, who is "crushing outreach" to the communities she serves; and
- Megan Davis, who soon will transition into a lead role with an orthopedic surgeon.

This is what you'd expect from the university that had the nation's first accredited sports medicine and athletic training major.

It's a story that reflects who we are at CMU. It captures our academic excellence, career placement and impact on the world. It also shows the pride and connectivity among our faculty, staff, students and alumni.

Today, you will receive our 2014-15 report on strategic priorities and year-end highlights, which summarize the work of 27,000 students and 2,700 faculty and staff.

You'll learn about our freshman to sophomore retention rate, which climbed from 76 percent a year ago to 78 percent this fall.

You'll see our international enrollment climbed 46 percent, and that the number of students studying abroad increased 13 percent.

The reports note our designation by Ford Motor Co. as one of 20 premier recruitment schools in the world for engineering.

They document the creation of new academic programs, including a Ph.D. in Earth and Ecosystem Science, an M.S. in Engineering and an M.S. in Applied Statistics and Analytics.

They cite CMU's exceptional residence hall life, which students rate higher than national averages.

They record the fact that CMU athletics remains one of just 14 colleges and universities in the nation without a major NCAA violation.

You'll learn that we've gone six years with a flat utility budget, thanks to smart management and sustainability efforts.

In short, these reports capture the inner workings of one of the nation's leading universities — a university that just last week, once again, was ranked among the top 200 of America's more than 720 four-year public institutions.

Before we get to our agenda, I'd like to share a couple of updates.

In April, you asked me to charge a committee to explore online academic programs.

The 11-person committee includes seven faculty members. Among the faculty members are four department chairs and the chair of the Academic Senate, Dr. Melinda Kreth. The four others include the committee chair, Dean Dale-Elizabeth Pehrsson and Bill Kanine, chair of the CMU Board of Trustees.

The committee has done significant and important work, exploring trends, financials, best practices, challenges and opportunities.

This month, the committee is gathering faculty and student input as part of their due diligence.

Next month, the members begin writing their report, due to you in December.

I applaud their work and expect it will lead to the creation of several task forces that will pursue implementation of an online strategy that's right for Central Michigan University.

I'd also like to note our search for a vice president for advancement. The search committee has had its first meeting and is working with Witt/Kieffer, the advancement world's pre-eminent search firm.

Top-level advancement positions are competitive, with not nearly enough candidates to meet demand. Witt/Kieffer has made it clear that when we find someone we like, we will need to move swiftly, as the good candidates will be on the radar of multiple universities.

Witt/Kieffer assures us CMU is a highly attractive university. Our academic offerings are strong. Our collective stamp on the world expands continuously. Our alumni base is active and passionate.

Witt/Kieffer leaders say our culture — that strong sense of community, with a dedication to academic excellence and to each other — will be highly attractive to potential candidates. It's something many VP candidates desire, but few universities achieve.

We also will be attractive because we're ready to take a giant leap forward in advancement. The person we hire will have an extraordinary opportunity to lay the foundation for CMU fundraising not only in the short term, but for the next decades to come.

Chair Kanine, that concludes my report.