

President's Report to the Board of Trustees



February 14, 2013

Good morning.

Thank you, Chairman Fannon. I welcome the trustees and all of our guests to this first meeting of 2013. Happy Valentine's Day.

Our two new trustees, Tricia Keith and Bill Weideman, send their regards. While they could not be here today, both joined us yesterday and are immersing themselves in the world of CMU.

Bill and Tricia join us at a time when CMU's future is being forged. They join us as the university continues its transition into an exciting and bright future.

Last week, as part of facilities master planning, more than 600 faculty, staff, students, alumni, city leaders and members of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe engaged in planning charettes and shared their ideas, as we plan our campus for the future.

One faculty member came back twice, returning with 35 students to see history in action.

Participants placed dots on maps as tall as they were, marking indoor and outdoor spaces that:

- work well,
- serve our campus well,
- are beautiful

... or not.

They identified spaces where they learn effectively, live well, and walk and drive easily. Or not.

They described CMU in regions, from our iconic north campus, to the academic space in the center, and the residential and athletic space on our southernmost reaches.

Their input was captured by national planning experts who will return the week of Feb. 25.

At that time, we'll all be able to stop by the University Center to watch them as they begin to design the CMU of tomorrow.

They'll envision and prioritize projects to make our campus an even greater learning community ... to advance our strategic plan ... and most importantly, to accelerate learning and enhance the success of our students.

Today, as we receive updates on the biosciences building and College of Medicine, our facilities planning is helping to shape the next century. The national experts leading this effort call it the most extensive planning process they've ever seen ... anywhere.

It's extensive because of several key efforts. Academic prioritization and strategic planning that are shaping our academic future. Shared governance and communication moves forward with an official report later this semester.

Enrollment management and technology planning are well under way.

All are interwoven and will cement CMU's role in the new world of higher education.

We're building the next phase of CMU's legacy. Right here. Today. This year.

I'd like to make a few comments about academic achievement, but before I do that, I want to address an issue that's been weighing heavily on all of us: campus safety.

In mid January, an incident here changed the life of one strong, brave young woman. Our hearts, our prayers and our support have been with her and her family ever since.

She is on her way to reclaiming her life, and she is determined to graduate as planned.

All of us were touched by her abduction, her escape, and by the heroic moves of children whose actions saved her life.

Our families ask if our campus is safe, and I want to address that question again.

None of us lives in a vacuum. We have no guarantees. We cannot stop those who are determined to harm others.

That said, I assure you: we do indeed have one of the most safe campuses in the state.

We have a first class, professional police department at CMU — they are one of five local police agencies.

One of our faculty members, Steve Thompson, is a global leader in sexual assault and aggression. Through the years, he has taught tens of thousands of CMU students, including all freshmen during orientation.

Our Safe Rides program last year provided more than 15,000 free nighttime escorts across campus. After January's incident, we doubled the number of cars available and ridership has increased.

We have more than 500 security cameras on campus. "Blue lights" provide direct access to central dispatch. A team of students and staff assesses our massive lighting grid each year.

After January's crisis, we launched a campaign urging more students, faculty and staff to "opt in" to our Central Alert notification system. And more than 3,000 have done so.

I assure you: We monitor safety daily, and we work to educate our community on an ongoing basis. Safety is a top priority for all of us.

Now, about that academic achievement. CMU recently earned three national rankings:

1. CMU's online graduate business program has been ranked 6th in the nation, according to US News and World Report.
2. CMU has been cited as Military Friendly for 6th year in a row.
3. CMU's Alternative Breaks volunteer program is ranked among the nation's top 5. That's among the hundreds that exist nationally.

That type of achievement is possible only through the dedication of our faculty, students and staff.

Let's take a moment to recognize several individuals:

First, I would like to welcome to the meeting Dr. Matthew Johnson, an assistant professor in the Department of Educational Leadership.

Dr. Johnson was recently awarded the 2013 Jon C. Dalton Institute on College Student Values Dissertation of the Year Award for his research on civic engagement. Dr. Johnson's research explores the concept of how to best structure various programs, co-curricular experiences, and courses to strengthen college students' civic identity and focuses on the intersections of leadership, diversity, and civic engagement among college students. The Dalton Institute, in its 23rd year, focuses on the development of college students' values and character. Congratulations, Matt.

While she could not attend this morning's meeting (due to class), I would like to recognize SGA Vice President Michelle VanHala, who several of you met yesterday afternoon. I look forward to meeting with and working with Michelle—and Justin—during the rest of their 2012-2013 terms.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and congratulate Andrew Dost, a former CMU Centralis scholar, Honors student, and 2005 Journalism graduate. Andrew has had a pretty good year. ...He is a member of the band Fun., who was nominated for six Grammy Awards Sunday evening—and went home with two, including prestigious Best New Artist and Song of the Year awards.

Andrew followed in his parents' footsteps in choosing to attend CMU. Cheryl (Kozan) Dost, '78 and Mark Dost, '79 both received elementary education degrees and recently retired after teaching throughout the Thumb and northern Michigan.

Chair Fannon, that concludes my report.