

# President's Report to the Board of Trustees



**February 18, 2016**

Good morning, and welcome.

We met yesterday and come together again today to discuss the initiatives, opportunities and achievements of Central Michigan University — a major, national university.

At the same time, nearly 27,000 students and approximately 2,600 faculty and staff — here on campus, at more than 45 satellite locations and online — pursue the very important quest for knowledge. They are teaching and learning ... doing research ... and serving a multitude of communities.

Everything we discuss today supports their efforts.

This morning, we celebrate CMU being named one of 44 universities nationwide spearheading a project called Re-Imagining the First Year of College. This three-year initiative seeks to increase freshman retention and position students to graduate.

Ultimately, the discoveries we make and the gains we achieve stand to be replicated at 420 member institutions of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

Funded with support from the Gates Foundation and USA Funds Inc., the program will build on the efforts of our Office of Student Success.

Specifically, we will leverage technology to reconceptualize advising and expand relationships with students. We will increase use of active learning pedagogies. And we will fuel student engagement through interdisciplinary courses focused on contemporary, real-world issues.

AASCU's selection of CMU to participate in this program is national recognition of our leadership, our innovation and our unwavering commitment to student success.

As you saw on the cover of my 2015 State of the University report, this is another case where it would be easier to sit back and let others find solutions. But that's not who we are.

We celebrate as well an elevation in our Carnegie Classification.

Central Michigan University is one of just eight doctoral universities to advance from limited research activity to higher research activity in this national ranking.

The Carnegie Classification is the single most comprehensive review of nearly 4,700 U.S. colleges and universities. It is not something for which we apply. Instead, it is unsolicited recognition that distinguishes us among the very best.

In fact, our classification places us among the top 5 percent in America.

This milestone proves our ability to combine teaching with research and creative activities. Importantly, it also recognizes the opportunities CMU students have to do research, be published in peer-reviewed journals, and give presentations at national and international conferences.

Much more rare, these opportunities at CMU are available to both graduate and undergraduate students and as such, reflect a powerful, deep relationship between faculty and students.

This research, which we combine with active community engagement and leadership experiences, provides an extraordinary education for our students.

I also am pleased to report progress with our Online Academic Program Committee. Our conversation yesterday during the Trustees-Faculty Liaison meeting follows conversations across campus the past two months.

Four work groups will be charged and move forward this semester. All 17 members of the original committee, the majority of them faculty, have agreed to participate. They'll be joined by subject matter experts and additional faculty, staff and students.

Together, we will bring our combined intellect to bear on one of the most significant and complex opportunities — and challenges — in higher education today.

The initiatives and achievements I just described:

- a deep dive into the first-year experience;
- a significant elevation in our Carnegie Classification; and
- the pursuit of online strategies that will keep us in front of our competitors

... are three ways in which CMU is solidifying its role in the state and nation, providing ever-greater impact as we approach the year 2020. They're proof of a strong, major, national university that positions students and alumni for excellent careers and to make distinctive contributions to the world.

Before I conclude, I'd like once again to recognize a few individual students, faculty, staff and alumni who represent what it means to be a part of Central Michigan University.

- School of Music alumnus **Thomas Clair** has been named the 2016 Band Teacher of the Year by the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association. Thomas teaches at Kingsley High and Kingsley Middle School in Grand Traverse County and is in his 38th year of teaching. He received both his bachelor's and master's degrees from CMU.

- Our CMU family also takes great pride in the latest accomplishment of former coach and Athletics Director **Herb Deromedi**, the winningest football coach in Mid-American Conference history. Herb has been named to the NCAA College Football Playoff Selection Committee. He is the first member of this committee with MAC ties, and in this role, he'll help rank the top 25 teams and determine football playoff and other bowl game matchups. In the world of college football – this is a very big deal.
- In November, **University Communications** was awarded three CASE V awards, competing against the largest universities from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin. Two of the awards are related to the Put Your Stamp on the World campaign. The third is for the university's faculty/staff e-newsletter, Our CMU. Congratulations to everyone in UComm, led by AVP Sherry Knight, on these awards.
- Senior **Charnae Sanders** from Southfield was recently selected by the YWCA Great Lakes Bay Region I as the Emerging Woman Leader from CMU for the 2016 YWCA Women of Achievement Award. This award honors women between the ages of 18 and 25 who demonstrate emerging leadership skills and, as exhibited through her character, accomplishments and activities, a philosophy of empowering women, and commitment to the community. Congratulations, Charnae.
- I also would like to recognize physics associate professor **Axel Mellinger**, whose panoramic image of the galaxy was used in last week's official announcement of a black hole collision 1.3 billion light-years away. The panorama is a pivotal part of the gallery used to announce confirmation of a theory written by Albert Einstein in 1915. Dr. Mellinger's contribution to one of the greatest astrophysics discoveries of our lifetime took him almost two years to complete and is comprised of more than 3,000 individual frames taken in South Africa, Texas and Michigan. A large print of the full map is on display in the Dow Science Building.
- Finally, I want to recognize Central Michigan Life for being named the 2015 College Newspaper of the Year by the Michigan Press Association. The Life staff took home more than 30 awards, including "Best Editorial" and "Best Single Ad Design." With us today are current CM Life Editor-in-Chief **Malachi Barrett**, Managing Editor **Sydney Smith**, News Editors **Jordyn Hermani** and **Kate Carlson**, staff photographer **Chelsea Grobelny**, and **Dave Clark**, director of student media. Congratulations!

That concludes my report.