

President's Report to the Board of Trustees



April 19, 2018

Thank you, Chair Weideman. Welcome, trustees, faculty, staff, students and community members.

Today, you will approve more than 3,200 degree and certificate recipients for commencement in just more than three weeks. Graduation weekend is always special to me, and over the past eight years we have celebrated more than 51,000 new alumni.

Commencement showcases the power of a transformative education — the culmination of our students' diligent and triumphant work, and proof of what happens when they are surrounded by the support of the excellent CMU faculty and staff.

As I tell our students, and their families and friends each May and each December, CMU graduates are armed with the knowledge, tools and perspectives — the leadership mindset — to think beyond the intellectual, emotional and yes, beyond the political limitations of our time.

That's what it means to attend Central Michigan University, and it is the reason each of us presses forward with determination and passion, with our focus consistently on our students.

Talk about putting your stamp on the world. At commencement, we celebrate our students' stamp ... and our own.

Since we met in February, CMU has weathered one of its most tragic experiences ever. With the eyes of the state, the nation and the world upon us, we ensured the safety of our campus community following a domestic violence situation that left two parents dead in one of our residence halls.

You'll hear more about March 2 and the follow-up efforts in a bit, but I want to take a moment to applaud the efforts of the CMU Police Department, residence life, University Communications, and faculty, staff and students across campus. Together, we made sure no further injuries occurred, with our police department coordinating the efforts of more than 100 law enforcement personnel from across the state.

It was a day we will never forget ... and a day we pray we'll never have to replicate. The team here came together and did well, with commendations coming from across the country.

We've also had some positive news in the past two months.

The College of Medicine's second class had its Match Day on March 16, and once again, for the second year in a row, we had a match rate of nearly 100 percent.

Significantly, 75 percent of our second class will have primary care residencies, and once again, nearly 55 percent have residencies and will remain in Michigan.

The dream is reality.

As I've said periodically during my time as president, it would be easier to sit back and let others find solutions. But that's not who we are at CMU.

While some in our campus community expressed skepticism about CMED, our College of Medicine is fulfilling its mission. We are graduating doctors determined and passionate about meeting the health care needs of residents and families across the state and beyond, especially in rural and medically underserved areas.

Some of you on the board and in attendance today were present when we celebrated the grand opening of the College of Medicine Building in September of 2012. Former trustee and CMED supporter Sid Smith spoke eloquently that evening about the pride with which we currently see CMU diplomas hanging on office walls of physician assistants and physical therapists across the state.

Sid then imagined the day when we would go to our doctors, and so too would their diplomas read "Central Michigan University."

Today, that bold dream — the vision of CMU as a hub of medical education — is reality. The College of Medicine is here, it's real, and it's expanding our long-standing excellence in health care.

So, too, will the bachelor of science in nursing online completion degree further expand our ability to address critical health care needs across the state and nation. Your consideration of this new BSN degree today marks another milestone for CMU. With this program, we will prepare nurses to earn their bachelor's degree, in accordance with a massive national push for nurses with their BSNs.

Health care and CMU. This aspect of our leadership will continue to grow for decades to come.

And now, before I conclude, I would like to recognize some students and a faculty member for their initiative and achievements:

Ian Eickholdt, a senior in mechanical engineering, received the 2017 Rumbaugh Outstanding Student Leader Award by the Society of Automotive Engineers; the first CMU student to receive the award. Ian, from Rochester Hills, Michigan, is also president of CMU's Baja racing team and has been an SAE member since his sophomore year. SAE Baja is a Collegiate Design Series, which requires teams from universities around the world to

engineer, fabricate and compete in the development of a single passenger off-road vehicle. Ian cannot attend today's meeting because his team left yesterday for a Baja Collegiate Design Series Race in Maryland, but I wanted to recognize his award and wish the team luck.

CMU [fashion merchandising and design](#) seniors Alicia Johnson, who is with us today, and Holly Conner, who cannot be with us today, serve as managers in the First Impressions store.

Johnson came to CMU intending to become a teacher. When she learned about First Impressions during orientation, she saw an opportunity to pursue a different path. She began working in the store as a volunteer associate her freshman year and soon switched her major to fashion.

For Holly, working in the store seemed like a good way to get more involved in her major. Conner joined the First Impressions team as a sophomore, working as an associate.

Job-seeking students come into First Impressions for assistance in getting outfitted with free/donated professional attire for interviews. The student managers at First Impressions have helped advise and fit more than a record 600 students this year. Alicia, thank you for your expertise and advice that you provide to CMU students.

I observe in the audience today the individual who started First Impressions, First Lady Elizabeth Ross.

Dr. Daelyn Woolnough, a biology professor and member of CMU's Institute for Great Lakes Research, has researched mussels with students at a number of sites over the years, including the Grand River and the Maumee River basin that connects to Lake Erie. The mission of the research is to help prevent the decline of mussels in the state of Michigan and the great lakes. Mussels are important because they remove contaminants from water as they filter it for food leading to better water quality.

This summer, Dr. Woolnough and her team of students will perform research at the Kalamazoo watershed, a large portion of which was devastated by an oil spill in 2010. Bolstering the project is a three-year, \$499,000 grant from the Kalamazoo River Community Recreational Foundation. CMU, along with the Michigan DNR, also will develop Michigan's first mussel hatchery as part of the project.

Among this summer's student researchers is Megan Malish, from Mount Pleasant, who is pursuing a master's degree in conservation biology. Upon graduation, she plans to continue research on how human activity impacts the environment and share that knowledge with the public.

Joining her on the river will be **Grace Henderson**, a senior from Brighton, majoring in biology and minoring in natural resources. She previously did mussel surveys in the Grand River near Lyons, Michigan, and her own independent project on the Chippewa River. Grace plans to pursue a master's degree in conservation.

Congratulations to you all.

Chair Weideman, that concludes my report.