

President's Report to the Board of Trustees



June 28, 2018

Thank you, Chair Weideman. Good morning, trustees, faculty, staff, students and guests.

Before I begin this morning, I'd like to introduce Vice President A.T. Miller, our first chief diversity officer and new member of the president's Cabinet. A.T. joined us at the end of May, from Cornell University. A.T., welcome!

Let's also take a moment to acknowledge the significant milestone achieved earlier this month when our College of Medicine achieved full accreditation from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education.

When I was appointed president in 2010, opening the College of Medicine and achieving accreditation were the top priorities set for me by the Board of Trustees.

It's been a long journey, a tough journey and a remarkably exciting journey. I congratulate and thank all of the individuals who have played a role in the college during the past eight years, including faculty, staff and students. Your leadership, determination and boundless hard work will deliver untold value to rural and urban medically underserved communities for many decades to come.

The need for physicians is real. And just like in 1892, when there was a need for teachers in our state and CMU was founded, we stepped forward to prepare physicians to serve residents of our state and beyond.

Trustees, I hope all of you have taken time this week to look around campus. For summer is the time when signs of progress are most visible. Just a block west of where we sit this morning, you can see the new foundation of the Center for Integrated Health Studies. This building will further cement Central Michigan University's leadership in the health professions.

Sprinkled elsewhere across campus, you'll see installation underway on what will be 30 new wayfinding signs. These structures reflect our brand and our commitment to helping new students, faculty and staff, as well as visitors and returning alumni, find their way across campus.

To the south, you will see CMU's newest landmark — an impressive 21-foot high, 32-foot wide pedestrian archway — going up between Celani and Thorpe residence halls along Broomfield Road.

These efforts represent ongoing big thinking and ongoing big progress.

During my 2014 State of the University address, I talked about Michigan's shrinking high school senior classes and asked whether we are a university that stops investing ... in fear of the future ... or a university that envisions the future and makes it happen.

We've engaged in dialogue as we've considered that question, and there is widespread agreement that continual progress is vital.

A clear vision is essential. So, too, is the ability to identify opportunities. To choose those that will have the greatest impact. And then to muster the fortitude and accountability to make them happen.

As a top, national university, we always will have a lengthy list of possible uses for every dollar. As I've said many times, we can do anything we want to do ... we just can't do it all.

I'll share my favorite quote, one last time for this board: In the words of President John F. Kennedy, "Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."

I encourage you to always put students first. To be bold. To step forward as one CMU and create the future that makes our students, our university and our state, even greater.

Today this board will set tuition rates, continuing the now nine-year run of adopting the lowest cumulative increases among all 15 public universities in Michigan. This fact highlights our concerted commitment to students and their families.

An important statistic: Had we *not* held the line on behalf of students and families — had we instead raised tuition as much as the state would have allowed the past seven years when it had tuition caps — we would generate \$14 million more in this year's budget.

However, all \$14 million would have come on the backs of students and families.

I am proud that we have done the tough budgeting work necessary to keep costs in line, while continuing to move CMU forward. That's leadership, and I applaud the colleges, academic departments and service units for their diligence in containing costs while making wise, strategic investments.

Student needs have evolved through the years, and you'll hear more about that this morning. Students, parents and taxpayers alike have robust expectations for a university experience.

They expect universities will ensure students have the support and experiences they need to graduate, to land good jobs and to start fulfilling careers. They expect universities will help all students learn to uphold a diverse, global society. They expect our campuses to be safe.

Our responsibility in response, is to ensure the best possible framework for such expectations to be met.

Switching gears, we have a few important recognitions today.

Since we last met, Bob Martin and his team coordinated a spectacular celebration of Central Michigan University's second capital campaign. The event came two years earlier than planned, and the campaign stood that sparkling night in April at nearly \$84 million.

When we began talking about the campaign four or five years ago, some said a \$100 million goal couldn't happen. People wouldn't donate that kind of money.

Bob and his team changed the paradigm for CMU. They showed us that big fundraising goals are *entirely* possible. They've changed the culture of philanthropy here, creating the excitement that makes our alumni and friends give to a degree they'd never imagined.

As the public phase of the campaign continues, Bob, I recognize and thank you and your team for the stamp you are putting on CMU and for the impact that will be felt for generations to come.

I also want to recognize WCMU Public Television, which has won an Emmy for its "Destination Michigan" series from The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Michigan Chapter. The Emmy was received by crew members Steve Smith, Stefanie Mills, Adam Miedema, Chris Ogozaly, Matthew Ozanich, Bob Garner and Ken Kolbe, who are with us this morning. "Destination Michigan," is now in its ninth season and is an original series of WCMU Public Television that showcases the places and people that make Michigan a special place to live. Earlier this year, the series received the Broadcast Excellence Award from the Michigan Association of Broadcasters.

Similarly, WCMU Public Radio News Director Amy Robinson has won the Edward R. Murrow Award from the Radio Television Digital News Association for her feature report on "Bach in the Subways." Robinson competed against journalists from Ohio, Michigan, Indiana and Illinois for this award, which recognizes exceptional work in broadcast and digital journalism. This is the second time that Amy has received this award.

Congratulations to all of you!

Chair Weideman, I have some closing comments that I would like to share at the end of the meeting. This concludes my report for now.

President Ross' concluding remarks at the end of his final meeting with the Board of Trustees:

In my final board meeting as president, I want to thank each of you as trustees, for your leadership and your support of me and Elizabeth and of CMU these past eight years.

Your efforts, and that of the Cabinet members and senior leaders, have forged the collective partnership that has cemented CMU as a major, national university.

Central Michigan University will always have a special place in my and Elizabeth's hearts. We didn't get a chance to attend here, but we feel like this is our university.

I encourage you and all of our students, faculty, staff and alumni to be proud, to be bold and to be confident in CMU as a first-choice university.

Know that we deliver educational experiences in a manner that is unique. That we have a profound impact on lives — that all of us at CMU put *our stamp* on students and alumni — in ways that many universities simply do not.

As I have crossed campus and traveled the nation and globe these past eight years, I have met countless students and countless alumni.

These students and alumni, without fail, cannot wait to tell me about their experiences at CMU. They talk about faculty and staff who took the time to not only teach them, but to guide them, inspire them and help them see their own potential.

They talk about deep relationships and support. They brag about experiences in and out of the classroom. They share stories about how CMU faculty and staff challenged them and helped them grow intellectually and personally. Some of those alumni are sitting around this table today and in the audience today.

When I go to presidents' conferences, we talk about our respective universities, what makes them special and how others perceive us.

Folks, Central Michigan University is an incredible university.

We nurture. We support. We inspire. We create opportunities for each and every student, one-on-one. We open pathways students didn't even know existed. We truly do prepare leaders.

We graduate leaders who are fueled throughout their lives by the encouragement and support of individual faculty and staff and who are fueled by the legacy of alumni before and around them.

Central Michigan University is one of a kind. And I am proud to have been your president.