President's Report to the Board of Trustees

September 22, 2016

Good morning, trustees, cabinet members, faculty, staff, students and visitors. It is with great enthusiasm that we have begun the 2017 academic year.

We had a small, quiet celebration on campus Monday, in the conference room of the powerhouse. Despite its size, the event had magnitude, as the National Weather Service recognized CMU for having collected important weather data the past 100 years.

We replicated a similarly inconspicuous event from 50 years ago, led then by Judson Foust, CMU's sixth president.

It was significant that the National Weather Service was represented by CMU alumnus Brandon Hoving, a meteorologist in Grand Rapids who leads such observation programs … and that Steve Gill, CMU senior energy facility operator, has overseen our data collection for more than 30 years.

It is significant that our work helps national leaders address issues affecting our planet and our lives …

that our students are involved with and learn from such research …

and that we have a new undergraduate major in environmental science.

This one small celebration says much about CMU's role and its impact as a major, national university … and about our 124-year history in higher education.

This fall, CMU once again welcomed more than 26,000 students — on campus, online and at satellite locations across the United States and Canada.

Vice President Johnson shared details yesterday, but I am pleased to report that my challenge to mirror the state's population and have 20 percent of our student body be multicultural by 2020 has been met with the freshman class this year, four years early.

Additionally, we have achieved our best student profile, with our highest mean ACT score ever.

Our residence halls are full, and our new freshman class is slightly larger than last year's, despite another decrease in the number of Michigan high school graduates.

This morning you will hear from our independent auditors, Plante Moran. They will report on their unqualified audit opinion on the university's fiscal year 2016 financial statements. CMU is in a strong financial position; however, the challenges facing our university are real.

The pressures are impacting universities across the state and across the nation.

Consider the powerful, conflicting forces that buffet academe today:

- expanding public expectations for access, affordability, service improvement and quality academic programs;
- various and numerous influential stakeholders, often with conflicting values and interests;
- frequent accountability demands that at times are intrusive to established operations;
- stronger competition, including the expanding for-profit and in-house corporate education sectors;
- institutional financial constraints; and
- resistance to change.

In spite of challenges and headwinds, CMU continues to move forward in a positive manner.

I will present my annual report to the Board later this morning, including the 2016 performance metrics and the 2017 priorities and goals.

We discussed at committee yesterday factors that will impact an amended budget, and university-wide, we will look to curtail costs and reallocate resources in ways necessary to achieve critical priorities, goals and metric performance measures this year.

As CMU advances, we need to continue expanding our reputation and recruit in ways that increase our market share in Michigan, while further growing our reach beyond our state borders.

We must continue to grow and cement our leadership in academic programs and in the educational experiences and support that students find in our classrooms and beyond. These efforts will increase our retention and graduation rates … as well as employment and graduate-school placement for our alumni.

We must continue to embrace the development and delivery of online and hybrid programs, reaching students — including adults — for whom a four- or five-year, on-campus experience isn't realistic.

Such courses also are important for on-campus students who leverage them — especially in their junior and senior years — so they can graduate on time, even while they pursue internships, study abroad experiences, summer jobs and campus leadership roles.

As we heard yesterday in committee, the work this summer and fall of 48 faculty and staff involved in the Online Academic Program Committee will continue our momentum on this front.

I would now like to offer a few recognitions:

Olivia Bolen, a College of Medicine Year 3 student, was elected the student member of the Michigan Academy of Family Physicians at its annual meeting in July. Olivia will be the only student member of this academy that serves the needs of more than 4,200 family physicians in the state of Michigan. She is originally from East Tawas and graduated from Western Michigan University with a Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Sciences. Olivia is doing rotations at one of our hospital partners in Saginaw this morning.

Also during the summer, **Austin Brittain**, a sophomore from Breckenridge — who is with us today — created a 3-D printed prosthetic hand for an 8-year-old Muskegon Heights boy. Austin is a mechanical engineering and technology student who has always had an interest in working with cutting-edge technology. While a freshman here at CMU, Brittain created the hand using technology in our MakerBot Innovation Center and templates from E-nable, an organization that 3-D prints prosthetic hands for those in need. The red, white and blue hand was inspired by the boy's favorite superhero, Captain America, and contained less than $10 worth of plastic. Total expenses for the project were under $100. Well done, Austin.

Physics professor **Matthew Redshaw** received the U.S. Department of Energy's prestigious Early Career Award. This award supports the development of individual research programs of scientists early in their careers. Fifty-one scientists were selected for the award, including 29 from U.S. universities and 22 from the DOE's national laboratories. Matt joined CMU in 2012, and part of the Dow Science Complex was remodeled to install a large superconducting magnet for his specialized research in nuclear physics. His research involves the development of a new mass spectrometer — providing some of the world's most precise atomic mass measurements. Next up for Matt is an investigation of neutrinos, tiny subatomic particles produced by the decay of radioactive elements. This research will take place at the National Superconducting Cyclotron Laboratory, Argonne National Laboratory and at CMU.

Before I conclude, I want to mention a 14-year journey that culminates after our meeting with the grand opening of our new Biosciences Building.

Move-in efforts are well underway for this $95 million structure — the largest construction project in CMU history.

A committee to explore the college's facility needs was first launched in August 2002. And over the past 14 years, the number of students with biology majors has grown to about 7,000.

Our Biosciences Building is one more sign of CMU's leadership on a national scale. It includes modern, open, collaborative lab space and a vivarium to be used by faculty and students alike, a living wall and fish tanks filled with native species.

It demonstrates, once again, continued growth at CMU and an expanded reach in the STEM disciplines, pursued in service to the citizens of Michigan.

Fire Up Chips!

Chair Opperman, this concludes my report.