

President's Report to the Board of Trustees



December 7, 2017

Thank you, Chair Weideman.

Welcome, trustees, faculty, staff, students and community members to the December board meeting in the 125th year of Central Michigan University.

Just minutes ago, we unveiled a report from Anderson Economic Group detailing the economic impact CMU has on our communities, region and state.

That impact is a sizable \$1.2 billion a year and generated nearly 12,000 Michigan jobs.

The report reflects how CMU's growth and Michigan's growth are intertwined for the benefit of residents, businesses and communities.

Our good news complements the Michigan Chamber of Commerce's [2017 Economic Competitiveness Study](#), which ranks Michigan 21st in the nation, up from 47th in 2012. We're proud to be a part of moving our great state forward.

Today, our campus is preparing for finals week and the graduation on December 16 of nearly 2,000 students.

It's been a very busy semester, with two committees dedicating much time and energy to a review of the organizational structure of our academic division and units that advance student success. Across the university, we have had many intensive, strategic conversations since September about how to structure and strengthen Central Michigan University for the coming years.

The committees will identify recommendations to be shared and discussed next semester with the campus community and this board. The ultimate goal is to determine how best to support students, employers, our state and our nation.

While this review has fueled some angst — as is natural with the potential for change — I applaud all of those who are involved. I especially commend faculty and staff who have chosen to engage ... to be innovative in envisioning our future.

I continue to call on the committee members and Dr. Ian Davison, who is filling a two-year appointment leading the review, to capture the greatest possible opportunities. Their role is to shepherd the review, keeping it focused squarely on student outcomes, on preparing graduates to meet employer needs and on positioning CMU to achieve its greatest possible impact.

This effort is rounded out by a third committee that is looking at our responsibility centered management model of financing.

All three committees are helping to chart our future, by aligning who we are with the strategic imperatives this board adopted in June.

I'd also like to update you on two other significant initiatives.

First, our search for a chief diversity officer is underway. As recommended this summer by the Equity and Inclusion Task Force, this position will report to the president and be a part of the president's cabinet.

Witt Kieffer, the firm supporting our search committee, met in November with constituents across campus before solidifying the position description. Applications are being received and reviewed, and it is our plan to have someone in place by the end of the coming semester.

The second major effort this fall was completion of a state capital outlay request focused on the projected \$28.5 million renovation of Brooks Hall.

The renovation of our 1964 science facility would provide modern spaces that foster collaboration among students, faculty, staff and community partners. It would support our students and high-demand science programs, increase the safety and energy efficiency of the building, and provide advanced facilities for health and medical research.

Now I'll conclude my remarks with a few recognitions.

Let's first acknowledge some special anniversaries. For while CMU is 125 years old this year, other entities also are celebrating major milestones.

Our women's basketball program, led by Coach Sue Guevara, is celebrating its 50th anniversary. All of us should be especially proud of this program, as it predates the monumental Title IX legislation that mandated women's athletics opportunities in 1972 — five years after our program began.

Another 50th is being marked by one of CMU's longest-standing partners — Special Olympics. Thousands of students, faculty, staff and alumni make each Michigan summer games extra-special for the athletes, families and friends who converge on our campus.

CMU Public Broadcasting also recognized 50 years, serving central and northern Michigan with programs that range from Sesame Street and Masterpiece Theater to the Morning Edition and All Things Considered.

CMU's Mary Ellen Brandell Volunteer Center, home to our nationally acclaimed Alternative Breaks program, has celebrated its 25th anniversary.

And finally, the Sarah R. Opperman Leadership Institute has marked 20 years of helping students understand their roles as leaders of today and tomorrow.

Each of these organizations and initiatives speak to what differentiates CMU from its peers. Each changes lives. Each embodies what it means to put our stamp on the world.

And finally, I'd like to recognize faculty members Koblar Alan Jackson and Juan Peralta.

Alan and Juan, both physics professors, have received a four-year, \$4.8 million U.S. Department of Energy research grant.

They're studying the computations, computer tools and software involved in predicting atomic and molecular behavior.

Physicists worldwide know there's a major flaw in the theory of molecular modeling — a flaw that comes up when molecular bonds get stretched or broken. Alan and Juan are the lead researchers among five universities and 10 senior scientists working to break the code.

Best of all? They'll involve two postdoctoral researchers, two doctoral graduate students and eight to 10 undergraduate students here at CMU in their work.

Alan and Juan, congratulations on this impressive award. And thank you for educating the next generation of scientists.

Chair Weideman, this concludes my report.