

# President's Report to the Board of Trustees



**December 8, 2016**

Good morning.

And welcome, trustees, cabinet members, faculty, staff, students and visitors.

In just over a week, nearly 2,300 students will receive diplomas symbolizing immense learning, personal growth and awareness of their own potential to impact the world.

At Central Michigan University, we immerse students in hands-on academic experiences from their first day forward, imparting not only knowledge, but life and leadership insights that create invaluable members of communities, businesses and the world. It's this combination of academic excellence and leadership skills that make CMU and our alumni top prospects for employers. We see this repeatedly, including this fall, when Fiat Chrysler named CMU one of its top 10 global recruiting universities.

Leadership Institute Director Dan Gaken begins building our "Stamp on the World" mindset during Leadership Safari, when he instructs new students to politely correct those who call them the leaders of tomorrow ... because in truth ... they are **the leaders of today**.

Those who exemplify leadership are known for identifying great opportunities and for overcoming obstacles to achieve them.

We have three initiatives underway here on campus that require the collective leadership of our faculty and staff en route to achieving the next milestones in CMU's history.

**The first:** As we approach our 125th anniversary next September, Provost Michael Gealt, Academic Senate Chair Melinda Kreth, Trustee Rich Studley, and 10 other faculty, staff and students have led discussions across campus the past couple of months regarding our **strategic plan**.

As you heard during the Trustees-Faculty Liaison meeting yesterday, the team has engaged constituents in conversations about whether all five priorities and related initiatives should remain and how they might be revised. They have talked about what differentiates CMU and about how we measure success ... as a university ... among our

students ... and in the outcomes we generate for the communities, businesses, state, region and nation.

The team, with continuous input from the Board of Trustees, will complete its work this academic year and bring a revised plan for your review.

**The second initiative** looks at **diversity and inclusion** at CMU.

We began a dialogue called Walking Together one year ago this week. Hundreds of campus community members gathered in Plachta Auditorium to discuss their experiences, perceptions and questions. A second forum in the spring included a panel of students, faculty and staff sharing personal stories that helped us to walk in each others' shoes and to see opportunities.

We also used an external firm to gather feedback through focus groups, individual interviews and an online survey.

Answers to matters of equity and inclusion have been decades in the making. Most issues related to diversity and inclusion are deeply complex. Not one tool, program or report will solve all concerns, yet our ongoing efforts ARE important and necessary. We must remember that every gain matters, and every step forward ... together ... is powerful.

**The third initiative** is in the work of the **Online Academic Program Committee 2.0**.

We heard as well during yesterday's committee meetings that subgroup work is complete and recommendations have been made and soon will be handed off to those who will pursue implementation.

Efforts of two online committees the past 12 months have moved CMU dramatically forward. No longer are our online offerings part of what was, in essence, a separate university. Ownership by the colleges of our online future, and as part of the Academic Senate and its processes, completely redirects our 45-year history.

Revision of processes to evaluate academic program need is important. And faculty exploration and development of programs in high demand areas will expand CMU's leadership in the delivery of online and hybrid academic programs.

We understand this board seeks transformational progress. We also know the marketplace rewards smart action. I assure you the cabinet, faculty and staff are committed to serving all students — here on campus in Mount Pleasant, at satellite locations and online — exceptionally well. We look forward to sharing news of our progress in the months to come.

I'll conclude this morning by recognizing the leadership of three individuals.

Kathy Wilbur, our vice president of government and external relations, has been appointed to two statewide commissions that closely match the values and mission of Central Michigan University. They will help the state of Michigan grow and prosper.

The first is the **Michigan Community Service Commission**, which utilizes service as a strategy to address the state's most pressing issues and empowers volunteers to

strengthen communities. Kathy was appointed to a three-year term on the commission by Gov. Rick Snyder.

The second is a commission that advises the governor and state in **Building a 21st Century Economy**. Appointed by Speaker of the House Kevin Cotter, the goal of Kathy and her fellow commissioners is to create a comprehensive vision for Michigan's economic future that will leverage the state's strengths and encourage development. The group also will set priorities for the next 20 years and identify short-term and long-term goals for the state's economic future.

Kathy and I have talked, and she will help her fellow members understand that an educated workforce is essential to our state.

Congratulations, Kathy, and thank you, as a member of our executive leadership team, for upholding all that it means to be a CMU Chippewa.

And finally, I want to recognize Board Chair Sarah Opperman and Trustee John Hurd, whose eight-year terms on the board have concluded.

Chair Opperman, that concludes my report.