



# Board of Trustees

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

September 26, 2024

Good morning, Chair Regis and welcome to everyone gathered here today and watching online.

As I begin my remarks, I would like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Paula Lancaster, who has recently agreed to serve as our interim provost. Since her arrival at CMU in 2020, Dr. Lancaster has made tremendous contributions to our university with her leadership, her scholarship and her service to our community. I am thankful to have her partnership as we continue to pursue our vital academic mission. Please join me in thanking Interim Provost Lancaster!

I have been known to begin my September report by saying how exciting it is to be at Central Michigan University for the start of a new semester. That has *never* been truer than it is this year.

It is thrilling to be on this campus as students return and energize it with their Fired Up attitudes. The fact that there are *more* CMU students this fall makes it even better!

For the first time in a decade, overall enrollment at CMU has increased this year. I will talk more about our encouraging enrollment and retention numbers in my annual report later in this session, but first I need to say THANK YOU.

Increasing enrollment after a decade-long decline was no simple task, especially given demographic changes in our state and significantly increased competition from other institutions. Achieving growth in our new student population for the past three years has been a university-wide endeavor, as has increasing our retention rates.

Our current students, faculty, staff and loyal alumni have played vital roles in helping us reach prospective students. They have helped us demonstrate what makes our university community THE BEST place to live and learn. Every day, they show the world what it means to be FIRED UP.

I am grateful to everyone who played a role in this exciting, important success.

Our signature events for freshmen and transfer students – IMPACT and Leadership Safari – were once again outstanding, and the perfect way to introduce them to CMU’s leadership culture at the start of their time with us.

At IMPACT, students learn that we are a community that lifts each other up, that we respect our differences and celebrate our unique identities.

During Leadership Safari, students learn that at CMU **everyone** has the ability and responsibility to lead. The program allows them to discover and explore their own leadership style.

To start everyone off with some fun, our Weeks of Welcome events did not disappoint. From Mainstage where we packed Franklin Street on the eve of classes, to Get Acquainted Day and Fire Up Fest, our students showed up to meet new friends and connect with all that CMU has to offer.

One of the most important things we have to offer is hands-on learning with real-world relevance, and you can see that reflected in our Career Outcomes data.

CMU announced a new Career Outcomes Rate, and we found a **remarkable 94.9%** of recent CMU graduates are employed, continuing their education or participating in military or other service.

The impressive new rate reflects CMU undergraduates who graduated between August of 2022 and June of 2023. It is higher than the previous year’s First Destination survey results and pushes us *very close* to the goal for career outcomes set forth in our strategic plan.

It also is a higher rate for success than nearly all our peer institutions in Michigan who publicly report a Career Outcomes Rate.

It stands as more proof that students choose to join us at CMU because of our focus on their future success... and we are delivering.

Just this week, US News and World Report released its rankings of 4-year colleges and universities, and CMU ranked *very well*. Our national rank is 259, meaning we stand in the top 10% of ALL 4-year colleges and universities in the country. CMU’s

undergraduate engineering program ranked third in Michigan and is in the top 100 programs in the nation. This is a result of the dedication of our faculty and staff, and intense focus on successful outcomes for our students.

CMU students, faculty and staff continue to garner attention and awards at the state and national level. I would like to briefly acknowledge a few of our standouts:

- Student Eleanor McFarlane, whose research led to action by the Michigan State Department of Natural Resources.
- Political science professor Prakash Adhikari, who was recently awarded a Fulbright to conduct research in Malawi.
- Student Joy Youngblood, whose lithium research is helping to identify new sources of power for innovation.
- Professor Marty Baxter, who was honored with the American Meteorological Society's 2025 Edward N. Lorenz Teaching Excellence Award.
- Student-athlete Alex Cramer, who was named to the Academic All-American team for excellence in competition and the classroom.
- Dr. Kechi Iheduru-Anderson, who was named to the inaugural class of the Academy of Diversity Leaders in Nursing Fellows.
- The student-athletes who earned a GPA of 3.5 or higher last semester, bringing CMU its 51<sup>st</sup> consecutive semester with a collective GPA of 3.0 or higher.
- Professor Amy McGinnis, who received the Distinguished Women in Higher Education Leadership Award from the Michigan ACE Women's Network.

These outstanding individual contributions shine a bright light on our university, and show what can be achieved with great dedication and determination.

We also have had several programs and divisions singled out for accolades.

This month, the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency recognized CMU as a 2024-2025 MVAA Gold Level Veteran Friendly School. We have now brought home the gold for nine straight years! It is further recognition of our strong commitment to our veterans and their future.

In our College of Science and Engineering this fall, we have some exciting developments to share. In addition to offering a new Biotechnology major, CSE has won some impressive recognitions.

The Integration of Science, Technology, and Engineering – or InSciTE – certificate program has been recognized with the 2024 “Inspiring Programs in STEM Award” by Insight into Diversity Magazine. The innovative program continues to harness the power of diversity to prepare students to be effective collaborators and leaders in STEM fields, and beyond.

The College of Science and Engineering was named an Engineering Society of Detroit “Partner of the Year”! It recognizes their support of the society’s Girls in Engineering Academy, which was held again this summer here on campus and on Beaver Island.

And I am thrilled to announce the College of Science and Engineering’s Earth and Atmospheric Sciences program just secured a National Science Foundation grant of more than a million dollars. The grant will fund extensive fieldwork to study hailstorms using state-of-the-art technology. The project is in collaboration with seven other universities, and it has a name I think is more than appropriate. The “Ins-situ Collaborative Experiment for the Collection of Hail in the Plains” will be better known as ICE-CHIP.

In our College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences this fall, we are excited to offer another way to help CMU students stay on track for successful careers. The new HUB is now open with a mission to connect students to internships and a career during their time at CMU. It is innovative programs like the CLASS HUB that are helping to fuel the career success of CMU students after graduation.

We also are delivering in the area of medical education. The CMU College of Medicine is now **nationally ranked** by US News and World Report in three categories directly connected to the college’s mission.

We ranked number 67 for serving medically needy areas, number 52 for placing the most graduates in primary care positions and number 43 for serving rural areas.

Those are very specific categories that show we are on track with the College of Medicine’s founding mission to educate physicians to provide comprehensive health care and services to underserved populations in Michigan and beyond.

The national rankings also complement recent US News and World Report rankings for our Audiology and Speech Pathology graduate programs in the College of Health Professions.

As we advance into another semester, we are focused on making everyone feel they have a place in our community. We are proud of the progress made on a new strategic plan for CMU’s efforts in diversity, equity, inclusion, justice and belonging.

The plan – “A Call to Action” – aims to equalize graduation rates, diversify faculty and staff and foster a more inclusive community.

Vice President Shawna Patterson-Stephens is bringing together groups at all levels to identify ways to meet the plan’s specific goals.

She also is preparing mandatory inclusive excellence training for faculty and staff – called for by Trustees in April – and it is on track to be ready in October.

We are heading into a busy fall, with events to bring the entire university community together.

We invite everyone to join us the weekend of October 12<sup>th</sup> to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CMU Homecoming. The milestone is a testament to decades of vibrant traditions, community building and the Fired-Up attitude that defines CMU.

A celebration also will take place in November as we honor the 2024 inductees into the CMU Media Hall of Fame. We invite you to join us for the induction ceremony on November 16<sup>th</sup>.

It truly has been an outstanding start to this academic year. I look forward to sharing more about the progress we have made together on top priorities for this institution in the past year, in my annual report later in today's session.

Finally, although I am stepping down soon as CMU president, I want you to know that Cindy and I will always consider ourselves to be a CMU Chippewa. We are very proud of this institution and what it achieves.

Thank you, Chair Regis, this concludes my report.

And – as always – Fire Up Chips!