

President's Report
EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Board of Regents' Meeting
November 15, 2005

Thank you, Regent Valvo.

Several days ago in my Periodic Update to campus I mentioned that I couldn't believe that the end of the semester is just a blink away. I thought that my being new to Eastern Michigan University was the reason I was feeling somewhat frenzied, until I started hearing back from folks across all spectrums of the University that they, too, have found this fall to be exceptionally eventful.

My report today will highlight three areas that have occupied a significant portion of my attention over these past several weeks—continuous improvement, governmental initiatives and engagement activities—as well as share with you several updates about EMU people, programs and activities.

Continuous Improvement

In February 2004 Eastern Michigan University was accepted into the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP). Launched in 1999, AQIP attempts to infuse the principles and benefits of continuous improvement into the culture of colleges and universities by providing an alternative process through which an already-accredited institution can maintain its accreditation from the North Central Association. EMU received its most recent 10-year accreditation from the NCA in 2000.

AQIP distinguishes itself from traditional accreditation through its concentration on systems and processes both as the basis for quality assurance and as the lever for enabling institutional improvement. This alternative accreditation process is more intense and efficient, uses faster cycles of improvement, involves faculty more directly in all academic improvement processes, maintains an institution's status with the Department of Education and emphasizes an institution's distinctive needs and aspirations.

A 12-member contingent of EMU officials, including Regent Clack, ventured to Lisle, Illinois, October 5-8, to participate in an AQIP Strategy Forum. During the forum, AQIP officials and representatives from other AQIP-member universities weighed in with analysis of the four continuous improvement projects we presented.

I'm pleased to report that all four projects passed muster, with scores and comments indicating the University was more than prepared enough to proceed. The committee unanimously agreed to move forward with all four projects, which include:

- Improving delivery of academic advising;
- Improving customer service to students, faculty and staff;

- Incorporating writing across the curriculum into lower-level writing courses;
- And creating metrics for campus-wide institutional assessment.

Complementing this process, indeed providing the underpinning for all of the work that we will do, will be the development of an institutional vision statement. Daryl Barton, president of the Faculty Council, and I are co-chairing this process. The visioning process will include a number of people directly, and everyone, indirectly. Our goal will be to create a five to seven page document that will represent a shared vision—a picture of our pathway to the future and what we intend to pursue with great vigor.

While some measure of visioning was undertaken as part of the strategic planning process, my experience thus far has been that the vision for EMU is as individual and idiosyncratic as the person with whom I am speaking at any given time. We are a multi-million dollar enterprise without a business plan. And in this era of increased competition and shrinking resources, we have an obligation to our stakeholders to have a precise picture of who we are and where we want to be—and to have all our oars rowing in the same direction.

This is hard work. Most organizations don't do it; many can't do it. But, I believe this will be the single most important task that we, as an institution, will undertake.

Governmental Initiatives

Outreach efforts in Lansing, Washington and with local governmental leaders have been a major priority for me. I've spent several days in Lansing meeting and, more importantly, listening to the concerns that our elected representatives have shared on a number of issues—from University House, to tuition increases, to graduation rates, to the need for universities to respond more quickly to the state's economic needs. In most cases these have been reasonable discussions. And although a few individuals are not yet prepared to move forward, I believe that we've done the things necessary to get us out of the doghouse—but we remain on a very short leash.

We are intensifying our efforts to have a presence in Lansing and to position the University as an indispensable asset to the state and legislators. To that end, this past week we implemented the first of what will be a series of e-postcards from me to legislators that will link them to an institutional resource they might find valuable—in this case, the rich resource of experts we have available to help them solve problems in their districts or in Lansing.

I recently met with Governor Granholm to discuss EMU's role in promoting her "Return to Learn" initiative. This program is aimed at encouraging adults in the state's workforce to complete a postsecondary education degree. Michigan lags behind the national average in the percentage of the population that has earned a college degree or some form of postsecondary education credential. Because of our unique niche in the marketplace, we've been working with adult learners for many years and have a number of programs already in place to address their special needs. The University is hosting a series of open houses at our regional centers and on the main campus to encourage adults who started, but did not finish, their degree program to Return to Learn at EMU.

A little over a week ago, I had the pleasure of convening an Intergovernmental Session that brought together representatives from Eastern Michigan University, Washtenaw County Government, the City of Ypsilanti, Ypsilanti Township, Superior Township, Pittsfield Township, the Ypsilanti Public Schools, Willow Run Community Schools, Lincoln Consolidated Schools and the Intermediate School District. The purpose of our meeting was to gather potential partners to explore ways we could, and should, work together to achieve greater efficiencies, effectiveness and cost savings.

The discussion was lively. The group generated a list of challenges we are facing, and began to discuss areas of collaborative opportunities we might pursue. Each of the participants has committed to continuing the discussion and using this group as a means to overcome barriers that have hampered prior initiatives. I was pleased that the group identified the University as a critical, and neutral, component in this process and that I have been asked to continue to facilitate these discussions. I can think of no better way to improve local relationships than to work together helping to solve mutual problems.

As I've visited local elected officials, one message I've heard loud and clear, is that they want to hear more often from EMU, and specifically the president. To respond, we've launched Executive Briefing, an electronic communication that is being sent weekly to local governmental, civic and educational leaders. This interactive piece provides recipients with links to EMU news and the ability to respond electronically with any questions or concerns they may have.

Engagement Activities

I was pleasantly surprised to see nearly 80 individuals at my first open forum, October 19. Those who came, including a group of students fulfilling a class assignment, had plenty of questions and we enjoyed a lively and open discussion. I intend to host a minimum of two open forums each semester—the next one is scheduled for tomorrow at 5:30 p.m. in Dining Commons One. These sessions have no agenda; they just provide an opportunity for anyone who would like to do so, to come and to ask questions or share information with me. They are part of the activities recommended by the Transition Team to help me learn about the University and to make the president more accessible than has been the case in the past.

Another recommendation that emerged from transition planning was to establish a forum through which community leaders could have regular access to me in order to share information, dispel rumors or ask questions. Twelve community leaders have accepted my invitation to be a part of this group and will be meeting with me on a quarterly-basis beginning November 29. I'm encouraged by the positive response I've received to my invitation and expect that this group will be an invaluable resource.

Earlier this month I addressed both the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti Chambers of Commerce. These were great occasions to share our story and the positive impact EMU has in southeastern Michigan. Shortly after arriving at EMU, through the efforts of Marketing and Communications, I had the opportunity to work with Mort Crim Productions on a segment they

were producing for WDIV-TV Detroit called Our Story. This series focuses on institutions in Michigan such as EMU, the DIA, the Detroit Medical Center and others that have helped shape the history and quality of life of the region. EMU: Our Story debuted in early October to an audience of nearly a quarter of a million viewers. I'm using it in presentations as I travel throughout the state and the University because it captures, in a very compelling way, the story of this great institution. I've included a copy of the DVD in your packets and invite you to view and share it among your colleagues.

Points of Pride

Each day as part of our internal communications efforts we share a "good news" story about EMU with the campus community. We've had a great deal of good news to share including:

- For the second consecutive year, The Princeton Review has selected Eastern Michigan University's College of Business as one of the "Best 237 Business Schools" in the nation.
- WEMU 89.1 FM was voted the best radio station for music for the second straight year by the Ann Arbor News Readers Choice Awards. The station also was given a silver award for being the best radio station for talk. WEMU was the only local station to earn honors in both radio categories.
- Eastern Michigan University was recently awarded a \$1.5 million grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to develop the Creative Scientific Inquiry Experience (CSIE), a program designed to increase the number of science and math graduates. The grant is part of the NSF's highly competitive science talent expansion program, which focuses on increasing the number of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) graduates. EMU's project, entitled "Creative Scientific Inquiry Experience: Developing Integrated Science Curriculum to increase STEM Graduates," is designed to increase the number of students graduating in STEM. The program will offer theme-linked courses with academic service-learning experiences and career exploration for students. Kathy Stacey, professor of communication and theatre arts, and director of Academic Service-Learning and Joanne Caniglia, professor of math, are co-principal investigators.
- We are completely retooling our scholarship and financial aid award process in order to better leverage resources to meet enrollment goals. Staff has been working with Noel-Levitz to analyze historical data and redesign award guidelines for fall of '06.
- EMU's Stafford Loan Default rate for the most recently published year, 2003, is at 2.2 percent. This is an all-time low for EMU and demonstrates the positive impact of our debt management sessions, borrower communications and individual loan counseling to inform students about their obligations.
- Applications for Winter 2006 are up by double digits over last year in all new student categories.
- At Oct. 31, **cash gifts in excess of \$2.5 million** have been received in benefit of Eastern Michigan University. Included in this total is a \$1 million gift from an anonymous donor to be used for entrepreneurial projects on EMU's campus.
- EMU's Children's Institute recently received a **\$25,000 grant from the Charlotte R. Schmidlapp Fund**, Fifth Third Bank, Trustee. The funds will help support the

Institute's childcare program. Byna Elliot, vice president at Fifth Third Bank and a 1992 graduate of EMU, helped secure the grant. She volunteers as a trustee with the EMU Foundation.

- **EMU's Faculty and Staff Giving program**, administered by the EMU Foundation, kicked-off with goals of exceeding last year's giving of more than \$400,000 and increasing participation.
- Since September, the Alumni Relations Office has planned and hosted several events engaging alumni in Washington D.C., Chicago and the Flint area. Upcoming is the annual alumni basketball reception Friday, Nov. 18 in the Stadium Club, EMU Convocation Center, as well as an evening reception hosted by the Accounting Alumni Chapter Tuesday, Nov. 22 at the Livonia Marriott at Laurel Park.

News Notes

As always, I'd like to close my report with a few notes about our faculty, students and alumni.

FACULTY

- Seven Eastern Michigan University professors were honored at the 15th Annual Teaching Excellence Awards Oct. 22. The awards recognize faculty who have distinguished themselves in the classroom. Faculty members, nominated by former students or other faculty from each of the five colleges, were honored. Those honored included: **Jeffrey L. Bernstein**, associate professor of political science; **Daniel R. Brickner**, associate professor of accounting and finance; **Ella M. Burton**, associate professor of educational leadership and counseling; **Konnie G. Kustron**, associate professor of legal and paralegal studies; **Sally McCracken**, professor of communication and theatre arts; **Peggy Alford Trewn**, assistant professor of nursing; and **Norman Tyler**, professor of geography and geology.
- **Gerald "Skip" Lawver**, assistant professor of technology, was recently honored by the National Center for Biomedical Research and Training at Louisiana State University as one of the top three emergency responders in the country.

STUDENTS

- **Clarissa Russell** is the first Eastern Michigan University graduate-and only one of three persons nationwide-to receive a Henry Ford Health System Fellowship for 2005-06. The fellowship program provides an opportunity for individuals with a master's degree to work in areas of administrative specialization with Henry Ford senior leaders.
- **Josh Jobst**, a graduate student in piano performance at EMU, won the 2005 "Best Interpretation of a Composition by Franz Liszt" award. Jobst, of Belleville, won the award at the American Liszt Society's William Garrison Piano Competition in Baltimore. He also was awarded second place overall in the competition and will be presented in a debut recital in Baltimore during the 2006-07 season.

ALUMNI

- **Brigadier General John C. Rowland ('65)** has been enshrined in the Michigan Aviation Hall of Fame. Rowland, the former Army Aviation Facility Commander and state aviation officer, is the first helicopter pilot to be enshrined. Rowland flew 839 hours of combat time during Vietnam and received the Distinguished Flying Cross and Bronze Star. After the military, he founded Wolverine Aviation, Inc. at Willow Run. Since 1974, he has been with the Michigan Army National Guard in Grand Ledge, Michigan.
- **Loren Estleman ('74)** was named best local author as part of the Ann Arbor News' Readers Choice Awards. Estleman is best known for his series of Amos Walker mystery novels. He has won numerous literary awards and has been a commencement speaker at EMU.
- **John Young ('04)** has received the 2005 Counselor of the Year Award from the Michigan Association for Humanistic Education and Development. The award is given at the annual conference of the Michigan Counseling Association.

ATHLETICS

- **EMU men's cross country team** won the MAC Championship and head coach John Goodridge was named coach of the year.
- **EMU's 2004-05 softball team** posted the sixth highest team GPA among Division I-A softball teams. The National Fast Pitch Coaches Association recognized the team. The team's GPA was 3.461.
- For the second consecutive season the Eastern Michigan University's **women's basketball team** has been picked to capture the Mid-American Conference's West Division championship by the voting members of the MAC News Media Association. The Green and White received 20 of 23 first-place votes in garnering 132 total points.
- **EMU's women's volleyball team** captured the 2005 West Division Championship this past weekend. The women head to the MAC tournament Friday.

Upcoming events

Nov. 18 Basketball double header

Women at 6 p.m. versus Central Connecticut

Men at 8:30 p.m. versus California

Former EMU head coach Ben Braun will be inducted into the Hall of Fame prior to the men's game. At halftime of the men's game, the women's NIT banner will be raised.

Dec. 18 Commencement at 2 p.m. at the Convocation Center