

President's Report  
**EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY**  
Board of Regents  
Feb.18, 2021

Madam Chair and Distinguished Members of the Board of Regents:

It is my distinct honor to welcome two new members of the Board of Regents, Nathan Ford and Dr. Jessie Kimbrough-Marshall. We truly benefit from the rich diversity and exceptional expertise of the members of Eastern Michigan University's Board of Regents, as well as outstanding leadership of our new Board officers, Chair Eunice Jeffries, the first Black woman to head the Board; and alumnus and Vice Chair Michael Hawks. A recent EMU Today profile embraces this diversity and emphatically highlights the overall excellence of the University's Board of Regents.

The University's deep commitment and support of diversity, equity and inclusion efforts are evidenced in the wide range of activities supporting Black History Month and January's 35<sup>th</sup> annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration.

Academic programming in support of Black History Month is engaging and ongoing. Several sessions take place this evening and next week. Please visit the University calendar for details and registration information. We also continue to feature a variety of Black History Month profiles on the University's social media channels. Chair Jeffries participated in an extended interview on Monday and Regents Simpson, Ford and Kimbrough-Marshall will be interviewed in the days ahead. Visit our social media pages for dates and times.

This January marked the 35<sup>th</sup> annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration at Eastern Michigan University. Our goal with the annual celebration is to engage the campus and community in meaningful events and dialogue, moving us towards a just society for all. As we address multiple national crises that highlight racial inequities and injustices, this annual celebration remains critical in meeting our mission and vision as an institution that strives towards racial equity.

This year's celebration took place virtually, continuing our effort to do our part to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Participation in the annual celebration included:

- The Scholarship and Awards program, along with the gospel performance, had more than 1,000 views on Facebook;
- This year we collaborated with the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History to present keynote speaker, Yamiche Alcindor, PBS Newshour White House Correspondent. The live keynote brought 1,890 attendees – and 400 people stayed for the panel discussion.
- The CloseUp Theatre performance had 872 views on Facebook - and 739 participants in the after-show discussion;
- More than 170 people pre-registered for the two-day Academic Programs Conference and over 30 faculty, staff and students were presenters; and,

Please join me in thanking the countless number of faculty, staff and students who helped to make the 2021 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration a success. I would like to give special thanks to the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History for its collaboration to present the keynote speaker. If you have not already seen the events, I encourage everyone to view them on the University's Facebook page and YouTube channel. For more information, and the opportunity to receive a MLK celebration commemorative face covering after completing an evaluation, please visit [emich.edu/mlk](http://emich.edu/mlk).

The University's #EMUSafe practices in confronting the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be our primary priority. Following an increase in positive cases in late January, the number of cases has returned to the low levels of last summer and fall. We're proud of our efforts to keep cases among the lowest of Michigan's public universities. This is due to the University's determined adherence to safe practices and protocols. As outbreaks are identified, our response team jumps into action with contact tracing, strategic testing of populations that may have been exposed, and enacting quarantine and isolation for those individuals. The level of compliance for safe practices among our students, faculty and staff is critical to our success.

In the seven days ending Feb. 16, the University administered 1,316 tests that resulted in eight positive tests, for a positivity rate of 0.61 percent. During this time, we confirmed a total of 16 positive cases. This compares to 43 cases the week of Feb. 3 and 82 the week of Jan. 27.

Since August 12, the University has administered a total of 24,285 tests that resulted in 318 positive results for a positivity rate 1.31 percent. The data is updated regularly on the University's [COVID-19 Dashboard](#).

We are significantly expanding the free on-campus testing of students and employees, provided at University expense. We relocated our testing site to a larger space in the Student Center and are testing more than 1,000 students and employees weekly.

At the same time, we are proud to support the important community effort to provide vaccines to Washtenaw County residents. We are pleased to provide the University's Convocation Center as a mass vaccination site – and we continue to work closely with the Washtenaw County Health Department and St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor to facilitate the vaccinations of hundreds of people each day.

As highlighted by the Board of Regents action this afternoon, these are important and exciting times for the College of Engineering and Technology. We are extremely proud and gratified to honor the singular contributions of GameAbove with the renaming of our outstanding College of Engineering and Technology. GameAbove's extraordinary \$20 million in support to the University, over a 15-month period of time, represents the largest gift portfolio received in Eastern Michigan University's 171-year history.

GameAbove's partnership will be transformative in our efforts to provide world-class experiences in engineering, technology, cybersecurity, autonomous vehicles, drone technology, gaming, aviation, and many other related careers. We greatly value GameAbove's exceptional support of Eastern Michigan University students and faculty.

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Additional information and accomplishments are listed in the appendix to this report on and the University website.

Thank you, Chair Jeffries.

James M. Smith, Ph.D.  
President

## Recognition

- **Katlyn Collins, Charles Graham, Meagan Putnam, and Avery Wright** advanced to the **national University Moot Court tournament** in late January, which was held virtually. EMU also held its **first regional tournament** in November, with 30 teams across the nation competing virtually.
- As part of the EMU's annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, **D'Anna Hayes** received the **Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship Award** for her commitment to promoting respect and improving the quality of life for all people, and service to the community.
- **Lori Marie Key**, a registered nurse at St. Mary Mercy Hospital in Livonia and a student in Eastern's **RN to BSN online program**, performed "Amazing Grace" during the COVID-19 memorial event held in Washington D.C. at the Lincoln Memorial, as part of the presidential inauguration events.
- **Maliyah McGowan** won **The Evans-Strand Peace Award** for her contributions toward enhanced understanding and peace between diverse persons or groups at Eastern. McGowan earned the award from her participation in the MLK Student Essay program.
- The **EMU Baja racing team** of 13 students is gearing up to compete in the **Louisville Baja SAE national competition** this year with a \$5,000 grant through the **Ford College Network**, an initiative of the **Ford Fund**. When the March 2020 event was changed to a virtual, non-driving event, the EMU team submitted its design and business plans to a panel of judges and placed 44<sup>th</sup> out of 100 teams.
- The **EMU Summit Street student a cappella group** will compete in the quarterfinals of the International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella tournament on March 13. The tournament will be held virtually with 3,500 performers from 33 states and five countries.
- A new book, "Saturation Project," by **Christine Hume**, professor of **English Language and Literature** in the **College of Arts and Sciences**, was featured in a recent review in **The New York Times**.
- **Rema Reynolds**, associate professor in **Leadership and Counseling** in the **College of Education**, was honored with the **MLK Humanitarian Award** during EMU's annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration. She was recognized for exemplifying the values and ideals of Dr. King, in the areas of advocacy, leadership, and service.

- **Susan Schanne, College of Business Writing Center** consultant and lecturer of management, has been named **The Association for Business Communication's (ABC) 2020 Rising Star**. ABC's Rising Star Award recognizes the meaningful contributions to the mission and membership of the Association and to the business communication field at large through excellent teaching, research, and/or practical applications. The international award recognizes only one recipient each year.
- **Stephanie Wladkowski**, professor of **Social Work** in the **College of Health and Human Services**, has been chosen as a **Sojourns®Scholar**, one of 12 emerging palliative care leaders in the United States. The program is administered by the Cambia Health Foundation and is designed to identify and advance the next generation of palliative care leaders.
- Two **College of Business** graduate and undergraduate programs in human resources received **grand prize honors with first place rankings by HR.com**. The Master's of Science in **Human Resources and Organizational Development (MSHROD)** was ranked first in the category of "Master's Programs with Emphasis in Human Resources." The EMU **BBA-Management Major/HR Concentration** was also ranked first in "Diploma Program with Emphasis on HR."
- The **Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)** program in the **College of Business** has again been highly ranked in the annual list of top online graduate business programs compiled by the **U.S. News and World Report**. The IMC Program ranked 60th in the country, and second in Michigan, in the category of non-MBA master's programs.
- EMU programs in the **College of Education** are ranked among the top 150 online graduate programs in the country in an annual list compiled by **U.S. News and World Report**. Online graduate programs in the College of Education were ranked 144th this year, in the top four among the Michigan public university online education programs.
- Federal legislation was passed to rename the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Ann Arbor after **Lieutenant Colonel Charles S. Kettles**, an EMU alumnus and Vietnam War hero.

## Of Note

- The **School of Nursing** has moved its **Master of Science in Nursing Education** program fully online, making it accessible nationwide.

- Several new episodes of “**EMU Today TV**” have been released on Xfinity On Demand and on EMU’s YouTube channel. The episodes feature the renaming of the Quirk Building in honor of the late Judy Sturgis Hill, scholarship partnership Henry Ford College, the 2021 MLK Day Celebration, Digital Divas, EMU’s COVID-19 response team, the Master of Science in Finance program, and Emeritus Dean of Students Gregory Peoples.

## Events

- **Thomas Horvath**, Baylor College of Medicine and an alumnus of the EMU Chemistry department, presented a seminar on bioanalytical chemistry on February 8.
- In honor of **Black History Month**, EMU is offering a number of virtual, public events to celebrate and reflect upon Black history. Information can be found at [today.emich.edu](http://today.emich.edu).
- **Ashley Johnson Bavery**, assistant professor of **History**, virtually presented “Bootlegged Aliens: Immigration Politics on American’s Northern Border” on January 28, as part of the EMU History Speaker Series.
- A **Star Lecture** was held virtually on January 27 with EMU professor **Dr. Rema Reynolds**, professor of **Leadership and Counseling**, who discussed the topic, “Leading for Equality in Education: What Justice Should Look Like.”
- The **Winterfest** event to promote participation in student organizations was held virtually on January 27.
- The **EMU Women’s Resource Center** hosted a virtual panel event on “Sex and Human Trafficking Awareness” on January 27.
- **Holly Huffnagle**, the U.S. Director for Combating Antisemitism for the American Jewish Committee (AJC), presented a lecture on January 26, which was hosted by EMU’s **Center for Jewish Studies**.
- EMU’s **35th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration** was held January 15-18. The celebration included an online keynote from **Yamiche Alcindor**, White House correspondent for PBS NewsHour and an NBC and MSNBC political contributor. The keynote was cosponsored by **The Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History**. Other events included academic programs, theatre and musical performances, panels, and a day of service.

## Athletics

- Cross Country (Women): **Olivia Chandler, Esme Davies, Emily DeLine, Lexi Seifert, and Kaitlyn St. Bernard** earned **Academic All-MAC** honors.
- Cross Country (Men): **Chris Devaney** was named a **MAC Distinguished Scholar Athlete** for excellence in academics and athletics.
- Cross Country (Men): **Ronald Brandal, Ian Cook, Owen Day, Chris Devaney, Baldwin Magnusson, Noah Perrin, and Eddie Zuercher** earned **Academic All-MAC** honors.
- Football (Men): **Chad Ryland** was named a **MAC Distinguished Scholar Athlete** for excellence in academics and athletics.
- Football (Men): **Steve Bird, Darius Boone Jr., Matthew Buschman, Jake Donnellon, Dylan Drummond, Korey Hernandez, Joey Hiser, Alex Howie, Marcellus Johnson, Broderick Jordan, Tanner Knue, Alex Merritt, Thomas Odukoya, William Racely, Chad Ryland, Tariq Speights, Carter Stagner, Lucas Teszner, Grant Trueman, and Mike Van Hoeven** earned **Academic All-MAC** honors.
- Football (Men): **Hassan Beydoun** was nominated for the **2020 Burlsworth Trophy** for outstanding performance by a player who started his career as a walk-on.
- Football (Men): Eleven players were named to the **Phil Steele Postseason All-MAC Conference Teams**. Alvinoski LaFleur was named First Team. **Hassan Beydoun Terry Myrick, Turan Rush, Chad Ryland and Sidy Sow** were named Second Team. **Jake Julien and Jose Ramirez** garnered Third Team honors. **Preston Hutchinson, Thomas Odukoya, and Mike Van Hoeven** earned Fourth Team accolades.
- Football (Men): **Alvinoski LaFleur** was named to the **2020 All-MAC First Team Defense**. **Terry Myrick, Turan Rush, and Chad Ryland** were named to **All-MAC Second Teams**. **Hassan Beydoun, Jose Ramirez, and Sidy Sow** garnered **All-MAC Third Team** honors.
- Swim & Dive (Women): For the 19<sup>th</sup> consecutive semester, the EMU team was named a **Scholar All-America Team** for the fall 2020 semester by the College Swim & Dive Coaches Association of America.

- Track & Field (Men): **Baldvin Magnusson** set a **national Icelandic record** in the 3000m event at the February 5 GVSU Snowdown Showdown.
- For the 22<sup>nd</sup> straight semester, EMU student-athletes posted an average GPA above 3.0, with a **fall semester GPA of 3.591**.
- Nearly **100 EMU student-athletes** came together to celebrate **Martin Luther King Jr.'s life and legacy** on January 18. EMU football junior **Tariq Speights** organized a march and virtual panel discussion, all of which were open to the public.
- Athletic media relations graduate assistant **Alexis Chevalier** has been accepted into the **NCAA Emerging Leaders Seminar**. The program is designed to educate, develop, and connect participants to accelerate their career progression in college sports.
- Women's basketball graduate assistant **Trevon Tiggs** has been selected to participate in the inaugural **TopConnect Graduate Leadership Academy**. Tiggs was selected from 115 graduate assistants from across the country for one of the 22 spots in the inaugural class.
- **Eagle Crest Golf Club**, home course of the EMU women's and men's golf teams, has been **named the 16<sup>th</sup> best college golf course in the country** in the annual "Golfers' Choice" list by Golfpass.
- Two former EMU football players will play in **Super Bowl LV**. **Andrew Wylie** will play for the Kansas City Chiefs, and is one of six former EMU players to capture a Super Bowl Crown. **Pat O'Connor** will play for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.