

President's Report  
**EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY**  
Board of Regents  
Oct. 14, 2021

Madam Chair and Distinguished Members of the Board of Regents:

To say the academic year has gotten off to a great start is an understatement.

As you know we just completed a weeklong celebration of the University's 100<sup>th</sup> Homecoming – and it was quite the series of fun events with great participation and school spirit evident throughout. Not to mention we won a very close homecoming football game against Miami (Ohio) that went down the wire before a large crowd at Rynearson Stadium.

I'd like to recap some key developments from the start to the academic year. First off, I have some great data to share in terms of enrollment:

The number of first year students increased 20% this fall. Importantly, it wasn't all about getting students back who sat out due to the pandemic. Our enrollment numbers were also up 7% over 2019.

Students living in on campus housing increased 35% over last year.

The GPA of our incoming students was 3.43, the highest ever for an incoming class at Eastern.

44% of our new students represent ethnically diverse communities, a continuation of our long-standing commitment to support and serve diverse communities.

And, first-year international student enrollment increased 60%, from 117 last year to 187 this year.

Our enrollment and housing data reflect the great attention paid by faculty and staff to providing quality degree programs, experiential learning, and support services that lead our graduates to successful careers. Our continuing appeal and outreach to diverse audiences are particularly noteworthy and consistent with our commitment to be an institution of opportunity.

More evidence of the great start to the academic year can be found in our robust practices and protocols related to COVID-19. I'm pleased to report that our campus positivity rates remain among the lowest of any public university in Michigan. This has been the case since the outset of the pandemic. I attribute our success to several key initiatives:

First – the formation of a steering committee to guide our processes since the beginning of the pandemic. This committee, made up of faculty and staff who have both public health and facilities management expertise, met weekly for the first several months of the of the pandemic, and now meets every two weeks.

This effort has allowed us to remain nimble in adjusting our practices to help ensure a campus environment that is as safe as possible.

A second key initiative is the opening of a testing center on campus, led by Health Sciences Professor Lynne Shetron, public health students, and several other key staff members. The center provides an easy, accessible and free testing option. Since August 2020, we have conducted nearly 43,000 COVID-19 tests, with an extraordinarily low 1.08% positivity rate.

A third program involves the launch of pop-up vaccination clinics on campus, in partnership with the Washtenaw County Health Department and the State of Michigan. Participation in the vaccination process has been robust. Another clinic is scheduled for 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. tomorrow at the Student Center.

A fourth initiative is our mandatory vaccination policy for students who live in on-campus housing and those who participate in other potential “close contact” scenarios. These include student-athletes, students in marching band, choir and other organizations. The vaccination rate for students living in housing is 93%, with 5% seeking exemptions for health or religious reasons. The remaining 2% have not indicated their status and are being actively contacted.

A fifth program is the highly organized Telehealth operation with public health experts who answer COVID-exposure related questions. They also engage in a robust contact tracing process to identify individuals who have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive.

A sixth initiative is a wastewater testing program that allows us to monitor COVID biomarkers in the wastewater coming from residence halls. This early detection program allows us to identify buildings that potentially have a COVID outbreak present and immediately take preventative action, such as required testing for all students in that residence hall.

This multi-layered approach – we call it EMUSafe -- has us well ahead of the curve in keeping COVID-19 rates on campus considerably below the average of most universities in Michigan, as I stated earlier.

As I conclude, I hope you will join me in congratulating one of our faculty members for a highly prestigious international honor, as well as consider participating in two outstanding events happening on campus this evening.

World Languages Professor Carla Damiano was awarded the Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, considered the Republic’s highest honor, on Sept. 29, at a ceremony at the Student Center. The event was attended by many of Dr. Damiano’s colleagues, as well as associates from around the world who joined us via a live stream video of the presentation. Professor Damiano was recognized for her commitment to furthering German language and literature in the United States, supporting German students, and playing an active role in keeping the memory of the Holocaust alive.

The College of Arts and Sciences Detroit Theme Year continues with a keynote lecture by Dr. Kevin Boyle, the William Smith Mason Professor of American History at Northwestern University. Professor Boyle is a Detroit native and a historian of Detroit. He will tell the story of Ossian Sweet, a Black doctor in 1920s-Detroit who moved into a White neighborhood with his wife and infant child. They were attacked by a mob, and in the violence that followed; one of the attackers was killed. The legal case is one of the most famous trials of the 1920s.

The event begins with a book signing and reception at 5 p.m. in the Student Center Ballroom Lounge, and a 6 p.m. presentation in the Ballroom. You are invited to attend in person, or register for the Zoom webinar through the [College of Arts and Sciences Detroit Theme Year website](#).

At 7:30 p.m., the Center for Jewish Studies hosts “A Conversation with Rep. Elissa Slotkin.” Rep. Slotkin, who represents Michigan’s 8th Congressional District, will discuss growing up Jewish on a farm in Holly, Mich., working as a CIA analyst who did three tours in Iraq alongside the U.S. Military, and serving in Congress. She will address the resurgence of anti-Semitism and America’s involvement in the Middle East.

The event takes place in the Student Center Auditorium and is free and open to the public. Guests can also view the event via Zoom — visit the [Center for Jewish Studies website for registration information](#).

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

Thank you, Chair Jeffries.

James M. Smith, Ph.D.  
President

## Recognition

- **Mia Cusenza**, a first-year student at Eastern pursuing a degree in Cybersecurity, was recently surprised with a \$10,000 scholarship from the **Gen.G Foundation**. Gen.G is a global esports organization connecting the best gamers in the United States and Asia. Last year, Gen.G and Eastern Michigan University announced a first-of-its-kind partnership in Michigan to initiate a multi-year esports program.
- **David DeLisle**, a senior majoring in Electrical Engineering, has received the **2021 “Outstanding Undergraduate Student of the Year” scholarship from the Engineering Society of Detroit** in recognition of outstanding achievement by an undergraduate student who has distinguished himself in the engineering and scientific community. DeLisle has been a participant in the **EMU Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program** since 2018. EMU is one in a highly elite group of institutions selected by the U.S. Department of Education to host a McNair Program. As such, EMU McNair Scholars are among the students in our nation with the greatest potential to become leaders in their academic disciplines.
- The student chapter of the **Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)** has been awarded a 2020-2021 **Outstanding Student Chapter** designation by the national organization for providing superior growth and development opportunities to its student members. Only 12 schools nationally were chosen for the honor, which is the society’s highest award. More than 200 schools applied for the award.
- Professor **Vijay Mannari** and Ph.D. graduate **Hamid Asemanni** were recently honored with the **CoatingsTech Best Paper Award at the American Coatings Association's (ACA) 2021 CoatingsTech Conference** for their co-authored paper and presentation titled, "Advanced Dual-curable Coatings Obtained from Multi-Functional Non-Isocyanate Polyurethane Oligomers."
- Associate Professor of Management **Salar Mesdaghinia** has been recognized by the **Human Resources Division of Academy of Management (AOM) with the International HRM Scholarly Research award** for his research paper *“Perceived organizational support (POS) across 54 nations: A cross-cultural meta-analysis of POS effects,”* which was published in the Journal of International Business Studies in 2020.
- Professor and Nursing Program Director, **Tsu-Yin Wu**, Ph.D., has been recognized by the Prevent Cancer Foundation® as a national leader in cancer prevention and early detection with the 2021 **Cancer Prevention Laurels Awards**. Dr. Wu, the director of the EMU Center for Health Disparities Innovation and Studies (CHDIS) and the Healthy Asian Americans Project at EMU, was honored with a Laurel Award for Increasing Health Equity through Innovation from the Prevent Cancer Foundation. The award is given to an individual or organization for innovative methods to increase health equity in cancer prevention and screening in communities across the U.S.

- EMU's **engineering programs** have been recognized in the national rankings by **U.S. News and World Report**. The programs are ranked at 129 among 239 schools nationwide.
- Eastern has earned a spot in the **top 15 of MilitaryTimes.com's 2021 Best for Vets: Colleges list**, ranking 13th out of more than 360 US colleges. EMU moved up more than 20 spots from its No. 35 ranking in the 2020 list. The announcement follows the ranking earlier this year by Military Friendly Schools in which Eastern was ranked number two in the United States and number one in Michigan.
- The **Bachelor of Music Therapy** has been ranked as one of the **Top 20 Most Affordable Music Therapy Degrees** in 2021 by Bestvalueschools.org, which rates various university programs throughout the country. The program ranked eighth on the list, making it the only university in Michigan to rank in the top 10.
- The **Bachelor of Science in Electrical and Computer Engineering (BSECE)** program has received accreditation from the Engineering Accreditation Commission of the Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology.
- The **U.S. News and World Report** ranked Eastern among one of the best universities in the country in the **social mobility** category. The distinction is based on the opportunities that colleges offer disadvantaged students with federal Pell Grants. Eastern was ranked 82 in the nation among 391 national universities.
- Chartwells Higher Education launched **Chartwells Heroes** earlier this spring. The campaign allowed internal team members across the country to recognize their fellow associates in a number of categories including culinary innovation, sustainability, safety, and diversity and inclusion. **Sam Denton** was selected as a division leader in the safety category, out of over 5,000 nominations. Since joining the E-Dining team as a student food service worker in 2016, Sam has overseen numerous operations on campus, including Chick-fil-A and Smashburger, and has maintained a culture of safety at every level of employment.

#### Of Note

- **Alexandros Maragakis**, assistant professor in Psychology, has received a **\$1.86 million grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)** to improve access to behavioral health services for children in Michigan. The focus of the program will be to integrate behavioral health services with pediatric primary care practices in a variety of urban and rural Michigan communities.

- Eastern has received **\$167,002 from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund** (Health Fund) to expand access to early childhood mental health services in Washtenaw County as part of the Health Fund's Behavioral Health grants program, which aims to improve access to high-quality, person-centered mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) healthcare. The grant will go toward the **EMU Community Behavioral Health Center's Early Childhood Satellite clinics**, which offer specialty services for young children ages 1-5 and their families.
- Students in the **Aviation** program in the **GameAbove College of Engineering and Technology** will now have access to valuable hands-on flight experience with the addition of a new **Frasca RTD DA40-180 aviation flight simulator**. The simulator can be configured to simulate the Diamond DA 40, which is EMU's primary aircraft for instrument flight training, or a Piper Seneca, which is currently used for twin engine training in the EMU aviation program.
- **Summit Street**, EMU's premier student a cappella group, launched its debut album, Summit Street: Maroon in July. Summit Street represented Eastern earlier this year in the **2021 Great Lakes Quarterfinal 4 of the International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella (ICCA)** where they made it to the quarterfinals among 3,500 performers in 250 groups from universities across 33 states and five countries.
- Students enrolled in the **Early College Alliance (ECA) program** at EMU have a significantly higher four-year college graduation rate than other students in Michigan, Washtenaw County and across the state. Black students enrolled in the ECA graduate college at a rate nearly 700 percent higher than Black high school graduates in the state of Michigan, according to data from the National Student Clearinghouse regarding students who finished high school in 2010.
- **Anna Gersh**, EMU Bright Futures project administrator, founded the **One Love Symposium**, a three-phase initiative, as a vehicle to improve the skills of education, healthcare, and law enforcement professionals around key features of their jobs that have led to gross inequities in the treatment of individuals of different races and classes. Eventually, Gersh hopes that the initiative will result in the creation of a course that human service professionals can complete to earn certification and continuing education credits.
- Eastern Michigan University teamed up with **GameAbove, the Ypsilanti District Libraries and various EMU corporate partners and organizations** to expand its **K-12 STEM programming** this past summer. As part of the collaboration, a total of 500 hands-on STEM activity kits were distributed to youth in Washtenaw County throughout a five-week period.

- In an effort to highlight its commitment to technology, the **GameAbove College of Engineering and Technology** announced plans to deploy autonomous shuttles this school year and to open a new research and development space at the **American Center for Mobility (ACM)** in Ypsilanti. The **Eagle Shuttle**, as it is called on campus, is built by **Local Motors** as part of the Olli autonomous vehicle platform. Olli is a low-speed, electric, self-driving shuttle built in Knoxville, Tennessee using advanced manufacturing techniques like 3d-printing.
- **WEMU-FM 89.1**, Eastern Michigan University's public radio station, increased its listening audience by 32% in spring 2021 when compared to fall 2020, according to Nielsen Audio broadcast radio's ratings service. The increase moves the station from sixth most listened to station in the market to third, with market share of 6.2.

## Events

- Eastern Michigan University and Hero Nation joined forces on October 2 to present **Heroic Futures**, a free, virtual event to help students ages 14-18 identify and address social issues in their communities.
- The **EMU Marching Band** held a **March-A-Thon** on October 2 to raise funds to support the purchase of new instruments.
- **Michael Stauch**, Assistant Professor of History, University of Toledo presented a lecture on "Detroit in the Age of Community Policing" on September 30.
- The **Honors College Star Lecture Series** welcomed **Dr. David "Bo" Bunnell** for a talk about the work of the Great Lakes Science Center in contributing to federal, state, provincial, and Tribal partnerships to restore native fish populations and improve the Great Lakes ecosystems.
- Faculty experts and students from the **GameAbove College of Engineering and Technology** demonstrated the relationship between cybersecurity and connected vehicles on September 21 at **Motor Bella** at the M1 Concourse in Pontiac.
- **Mike Ragusa**, Assistant Professor of Chemistry at Dartmouth, presented a lecture on using protein crystallography and biochemistry to understand the mechanisms of autophagy, a conserved mechanism for preserving cellular health under stress on September 20.
- An exhibition of 40 powerful works by **Harold Neal** and **Detroit Black Arts Movement artists**, who were influenced by the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements opened on September 13 in the Student Center Art Gallery.

## Athletics

- Baseball (Men): **Mike Monahan** was recognized as a **MAC Distinguished Scholar Athlete** for 2020-21.
- Baseball (Men): Senior **Mike Monahan** was tabbed with an incredible honor when he was named to the **Academic All-America® Division I** baseball team by the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA). Monahan was one of only 33 players nationally, and the only player in the Mid-American Conference, to earn Academic All-American status in 2020-21.
- Baseball (Men): **Mike Monahan** was named as an **Academic All-District** selection by the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA).
- Baseball (Men): **Christian Bault, Eli Gora, Scott Granzotto, Taylor Hopkins, Trevor House, Nate Jones, Nick Jones, Jared Kauffman, Luke McGuire, Justin Meis, Mike Monahan,** and **Daniel Warkentin** were named to the **Academic All-MAC** team.
- Baseball (Men): Junior right-hander **Justin Meis** was selected with the first pick in the 10th round, 283rd overall, by the Pittsburgh Pirates in the 2021 Major League Baseball Draft.
- Basketball (Men): **Derek Ballard Jr.** and **Darion Spottsville** earned a spot on the National Association of Basketball Coaches (**NABC**) **2020-21 Honors Court** for the second straight year.
- Cross Country (Men): **Chris Devaney** was recognized as a **MAC Distinguished Scholar Athlete** for 2020-21.
- Football (Men): **Chad Ryland** was recognized as a **MAC Distinguished Scholar Athlete** for 2020-21.
- Football (Men): Junior wide receiver **Dylan Drummond** was named to the **Paul Hornung Award Honor Roll**. The award, now in its 12th season, is given annually to the most versatile player in major college football by the Louisville Sports Commission.
- Football (Men): **Mike Van Hoeven** was named **Second Team CoSIDA Academic-All America**, making him just the third football player in EMU history to be an Academic All-American.



- Golf (Women): **Maria Connelly** and **Anna Watson** were named as **All-American Scholars** by the Women's Golf Coaches Association (WGCA).
- Golf (Women): **Maria Connelly** and **Olivia Loberg** were named to the **Academic All-MAC** team.
- Golf (Men): **Cougar Collins** was recognized as a **MAC Distinguished Scholar Athlete** for 2020-21.
- Golf (Men): Redshirt freshman **Max Watson** won the **115th Ohio Amateur Championship** in July.
- Golf (Men): **Ty Celone, Cougar Collins, Zack Mason,** and **Tyler Rayman** were named **Srixon/Cleveland Golf All-America Scholars** by the Golf Coaches Association of America.
- Golf (Men): **Ty Celone, Cougar Collins, Zack Mason, Tyler Rayman,** and **Max Watson** were named to the **Academic All-MAC** team.
- Golf (Men): The Eagles earned **President's Special Recognition** by the Golf Coaches Association of America (GCAA). The squad was recognized for having a 3.57 grade point average over the fall and winter semesters.
- Gymnastics (Women): **Jada Rondeau** and **Caitlin Satler** were recognized as **MAC Distinguished Scholar Athletes** for 2020-21.
- Gymnastics (Women): **Cortney Bezold, Raisa Boris, Katie Butler, Hadyn Crossen, Shannon Gregory, Cali Harden, Hannah Hartung, Jordan Jankowski, Carly Kosanovich, Anna Grace McCullough, Corey Melcher, Molly Parris, Brianna Price, Charlotte Reynolds, Sophia Rios, Jada Rondeau, Caitlin Satler,** and **Mickayla Stuckey** were named **Academic All-American** by the Women's Collegiate Gymnastics Association (WCGA).
- Rowing (Women): **Haley Dutton** was named a **Colonial Athletic Association Leadership & Sport Excellence Award** recipient.
- Rowing (Women): **Lauren Ahern, Rose Andrews, Emma Boersen, Laura Borchers, Olivia Bray, Priscilla Brom, Jennifer Bucci, Grace Burke, Sonia Buxton, Erin Corbley, Maiyah Devenport, Haley Dutton, Anna Eschenburg, Reagan Fazekas, Tiana Fox, Emily Gandy, MacKaela Geisler, MacKenzie Geisler, Brianna Gracey, Brynne Harder, Mary Hemgesberg, Chloe Hinojosa, Leah Huyser, Emily Ignagni,**

- **Alexis Kettler, Kaialani Knox, Jessica LaRoy, Libbey Lloyd, Karson Mahaney, Melanie McKeehan, Eve Melody, Maggie Nied, Isabella Nothom, Alexandria Parsons, Laura Penny, Olivia Robinson, Lindsay Rock, Caitlin Rodanhisler, Abbey Simpson, Ariel Sutton, Hannah Taylor, and Alexandra Walsh** were named to the **Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) Commissioner's Academic Honor Roll**.
- Swimming & Diving (Women): **Bethany Berger** and **Ali Staver** were recognized as **MAC Distinguished Scholar Athletes** for 2020-21.
- Swimming & Diving (Women): Diver **Bethany Berger** was named as an **Academic All-District** selection by the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA).
- Swimming & Diving (Women): **Lainie Bell, Bethany Berger, Kelsi Hill, Carlin Hudson, Hunter Ignasiak, Carlee Jones, Abby Rapien, Kaitlynd Scanlan, Micaela Schempf, Mieke Staffeldt, Ali Staver, Avrie Stewart, Abigail Wnder, and Hannah White** were named to the **Academic All-MAC** team.
- Swimming (Women): For the 20th consecutive semester, the swimming and diving team has been named a **Scholar All-America Team** by the Collegiate Swimming and Diving Coaches Association of America (CSCAA).
- Tennis (Women): The Eagles collected the **ITA All-Academic Team** award. **Essence Eaton, Vasavi Ganesan, Morgan Ingram, Julia Piatek, Emma-Lou Pommiers, Natalia Regalado, and Grace Whitney** were also named as **ITA Scholar-Athletes**.
- Tennis (Women): **Vasavi Ganesan, Luisa Pelayo, Julia Piatek, Emma Lou Pommiers, Isabelle Popma, and Grace Whitney** were named to the **Academic All-MAC** team.
- Track & Field (Indoor) (Women): **Alyson Davis, Quintella Johnson, and Nina Ward** were recognized as **MAC Distinguished Scholar Athletes** for 2020-21.
- Track & Field (Outdoor) (Women): **Kristine Bourg, Alyson Davis, and Nina Ward** were recognized as **MAC Distinguished Scholar Athletes** for 2020-21.
- Track & Field (Outdoor) (Women): **Quintella Johnson** earned **Second Team All-American** honors following the NCAA Outdoor Championships.

- Track & Field (Outdoor) (Women): **Kristine Bourg, Miranda Cadwell, Brenna Cavanaugh, Kadian Clarke, Alyson Davis, Mair Edwards, Keypathwa Gibson, Janay Hall, Morgan Iverson, Maura Lane, Brittni Mason, Gianna Salzbrunn, Lexi Seifert, Graysen Simmons, Nina Ward, and Chevonne Wheeler** were named to the **Academic All-MAC Team**.
- Track & Field (Women): The Eagles earned United States Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association (**USTFCCCA**) **All-Academic** honors for the indoor and outdoor track and field seasons. Individual honors went to **Tiffany Cernej-Garcia, Kadian Clarke, Alyson Davis, Keypathwa Gibson, Morgan Iverson, Lexi Seifert, Nina Ward, and Chevonne Wheeler**.
- Track & Field (Indoor) (Men): **Ronald Brandal, Owen Day, Chris Devaney, Toby Gualter, and Owen Richardson** were recognized as **MAC Distinguished Scholar Athletes** for 2020-21.
- Track & Field (Outdoor) (Men): **Taige Bryant and Zach Harkey** were recognized as **MAC Distinguished Scholar Athletes** for 2020-21.
- Track & Field (Outdoor) (Men): **Khalil Bedoui, Ronald Brandal, Taige Bryant, Chris Devaney, Joe Duff, Chukwusom Enekechi, Zach Harkey, and Garrett Wade** were named to the **Academic All-MAC Team**.
- Track & Field (Men): The Eagles earned United States Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association (**USTFCCCA**) **All-Academic** honors for the indoor and outdoor track and field seasons. Individual honors went to **Kappa Bedoui, Taige Bryant, Chris Devaney, Chukwusom Enekechi, Toby Gualter, Zach Harkey, Baldwin Magnusson, Andy Payne, and Kaleb Simpson**.
- Track & Field (Men): **Taige Bryant and Chris Devaney** were named **Academic All-District** by the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA).
- Volleyball (Women): For the 17th consecutive season, the volleyball program was recognized by the American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) and the United States Marine Corps with the **USMC/AVCA Team Academic Award**.
- The E-Club Hall of Fame class of 2021 was officially enshrined on September 24. The honorees included **Carl "CJ" Johnson** (Men's Track and Field), **Jason Jones** (Football), **Amanda Kulikowski** (Soccer), **Carl E. Thomas** (Men's Basketball), **Charles E. Thomas II** (Men's Basketball), and **LaTonya M. Watson** (Women's Basketball). The newest inductees join a prestigious group of more than 250 fellow Hall of Famers that will forever be honored at EMU.

- Former Eastern golfer **Michael Blair** won the **Mackenzie Tour/PGA TOUR Canada's Prince Edward Island Open**.
- Former Eagle **Brittni Mason** earned three medals (one gold and two silver) at the **2020 Summer Paralympic Games**.
- Former Eagle **Donald Scott** completed his Olympic run in the men's triple jump final with a seventh-place finish at the **Tokyo Olympics** in August.

\* \* \*