

President's Report
EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Board of Regents
Dec. 5, 2024

Chair Newton and Distinguished Members of the Board of Regents:

As we approach the final stretch of the winter semester, our students are busy completing assignments and preparing for final exams, which begin next week. This can be a challenging time for them, and the University remains focused on providing the support and resources they need to succeed in these final days of the semester.

In nine days, the University will celebrate the most special of times on a college campus – commencement. On Dec. 14, members of the Board of Regents, University administrators, and our faculty and staff will congratulate 1,000 students who will conclude this part of their academic journey. Here are some interesting facts about our soon-to-be graduates:

- 8 are graduating with doctoral degrees;
- 211 are graduating with master's degrees;
- 760 are graduating with bachelor's degrees;
- 157 are graduating Cum Laude with a 3.5 to 3.69 grade point average;
- 154 are graduating Magna Cum Laude with a 3.7 to 3.89 grade point average; and,
- 119 are graduating Summa Cum Laude with a 3.9 to 4.0 grade point average.

Our commencement speaker is EMU alum and financial executive Michael Pugh. He is the chief executive officer at the Local Initiatives Support Corporation. With more than 30 years of banking experience, Mr. Pugh has been a strong advocate for expanding access to capital for underserved families, businesses, and communities. His interest in community finance began while working as a bank teller to support himself through college.

As we celebrate the accomplishment of our graduates, it's worth noting that their success is built on the strength of our outstanding academic programs. Several Eastern master's programs were recently recognized by Intelligent.com:

- Clinical Research was ranked No. 1 in the nation;
- The online educational psychology program was ranked No. 8; and,
- Our master's programs in human resources, engineering management, and the MBA in entrepreneurship were all ranked in the top 50 in the country.

President's Report

EMU continues to be Michigan's leading military and veteran-friendly higher education university. In the latest Military Times Best for Vet rankings, Eastern claimed the No. 1 spot in Michigan and ranked No. 4 in the Midwest, highlighting our commitment to providing exceptional support and resources for military-affiliated students.

Students from the GameAbove College of Engineering and Technology Interior Design program recently earned the top three awards in the Student Rendering category in the national Configura Awards. Seniors Rah-Neem Ah-Lani took first place, Holly-Ann Moo-Dee claimed second, and Isa-Bella Ruh-Shell secured third.

Congratulations to the 21 faculty members selected as recipients of the James H. Brickley Endowment for Faculty Professional Development and Innovation awards. The awards will allow them to further their academic research and scholarly and creative activity. Details about the endowment and the faculty members involved can be found on EMU Today.

My deep appreciation to the members of the negotiating teams who finalized the new collective bargaining agreement with EMU UAW Local 1976, representing nearly 300 University employees in the Professional Technical bargaining unit. Both teams worked diligently over several months to achieve a successful outcome.

In the spirit of giving for the holiday season, the annual "Thankful for You" Drive-Thru Giveaway was held on Nov. 21 at the George Gervin GameAbove Center. This year, 540 free holiday meals, totaling approximately 15,000 pounds of food, including turkeys, hams, pies, dinner rolls, and locally grown produce, were distributed to local families. Led by EDining and Chartwells, I was a proud sponsor the event along with Dr. Connie Ruhl Smith. Other sponsors included the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, the Eastern Michigan University Credit Union, and Meijer.

In a separate giveaway, the EMU Department of Public Safety and members of Student Government collaborated to provide Thanksgiving meals to 20 families from the EMU Children's Institute. This is the third year DPS has led this effort.

It is my hope that support of initiatives such as these fit into all of our holiday plans this season.

In concluding my remarks, I thank Regents Jeffries and Simpson for their outstanding support as they end their Board duties at the end of the year after eight years of remarkable and dedicated service.

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

Thank you, Chair Newton.

James M. Smith, Ph.D.
President

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Recognition

- **Isaiah Garcia**, a junior studying Entrepreneurship, and **Chloe Hibbler**, a junior studying Finance, were recipients of the **College of Business Ethics Essay Award**, named in honor of former Dean David Mielke.
- The **Master of Science in Management of Innovation and Strategy** degree program has achieved a **top-50 ranking** among entrepreneurship programs in the United States and is the **No. 9 best program in the Midwest**, as announced by **The Princeton Review** and *Entrepreneur* magazine.
- EMU earned a spot among the **top 250 universities nationwide** for **online degree programs**, according to **Newsweek**.
- The **Nursing** and **Business** degree programs have been ranked **among the best nationally** in the 2024 **Best Colleges Research rankings** released by Research.com.
- Eastern Michigan University recognized the achievements of four distinguished alumni at its **63rd annual Alumni Awards** ceremony on October 18. Awards were presented by the **Office for Alumni Engagement** in partnership with the **Alumni Association**. **La'Shardae Scott** was honored with the **Outstanding Young Alumni Award**, **John Tuttle** with the **Alumni Achievement Award**, **Judy Keenan** with the **Distinguished Alumni Award**, and **Patrick Barry Jr.** with the **Dr. John W. Porter Distinguished Service Award**.

Of Note

- Eastern's new facility dog, Tinker, advice for students living with developmental and learning disabilities, Eastern's support of refugee students, the halftime show with The Temptations, and the EMU Foundation are the subjects of recent episodes of "**Enlighten U**," a mental health podcast for students. The podcast can be found on EMU's YouTube channel and is available from podcast services.

Events

- EMU alumnus **Kevin Evans** presented a lecture on the latest trends in cybersecurity on December 4.
- In collaboration with the **EMU Credit Union**, a lecture on budgeting, saving, common money mistakes to avoid, credit, and more was held on November 21. The talk was facilitated by **Nicole Bernacik**, a financial education specialist.
- The student organization **EMU Gift of Life** club held its first bone marrow drive on November 21.
- The **GameAbove College of Engineering and Technology** hosted a **TechTalk** featuring **Mycah Slade**, associate engineer for Asset Management Overhead Transmission Line at ITC Holdings Corporation, on November 20.
- A community discussion on **dating violence and sexual assault** was held on November 20. The event was sponsored by the **EMU Special Victims Unit**, **SafeHouse Center**, and the **Washtenaw County Prosecutor's Office**.
- Students had the opportunity to experience **Ikebana**, Japanese flower arrangement, on November 18 during **International Education Week**.
- The annual **Bandorama** event featuring the **Symphonic Band**, **Wind Symphony**, and **EMU Marching Band** was held on November 16.
- The **Digital Marketing Workshop** was held on November 15. Participants explored the intersection of marketing, culture, and AI with leaders from the Detroit Pistons, Pinterest, Google, and local tech startups.
- The annual **EMU Rec/IM Turkey Trot 5K** was held on November 14.
- The **University Library**, **University Archives**, and the **College of Arts and Sciences** presented a seminar, "**EMU at 175: Telling Our Stories to Understand Who We Are**," covering pivotal moments, achievements, and the enduring impact on the community, on November 14.
- **Dr. Akram Khater**, Khayrallah Chair in Diaspora Studies at North Carolina State University, presented a lecture on unearthing the hidden histories of Arab immigrants in the U.S. on November 13.
- A reception for campus veterans was held at the **Kettles Military and Veteran Services Center** on **Veterans Day**, November 11. The Center serves over 400 student veterans, spouses, and dependents annually, providing access to essential resources, such as resume writing assistance, academic advising, and employment preparation.

- Some of the region's best high schools and community college esports teams converged at EMU for a full day of competition at the **Scholastic Esports Invitational Finals** on November 9.
- A performance by more than 100 string students and 100 choir students who participated in the **EMU Honor String Orchestra and EMU Honor Choir** was held on November 8.
- The subject of the **COE Dean's EduTalk** event on November 7 was "**Meeting the Moment in Special Education: Transdisciplinary Scholarship as a Tool for Better Supporting Students,**" addressing the need for collaborative action to address persistent inequities in special education.
- The **University Advising and Career Center** held its annual **Fall Job Fair** on November 6 featuring more than 70 employers from industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, and government.
- **Shiloh Maples**, an Anishinaabe seed keeper and community organizer, presented a discussion on November 6 on the origins of food and reconnecting with the land.
- **Stefan Stolarchuk**, low brass instructor at the Flint Institute of Music, presented a recital with the assistance of pianist **Dr. Hyekyung Lee** and violist **Dr. Dilek Engin** on November 4.
- **Jaewoo Lee** and **Zachary Litty** joined EMU faculty, **Dr. Brendan Ige** and **Dr. Donald Babcock**, for a low brass orchestral concert on on October 30.
- **Dr. Delia Fernandez-Jones** of Michigan State University, Chicano/Latino Studies, spoke about Mexican and Puerto Rican history on October 30.
- **Campus Life** held its annual **Pumpkins on the Patio** pumpkin carving event on October 29.
- The **Faculty Scholarly and Creative Activity Showcase** was held on October 29.
- The **Center for Jewish Studies** sponsored a lecture on October 28 with **professor Barry Steifel** on "Difficult Memorials: Historic Synagogues From the Days of Slavery," discussing the important role memorials play in understanding ourselves and our history.
- The **Women's and Gender Studies** department sponsored a panel on gender in the election on October 28 featuring **Congresswoman Debbie Dingell, EMU Provost Rhonda Longworth**, and student and faculty speakers.

- American composer, **Lori Laitman**, held a master class for **School of Music & Dance** singers on October 26. Voice faculty presented Laitman's songs in a recital as part of the **2024 Festival of American Song**.
- The **GameAbove College of Engineering and Technology** held its annual **Digital Divas Conference** on October 25. The conference aims to deliver crucial knowledge about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers and opportunities for young women.
- The **EMU Symphonic Band** presented its annual, family-friendly **Halloween Pops Concert** on October 25. The concert featured music from Wicked and Harry Potter among other classical favorites by Dvorak, Grieg, and Offenbach.
- Two-time GRAMMY® award nominee for Best Classical Vocal Solo Album for 40@40 (2024) and Confessions (2022), soprano **Laura Strickling**, presented a master class for **School of Music & Dance** singers on October 25.
- The “**Amplifying the Arts Creative Connections**” event was held on October 24, to showcase students' talents, provide networking with local professionals, and encourage connection with the creative community at EMU.
- **McAndless Visiting Professor Dr. Joey Quiñones** spoke on October 24 about the **Marking Place** project, which explores how statues, monuments, and memorials at EMU reflect the people, histories, and events of our University community.
- EMU associate professor **Audrey Farrugia**, 2023-24 **Michael G. Morris Endowed Chair**, hosted an open house and presentation on transforming education through leadership on October 23.
- Internationally renowned sociologist and social theorist, **Peter Beilharz** (La Trobe Uni, AU) led a discussion on exploring the **shared and divergent modernities of the U.S. and Australia** on October 21.
- The **Africology and African American Studies Department** hosted the “**We Are Speaking--Gender, Race, and Voting**” panel discussion on October 21.
- The **Chemistry Department** hosted the “**From Lab to Life: A Chemistry Career Exploration Event**” on October 21.

Athletics

- Cross Country (Women): The women's cross country team placed third at the MAC Championships. **Paige Marchant** was named **All-MAC First Team**.

- Cross Country (Men): The men's cross country team placed third at the MAC Championships. **Ronan Codyre** and **Sam Peterson** were named **All-MAC Second Team**.
- Golf (Women): The women's golf team set a **new team school record of 879** at the Rainbow Wahine Invitational.
- Golf (Men): **Tim Chan** set a **new school record of 63** and finished **third overall** at the **White Sands Bahamas Men's NCAA Invitational**.
- Soccer (Women): **Ella Holland, Secora Johnson, Maddie O'Farrell, Kate Robinson, Rosalie Takacsy,** and **Sarah Van Euwen** were named **Academic All-District** by the College Sports Communicators.
- Tennis (Women): **Sabina Brichackova** and **Prerna Vichare** earned a **silver** medal in the doubles tournament of the **MAC Fall Individual Championships**.
- Volleyball (Women): **Kendal Bonney** was awarded a **Demonstrator Scholarship** by the AVCA. As a Demonstrator, she will attend the annual AVCA Convention and will participate in on-court educational sessions.
- Volleyball (Women): **Hatteras Welker** broke the single-season freshman block record with six blocks against Ball State University.
- Volleyball (Women): **Hatteras Welker** was named to **MAC All-Freshman Team**.
- EMU Athletics achieved its **highest Graduation Success Rate (GSR) in program history**. According to the latest NCAA report EMU posted an impressive overall **GSR of 89%**, matching its record set during the 2022-23 season. This achievement marks the 10th consecutive year the university has recorded a GSR of 80% or higher, representing a remarkable 17-point increase since the 2010-11 academic year.