

SECTION:	13
DATE:	April 23, 2019

**BOARD OF REGENTS**  
EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

**RECOMMENDATION**

**COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER AND HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENT**

**ACTION REQUESTED**

It is recommended that the Board of Regents approve Mr. Dave Zilko as Commencement Speaker at the morning and afternoon April 28, 2019 commencement ceremonies. In addition, it is recommended that the Board award an honorary Doctor of Commerce degree to Mr. Zilko.

**STAFF SUMMARY**

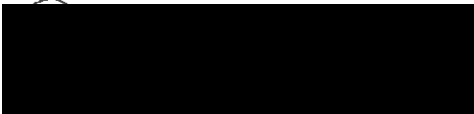
Biography for Mr. Zilko follows.

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

None.

**ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION**

The proposed Board action has been reviewed and is recommended for Board approval.



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**University Executive Officer**  
**Rhonda Longworth, Ph.D.**

4/2/2019  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

# Dave Zilko

Dave Zilko has been an entrepreneur for over 25 years, most notably as Vice Chairman of Ferndale-based Garden Fresh Gourmet. Dave's primary responsibilities at Garden Fresh were sales and strategy, and he helped usher the company to \$110 million in revenue before engineering its sale to The Campbell's Soup Company for almost a quarter billion dollars.

Dave subsequently wrote book detailing how he and his partners built Garden Fresh. Entitled "Irrational Persistence; Seven Secrets That Turned a Bankrupt Startup into a \$231 million Business," the book was published by Wiley & Sons, who distributed it nationally where it enjoyed time on USA Today's best seller list.

Dave currently serves as CEO of FUEL Leadership, an emerging digital media property he founded specializing in the university communication space.

Dave is an operating partner at Huron Capital, Michigan's leading private equity firm with over \$1 billion under management, and serves on several boards. He earned a bachelor's degree in finance from Michigan State University and an MBA in marketing from The George Washington University.

