

President's Report
EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Board of Regents
Dec. 8, 2022

Madam Chair and Distinguished Members of the Board of Regents:

As we near the end of the semester we have much to celebrate and look forward to, especially as we are approaching the start of the new year. Across campus, construction is evident as Welcome Home 2025, our transformative student housing project, is well underway. Renovations to Downing, Putnam and Walton residence halls are taking place. And, considerable activity is taking place as construction of the new Lakeview and Westview buildings begins. These new housing communities, with apartment-style living, will be highly user-friendly and efficient for our students and will contribute greatly to the overall vibrancy of our campus. It is wonderful to see the hard work of the many people involved in the planning process, including hundreds of students who participated in forums and surveys, starting to come to fruition. New renderings of the buildings are posted on the [Welcome Home 2025 website](#), where you can learn more about the project and timeline.

Commencement is just nine days away – 1,100 students will receive their degrees and begin the next chapter in their lives. This is always a highlight of the year, and I am pleased we will be joined by two-time Eastern graduate Philip Incarnati, president and CEO of McLaren Health who will deliver the commencement address and receive an honorary Doctorate of Science. Mr. Incarnati holds both a bachelor's and master's degree in business administration and was a student-athlete on the football team. His legacy at EMU runs deep. He served on the Board of Regents from 1992-2010, including serving as chair for 10 years. His leadership as a Regent and his generous financial support continue to incentivize innovation, growth, and excellence on campus.

We're also pleased to be joined by distinguished educator and community advocate, Professor Emeritus Ronald Woods. Professor Woods will receive an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters. He is the founding department head of African American Studies and has been an unwavering champion for students from all walks of life. We look forward to celebrating Professor Woods and recognizing his many achievements.

The end of the semester is also an excellent time to celebrate academic success and innovation. Earlier today, we highlighted the Brickley Awards and the 11 faculty members involved in nine projects that were recognized. In 2016, Anthony and Lois Evans established the James H. Brickley Endowment for Faculty Professional Development and Innovation. The endowment's purpose is to facilitate faculty professional development and innovation through a broad range of activities, including research and scholarly/creative work, curriculum development, community service, professional travel, and training. The full list of the 11 faculty members and their projects can be found in the documents from today's Educational Policies Committee meeting.

Continuing our theme of success and innovation, three interior design students were recently honored with first, second, and third place finishes during the 15th annual National CET Student Awards sponsored by a Swedish software company. This is the fourth consecutive

year that all three top spots have been awarded to EMU interior design students. Please join me in congratulating seniors Kaitlyn Dorey, Allison DePottey and Claire Heikka.

Students in Eastern's Eagle Investment Fund are showing professional investment managers how it's done. Since April, the student-managed fund, supported by faculty in the College of Business, outperformed the markets, which is all the more difficult due to factors like inflation, rising interest rates, the ongoing war, and the possible recession.

The Eagle Investment Fund includes 11 undergraduates and five graduate students. You can learn more about them on EMU Today. Please join me in recognizing their faculty advisors, Ivan Rodriguez and Yu Zhang. Not surprisingly, two students have already found positions with an investment company.

The entrepreneurship program headed by Professor Sanjib Chowdhury was recently ranked among the top 50 graduate programs in the nation by The Princeton Review and Entrepreneur magazine. This is a wonderful accomplishment and testament to Dr. Chowdhury's fine work through the Center for Entrepreneurship.

On the topic of success, please join me in celebrating our student-athletes on the football team, along with the coaching and support staff, for their outstanding season this year. With eight regular-season wins, the team claimed a share of the MAC's West Division title for the first time in Eastern history and won the Michigan MAC trophy for the first time since 2012. The team will play in its fifth bowl game in the last seven seasons, earning a bid to the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl. The Dec. 20 matchup against San Jose State University pits two teams who last met in the California Bowl in 1987. Eastern went into that game as a 17-point underdog, and won 30-27. Special congratulations to Coach Chris Creighton who has built a program that has made Eagle nation proud.

In regard to the extension of my employment contract, I am grateful to the members of the Board of Regents for their confidence and their appreciation of the efforts of the University's leadership team. I am proud of the positive strides we have taken, together with students, faculty, staff and alumni. And, I know much work, and ongoing collaboration, is critical to continuing our progress.

As I conclude, please join me in recognizing two exceptionally fine individuals who share this very long table with me this afternoon, Regents Dennis Beagen and Michelle Crumm. Your time and commitment to the University and your support of our students, faculty and staff have been tremendously valuable. I thank you on behalf of our leadership team, those in the room with us today, those watching via the live stream, and the rest of the Eastern community. I hope everyone can join us across the hall following the meeting for a reception in recognition of their work.

Madame Chair, this concludes my report. Additional information and accomplishments are listed in the appendix to this report on the University's website.

Thank you, Chair Jeffries.

James M. Smith, Ph.D.
President

Recognition

- Interior Design students were recently honored with the **top three spots** during the **15th annual National CET Student Awards** sponsored by the Swedish software company, Configura. **Kaitlyn Dorey** earned **first place**, **Allison DePottley** took **second place**, and **Claire Heikka** took **third place**.
- The **MBA program** has been named among the nation's **Best Part-Time MBA Programs by Fortune** in its 2022 ranking, climbing 13 spots and being one of two MBA programs in Michigan to be recognized.
- **EMU Chief Information Officer Ron Woody** has been named to the **EdScoop 50 Awards**, which honor the top information technology leaders in higher education.

Of Note

- Eastern Michigan University alumni, friends, faculty, staff, and students came together for the University's annual day of giving on November 29, **#GIVINGTRUEDAY**. Thanks to the support of **957 donors**, EMU raised almost **\$600,000** to support scholarships, programs, and services.
- **The National Science Foundation** awarded **Stephanie Casey**, mathematics and statistics professor at Eastern, a **five-year grant totalling more than \$215K** for data science and statistics education. The grant is part of a \$2.5 million project called "ESTEEM II: Enhancing Data Science and Statistics Teacher Education - Transforming and Building Community" project.
- GameAbove introduced the **GameAbove Next-Generation (Next-Gen) Scholarship**, offering financial support to EMU students on the brink of graduating but who are not able to finish their degree due to financial limitations. Partnering with the University and **Engage@EMU**, GameAbove is designating **\$75,000 towards scholarships starting in January 2023**.
- Washtenaw County has one of the state's highest recidivism rates at 34% compared to 26% statewide. Eastern received funding to launch its first **Navigation: Returning Citizens AmeriCorps Program (NRCA)**. The new program is designed to support returning citizens interested in pursuing two or four-year degree programs and certifications.
- In collaboration with Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County (JFS), Eastern has created a new scholarship called the **New Future Fund to help refugee students continue their studies** at the University due to an interruption by war or other transformative events.

- During the early holiday season, Eastern partnered with the **Hundley Foundation** and **Chartwells** for the “**Thankful For You**” event. Community organizations were able to receive more than **1,000 Thanksgiving meals** delivered or served by student volunteers, EMU alumni Samuel Estes, members of EMU athletics, President James Smith, Connie Ruhl-Smith, and Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels.
- The latest episode of **EMU Today TV** features **Student Body President Auryon Azar**. Topics discussed include the **Welcome Home 2025 plan** to build two new residence halls on campus and modernize other residential buildings, and **EMU’s long history as a national leader in forensics**. In the second segment, **Alexis Braun Marks, EMU archivist and associate professor**, is interviewed and discusses EMU’s iconic buildings and features.

Events

- The **Eastern Michigan University Choral Program** will usher in the holiday season with its **Candlelight Concerts** at 7:30 p.m. on December 10 and at 3 p.m. on December 11, at Pease Auditorium.
- **Raffaele Mautone**, EMU alum and founder and CEO of AaDya Security, spoke about his career path and technology as part of the **Tech Talk speaker series** on December 7.
- Director of the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study, **Ryan Buck**, shared his experience and expertise on transportation planning and creating a multi-modal and non-motorized future as part of the **URP Streetwise Speakers Series** on December 6.
- The **EMU Theatre** is presenting “**Peter and the Starcatcher**” on various dates from December 2-11.
- The **World Languages German language program** collaborated with the Detroit Pistons to host “**German Heritage Night**” on December 1. Participants experienced a panel discussion with guest speakers Andrew Bemish, honorary consul of the Federal Republic of Germany, Arnd Herwig, president of German American Business Council of Michigan, and Reinhard Lemke, senior advisor of the American Chamber of Commerce in Germany.
- **The Emerald Flutes ensemble** presented world music in the Alexander Recital Hall

on November 30.

- The annual **Bandorama** was held on November 19. The concert featured the **Symphonic Band, Wind Symphony, and EMU Marching Band**.
- The **EMU Civil Rights & Social Justice Center** presented the first in a three-part speaker series, “60 Years of Civil Rights: From the Church House to Social Media, the Struggle Continues,” on November 17. The keynote speaker was **Dr. Leslie McLemore**, an activist with the Mississippi Freedom Project.
- Assistant Principal Percussionist of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra **Andres Pichardo-Rosenthal** presented a **percussion clinic** for percussion students on November 16.
- **Michael Grzybowski**, senior counsel for Dykema, spoke on patenting inventions as part of the **Tech Talk** speaker series on November 16.
- **Dr. Abraham Edwards**, of Michigan State University and recipient of the 2022 Michigan MAA Distinguished Teaching Award, held a talk titled “Infinite Fun with Exponents” on November 15.
- **Dr. June Manning Thomas** discussed her book “Struggling to Learn: An Intimate History of School Desegregation in South Carolina” covering first-person recollections and incisive, historical commentary on November 10.
- EMU alumnus and Syracuse University professor, **Aaron Luedtke**, gave a talk that examined the **Battle of Fort Dearborn** from a Native American perspective on November 10.
- On November 10, **Petra Koppers**, the 2022 McAndless Professor, led students and community members in a workshop exploring **creative ways to audio-describe visual images** for the benefit of visually disabled people and everyone else.
- **Professor Deborah Pae** and Grammy Award-Winning recording engineer and violinist, **Da-Hong Seetoo** hosted a talk on the art of recording, “What musicians need to know when preparing for recording, and what recording engineers listen for in the booth!” on November 10. Following the talk, Professor Pae and Da-Hong Seetoo performed the “East Meets West: Seetoo Scholarship Celebration” concert.
- The **EMU First-Gen Forward Initiative Team** hosted the **EMU First-Generation**

Celebration Day on November 10 to celebrate first-gen students.

- **Chuck Gray**, vice president of Ford Motor Company, discussed the importance of STEM and the power of engineering on November 9 as part of the **Tech Talk** speaker series.
- **EMU Admissions** hosted “**Explore Eastern**” on November 5. The event for high school students and their families featured an academic resource fair, presentations by the Deans from each of our five academic colleges, and opportunities to tour the campus.
- The **Digital Divas** program hosted its **12th annual high school conference** on November 4. The event provides invaluable insight into STEM careers and opportunities for young women.
- **Shooshan Danagoulian**, Wayne State University, presented a seminar titled “Insured in the Emergency Department: Does Improved Insurance Coverage Close Disparities in Care for Black and Hispanic Patients?” on November 2.
- The **EMU 2022 Fall Career Fair** was held on November 2. Students and alumni from all majors and industries were encouraged to attend.
- The **EMU Symphony Orchestra** presented an evening of Halloween music at their **annual Halloween Pops Concert** on October 28. The EMUSO performed songs from Star Wars, The Wizard of Oz and Pirates of the Caribbean as well as many others.
- **Engage@EMU** and the **EMU Bright Futures** network of afterschool programs partnered with **uniteSTEM** for **ypsiGLOW** on October 28. The event is a celebration showcasing Ypsilanti's creativity and diversity with light-filled luminary processions, costumes, public art installations, street art performances, music, dancing, and more.
- The dean of the **College of Education, Dr. Ryan Gildersleeve**, held a Dean's Talk titled "Community + Value and the Future of Education" on October 27.
- **Bollywood Night** was held on October 22 in **celebration of Diwali**, a famous festival of lights.
- The **EMU Marching Band** took to the streets of Ypsilanti on October 22 for donations to benefit the students in the marching band.

- The **EMU Theatre** presented Arthur Miller's "**The Crucible**" from October 21-23.

Athletics

- Football (Men): **Brandon Benson, Dylan Drummond, Carter Evans, Samson Evans, Jesus Gomez, Tanner Knue, Taylor Powell** and **Mitchell Tomasek** have been named **2022 College Sports Communicators (CSC) Academic All-District honorees**.
- Football (Men): The Eagles captured the **Michigan MAC Trophy** and were also **co-champions of the MAC West Division**.
- Football (Men): **Jose Ramirez** collected **MAC Defensive MVP honors**, becoming the first Eastern Michigan student-athlete to be named a league most valuable player in the sport of football. **Jaylon Jackson, Sidy Sow, and Mitchell Tomasek** were named **First Team All-MAC**. **Brian Dooley** and **Samson Evans** each earned **Second Team All-MAC honors**. **Hassan Beydoun, Jesús Gómez** and **Tanner Knue** earned **Third Team All-MAC honors**.
- Football (Men): **Jose Ramirez** has accepted an invitation to play in the **2023 East-West Shrine Bowl**, college football's longest-running all-star game.
- Soccer (Women): **Sarah Ash, Sophia D'Ambra, Tiffanie Hollingsworth, Megan Lukowski, Maddie O'Farrell, and Rebecca Przybylo** have been named **2022 College Sports Communicators (CSC) Academic All-District honorees**.
- Soccer (Women): **Maddie O'Farrell** was named **All-MAC Second Team** and **Hannah Thompson** was **2022 MAC All-Freshman Team** honors.
- Track & Field (Men): **Baldvin Magnussen** set a new **Icelandic indoor national record** in the 5,000m run at the Sharon Colyear-Danville Open.
- Volleyball (Women): **Raeven Chase**, a three-time Academic All-MAC selection, earned **All-MAC First Team honors** for the second consecutive time.
- Volleyball (Women): **Mackenzie Gross, Bella Hommes, Callie Minshew, and Madeline Timmerman** have been named to the **College Sports Communicators (CSC) Academic All-District Team**.
- **Eastern Michigan Athletics** posted an **overall Graduation Success Rate (GSR)** of

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87, the mark tying the department's previous best set during the 2019-20 campaign.

- **Alex Jewell**, director of media relations, was named to the inaugural **30 Under 30 Class** by the **College Sports Communicators**.