

President's Report  
**EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY**  
Board of Regents  
Feb. 8, 2024

Chair Newton and Distinguished Members of the Board of Regents:

I'll begin my prepared remarks this afternoon, focusing on the profound significance of Black History Month. It is a time to reflect and celebrate the achievements, resilience, and impact Black individuals have made to shape our campus, communities, and nation.

At Eastern Michigan University, we stand committed to fostering an inclusive and diverse environment where every student feels valued and supported regardless of their background. Diversity is part of Eastern's D-N-A. It is celebrated here, as evidenced by our "All Are Welcome Here" signage across campus. We are focused on providing opportunities for growth and leadership -- and Black History Month is a catalyst for ongoing dialogue, understanding, and education.

As such, we have several programs taking place throughout the month. Yesterday, alumna and fashion icon Desyrée Nicole visited campus for a series of events to commemorate Black History Month and National Girls and Women in Sports Day. Desyrée founded a luxury men's clothing line based in New York City and participated in the Netflix program "Next in Fashion." While a student at Eastern, she was a point guard on the basketball team that won the Mid-American Conference Championship in 2012.

Tomorrow, a group of students will travel to the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit for an event sponsored by Eastern's Black Student Union, the Center of Race and Ethnicity, and Campus Life. Registration for the museum tour and a list of other Black History Month activities can be found on the University's Black History Month webpage.

Let us carry the spirit of Black History Month as we continue our journey toward a more just and equitable society.

While on the topic of a more just and equitable society, Eastern faculty members are being recognized for their recent work. Professor Tsu-Yin Wu, director of the University's Center for Health Disparities Innovations and Studies, is the lead author of a study published in a national journal that examines the relationship between racism,

mental distress, alcohol use and firearm purchasing among Asian Americans during the pandemic.

Another national journal has published research conducted by three faculty members in the College of Business that assesses the impact of the Ukraine-Russia war on Ukraine refugees. Professor David Victor, Lecturer Kimberley Barker and retired lecturer Christine Day collaborated on the research project investigating the communication and cultural challenges the refugees face.

First-year student and Presidential Scholar Anyah Johnson has received the prestigious Gates Scholarship, awarded to only 300 students nationwide from a pool of more than 35,000 applicants. The Gates Scholarship is designed for exceptional minority students. Anyah is majoring in Aviation Flight Technology and is committed to increasing the number of women and Black pilots in the U.S.

In other good news, Eastern's nearly 500 student-athletes set a school record for the highest cumulative GPA in athletic department history with a 3.404 for the Fall 2023 semester.

And, keeping with athletics, please join me in celebrating the \$2 million gift from former cross country and track and field student-athletes Dan McClory and Keith Moore. Dan was a three-time captain of the cross-country team. Keith was a cross country and track and field team member and served in student government. After graduation, the teammates founded Boustead & Company Limited, a diversified financial services firm headquartered in Irvine, California. We are immensely grateful for their gift and ongoing commitment to Eastern Michigan University.

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

## Recognition

- **Chanuth Jayatissa, Cameron Jones, and Karthikeya Thota** represented EMU at the **Institute of Electrical Electronics Engineer's IEEEExtreme** 24-hour hackathon. The TEAM placed ninth in the U.S.
- Eastern's **Information Assurance Student Association** competed in nine challenge categories: open source intelligence, cryptography, password cracking, log analysis, network traffic analysis, forensics, scanning and reconnaissance, web application exploitation, enumeration, and exploitation. The team placed 11th in the competition, and ranked first in Michigan.
- Associate professor **Adam Briggs** has received the **B. F. Skinner Foundation New Researcher Award**. The award recognizes innovative and significant research in behavior analysis conducted within the first 10 years of receiving a doctorate.
- Five faculty projects received **James H. Brickley Endowment for Faculty Professional Development and Innovation** awards to develop solutions to real-world issues, such as twisting body motion detection, interdisciplinary understandings of social change and the Civil Rights movement, understanding the links between human behavior and the brain, and how science can inform the future. **Ruth Armitage, Jin Bo, Rui Chen, Matthew Cook, Naomi Hashimoto, Renee Lajiness-O'Neill, Steven LoDuca, Elizabeth Neilson, and Ken Saldanha** received awards for their projects.
- Eastern's **Director of Admissions LaJoyce Brown** has been honored with the **Michigan Youth Appreciation Foundation's Distinguished Service Award** for her contributions to Metro Detroit Youth Day, which brings together youth from diverse backgrounds for sports, fun, and constructive activities.
- The EMU **Center of Entrepreneurship's Executive Certificate in Entrepreneurship and Venture Challenge**, an eight-week certificate program, awarded \$30,000 to two winners, **Paul Reiss** and **Jonathan Marceau**.

## Of Note

- **Dr. Tsu-Yin Wu** has received a multimillion-dollar five-year grant from the **National Institutes of Health** to better understand racism during the pandemic that is associated with an increase in firearm ownership and carrying by Asian Americans, putting them at a higher risk of firearm injury.
- In a time of critical need, **Kroger**, alongside **Eastern Michigan University's Swoop's Pantry** and **EMU Athletics**, continues efforts to alleviate food insecurity among students. Due to the success of this joint effort, Eastern

recognized Kroger at a basketball game for the company's recent contributions to Swoop's Pantry, amounting to \$20,000. Cumulatively, Kroger had extended support exceeding \$90,000 to the pantry through various grants.

- The **GameAbove College of Engineering and Technology** announced the launch of its new **Fundamentals of Cybersecurity Certificate** program. The virtual six-month program is designed to provide individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to enter the field of cybersecurity.
- EMU biology professor **Aaron Liepman** created a LEGO mosaic of Martin Luther King Jr. and other influential leaders during the famous 1965 march from Selma to Montgomery. The mosaic was unveiled on January 15 in the University Gallery in the Student Center. It is comprised of 16,000 hand-painted LEGO bricks and took more than 100 hours to build. The mosaic is on display in the Honor's College.
- On the most recent episode of the "**Enlighten U**" podcast, EMU graduate student Justin Walters candidly shares his struggles with burnout and over-commitment throughout his undergraduate and graduate studies. Podcast episodes are available on the EMU YouTube channel and on all major podcast platforms.
- The January episode of **EMU Today TV** provided an inside look at the development of an innovative new EMU video podcast focusing on student emotional well-being, "**Enlighten U**," and a new six-month program that provides individuals with the skills and knowledge to enter the field of cybersecurity. Episodes can be found on the EMU YouTube channel.

## Events

- The **School of Music and Dance** held its annual **Faculty and Guest Artist Dance concert** on January 26-27.
- The **Formosa Quartet, EMU Symphony Orchestra, and EMU Choir** performed as part of **The American Mirror Project**, a collaborative initiative that holds up mirrors to America and highlights personal reflections of what America means, on January 20.
- Eastern held the inaugural "**Night of Dreams**" event, a collection of performances by EMU students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members at Pease Auditorium on January 18 as part of the MLK Celebration week of events.
- During the MLK Celebration week of events, Eastern hosted a "**Walk to Freedom**" panel discussion on January 17 with Edith Lee-Payne, activist for

social justice and participant in MLK's March on Washington.

- The **Holman Success Center** held its winter **Syllabus Scavenger Hunt Workshop** to help students learn organizational tips and time management strategies on January 17.
- EMU held its annual **Winterfest**, an event for students to connect with various student-run organizations on January 16.
- Eastern held its annual **MLK Jr. President's Luncheon** with keynote speaker **Victoria Pratt**, author of *The Power of Dignity: How Transforming Justice can Heal our Communities*, on January 15.
- Eastern's Choir hosted its annual **Holiday Candlelight Concert** on December 9 and 10.
- Eastern alumni and social media influencer **Jon Kung** made a stop on EMU's campus to give an **exclusive talk** about his career journey and how he rose to fame as a full-time content creator on December 5.
- **EMU Theatre** presented the stage play "**A Wrinkle in Time**" on November 30-December 3. The performance follows Meg Murry as she joins forces with Mrs. Whatsit, Charles Wallace, Calvin O'Keefe, and others to battle evil, rescue her father, save humanity, and discover herself.

## **Athletics**

- Cross Country (Women): **Esme Davies, Ella Gavin, Kiera Hansen, Sofia Ivanko, Marta Moreno, Chloe Musta, Cara Weber, and Elena Wheeler** were named to the **Cross Country Academic All-MAC Team**.
- Cross Country (Men): **Sam Peterson, Grant Sweningson, and Kian Wiles** were named to the **Cross Country Academic All-MAC Team**.
- Football (Men): **Dimitri Douglas, Samson Evans, Jere Getzinger, Ryan Kingston, and Tanner Knue** have been named **2023 College Sports Communicators Academic All-District** honorees.
- Football (Men): **Steve Bird** has been named to the **Phil Steele MAC All-Conference first team**. **Brian Dooley, Mitchell Tomask, and Hamze El-Zayat** were named to the **Phil Steele MAC All-Conference second team**.
- Football (Men): **Steve Bird, Blake Daniels, Nick Deverauz, Dimitri Douglas, Samson Evans, Jere Getzinger, Alex Howie, Kaiden Keefe, Ryan Kingston, Tanner Knue, Carson Lee, Josh McCarty, Alex Merritt, Max Reese, Owen**

**Snively, Mitchell Tomasek, and Daniel Warnsman** have earned **Academic All-MAC** honors.

- Football (Men): **Samson Evans** has earned a place on the **College Sport Communications Academic All-American second team**.
- Soccer (Women): **Sophia D'Ambra, Mary Grimes, Tiffanie Hollingsworth, Secora Johnson, Meagan Lukowski, Ashley Schneider, and Lily Spotak** received **Academic All-MAC** honors.
- Volleyball (Women): **Sabrina Gremm, Mackenzie Gross, Hannah Kivett, Emma McMahon, and Callie Minshew** received **Academic All-MAC** honors.
- Volleyball (Women): **Callie Minshew** and **Abigail Stanford** have been named to the **College Sports Communicators Academic All-District** team.
- Eastern held a ribbon cutting for the new **GameAbove Golf Performance Center** at Eagle Crest Golf Course, marking the culmination of a visionary project that promised to redefine the landscape of collegiate golf training.
- Eastern's 497 student-athletes set a school record of the **highest GPA in the department's history** with a 3.404 cumulative GPA for the Fall 2023 semester marking the 28th consecutive semester of earning higher than a 3.0 cumulative GPA.

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