



November 21, 2025

Thank you, Chair Regis and Trustees, and welcome to those joining us in the room and through the livestream.

A special thank you to Trustee Regis for his service leading the CMU Board of Trustees as Chair for the past two years. Your leadership has helped guide this institution through a dynamic and often challenging time for higher education. You also have provided stability through a presidential transition, helping me feel welcome and supported in my role as president over the past year. Please join me in standing to recognize Todd Regis.

I am excited to continue our work with the Board's next Chair, and author, Trustee Denise Williams Mallett in the new year.

One of the highlights of the fall semester at CMU is Homecoming, and my first Homecoming experience was amazing.

Leanne and I were able to connect with so many returning alumni and the community. We were introduced to all the special CMU traditions, from waking up at 4:37 a.m. to the sound of a trombone serenade and throwing candy in the parade, to celebrating the class of 1975, surviving a perilous journey in a cardboard boat and getting a win on the football field!

It was unforgettable, and we look forward to many more Homecoming celebrations!

We have much to celebrate at CMU, and a lot of work ahead to confront challenges and meet our mission of student success. I appreciated the

opportunity to share my thoughts on this at the State of the University Address earlier this month.

The state of our university is strong, and I believe it will only grow stronger through the implementation of necessary changes. I was thrilled to remind our university community that our brightest days are ahead.

Our students give me reason for optimism every day, and I would like to share some examples of their success over the past couple of months.

A CMU student team earned first place at the Collins Aerospace Supply Chain Case Competition, outperforming universities from across the Midwest. Congratulations to Savana Stewart, Austin Benchley, Zack Parker and Chester Gouin, and College of Business Administration faculty advisor Evelyn Smith. Thank you for representing CMU so well in the region.

This fall, CM Life was again recognized by the Associated Collegiate Press as a Pacemaker finalist, the top award in the country. Seven staff members were celebrated among the top 10 in the nation for graphic design, column writing and photography. CM Life is routinely recognized nationally for its excellence in business, advertising, and journalism. Congratulations to the hard-working students continuing that legacy.

And I'm happy to report CMU has a new registered student organization: a chapter of the American Marketing Association. It is a new opportunity for our students to connect theory with practice, develop their marketing skills, and join a nationally recognized network of marketing professionals. MBA student Aimen Khan is the group's founding president and is already collaborating with other student organizations to provide valuable experiences for marketing students.

Fall on campus always includes excitement around football, and while the outcome of our rivalry game against a certain opponent did not go our way, Coach Drinkall and the team are bowl eligible and still in the hunt within the Mid-American Conference.

Congratulations as well to Coach Drinkall and his wife Kim who expanded their roster and welcomed a new CMU Chippewa into the world with the birth of a baby girl.

The CMU men's and women's basketball teams have also tipped off their seasons, and we look forward to plenty of thrills on the court this season.

We are learning more about the impact CMU Athletics has in our community. It is truly an integral part of the local economy.

A recent independent report found that CMU Athletics creates \$106.9 million a year in economic activity. We could not make that kind of impact without the support of our partners and the community – thank you.

This week CMU took another big step toward making a CMU degree more flexible, affordable and convenient with the launch of Central Bound at Lansing Community College.

Central Bound is a partnership between CMU and community colleges designed to increase access to earning a bachelor's degree. Through dual admission and co-enrollment, students remain active at both institutions – continuing community college coursework while making progress toward earning a CMU degree.

The Central Bound model eliminates the need for a traditional transfer process – students are CMU Chippewas from the beginning. We look forward to expanding this initiative to more community colleges throughout Michigan.

In September, this board approved updates to CMU's 2023 to 2028 Strategic Plan, and we keep making progress on achieving the plan's goals.

Go Grants are fueling many aspects of the plan's priorities with several initiatives now underway or completed, including: Psychological Safety trainings for faculty and graduate students, the opening of a new 3-D printing lab, listening sessions on embracing A.I., creation of a mental health peer support network, new tools allowing students to make the most of our Adobe Digital Lounge, and more.

We are planning a symposium on February 10th to receive updates on all 27 of the Go Grant funded initiatives.

One of the most successful parts of our Strategic Plan, to date, has been a significant increase in our engagement with the Mount Pleasant community.

We were very proud of the success of the Paint the Town Maroon effort and the Fire Up Fest events, and we're incredibly grateful for our strong relationships with community leaders and organizations.

And, in the spirit of celebrating those strong ties, I would like to give a special shout out to a Mount Pleasant team we are ALL rooting for: the Mount Pleasant High School Oilers football team.

This year's team is making local history: They have already won both their district and regional championships, and this weekend they are heading into the Michigan High School Athletic Association Semi-Finals. They are just one game away from earning a spot in the State Championship! This team has worked incredibly hard, and our community is proud of their dedication and drive.

To the Mt. Pleasant Oilers – we are cheering for you! FIRE UP!

Enrolling and retaining more students at CMU requires a plan, and our Strategic Enrollment Management Plan is now in its final draft – the result of many people on this campus contributing their thoughts and ideas over several months.

The four major priorities of the SEM Plan are: to increase CMU market share, to improve student success, to promote CMU's distinctive position and to increase online programs.

33 strategies in the SEM Plan support these priorities, some with a cost associated with them, but several that will require no new investment.

As I shared at the State of the University Address, one of the strategies will be to improve the campus visit experience for prospective students and their families and supporters. We will find ways to differentiate CMU on what is sometimes called the “wow walk,” to improve the odds they end their campus visit wanting to attend CMU.

I look forward to receiving your feedback about the SEM Plan draft as we head toward adoption and implementation.

Of course, implementing a new Strategic Enrollment Management plan is something that will require us to change some things we do. It is one of the initiatives that prompted the Board of Trustees to charge me with developing a roadmap for change management at CMU, which I am doing in conjunction with CMU's Chief Transformation Officer, Darcie Wilson.

We are currently holding workshops with various groups to talk broadly about the concept of Change Management and to identify elements that CMU may need to address to build long-term strength and sustainability.

The workshops are also a place to discuss ideas groups have on opportunities for innovation and change and current barriers.

We are excited about these workshops and know that the insights gained will be critical in shaping a change roadmap that truly reflects the realities and opportunities across CMU, and in building a culture where collaboration, investment, and continuous improvement help CMU thrive.

We plan to have the workshops completed by the end of the year and draft a change roadmap with standards based on the input received. After incorporating feedback, we plan to present the change management roadmap to the Board of Trustees in April.

Additionally, I would like to thank the more than 30 faculty and staff who have now joined the Change Champions Network and are meeting monthly to discuss how best to foster change at CMU.

I would also add that word of our University Transformation Office is spreading not just here in Michigan, nor in the US, but globally. Last weekend, I spoke about the UTO as part of a panel on higher education and transformation at a meeting held in Europe for approximately 200 global university and healthcare leaders that was covered by the Financial Times in the UK.

Physical changes on campus await approval of the Board today as well.

In addition to 33 deferred maintenance projects for the year ahead, there are several renovation projects aimed at retrofitting existing buildings to better meet CMU's needs, including: Merrill Residence Hall interior renovations, Ronan Hall renovations to allow for full use of the building and a new, permanent Student Food Pantry.

There also are College of Business Administration and general administration renovations affecting the Combined Services Building, Grawn, Sloan, Powers and Warriner Halls, to make more efficient use of space.

Later in this formal session under new business, we will have the opportunity to discuss the Advancing Health Together initiative, and the

next chapter for medical education at CMU involving Covenant HealthCare and MyMichigan Health.

The Board of Trustees' efforts to strengthen CMU's College of Medicine to make a greater impact in health care for underserved communities began in 2022. We call this the Advancing Health Together initiative.

CMU has explored ways to consolidate all four years of medical student cohorts in Saginaw to provide greater opportunities for peer-to-peer mentoring and student engagement, as well as increase access to clinical training opportunities.

Through the Advancing Health Together initiative, CMU and our health and community partners are demonstrating real commitment to delivering real improvements in health care – preparing physicians to meet the needs of underserved areas.

As we head toward the end of the fall semester, I am excited to be a part of a number of events.

One of my first major events as president one year ago was in Detroit, welcoming CMU alumni and supporters participating in America's Thanksgiving Parade. Again this year, CMU will have an amazing, student-focused float in the parade, which is broadcast on TV stations across the country. I am excited to participate in this annual tradition and look forward to meeting even more fired-up alumni. Trustee Denise Williams Mallett will also be joining us that day to help represent CMU.

Then on December 13, we will celebrate our fall graduates with three commencement ceremonies in McGuirk Arena. Graduating students will receive the degrees they worked so hard to earn, and I cannot wait to hand them a diploma as they cross the stage and begin their journey as highly employable CMU alumni.

As I concluded in my State of the University Address, CMU has faced challenges in the past and each time met adversity with resilience to grow stronger. I remain convinced that even brighter days are ahead, and I am grateful for the Trustees, faculty, staff, alumni and community whose FIRED-UP attitude ensures CMU will thrive.

Thank you, Chair Regis, that concludes my report.