

President's Report  
**EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY**  
Board of Regents  
Feb. 16, 2023

Madam Chair and Distinguished Members of the Board of Regents:

Over the past two months, we have had a wonderful opportunity to highlight Eastern's academic and research successes. Projects that take the work of Eastern graduates, students and faculty high above the earth into space, deep into Michigan lakes, and beyond.

Recent graduate Jeremy Schiel is on a mission to open gas stations in space. Yes, you heard me right, gas stations in space.

Jeremy graduated six years ago with a bachelor's in business administration from the College of Business. He is an entrepreneur who was recently named to Forbes Magazine's prestigious 30 Under 30 list.

He co-founded the company Orbit Fab whose mission is to extend the life cycle of satellites by creating a refueling mechanism. Jeremy has raised more than \$14 million from investors, including Lockheed Martin and Northrup Grumman, and has signed a \$13 million contract with the U.S. government to deliver fuel to Space Force satellites beginning in 2025.

While on the subject of high-altitude projects, another project that is gaining attention involves Eastern students participating in a nationwide eclipse balloon project supported by NASA.

Eastern's new program, EMU Atmospheric Physics Exploration, was developed by professors Dave Pawlowski and Tom Kovacs. Currently, EMU students are designing and building a set of high-altitude balloon payloads that include a streaming video system and data collection hardware. The 20 students will launch their atmospheric research later this year in the southeast U.S., coinciding with upcoming lunar and solar eclipses.

And we're not only looking up to the sky. A new course studying freshwater jellyfish in local lakes is also drawing interest from student researchers. You may have thought that jellyfish were only in our oceans. But they are right here in Michigan waterways.

Students in the class, led by Professor Cara Shillington, are back in the classroom after being out in the water last year observing and filming the jellyfish. Their research will contribute to scientific knowledge about freshwater jellyfish.

Each of the three endeavors – gas stations in space, balloons for eclipse research, and freshwater jellyfish – represent just a small sample of the tremendous research going on at our great institution.

The catastrophic earthquakes in Turkey and Syria hit close to home for many of the Turkish and Syrian citizens in our community. Four Turkish professors have launched a relief campaign in collaboration with the Turkish-American Cultural Association of Michigan. Economics Professor Mehmet Yaha, who has family in Turkey who are, thankfully, safe, is the president of the association. You can learn more about the relief effort on EMU Today.

In closing, I would like to welcome back to Ypsilanti our new Regent, Marques Thomey. Mr. Thomey is an Eastern alumnus and is the director of business development and real estate at the Wayne County Airport Authority. He previously served on the Eastern Michigan University Alumni Association Board of Directors, including a term as president. He received a Bachelor of Science in aviation management technology from Eastern Michigan University and a Master of Science in leadership from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Welcome home, Marques.

Madame Chair, I will conclude my report in a similar way as we started today's meeting. We stand by our friends, family and associates at Michigan State University and offer our deepest condolences to the victims' families.

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

- The **American Institute of Professional Geologists (AIPG) Michigan Section** recently awarded **Steve LoDuca**, professor of Paleontology, Sedimentology and Stratigraphy, the **Outstanding Educator Award**.
- Nursing Professor **Tsu-Yin Wu** was recently awarded the **Midwest Nursing Research Society (MNRS) 2023 Excellence in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award, Senior Career award** for her contributions to advancing health care.
- The **James H. Brickley Endowment for Faculty Professional Development and Innovation award** recipients for Fall 2022 are **Adam Briggs, Ovidiu Calin, Audrey Farrugia, Frank Fedel, Melissa Jones, Sheila Longpre, Tsai-Shan Shen, Rebecca Spragg, Chuyang Yang, Jodonnis Rodriguez, and Amanda Stype**.
- The **Center for Entrepreneurship** in the **College of Business** has been named **among the top 50 best graduate programs for entrepreneurs** by the **Princeton Review**.
- Eastern's Master of Science in **Integrated Marketing Communications** has been ranked No. 60 in the United States and No. 2 in Michigan among the **2023 Best Online Programs** by **U.S. News & World Report**.
- The Bachelor of Science degree in **Simulation, Animation and Gaming (SAG)** has been **ranked in the top 25 in the country** by **Animation Career Review**, an online resource for the animation, design and gaming industries.
- The **College of Business** has been named **one of the nation's best graduate business schools** for the 19th consecutive year by the **Princeton Review**.
- The **National Security Agency (NSA)** has redesignated the **GameAbove College of Engineering and Technology** as a **National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense (CAE-CD)** through the 2028 academic year.

## Of Note

- Nursing Professor **Tsu-Yin Wu** has received a federal **Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Navigator cooperative agreement award of nearly \$800,000**. The funding will help Wu lead a broad effort to assist the uninsured and other underserved communities in Calhoun, Kent, Macomb, Oakland and Wayne

counties in Michigan.

- **The National Science Foundation** awarded a national team of researchers, led by faculty at Eastern Michigan University, with a **grant totaling more than \$600K to study civilian-led police oversight boards** in Washtenaw County, San Diego County, and Milwaukee County. **Kevin Karpiak**, professor of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology, and his team will serve as principal investigator.
- The **National Science Foundation** recently awarded a **\$271,381 research and development grant to EMU and partner Rogue Space Systems** for their project on a new type of electronic propulsion thruster. **Evan Aguirre**, Rogue propulsion engineer and principal investigator, will lead the electronic propulsion thruster project along with co-principal investigator **Surabhi Jaiswal**, assistant professor of Physics and Astronomy at EMU and co-principal investigator.
- With funds raised from EMU alumni and community partners, the **Center for Entrepreneurship** at Eastern Michigan University is launching its third installation of the **Executive Certificate in Entrepreneurship program** to help aspiring entrepreneurs jumpstart their ideas. The eight-week in-person and online hybrid program offers business instruction, professional coaching, mentorship, networking, and the chance for participants to **pitch their startup ideas for a \$25,000 business expense fund**.
- Eastern Michigan University alumna Brittni Brown created the **Brittni L. Brown Book Scholarship** with EMU's **Black Alumni Association (EMUBA)** to support African American public relations and undergraduate journalism students. Brown presented the first **\$1,200 scholarship to Erin Flynn**, a senior majoring in media studies and journalism with a minor in public relations and a writer for the Eastern Echo.
- EMU alumnus **Jeremy Schiel** was recently named in **Forbes Magazines's 30 Under 30**. He co-founded Orbit Fab, the Gas Stations in Space™ company, after earning a bachelor's degree in International Business with a specialty in Management from Eastern. Orbit Fab builds orbital propellant depots so satellites can fuel up when necessary and deliver supplies to satellites and commercial space stations.
- Four EMU Turkish professors are partnering with the **Turkish-American Cultural Association of Michigan (TACAM)** to aid in what is considered one of the strongest earthquakes in Turkish history. **Mehmet Yaya**, EMU economics professor and department head in the College of Arts and Sciences, is the TACAM board president. Professors **Elif Persinger**, **Armagan Korkmaz**, and **Fatos Kocer** are also TACAM board members and have been actively involved in the relief efforts.
- Eastern Michigan University has been **awarded a bronze STARS rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education**. STARS

measures and encourages sustainability in all aspects of higher education. Fewer than 25% of U.S. universities have applied for STARS certification, and fewer than 5% have a current certification of bronze or better.

- Eastern Michigan University and **Washtenaw Intermediate School District (WISD)** are working collaboratively on a **Paraprofessional-to-Teacher Certification Pilot Program** to invest in existing public school employees who want to become teachers.
- The February episode of **EMU Today TV** provides perspective from Interim Chief Diversity Officer **Doris Fields** into the death of Tyre Nichols in Memphis, Black History Month and a recap of last month's campus MLK Celebration. The second segment features EMU Football Coach **Chris Creighton** discussing the team's dominating win in The Famous Idaho Potato Bowl, the successes of last season, this year's recruiting class, which has been named No. 1 in the Mid-American Conference, and the effort involved in helping football student-athletes excel on, and off, the field.
- The January episode of **EMU Today TV** introduced the new dean of the College of Education, **Ryan Evely Gildersleeve**. The episode also provided insights into the University/community initiative, "60 Years of Civil Rights," under the leadership of Political Science Professor **Barbara Patrick**, director of the EMU Civil Rights and Social Justice Center.
- Eastern Michigan University has partnered with **EnergySage** to provide educational resources and calculators for EMU employees, faculty, students, and alumni who are looking for solar options at home. Members of the EMU community can access resources and compare solar options online at the EMU-EnergySage program page.

## Events

- EMU students, faculty, staff, alumni, and supporters will celebrate the first **TRUEMU Night** of the year on Feb. 23 year as the **Detroit Red Wings** take on the New York Rangers. TRUEMU Nights are a great way for fans to show their support and appreciation of Detroit, the Red Wings, and EMU.
- The exhibition "**King Kong at Ninety: Visualization in the Art of Stop Motion Animation**," one of the largest exhibitions of original artworks featuring the art of Willis O'Brien, is running at the University Gallery in the EMU Student Center until Feb. 23. **Tom Suchan**, professor of art history, is co-curator of the exhibit.
- An installment of the EMU's Civil Rights Forum — "**A Conversation on Race, Policing, & Social Justice: Where Do We Go From Here?**" — was held on Feb. 15. The panel discussion featured EMU alumnus **Marques Banks**, who helped create the

Black Movement Law Project, an organization providing legal support to the activists and organizations of the Movement for Black Lives. A 2012 graduate of Eastern's Political Science Department, Banks went on to earn his Juris Doctor at the Catholic University of America's Columbus School of Law. Also included on the panel were **Dr. Aaron Rollins**, Peace, Justice, & Conflict Transformation Program, University of Louisville; **Natalie Holbrook**, Michigan Criminal Justice Program; **Eleanore Ablan-Owens**, Interfaith Council for Peace & Justice; and, **Rai Lanier**, Michigan Liberation.

- During **Black History Month** in February, a series of awareness events that will honor the sacrifices, contributions, and achievements Black people have made around the globe.
- **EMU Theatre** is performances of “**Stick Fly**” on various dates between Feb. 10-19.
- The **Center for Jewish Studies** sponsored a lecture with Professor **Mara Benjamin** of Mt. Holyoke College, who presented “Becoming Earthbound: Jewish Thought in an Age of Climate Change” on Feb. 13.
- The **Student Michigan Association of Planning (SMAP) Conference** was held at Eastern on Feb. 11.
- The **University Advising & Career Development Center** held an **Internship Fair** on Feb. 8 for students of all majors/class levels.
- On Feb. 7, **Connor Heaney**, Collections Manager of **The Ray and Diana Harryhausen Foundation**, spoke about the foundation's collection of some 50,000 items related to the film career and personal life of legendary special effects artist Ray Harryhausen.
- The **Black Student Union** and **Campus Life** hosted a trip to Detroit's **African American History Museum** on Feb. 3 in celebration of Black History Month.
- The **College of Arts and Sciences** hosted a lecture on **Arts-Based Methods, Archives and Futures** on Jan. 31 featuring 2022-23 McAndless Distinguished Professor Chair **Petra Koppers**. The lecture focused on why some disabled dance artists are not part of disability history.
- “**Comets & Discovery: A Sky-Hunter's Quest**” was presented at the EMU Planetarium on Jan. 30.
- The **GameAbove College of Engineering and Technology** hosted a **TechTalk**

featuring **Matthew Wagner, Renewable Energy Development Manager, DTE**, on Jan. 25. EMU TechTalk is a series that offers students and faculty opportunities to network with renowned experts and up-and-coming leaders in the engineering and technology fields. It also provides extensive networking opportunities and a chance to explore careers, internships, and research opportunities at the College.

- The **Annual Faculty and Guest Artist Dance Concert** was held on Jan. 20 and featured choreography by EMU Faculty and distinguished guest choreographers danced by members of **Company E**, the official performing company of EMU Dance.
- Professor **Ryan English** presented “Animation and Gaming: It’s Not Just for Play” on Jan. 17 as part of the **Honors College Star Lecture Series**.
- Eastern Michigan University hosted the **37th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration** from **January 13-16**. The celebration began with a kickoff event featuring EMU’s award-winning forensics team on Friday, Jan. 13, followed by other events during the weekend. Event highlights included a panel discussion and academic conferences designed to deepen the understanding of King’s impact on society. It culminated with the MLK Jr. President’s Luncheon and message from keynote speaker **Dr. Sampson Davis** on Jan. 16.
- The **Adapted Sports Club** hosted a “**Try Adaptive Sports Clinic**” in November, as a part of EMU’s **Therapeutic Recreation program** that aims to provide activities to athletes with physical disabilities. The Club supports participants in playing sports, exercising, and socializing in a barrier-free, inclusive environment.

## Athletics

- Baseball (Men): **Matt Kirk** has been named **Preseason Mid-American Conference Player of the Year** by **Perfect Games USA**.
- Football (Men): The Eagles took home the **championship trophy** for defeating San Jose University in the **26th Annual Famous Idaho Potato Bowl**. This is EMU's first bowl game victory against the same San Jose State Spartans in the 1987 California Raisin Bowl.
- Football (Men): **Jose Ramirez** has earned **Second Team All-America** status through the **Walter Camp Football Foundation**. The award is the nation’s oldest college football All-America Team. Ramirez also collected **Second Team All-America** honors from **The Sporting News** and **Third Team All-American** accolades from the **Associated Press**. Ramirez is the **first player in EMU history** to earn the trifecta of All-America honors from WCFF, AP, and SN.

- Football (Men): **Sidy Sow** has accepted an invitation to play in the **2023 NFLPA Collegiate Bowl**. Sow is just the fourth Eastern Michigan student-athlete to participate in the event.
- Track & Field (Men): **Baldvin Magnusson** set a new school record in the Meyo Mile event.
- Eastern student athletes posted **an overall GPA of 3.3**. The department's term GPA is second-best since records began being tracked in the fall of 1999. 74 percent (363) of EMU student-athletes earned a 3.0 GPA-or-higher for the fall semester. 62 EMU student-athletes with perfect 4.0 GPAs last semester, led by the women's Lacrosse team, which had 11.
- The **Mid-American Conference** won the **2022-23 Progressive Bowl Challenge Cup**, posting a winning percentage of .667 with a 4-2 record during Bowl Season. Created in 2002 by ESPN as a competition among the 10 FBS conferences during college football's postseason, the MAC won its first outright title. Previously the MAC tied for the top honor in 2011-12 with Conference USA.
- For the 14th time, an Eastern football alumnus is a Super Bowl Champion! **Andrew Wylie** and the Kansas City Chiefs won Super Bowl LVII. The game marked the third Super Bowl appearance in the last four years for Wylie as a member of the Chiefs.

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