

President's Report
EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Board of Regents
April 18, 2024

Chair Newton and Distinguished Members of the Board of Regents:

We're nine days away from one of the best days on Eastern's campus -- our spring commencement ceremonies. More than 1,700 students are eligible to participate on Saturday, April 27.

Graduates from the colleges of Business, GameAbove College of Engineering and Technology, and Health and Human Services will participate in the 9:30 a.m. ceremony. Graduates from the colleges of Arts and Sciences, Education, and Individualized Studies will participate in the 1:30 p.m. ceremony. The ceremonies will be live streamed – the link will be available on the [Commencement web page](#).

Chris Kaufman, entrepreneur, business executive, author, investor, EMU alumnus and GameAbove Advisory Board member, will serve as the keynote speaker and will receive an honorary doctorate in commercial science.

He is the co-founder of StockX, a revolutionary, global e-commerce platform. Recently valued at \$3.8 billion, StockX has created more than 2,000 jobs worldwide, many of which are in Detroit. He also recently co-founded ArtClvb, the world's first network-based marketplace platform created for the art world.

Two other distinguished leaders also will receive honorary degrees.

The honorable Trudy Archer, an alumna of Eastern, will receive an honorary doctorate of public affairs. She was appointed by Governor James Blanchard in 1989 and served as a judge for over 17 years before retiring from Michigan's 36th District Court. She also served as first lady of Detroit from 1994 to 2001 while her husband, Dennis Archer, was mayor.

Mohamad Issa will receive an honorary doctorate of public service. He is the founder and director of Global Educational Excellence, an education management organization based in Ann Arbor. His company oversees 14 public school academies in Southeast Michigan, including Global Tech Academy in Ypsilanti, which is chartered by Eastern. His company also has a presence in the Middle East and North Africa.

Another highlight of the graduation season is our Multicultural Graduation Celebration, which takes place at 6 p.m. on Friday, April 26 in Pease Auditorium. We hope you can join us!

The University continues to champion research by honoring 18 students and 18 faculty members with the Undergraduate Symposium Research Fellow awards, known as

SURF awards. These grants foster research and empower recipients to participate in the Undergraduate Symposium.

The SURF awards demonstrate EMU's commitment to promoting collaborative partnerships between undergraduate students and faculty mentors. The \$1,000 awards provide a platform for students and faculty to engage in hands-on research and creative scholarly projects of mutual interest. Visit EMU Today to learn more about this year's student and faculty honorees.

We're pleased to recognize the 44 faculty members who have received Summer Research and Creative Activity Awards. They will receive a \$12,000 stipend to conduct research, creative endeavors and other scholarly pursuits that benefit students. The full list of the awardees and their projects can be found on EMU Today.

U.S. News and World Report continues to recognize our academic programs. In its rankings of best graduate programs released last week, occupational therapy, social work and speech language pathology were named. Rankings announced previously recognize online graduate programs in business and education, and undergraduate programs in nursing and psychology. We were ranked No. 1 in Michigan in our category for undergraduate engineering, and we were tied for No.1 in Michigan for social mobility.

We also recently learned that for the seventh consecutive year, the online publication Military Friendly named Eastern the number one university in Michigan for supporting military veterans who are students. We are ranked, also by this publication, in the top 10 nationally.

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

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Recognition

- Honors senior, presidential scholar, and psychology major **Rana Aabed** was named as a semi-finalist in the **2024 Fulbright competition** for the **Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship (ETA)** to Turkey. The ETA program in Turkey serves to expand English language programs at developing universities across the country.
- Junior political science major and honors student **Naomi Barbour** has been selected as a **Harry S. Truman Scholarship** finalist. This scholarship is awarded to individuals who show outstanding potential and plan to pursue a career in public service.
- School of Music & Dance students and trumpet players **Nathan Bohr, Carter Coyne, Adriano Estraiotto**, and **Emily Smith** earned the opportunity to participate in the **National Trumpet Competition**. **Pereira** and **Estraiotto** will also compete in the Graduate Solo Division. The competition fosters a supportive environment for over 3,000 students from across the globe to showcase their talents and learn from renowned trumpet artists and faculty.
- McNair Scholars, **Jemone Cochran II, Sydney Dhue, Coreena A. Forstner, Jua'Chelle Harmon, Ryland b. Lambert, Thairu Moore-Petinak, Tierra Tresvant**, and **Lisbette Zavala** each published their research in the **2023 EMU McNair Scholars Research Journal**. The annual journal serves as a platform for McNair student researchers to showcase their hard work.
- Sophomore presidential scholars **Faith Galinis, Randy Kamindo**, and **Tatiana Worthy** have been accepted into the **Management Leadership for Tomorrow Career Prep Program**. The 20-month program provides underrepresented students seeking successful careers within business and technology the opportunity to receive personalized coaching, job search guidance, exposure to top employers, and more.
- The **National Science Foundation (NSF)** has awarded senior honors environmental science major **Kyle Martin** a **Graduate Research Fellowship**, one of the most prestigious science scholarships in the U.S., provides annual funding of \$37,000 for three years for outstanding graduate students who are pursuing research in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Martin is the first athlete from EMU to receive this award and the fifth recipient overall from the university.
- EMU's **Financial Management Association (FMA) chapter** earned a second-place finish at the recent FMA Leaders' Conference in New York City. Sophomore **Bre Neely**, freshman **Valentina Calderon Perez**, senior **Joe Rushlow**, and senior **Showan Yasin** competed in the conference's highly competitive investment challenge, showcasing their financial knowledge and

strategic thinking. The FMA Leaders' Conference is the premier gathering for undergraduate and graduate students interested in finance careers. It offers a comprehensive experience, allowing students to explore diverse career paths in finance and gain insights into the skills needed for success.

- EMU students launched a high-altitude weather balloon in Ohio on April 8 to capture a once-in-a-lifetime glimpse of the solar eclipse. This initiative is part of the NASA-funded **Nationwide Eclipse Ballooning Project**, led by Montana State University, which aims to capture data during the solar eclipse. The high-altitude weather balloon launch is the culmination of a year and a half of work by **EMU Atmospheric Physics Exploration (EMU APEx)** students, who are flight-testing new hardware while collecting data to help better understand how the atmosphere changes during solar eclipses. EMU is among 70 institutions selected to participate in the balloon project.
- EMU professor of secondary education mathematics **Stephanie Casey** has been selected as a recipient of the **Fulbright Scholarship**, a flagship U.S. initiative for international educational and cultural exchange that fosters connections between scholars and a global network of leaders and educators. She will conduct her research at the STEM Education Research Center at the University of Canberra, Australia.
- **Lewis Hershey**, professor of marketing, and **Annemarie Kelly**, associate professor of health administration, are second-place winners of the 2023 **Kenneth Black Jr. Author Award from the *Journal of Financial Service Professionals***. The journal recognized Kelly and Hershey's article as one of three original pieces that advance scholarly research and the financial services field.
- Internationally acclaimed cellist and EMU faculty member **Deborah Pae** performed with the **Michigan Philharmonic** on March 10.
- EMU faculty and lecturers **Ali Eydgahi, Marisol Garrido-Gutierrez, Henry Hastings, Amanda Maher, Christina Marsack-Topolewski, Christine Neufeld, Mark Veal, and Chuyang Yang** received awards at the **2024 Ronald W. Collins Distinguished Faculty and Lecturer Awards Ceremony** on March 19. The awards recognize individuals who excel in teaching, research, creative activity, and service to the University.
- EMU has been ranked as one of the top schools for online master's degrees in 2024 by **OnlineMastersDegrees.org**. The online **Dietetic Master's program** ranked 3rd in the nation, the **Psychology Master's program** ranked 22nd in the nation, the **Master's program in Engineering Management** ranked 25th in the nation, and the **Master's program in Early Childhood Education** ranked 37th in the nation.

- EMU has been ranked the No.1 most affordable online **registered nurse (RN) to Bachelor of Science in nursing (BSN) program** in Michigan by **RNtoMSN.org**, a resource for aspiring and current nurses seeking online BSN degrees. This recognition highlights EMU's commitment to delivering high-quality nursing education at an affordable cost, making it a top choice for registered nurses in Michigan looking to advance their careers.
- **Sarah Bamrick, Andre Bravo, Dr. Wendy Burke, Leighanne Denja, Vanessa Gardner, Matthew Gregory, Donna Holubik, Colleen Kibin, Charles Krey, Karen Peacock, Cathy Steiner, Melina Tumpkin, Paul Vuocolo, and Kathryn Wilhoff** received awards at the **2024 Staff Distinguished Achievement Recognition Awards Celebration** on March 21. The awards recognize outstanding staff who promote student engagement, institutional effectiveness, and community service.
- EMU alumna **Alexa Cooley** was named one of the **"Top 10 House Staffers to Watch in 2024"** on **Medium.com**. She graduated with honors in political science and communication in 2020.

Of Note

- **Eastern Michigan University** is celebrating its **175th anniversary** and rich legacy of academic excellence throughout the year, featuring various events and an exclusive website showcasing the university's journey.
- **Eastern** has been awarded a total of \$198,535 in funding from the **Martin Luther King, Jr. - César Chávez - Rosa Parks Initiative**, a program established by the Michigan Legislature to support academically or economically disadvantaged students pursuing higher education. Eastern received grants for the **Morris Hood Jr. Educator Development (MHED) Program, Select Student Support Services (4S) Program, and Michigan College/University Partnership (MICUP) Program**.
- EMU has been awarded a **\$50,000 grant** from the **Flinn Foundation** to support its commitment to building compassionate classrooms. **Professor Ron Flowers** is leading a powerful initiative to create an environment where students feel secure, supported, and understood. Flowers has taken a public health approach, establishing a campus-wide task force called "Building a Community of Caring." The task force is charged with developing and implementing a strategic mental health action plan to improve students' mental and behavioral health at EMU. The task force will partner with groups like the JED Foundation, a nonprofit that protects emotional health and prevents suicide for our nation's teens and young adults, to develop and implement mental health educational opportunities across campus.

- **EMUiNVENT** has been selected as one of eight high school teams to be awarded the **Lemelson-MIT InvenTeam® Grant**. This recognition highlights EMUiNVENT's dedication to innovation and its commitment to addressing pressing real-world challenges.
- EMU alumnus **Zach Wigal** hosted more than 1,200 gamers at the "**Gamers for Giving**" marathon from April 5-7 in the George Gervin GameAbove Center. The event, a charitable streaming marathon and video game fundraiser, raised more than \$1.25 million. The annual fundraiser has had a profound impact, with an estimated 5 million children benefiting from Gamers Outreach programs annually. The organization currently provides video game devices in over 400 hospitals, bringing joy and a bit of normalcy to hospitalized children.
- The **College of Business** has launched a new **Master of Science in Management of Innovation and Strategy degree** that is tailored for professionals and managers aspiring to leadership roles where innovation and strategic thinking are imperative. Participants will acquire essential skills for developing strategic thinking, creativity, innovation, and leadership communication. The program equips students with innovative strategies to recognize and address the greatest disruptors facing organizations today.
- Embarking on a higher education journey from **Henry Ford College (HFC)** to EMU is now more streamlined thanks to the **Learn4ward to EMU guaranteed transfer program**. This initiative offers HFC students a seamless transfer experience that paves the way for attaining both an associate degree and a bachelor's degree within four to six years.
- Eastern Michigan University's **College in Prison program** has forged a new partnership with the **EMU Writing Center** to extend tutoring and writing support to incarcerated students at **Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility**. By equipping students with valuable skills and knowledge, the program seeks to enhance employability prospects and reduce recidivism rates, thereby fostering positive societal outcomes.
- In response to the alarming statistics linking the opioid crisis to the rising rate of homelessness, EMU graduate student **Sara Crisenbery** is leading an initiative to address these intertwined epidemics in Ypsilanti. The project aims to educate the homeless population on how to use Naloxone as a harm-reduction approach and to create an environment where individuals feel that they have the self-efficacy and confidence to be active bystanders in the event of an opioid crisis.
- EMU's **Center for Digital Engagement**, in collaboration with **Ann Arbor SPARK**, is offering 48 paid internship positions through its 10th annual Digital Summer Clinic beginning June 10 to Aug. 9. The Clinic serves as a conduit, linking students from diverse backgrounds with real-world experiences. Hosted at Ypsilanti's **Ann Arbor SPARK East Innovation Center**, interns from a multitude

of colleges will engage in hands-on projects directly with startups, fostering growth and innovation in a professional environment.

- In the March episode of “**Enlighten U,**” Eastern Michigan University’s podcast for students, the focus is on the harmful effects of social media on all college students and shines a light on the unique challenges of student-athletes. The series can be found on the EMU YouTube channel and podcast platforms.
- The latest episode of **EMU Today TV** highlights three programs that are drawing considerable interest from students: New Learn4ward to Eastern Michigan University transfer partnership with Henry Ford College; the University’s Aviation program; and, the new Master of Science in Management of Innovation and Strategy program. Other episodes feature the university’s dedication to addressing food insecurity among students, supporting cutting-edge careers in the world of digital marketing, a \$2 million gift to support the track and field program, and a wide-ranging interview with Honors College Dean Ann Eisenberg about what makes the College distinctive. The series can be found on the EMU YouTube channel.

Events

- The Department of **World Languages** hosted its **2024 Honors Event** on April 10. This celebration honored the academic achievements of students enrolled in intermediate and advanced language classes and graduate students. The event also included performances and showcases highlighting the department's diverse talents.
- The **Fashion Marketing Innovation program** hosted its annual **Portfolio Show** on April 9. Based on the fashion marketing’s Senior Portfolio course, the event connects students with leading companies in the fashion industry, offering invaluable networking opportunities and potential jobs and internships. Organized by the program's faculty, this annual event has become a cornerstone for students aspiring to make their mark in the fashion industry.
- The **Preservation Studies Program** teamed up with the **Detroit Historical Society** to host “Black Heroes of Detroit’s Eastside” on April 7 to honor, explore, and preserve the stories and places associated with 20th-century civil rights activists who lived on Detroit’s Eastside.
- The finale performance of the **Formosa Quartet**’s McAndless residency on April 4 included a program that investigates the complexities of American music, challenging audiences to reimagine what defines it. Through a diverse selection of familiar and unfamiliar pieces, the Formosa Quartet encouraged listeners will explore the rich tapestry of America's musical heritage and the contributions of often-overlooked voices.

- Eastern Michigan University welcomed 350 middle school girls to its annual **Digital Divas Conference** on April 5. The conference aims to deliver crucial knowledge about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers and opportunities for young women.
- Eastern Michigan University hosted a screening of “**In a Different Key: A True Story of Love, Autism, and the Fight to Belong**” for the EMU and Ypsilanti community on April 2. The collaborative screening's community partner was **Washtenaw County Community Mental Health**, a public mental health agency providing services to all individuals in Washtenaw County. The movie was inspired by journalists Caren Zucker and Jon Donovan’s Pulitzer Prize-nominated book, which shares the same name.
- To kick off **EMU’s 175th Anniversary Celebration**, a "birthday party" was held on March 28, marking the 175th anniversary of Founders Day. The event featured music, photo booths, and creative activities, including designing a branded pennant.
- **EMU Voices** held a **Spanish Song Festival Concert** featuring music from Spain and Latin America on March 28.
- **EMU Voices**, **EMU Vision**, and **Measure for Measure** came together and performed a concert of varied repertoire in their **Winter Choral Concert** on March 22.
- EMU held its annual **Undergraduate Symposium**, a one-day event filled with presentations of scholarly and creative projects by EMU undergraduate students in collaboration with their faculty mentors on March 22.
- The **Beltline Bones**, an EMU trombone group performed a continuous 1 hour concert of electro-acoustic music featuring works by Eve Beglarian, Jay Batzner, Alex Gray, and Cole Bartles on March 20.
- The **College of Education** held a **Celebration of Excellence**, honoring outstanding Teacher Preparation program Scholars of Excellence on March 20.
- Eastern held its annual **Student Golden Medallion Awards** on March 19. The event recognizes the significant ongoing contributions students make to the success of institutional programs, activities and services.
- The **Bruce K.Nelson Faculty Development Center** and the **ORDA** hosted the **2024 Faculty Scholarly and Creative Activity Showcase** to celebrate scholarship and creative activities recently completed by EMU faculty on March 14.

- EMU's **Cello Studio** held a **Cello Studio Recital** on March 12. Each of the cello majors presented a selection of music that they are working on for the semester.
- The **Department of Women's and Gender Studies** hosted **The Women of Color Symposium** on March 12. The event provided a space for people from across the university and the surrounding community to come together and share their experiences.
- The **Center for Jewish Studies** presented the play "**Connected**" by **Ori Urian** on March 9-10. The play speaks to the way our present moment is oversaturated with technology and how that often negatively impacts young people.
- **The Michigan Crossroads Council of the Boy Scouts of America** and the EMU chapter of **Alpha Phi Omega** fraternity hosted **Merit Badge Day** on March 9. The event welcomed more than 200 boys and girls scouts aged 11 to 17 creating a platform for skill-building and exploration.
- Eastern hosted the **2024 Sesi Midwest Entrepreneurship Conference** and **Skandalaris Business Plan Competition** on March 8. The half-day event celebrated and fostered entrepreneurial spirit in high school and college students, teachers, and community members from across the Midwest.
- The **LGBTQ+ Resource Center** and **Campus Life** hosted their annual **Pride Prom**, a spirited student dance that celebrated students' authentic selves on March 8.
- Eastern's annual **Eagle-Con**, an event where students dressed up in their best cosplay, participated in contests, and enjoyed games for the pop culture celebration was held on March 7.
- **TruEMU Night** with the **Detroit Pistons** at Little Caesars Area collaborated for the annual event on March 7. The Pistons played against the Brooklyn Nets, each ticket purchased donated five dollars to the EMU Student Emergency Fund.
- EMU's **Journal of Narrative Theory** hosted its annual JNT Dialogue speaker series "**Neurodiversity and Narrative**" which dove into the intersection of storytelling and neurodiversity, featuring speakers **Michael Bérubé** and **M. Remi Yergeau** on March 7.
- **The Honors College** and the **LGBTQ+ Resource Center** hosted **Queer Talks**, an exciting event to celebrate queer identities, advocate for those around, and find community on March 6.
- Eastern hosted its second annual **Hot Wings Contest** presented by **E|Dining** on March 6. The event featured former NFL quarterback Brett Hundley and other former EMU athletes.

- **Swoop's Food Pantry**, a critical resource for students, has experienced a surge in demand, with more than 100 students utilizing the pantry most days. To ensure continued support for the program, Swoop's Food Pantry launched a food drive from March 4-22 to restock the shelves.
- Eastern celebrated **National TRIO Day** and 60 years of commitment to removing social, economic, and cultural barriers to higher education in the United States on February 24.
- **EMU Theatre** presented a Nathan Alan Davis production, “**Dontrell, Who Kissed the Sea**” on February 15-18. The play centers around 18-year-old Dontrell Jones III, who wakes up from a dream convinced he needs to journey to the ocean to connect with his long-lost ancestors, who were captured Africans during the Trans-Atlantic slave trade.
- The **Eastern Constructors** student organization hosted its annual **Construction Management Industry Career Fair** on February 15.
- The **Holman Success Center** held a **Scholarship and Financial Aid Workshop** helping students find ways to search for and apply for scholarships that they qualify for as well as how to navigate financial aid on February 7.
- The **Honors College** held an **EMU Voice Concert** on February 4.
- The **Rec/IM** held **RecWell Fest**, a large interactive wellness event. Students will have the chance to partake in healthy living booths/sessions/activities of all kinds on February 1.
- **TruEMU Night** with the **Detroit Red Wings** was held on January 27. The night drew more than 300 EMU alumni, employees, students, friends, and supporters raising more than \$1600 for the EMU Student Emergency Fund.

Athletics

- Basketball (Women): **Dara Capaldi, Tayra Eke, Kyndal Lewis, and Ashley Hassett** were named to the **Academic All-MAC team**.
- Basketball (Women): **Tayra Eke** was named to the **All-MAC Defensive Team**.
- Basketball (Men): **Arne Osojnik** was named to the **MAC All-Freshman Team**. **Tyson Acuff** was named to the **All-MAC Third Team**.
- Basketball (Men): **Yusuf Jihad** became the first player in program history to earn three **Academic All-Mid-American Conference** honors.

- Football (Men): **Steve Bird, Dimitri Douglas, Hamze El-Zayat, Samson Evans, Alex Howie, Tanner Knue, Dan Sunderman, and Elijah Williams** were named to the **2024 National Football Foundation Hampshire Honor Society**.
- Gymnastics (Women): **Raisa Boris, Ella Chemotti, and Alana Fisher** qualified to participate in the **2024 NCAA Michigan Regionals**.
- Gymnastics (Women): **Raisa Boris and Ella Chemotti** were named to the **All-MAC First Team**. **Chemotti** was named to the **MAC All-Tournament Team**.
- Swim and Dive (Women): **Olivia Clarino, Savannah Fisk, Tierney Fraidenburg, Ashley George, Camryn Hughes, Rebekah Knapp, Ali Kudo, Kate Migliori, Katie Shoen, Abby Szadorski, Kiersten Russell, Madelyn Sursi, Keira Veltigian, Ciara Wheeler, and Abbey Whipple** were named to the **Academic All-MAC Team**.
- Swim and Dive (Women): **Savannah Fisk, Ashley George, Camryn Hughes, Rebekah Knapp, and Ali Kudo** were tabbed **Academic All-District honorees** by **College Sports Communications**.
- Swim and Dive (Women): The team earned the **Scholar All-America Award** from the **College Swimming and Diving Coaches Association of America (CSCAA)** for the 2023 fall semester.
- Track and Field Indoor (Women): The team claimed their ninth **MAC indoor title** at the **2024 MAC Championships**. Gold was earned by **Kyra Buffen** in the triple jump, **Miranda Cadwell** in the weight throw, and **Paige Marchant** in the 800m and 3,000m runs. **Tijana Japundzic, Noriyah Johnson, Josephine Oloye, and Saraiah Walkes** won 4x400m relay.
- Track and Field Outdoor (Women): **Paige Marchant** was named the **2024 MAC Women's Most Outstanding Track Performer**.
- Track and Field Indoor (Women): **Kyra Buffen, Miranda Cadwell, Tijana Japundzic, Noriyah Johnson, Paige Marchant, Josephine Oloye, and Saraiah Walkes** were named **First Team All-MAC**.
- Track and Field Indoor (Women): **Isabella Brent, Natalie Buratczuk, Alyson Davis, Tijana Japundzic, Aleah Johnson, Maura Lane, Fleur van der Linden, Marata Moreno, Chloe Musta, Maleah Scott, Saraiah Walkes, Elena Wheeler, and Safeya Woolcock** were all named to the **Academic All-MAC team**.
- Track and Field Outdoor (Women): Freshman **Paige Marchant** set a new women's school record speed in the mile race with a speed of 4:38.91.

Miranda Cadwell set a new EMU record in the Hammer Throw at the Jim Click Invitational.

- Track and Field Indoor (Men): The team placed second at the **2024 MAC Championships**. **Callum Robinson** secured first in the 200m dash. **Almighty Williamson** in the 60m hurdles, **Eric Haddock Jr.** in the triple jump, and **Cason Doolittle** in the 1000m run, each took second place.
- Track and Field Indoor (Men): **Ryan Johnson, Callum Robinson, and Formula Thompson** were named **First Team All-MAC**.
- Track and Field Indoor (Men): **Ronnie Brandal, Brendan Hill, Kyle Martin, Carson McCoy, Brady Messer, Sam Peterson, Garnet Sweningson, Linus Vennemann,** and **Almighty Williamson** were all named to the **Academic All-MAC team**.
- Director of Cross Country/Track & Field **Sue Parks** was named the **Great Lakes Region's Women's Coach of the Year** for the 2023-24 indoor track & field season by the United States Cross Country/Track & Field Coaches Association of America (USTFCCCA).
- **EMU's Eagle Crest Golf Club** has been ranked 9 in the **Top 25 College Golf Courses** by **Golf Pass Golfers' Choice 2024**. This achievement signifies the facility's commitment to excellence and dedication to providing the total golf experience to students and the public.
- The EMU Department of Athletics held the annual **"YPSI's Awards Show"** on April 15. The awards show serves as a way to honor the top athletic, citizenship, and academic achievements of EMU student-athletes during the 2023-24 academic year.