

President's Report
EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Board of Regents Meeting
March 21, 2006

Thank you, Regent Valvo.

It seems almost unbelievable that it was just a little more than a year ago, at the March 15, 2005 meeting of the Board of Regents, that I was selected to serve the people of the State of Michigan as the 21st president of Eastern Michigan University. As I shared then, this is a very special place with a faculty and staff that is committed to providing an outstanding educational and co-curricular experience for students. I remain as committed to, and excited about, the opportunities and possibilities at Eastern Michigan University as I was that day.

The past several weeks have been extraordinarily busy, as I've juggled on-campus responsibilities with donor and alumni events in Florida, Arizona, California and Washington, D.C.

While these visits are informative and absolutely essential to the University's advancement work, I find that as I get older, I find myself agreeing with Mark Twain when he commented that: "Travel no longer holds the same charm for me. I've seen all the places I want to see except for heaven and hell, and I don't have an urgent need to know about either of those."

I'm pleased to report that two major positions on my leadership team will be filled in April when Darryl Szczepanski and Derrick Gragg join the staff.

Darryl Szczepanski, vice president for advancement at Kettering University, will join the University April 3 as vice president for university advancement and the executive director of the EMU Foundation. Darryl has more than 30 years of experience in capital campaign planning and management, major gift fund raising and alumni relations.

Derrick Gragg, deputy athletic director at the University of Arkansas, joins the University April 3 as the new athletic director. Derrick brings an impressive record in athletic administration to EMU. He has served as a senior-level athletic administrator at four Division I institutions and received accolades for his work at each.

While I look forward to the experience and vision both Derrick and Darryl will bring to their positions, I would be remiss if I didn't publicly thank Bob England and Tom Stevick for stepping forward and providing interim leadership during this transition period. Both served the University very well. I believe both are in attendance today, and I would ask that they stand so that we can give them an appropriate acknowledgment.

We have good news to share relative to continuing activities at the EMU Foundation.

- An additional disbursement of nearly \$347,000 was received from the **estate of Dorcas Wolf**, who taught elementary school in the Waterford School District for more than 42 years. Last fiscal year her estate provided more than \$430,000 to EMU, which funded an endowed scholarship in the College of Education.
- A gift of \$130,000 was received from the **estate of Jean Simpson**, a lifelong resident of Jackson, Mich., who died recently at age 81. Simpson received her MBA from EMU and her gift will benefit EMU's Colleges of Business and Education.
- A gift of \$72,000 from the **estate of alumna Anne Thorne** will benefit the speech and hearing impairment program in EMU's Department of Special Education.
- **Alumna Delores Brehm and her husband William** gifted an additional \$26,500. The Brehms have pledged \$1 million to EMU to establish an endowed scholarship in special education.
- Two recent grants from the **W.K. Kellogg Foundation** will help EMU promote diversity. A \$50,000 grant to the library will promote a culture of literacy, research and public engagement by establishing an African American history and literature collection and community lecture series.
- A \$41,555 grant to EMU's College of Education will facilitate a statewide Michigan summit on convergent issues impacting African American males in pre K-12 education.

Gifts such as these are critical to the University, especially as we face less-than inflationary increases in state appropriations. As you've heard, both the Governor and the Senate have now weighed in with budget proposals for FY07. Although their funding scenarios differ slightly, under both proposals the University would receive slightly less than a 2 percent increase. While we are pleased that we are not facing cuts to our appropriations as we have done the past two years, this modest increase provides a significant challenge to our ability to deliver high-quality, accessible educational programs.

As I shared with the Senate Subcommittee on Higher Education Appropriations, this challenge is further exacerbated for the seven sister schools hit with costs for the Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System—an unfunded state mandate for retiree health care benefits that is hurting us. Costs for MPERS have more than doubled since 1998. The cost to the University in FY05 was \$4,845,175, an increase of \$252,723 over FY04. It is estimated that the FY06 composite benefit cost will increase to \$5,536,866—an amount equal to a 5.5 percent tuition hike.

For the past two years the state has provided some relief to the seven institutions by subsidizing payroll contributions from a stabilization sub-account, but that source is now depleted. We continue to lobby in both chambers for continued relief in this area and I will make it a part of my request when I testify before the House Subcommittee on Higher Education Appropriations April 19.

We were pleased to see that renovation and restoration of Pray-Harrold was included in the Governor's proposed budget, and received support from the Senate subcommittee. I

personally want to thank the Regents and faculty, staff and students who visited Lansing to promote the necessity of this project, or wrote letters of support, or who hosted state legislators as they toured Pray-Harrold to see first-hand the scope of its problems. I also want to urge you to keep doing what you've been doing.

As you know, the development of the state budget often takes a circuitous route from start to finish. We're only in about the fourth inning of the game, so we need to keep the pressure on. This pressure will take a different form on May 2 when some 100 students, faculty, staff and alumni descend on Lansing for "EMU Day in the Capitol." This event will begin with a breakfast in the rotunda for our folks and legislators followed by four-person team visits to all 138 legislators. Our intent will be to share the special character of this university and some of its noteworthy programs and particular strengths.

Thanks to the Board's foresight in designating a portion of this year's tuition increase to funding the debt service on new bonds, we're in strong position to move forward. Both Moody's Investors' Services and Standard and Poor's have affirmed EMU long-term debt position with ratings of AA and A respectively. In rating EMU, Standard and Poor's cited the university's "enrollment and demand trends with a growing applicant pool; and healthy financial performance with consistent balanced operations despite a decreasing reliance on state operating revenues."

The University's ability to attract and retain students is critical to maintaining this position. To that end, two indicators for fall enrollment show positive activity:

- Reservations for Fast Track, our enrollment conversion program, are tracking 200 above where they were last year at the same time.
- Acceptances for freshman scholarships are also up more than 15 percent compared to last year.

We are also continuing our Return to Learn activities. These programs, focused on helping adult learners complete their degrees in order to compete more effectively in the changing marketplace, have attracted more than 200 students who have expressed an interest in working with EMU. You may have seen the story featuring one of our adult learners that recently ran in the Detroit Free Press.

Along these same lines, Eastern Michigan University is partnering with Automotive Components Holdings, LLC, to provide services to those employees who take advantage of its recently announced educational buy-out option. ACH, an entity managed by Ford Motor Company, is offering this buyout to hourly employees at all of its U.S. plants, including Saline and six other plants in southeast Michigan. The ACH educational buyout includes free tuition up to \$15,000 a year for up to four years and other benefits. To provide even more incentive, EMU will offer up to \$300 for books and waive the registration fee.

Two activities that you've heard about in previous reports have moved into a new phase. We officially launched our AQIP projects two weeks ago. These continuous improvement projects will help us focus strategically on academic advising services, general education,

assessment and customer service as part of our reaccreditation with the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, our primary accrediting agency.

The Visioning Task Force is preparing for two open forums during which time the University community will be invited to provide input regarding the core elements of the task force's work. The sessions are scheduled for Monday, April 10, from 10-11 a.m., in the Tower Room, McKenny Union, and Tuesday, April 11, from 5-6 p.m., in 104 Mark Jefferson.

Planning for my investiture April 7 has entered the "nervous" stage. I'm pleased that the planning committee has looked for every opportunity to present a quality event while at the same time keeping costs down, and that the evening program is doubling as a benefit to raise money for student scholarships. I am hopeful that funds raised that evening will allow us to establish at least one new endowed scholarship, and to "top off" several others that need a slight boost to raise them to the funding level at which a scholarship could be awarded. In all, I am hopeful that some 20 new scholarships will be awarded next fall as the result of the investiture. This approach lends yet additional meaning to one of my favorite concepts: leveraging. I hope you will all join me April 7 for the investiture activities.

Another major event on the horizon that has great promise for raising dollars to support Eastern Michigan University is a benefit concert being presented April 15 at the EMU Convocation Center by A.R. Rahman, one of India's leading musicians and music director for Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Bombay Dreams" and the musical, "Lord of the Rings."

The show, "Wake Up! A.R. Rahman with 150 All Stars," will bring together Rahman's works on stage through colorful costumes and set designs, along with Indian and American singers and dancers. Rahman also will perform with the Global Rhythm All Stars, a group of more than 150 American artists that has performed with numerous Grammy-winning artists. This project is the brainchild and present passion for my wife Sidney. I hope many of you will be able to attend.

As always, I'd like to close my remarks by sharing with you news about the successes of our students, faculty, staff and alumni.

STUDENTS

- Dan Mathis, a junior majoring in Social Sciences, was president for the day at EMU March 7. Dan and I exchanged places for the day as part of this annual program. He followed my schedule for the day, and I took his. This is an enjoyable and informative program that allowed each of us to see the workings of the University through a different set of eyes.
- Leena Karsan, a junior from Grand Blanc, had two of her photos selected for use as labels on bottles of Jones Soda. Her work is appearing on bottles of strawberry lime and bohemian raspberry produced by the company.
- The Michigan Organization of Residence Halls Association named Kelly Basden, president of the Residence Hall Association, Student of the Year.

- Last Wednesday, Eastern Michigan University celebrated the accomplishments of 32 newly published first-year student authors and artists. The creative works, including poetry, prose and artwork, were published in the inaugural issue of Real Beginnings: First-Year Creative Arts Collection. The publication of this multi-genre journal is a result of collaboration between Cellar Roots, the First-Year Writing program and Campus Life.
- Ninety-nine EMU students gave up their spring break to use that time making a difference in various communities around the country as part of the Alternative Spring Break Program. EMU students tutored at three urban elementary schools in Trenton, N.J.; worked with teens with AIDS at MetroTeenAIDS, Inc. in Washington D.C.; worked with children at the School for the Deaf and Blind at Spartanburg, S.C.; tutored Head Start children at the Cherokee Nation in Tahlequah, Okla.; restored trails at St. Mark's National Wildlife Refuge in northwest Fla.; helped to build low income houses with the Southern Appalachian Labor Schools in Kincaid, W. Va.; and did construction work, served meals and provided childcare for residents of Chalmette, La.
- Andrea Manson, a senior from Pittsfield Township, received the Newsmaker of the Year Scholarship from Crain's Detroit Business. This is the second consecutive year that an EMU student has won this award.

FACULTY and STAFF

- Morell Boone, director of the School of Technology Studies, will assume the position of interim dean of the College of Technology, effective May 1.
- Robert Campbell, dining services manager at Eastern Michigan University's CrossRoads Marketplace, was one of four bartenders working for Culinary Expressions International (CEI), a company hired by the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) to provide meals and beverages for the athletes, major sponsors and families of the athletes at the recent Winter Olympic Games in Torino, Italy.
- Peggy Harless, assistant director for community service and leadership, was honored recently with the Michigan Campus Compact (MCC) Faculty/Staff Community Service-Learning Award.
- Eastern Michigan University's Jumpstart Program, which helps improve readiness for school for at-risk children, earned the highest evaluation scores in the nation among 65 participating campuses. EMU's program saw a 16 percent gain in their children's language, literacy, initiative and social relations skills.
- Eastern Michigan University's First-Year Writing Program, which uses innovative strategies to help students learn to write well, won a national "Writing Program Certificate of Excellence for 2005-06," from the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC).
- WEMU news reporter **Andrew Cluley** has won the Michigan Association of Broadcasters 2005 Broadcast Excellence Award for the Best Feature/Use of Medium for his story "Pinball Art," a report on the pinball art display showcased on the EMU campus last winter.

ALUMNI

- **Gary W. Procop, M.D. ('87)** has been appointed to Luminex Corporation's new Scientific Advisory Board. Dr. Procop serves as an Anatomic Pathologist, specializing in Infectious Disease Pathology and associate professor of pathology at the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine of Case Western Reserve.
- **Nan Asher ('95, '98)** of Ypsilanti has been reappointed to represent hearing impaired persons as part of the Governor's Advisory Council on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Asher is currently the associate director and interim executive director of the Michigan Association for Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- **Candelle Schulte ('92)** has been named the softball coach at the University of Wisconsin. As a head coach, Schulte has a career record of 207-147 (.698). She was formerly the coach at the University of Charlestown.
- **Rodney Slater ('77)** is one of 10 African Americans who will be honored by the University of Arkansas for their contributions to the University of Arkansas, the State of Arkansas, the nation and the world.
- **James Wynalek ('77)** has been appointed executive vice president and chief technology officer for Collins and Aikman, a North American automotive supplier. Wynalek will direct and oversee all research, engineering, development and design activities for the company.

ATHLETICS

Our student athletes and teams have had a successful winter.

- The Women's basketball team captured the MAC West Division title. The championship marks their second title in three years. The women also earned a second straight trip to the WNIT.
- EMU junior forward Sarah VanMetre was named to the 10-person Academic All-Mid-American Conference women's basketball team.
- Ryan Coleman, a senior from Detroit, has been named a finalist for the Kodak/Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) All-America Basketball Team.
- The women's swimming team captured their first league title in program history. Head coach Peter Linn was named MAC Women's Swimming Coach of the Year.
- Six members of the women's swimming and diving team were named to the 2005-06 Academic All-MAC Women's Swimming and Diving team. Senior Katie Benedict and junior Sarah Chrzanowski repeated as honorees while first time members include senior Marie Canarecci, junior Claire Letendre, sophomore Madeleine Pilchard and senior Gretchen Plamondon.
- Six members of the men's swimming and diving team, which placed second in league competition, were named to the 2005-06 Academic All-Mid-American Conference Men's Swimming and Diving team. Junior Dan Wohl repeated as an honoree, while first time members include juniors Josh Olson, Preston Revere, Jason Piercey and sophomores Steven Bowling and Andrzej Olesinski .

ON THE HORIZON

March 27	Salute to Excellence: Graduate Research Fair
March 28	Salute to Excellence: Employee Recognition Salute to Excellence: Student Gold Medallion Ceremony
March 29	Salute to Excellence: Distinguished Faculty Awards
March 30	Salute to Excellence: DSA Gold Medallion Awards
March 31	Salute to Excellence: Undergraduate Symposium The sixth annual Education Alumni Hall of Fame induction ceremony. The 2006 Hall of Fame inductees are: Michigan State Superintendent of Public Instruction Michael Flanagan, Dean of the University of Miami College of Education Sam Yarger, EMU Regent Floyd Clack , and Mary Lou Durbin, a teacher consultant for the Garden City School District.
April 3	Holman Learning Center's Faculty and Tutor Appreciation Awards
April 7	Investiture activities
April 12	President's Open Forum—McKenny Union
April 15	A.R. Rahman Benefit Concert at the Convocation Center
April 19	House Higher Education Subcommittee Hearings
April 26	Office Professionals Day
April 30	Spring commencement ceremonies. The morning ceremony is at 10:30 a.m. and the afternoon ceremony is at 2 p.m.
May 2	EMU Day in Lansing
May 6	Alumni Awards Banquet
May 20	Congressman Dingell's "Conversation and Art" at Ford Gallery