

The Board of Regents meeting is now back in session.

I know this has been a very difficult time for everyone. Those difficulties have been foremost in our minds. However, when I look around this beautiful campus, I'm also reminded of the positive contributions EMU has made to the quality of life in Michigan for 158 years.

Since 1849, when EMU began as a school to train teachers, we have produced leaders in education and have expanded our expertise to include the arts and sciences, business, technology and healthcare.

In the last six turbulent months, there have been a number of significant, positive achievements at EMU. I'd like to give you a snapshot of some of these, which I hope, will let you appreciate Eastern Michigan University.

Nearly 2,300 students celebrated their scholastic achievements at the April 2007 commencements.

The Honors College residence hall is full for the fall term. The incoming students have an average GPA of 3.8. Our Honors College graduates have moved on to begin their studies at some of the nation's most prestigious graduate, medical and law schools such as Yale, Northwestern, University of North Carolina and the University of Michigan.

EMU's faculty members in the College of Health and Human Services are using their expertise to solve pressing health care needs, locally and internationally.

Fulbright scholar Richard Douglass has just returned from Ghana where he developed a system for tele-medicine in Africa, thus bringing badly needed health care to remote villages.

The College of Technology's information assurance program is recognized by the National Security Agency as a National Center of Academic Excellence. EMU is one of only three schools in the state to be designated as such.

EMU is one of only four schools in the country offering a polymers and coatings program. Four of its students recently won national acclaim, and the faculty received a grant from the U.S. Air Force to develop advanced coatings systems for aircraft.

The College of Business' Society of Human Resource Management student group was awarded the 2006-07 national Superior Merit Award that places the EMU chapter among the top 10 chapters nationwide. This is the fifth straight year the EMU chapter was honored.

The College of Business also has signed an important agreement with Ansal Institute of Technology in India as part of its goal to develop global partnerships. These agreements help Michigan businesses by educating students to assume positions in overseas operations.

The College of Education continues to be one of the nation's largest providers of educational personnel.

EMU has the largest Special Education Department in the nation. It is the only Michigan University providing professional preparation in all areas of disability education.

One of EMU's charter schools, the Ann Arbor Learning Community, has just been named one of the best charter schools in the nation by the Center for Education Reform.

In the College of Arts & Sciences, the award-winning Forensics Team placed second nationally at the National Forensics Association Tournament in April.

The U.S. State Department invited Dr. Betsy Morgan, head of foreign language and bilingual studies, to participate in its prestigious English language fellow program.

The English department sponsored an innovative program this summer called the Write-Link Community Connections Program. Write-Link is a writing program that introduces local high school students to professional writing fields while focusing on issues such as foster care.

The athletics program also celebrated a number of successes.

EMU made Mid-American Conference history with eight championships this year, bringing honors to men's cross country, men's indoor and outdoor track, men's swimming, men's golf, women's gymnastics, women's swimming, and women's softball.

EMU had three first-team Academic All-Americans: Sarah VanMetre for basketball; Sarah Chrzanowski for diving and Corey Nowitzke for cross country. Ten EMU students received the MAC Scholar-Athlete Awards.

The athletics department's cumulative GPA continues to improve with 14 EMU teams having a 3.0 GPA or better. The women's softball team took the lead with a 3.675 GPA.

It is clear that these accomplishments over the past few months demonstrate EMU's robust academic experience. Successful interaction in the classroom between students and faculty remains paramount.

However, EMU still faces significant challenges. We must resolve critical issues in order to move forward and achieve EMU's full potential. This university must decide to confront many issues that have been endemic in this university for too long.

There have been lingering problems on campus well before the Butzel Report revealed other more serious issues. We might as well come out and say this out loud, because all of us talk about it in the office, in restaurants, to family members, to the press, and to my fellow Regents and me. So why hide?

Phrases that have been used to describe the culture here include: “Lack of respect; personal agendas more important than EMU goals; bitter personal relationships overriding all other considerations; constant rumor mongering; and lack of credibility.” I could go on. These characteristics overshadow the wonderful achievements of our students and faculty that I mentioned earlier.

I want to make it clear: This Board is working cohesively together and we are united. We are committed to regaining the trust of all EMU stakeholders, and all of the people of the great state of Michigan. This Board will not tolerate anyone who sabotages the educational mission of this university by participating in these destructive behavior patterns.

This Board is committed to transparency and honesty, and will tolerate no less from all members of the university community. We demonstrated our sincerity with the immediate publication of the Regent-commissioned Butzel Long report.

We all now know the Butzel Long, and the Department of Education reports revealed that there was a systemic failure to comply with the federal Clery Act. This included the failure to warn the campus of potential danger. The findings are clear. There was a lack of judgment and many people fell short in their responsibilities.

These problems have overshadowed the university, taxed enormous amounts of resources and are emotionally draining. It is now time to resolve these issues, so we can move beyond the crisis.

The university has already taken steps to correct some of what went wrong.

The president recently announced 16 safety and security strategies that are now underway to respond more effectively in emergencies and report crimes more accurately.

These initiatives include working more collaboratively with the Ypsilanti Police and Washtenaw County Sheriff's Departments to improve safety and security on and adjacent to the main campus.

Security on Campus, the organization that filed the original complaint, has been engaged to conduct Clery compliance training on campus. This will commence on August 16.

In addition, we will be contracting with an outside agency in the field of campus safety to conduct a complete campus facilities safety audit.

The Department of Public Safety now reports to the vice president for business and finance as recommended in the Butzel Long report. Faculty offices are being rekeyed. This project will be completed by Labor Day. The process of updating crime statistics has begun, and the Department of Public Safety continues to offer crime prevention programs.

The Board of Regents supports these initiatives and will closely monitor their progress.

Now it is time for the Regents to exercise their prerogative and make personnel decisions based on the Butzel Long and the Department of Education reports.

Prior to addressing this formal resolution the Board would like to extend our thanks to certain staff that, we feel, performed admirably in this situation.

First, to the maintenance, residence hall and DPS first responders on the crime scene, who acted appropriately, preserved the scene, and insured that the proper police agencies were notified. The Board thanks you for your diligence.

Second, to all of the law enforcement agencies and personnel who participated in this investigation, which led to the successful apprehension. The Board thanks you for your service to the University and community.

Finally to the faculty, students and employees of the University who, in an atmosphere which was at best, confusing and at worst, terribly disruptive, continued with the day to day tasks of teaching, learning and operating the University. The Board extends our thanks for your perseverance.

It is our sincere hope that the actions that have been taken, the safety audit and the training by Security on Campus for the Department of Public Safety, the Communications Staff, members of the Strategic Operating council and other key employees, will insure that this situation never reoccurs.

With that, I would like to make the following Recommendation on Personnel Actions.