

President's Report  
**EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY**  
Board of Regents  
Dec. 10, 2020

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Members of the Board of Regents:

The University's efforts to remain nimble while focused on best safety practices continues to be a priority and is a significant factor in keeping our positive COVID-19 cases numbers relatively low, particularly in comparison to many of our peer universities in the state.

This is no small undertaking, and is a result of a strategic, pragmatic effort built on the expertise of the University's outstanding public health and operations professionals. This includes the members of the public health work groups, the members of the various subcommittees supporting the work groups, our contact tracing team, our testing team, our wastewater assessment team – and so many others.

What is making this overall effort so effective is that team members from each of these groups meet regularly, problem solve, coordinate and collaborate with one another, and intervene personally in individual situations and positive cases as they arise. It is truly a remarkable effort, and I thank everyone who has played such a vital role in keeping our campus community as safe as possible.

Our students have been outstanding in their support throughout this process. Their commitment to observing safe practices and wearing face coverings is extremely important to our efforts. Most days, when on campus, I observe 100 percent compliance from our students to the wearing of face coverings.

In the seven days ending Dec. 8, the University administered 1,241 tests that resulted in 14 positive tests. Since August 12, the University has administered a total of 12,944 tests that resulted in 108 positive results for a positivity rate 0.83 percent. The data is updated regularly on the University's [COVID-19 Dashboard](#).

I am deeply grateful to the committee members involved in the recommendation for the renaming of the Quirk Building to the Judy Sturgis Hill Building for their time and energy, and offer special thanks to the member of the Quirk family for her valuable insights throughout this process. This is an opportunity to live the mission and values of the University – and to celebrate the lifelong commitment of one of the finest individuals to graduate and then make a career at Eastern, the late Emeritus Professor Judy Sturgis Hill.

We must continually challenge ourselves to face the injustices of oppression and to build a more accessible, inclusive and equitable campus culture.

In October, the Board of Regents approved our recommendation to delay the start date of the winter semester one week to Jan. 13 to address any increase in COVID-19 spread during the holiday break. We've added another layer of safety precautions to that announcement. When winter semester begins, courses will be held in fully online/remote formats through Sunday, Jan. 24. Beginning Monday, Jan. 25, a limited number of those classes will transition to in-person formats.

The overall course delivery model for winter will be similar to the current semester in which approximately 10 percent of courses are in-person. The Provost conferred with Faculty Senate and other campus constituencies in making this recommendation.

I greatly appreciate the ongoing adjustments among our students, faculty and staff to accommodate these changes in what remains a very fluid and ever-changing situation due to the pandemic.

Registration for winter semester is now open to all students. Students are encouraged to register as soon as possible to ensure they get the classes they want.

It is hard to believe after this most challenging of semesters, but our winter commencement ceremony is only nine days away! We look forward to celebrating this special day with our graduates in the most virtual of ways. While we can't be with our graduates in person, we do have special plans to celebrate.

One that everyone can participate in is a special video we are creating for our graduates. Please join me in sending a short video offering congratulations to our newest graduates. Send your video to [grad\\_2020@emich.edu](mailto:grad_2020@emich.edu) (grad underscore 2020 at emich dot edu). In your email, please include your name and your connection to the EMU community. The deadline to receive videos is this Saturday, Dec. 12.

The final compilation will be published on commencement morning, Saturday, Dec. 19, along with a more formal graduation ceremony video and a list of names of all of our graduates. Our graduates will also receive a special social media filter via text and email to celebrate the occasion with balloons and other, specially designed celebration graphics. You can visit the [Commencement website](#) for additional details.

Last but certainly not least, I hope everyone will join me in a virtual standing ovation for Board Chairman James Webb and Regent Mary Treder Lang. Eight years of commitment to Eastern Michigan University! I have enjoyed working with you and very much appreciate the deep level of support and insight you have provided. I wish this standing ovation could be in person, but please know that it is with heartfelt admiration and appreciation that I thank you for your incredible service to Eastern Michigan University.

Additional information and accomplishments are listed in the appendix to this report on and the University website.

Thank you, Chairman Webb.

James M. Smith, Ph.D.  
President

## Recognition

- **Interior Design** students from the **College of Engineering and Technology** won the top three places in the Student Rendering category in a nationwide CET Designer contest sponsored by Configura. **Olivia Grant** placed first, **Alondra Chavez** was second, and **Raina Hammitte** took third place. Last year, Eastern also took the top three spots.
- **Grigoris Argeros**, an associate professor of Sociology, and **Natalie Dove**, associate professor of Psychology, have done noteworthy research regarding COVID-19 data from Washtenaw County. The first phase was funded by **GameAbove Faculty First** funds and the second phase will be supported by a **College of Arts & Sciences Faculty Professional Development Award**.
- **David Victor**, professor of Management and International Business, has won the Association for Business Communication's Award of Merit, for outstanding achievement in the discipline of business communication.
- **Stephanie Wladkowski**, associate professor of Social Work, and her research team of three colleagues from St. Louis have been awarded a **National Institutes of Health grant of nearly \$430,000** over two years to study the health and quality of life for patients and caregivers after hospice care.
- Eastern's **Center for Jewish Studies** has entered into a four-year partnership with the **Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor** and the **Harold Grinspoon Foundation's Life & Legacy Initiative** to promote after-lifetime giving and endowments.
- The graduate program in **Entrepreneurship** has been ranked among the **top 50 programs in the nation** by **The Princeton Review** and **Entrepreneur** magazine.
- Faculty from the **School of Social Work** have received a **\$221,680 grant from the Herrick Foundation** to help create a program that provides housing security for young adults experiencing homelessness, specifically as they transition out of juvenile detention facilities or jail within Washtenaw County. **Jennifer Kellman-Fritz**, social work professor and director of the School of Social Work; **Barbara Walters**, social work professor; and, **Bonnie Miller**, social work lecturer, will lead the efforts.
- Three EMU professors presented continuing education coursework to members of the **Society of Financial Service Professionals** in December. The topic was the potential ethical, financial, and clinical challenges associated with implementing legal guardianships. **Annemarie Kelly**, a practicing attorney and assistant professor of Health Administration; **Lewis Hershey**, professor of Marketing; and, **Christina**

- **Marsack-Topolewski**, practicing clinical social worker and assistant professor of Social Work, led the course.
- **Oksana Aliyev**, an Eastern alumna with a master's degree in Polymers and Coatings Technology, was selected as a delegate to the virtual **G20 Young Entrepreneurs' Alliance summit** in October.

### Of Note

- EMU and Henry Ford College (HFC) have entered into a partnership to offer **EMU scholarships to frontline workers who complete their HFC associate degree and pursue a bachelor's degree at EMU**. The partnership is an extension of HFC's participation in the State of Michigan's "**Futures for Frontliners**" scholarship program.
- **Yamiche Alcindor**, the **White House correspondent for PBS Newshour** and an **NBC and MSNBC Political Contributor**, will be the keynote speaker on January 18 for EMU's virtual **2021 Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration**, which runs from January 15-18.
- More than 1,300 supporters of Eastern gave more than **\$1.2 million in gifts** to a variety of scholarships, programs, and services on **#GivingTrueDay** on Tuesday, December 1.
- The **EMU University Archives** invites the EMU community to contribute any materials to assist in documenting the coronavirus pandemic, political turmoil, and racial unrest of 2020.
- A new episode of "**EMU Today TV**" has been released on Xfinity On Demand and on the university's YouTube channel. The episode features an in-depth look at the university's response to COVID-19.

### Events

- The 38<sup>th</sup> semiannual **Celebration of Student Writing** is being held from December 4-20. The research and writing fair showcases projects by more than 1,000 students.
- The third **Star Lecture** was held virtually on November 18. **Dr. Jeffrey Bernstein**, professor of Political Science, discussed the topic, "Prospects for Justice in Post-Election America."

- **Eastern's Center for Health Disparities Innovations and Studies** worked with the **Asian Community Toward Innovative Visionary Environment Coalition** to offer mobile flu vaccination clinics for Asian and Arab Americans from November 14 – December 8.
- The **EMU Winds & Percussion Day** for high school students was held virtually on November 14.
- The **College of Health and Human Services** virtually hosted more than 200 students and faculty from eight different programs in the annual **Interprofessional Education** event on November 13.
- A music event celebrating **Native American Heritage Month** was held virtually on November 12.
- The **Center for Entrepreneurship** welcomed **Chris Kaufman, CEO of StockX**, for Fall Speaker Series event, held virtually on November 12.
- The annual **Digital Marketing Workshop**, sponsored by the **EMU Center for Digital Engagement**, was held virtually November 9-13.
- The **Women's and Gender Studies program** in the **College of Arts and Sciences** presented a symposium, "Critical Border Crossings: Stories, Texts, and Their Feminist Travels," on November 6.
- The **College of Business** virtually held its annual **Alumni Business Conference** on November 5.
- The **Faculty Senate Task Force on Campus Climate, Race, and Diversity** sponsored a discussion about the presidential election and moving forward. Faculty experts in politics, social statistics, history, psychology, women & gender studies, and African American studies were on hand for the virtual discussion on November 5.
- **EMU Campus Life** and the **EMU Police Department** teamed up to provide a family-friendly night of **Halloween fun** on October 30.
- **YpsiWrites**, a nonprofit community writing center created in partnership with EMU's **Office of Campus and Community Writing**, celebrated its one-year anniversary with the "Writing Matters to Ypsi" event on October 24.

- The second **Star Lecture** was held virtually on October 22. **Dr. Barbara Patrick**, associate professor of Political Science, discussed the topic, "Race, Policing, and Social Justice in 2020."
- The **Philosophy Speaker Series** presented **Dr. Lewis R. Gordon**, University of Connecticut, who gave a virtual presentation on "Black Existentialism and Black Lives Mattering" on October 22.
- The **Women's Resource Center** sponsored "Taking a Stand 24/1," a virtual discussion forum, on October 21.

## **Athletics**

- Cross Country (Men): The Eagles captured the **2020 MAC Championship**, their 24<sup>th</sup> conference title and 14<sup>th</sup> in the last 16 seasons. Coach Sue Parks was named **Cross Country Coach of the Year**. **Andy Payne** placed second, **Baldvin Magnusson** took third, and **Chris Devaney** placed fourth in the championship.
- Cross Country (Men): **Chris Devaney**, **Baldvin Magnusson**, and **Andy Payne** were named to the **All-MAC First Team**, and **Toby Gualter** earned **All-MAC Second Team** honors.
- Golf (Men): **Cougar Collins** has been named to Team Canada's National Amateur Squad.
- Volleyball (Women): The EMU program was recognized with the **AVCA Voting Community Award** from the American Volleyball Coaches Association for exercising civic duty through participation in the democratic process. 100 percent of eligible student-athletes and coaches voted in the 2020 Presidential election.
- The NCAA has announced that Eastern's has posted a multi-year GSR (Graduation Success Rate) of 87 percent. Eleven teams improved or matched last year's scores. Baseball, women's golf, gymnastics, soccer, and volleyball each boasted a 100-percent rate.
- Former EMU Track alumna **Asia Rawls** has been named to the "Twenty in their 20s" list by **Crain's Detroit Business**.