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Welcome to CMU!

Welcome to Central Michigan University! As you flip through this orientation edition, you'll notice that every story, column and piece of advice comes from students who were once in your exact position not too long ago.

Starting college can feel exciting, overwhelming and even a little intimidating all at once, but you are not alone in that experience. The students behind these pages understand what it feels like to move into a residence hall for the first time, walk across campus searching for a classroom or trying to find where they belong.

As a recent graduate of CMU, I have seen firsthand how quickly this campus becomes home. Over the next few years, you will learn much more than just what happens inside a classroom. You'll learn how to navigate campus life, build friendships and connections, discover new passions and create memories that will stay with you long after graduation.

Whether it's attending your first football game, joining a student organization, grabbing late-night food with friends

or simply finding your favorite study spot, these moments will shape your experience here in Mount Pleasant.

At Central Michigan Life, our mission is to tell the stories of this campus and the people who make it special. We want to highlight the voices, experiences and achievements of students just like you. I encourage you not only to read our work, but to become part of the CMU community in every way possible. Get involved, try new things and don't be afraid to step outside your comfort zone. Some of the best experiences in college come from taking chances and saying yes to opportunities you never expected.

Most importantly, remember that everyone's college journey looks different. There is no single "right way" to experience CMU. Take your time, give yourself grace and enjoy every moment of this exciting new beginning.

On behalf of all of us at CM Life, welcome to campus. We are so happy you are here, and we cannot wait to see the impact you will make on the CMU community.

FIRE UP, CHIPS!

On the cover: Photo illustration by Ben Westerhof

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Traditions, events, and memories at CMU

Central Michigan is home to many traditions which constantly shape its identity

By **Chance Hamilton**

Staff reporter

Central Michigan University is steeped in traditions, which have persisted for decades. Each year, they continue to grow and shift, but the spirit of the school stands firm.

Its unique identity as the Chippewas comes from the long-standing relationship between the university and the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe. The school places an emphasis on respect for the tribe and is proud to honor them through adopting their name.

The school's famous slogan, Fire Up Chips, is crucial to the school's identity as well. Although the origin of the phrase is relatively shady, it is said to have developed as early as the mid-to-late 1960s. Students and alumni alike recognize a fellow Central Michigan Chippewa after hearing this catchphrase.

The CMU community has developed its own rituals throughout the university's history, whether it focuses on a physical area of the campus or customs for the student body to participate in.

Plenty of rumors swirl around the decorative "C" in the pavement of Central Avenue near Dow and Moore Halls. The most famous of these suggests that any student who steps on it will fail their upcoming assignments, and every student attempts to avoid it as much as possible.

Each semester, students swarm to advertise their own registered student organizations (RSOs). This event, MainStage, allows for students to connect with RSOs and establish their own community on campus. Fall MainStage takes place on Franklin St. north of the Park Library.

Don't be alarmed when a chorus of screams erupt at midnight on the Sunday before exams. The Midnight Scream may sound horrifying, but students take this opportunity to have fun and unleash their stress ahead of finals week.

Often, game days are where Central Michigan's traditions truly shine.

Memorable soundtracks for the various sports programs are provided by the CMU Marching Band during football season, along with the Sixth Man Band for basketball games.

When the band begins its trek towards Kelly/Shorts Stadium for football games, it's the cue for fans to head to their seats. Other pregame festivities include the playing of Central Michigan's fight song and the alma mater, emphasizing the school's identity.

Fans then prepare to rise to their feet to loudly support the team in Maroon and Gold. On important defensive sequences, they shake their keychains for these "key plays."

Once the home team scores a touchdown, the school's

Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) battalion fires a cannon nicknamed Genny's Own in celebration. The first CMU cannon was built in 1952, and events including MainStage and Veteran's Day also take time to fire the cannon.

Additionally, the cannon is a recognizable symbol of Central Michigan's biggest rivalry. Each year, CMU competes with Western Michigan University for ownership of the Victory Cannon trophy, as WMU also features a cannon atop its stadium.

A short way down Broomfield St. in McGuirk Arena, the CMU basketball team hosts a unique once-yearly pregame

event. During the Toilet Paper Toss, fans dressed in white throw rolls of toilet paper towards the court in an impressive visual display.

Fans have thrown toilet paper at basketball games since the 1982-83 season, but due to rules within the Mid-American Conference, the program made it an official recurring event in 2022.

No matter if it's a campus rumor or a sports game, Central Michigan University is steeped in tradition. Each one has developed into something completely unique as the decades have rolled on, and it's now in the hands of the current student population to keep them thriving.



A block "C" for the College of Science and Technology is embedded in the walkway outside the Biosciences Building, Friday, May 8, 2026. Students are told to avoid stepping on the "C" or they will fail their finals.

Alivia Cranick | Staff photographer

What dorm life really teaches you

By Makayla Herrick
Staff reporter

From dining hall debriefs the morning after going out with your friends, to 2 a.m. fire drills the night before a big presentation; I have experienced firsthand the highs and lows of dorm life.

Dorm life, in general, is far from glamorous. Laundry becomes a competitive sport, there is always someone making noise when you need quiet the most and the white brick walls with exposed pipes do not help either.

After living two years in the dorms, I can gladly say this: it will be chaotic, exhausting, thrilling, occasionally frustrating but soak it all in. There is only so much time where your friends will live a two-minute walk away from you for a laugh, a shoulder to cry on or just to hangout.

But here is what no one emphasizes enough, the people around you can make or break your experience. Reaching out to your neighbors is one of the most important things you can do.

My entire first-year floor became close because people made the effort early on. It

started with simple things, knocking on doors, introducing ourselves, leaving them open while doing homework or inviting people to grab food. Before long, it turned into a community.

The truth is that everyone walks into dorm life a little nervous. No one really knows what they're doing, even if they act like they do.

Though the dorms themselves are quite prison-like, there are many ways to turn any environment cozy and reliable.

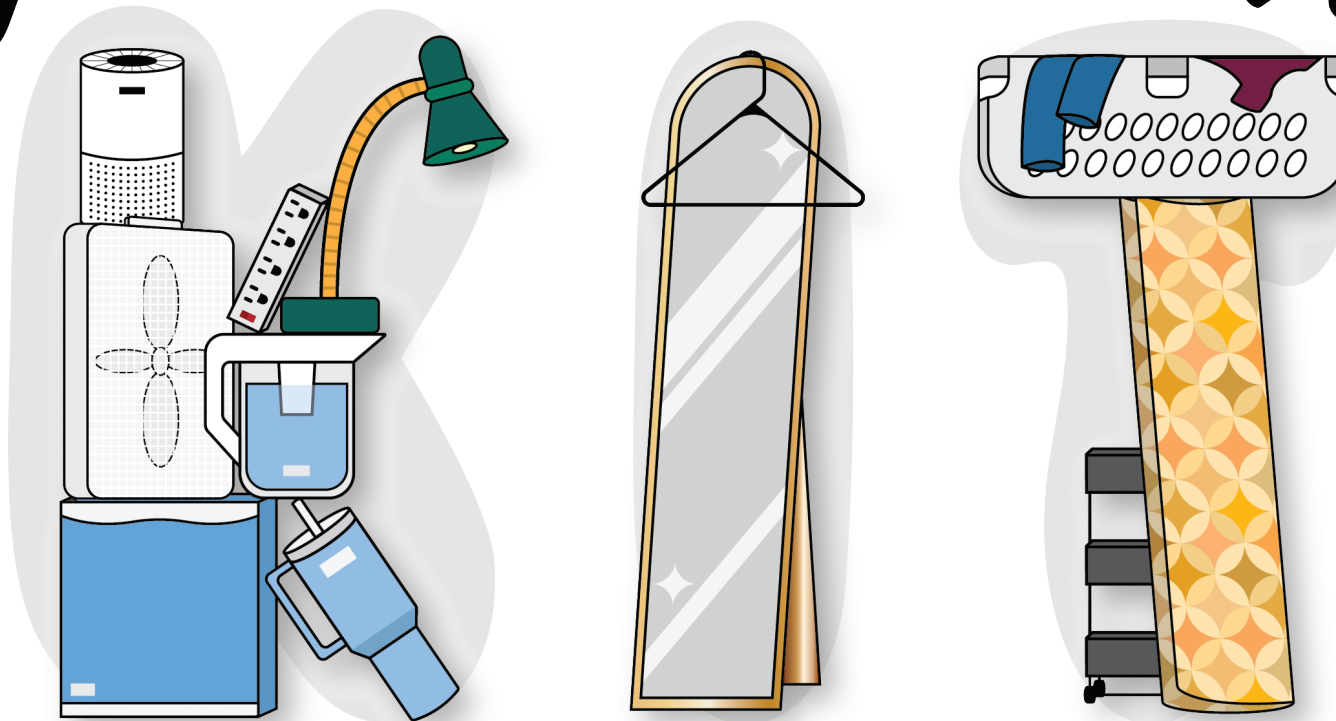
5 things first-year students should bring with them to the dorms

1. **Mattress topper:** Though CMU offers beds in the dorms, they are as stiff as my back after a long day of studying at the library. A mattress topper is one of the most important things to have with you when coming up to college.
2. **Box fan:** The dorms will get hot at the beginning of

the year, having a box fan in the window is crucial to feeling comfortable for those hot early September afternoons. Personally, I need to always have at least two fans in my bedroom.

3. **Power strips, extension cords, power hubs:** Dorm outlets are inconveniently placed, and there are never enough of them. Between laptops, phones, lamps and chargers, extra outlets are essential.
 4. **Water filter or Brita:** Walking down the hallway every time you need to fill up your water bottle can get tiring. Buying a water filter or Brita is convenient and keeps the water clean.
 5. **Command Hooks:** In a small dorm room, organization matters. Command Hooks are perfect for hanging towels, bags, keys or decorations without taking up valuable space. (Pro tip: use a hairdryer when taking them off to avoid ripping off the paint).
- Beyond the survival kit itself, the real key to becoming used to dorm life is learning to embrace the experience, the friendships, challenges and memories that come with it. Soak it all in, two years fly by just like that.

DORM SURVIVAL



How to stretch your FLEX

By Brooke Binder
Staff reporter

You just got to Central Michigan University, and those FLEX dollars are burning a hole in your pocket. It's simply too easy to tap your phone at campus restaurants and markets. You feel rich. But before you know it, you're broke.

Budgeting can be challenging as a college student. Luckily, CMU's meal plans offer a variety of options for dining hall meal swipes and FLEX dollars.

Here are some ways to save those FLEX dollars and make the most of your meal plan:

Pick the meal plan that's best for you

Before each semester, CMU lets you pick between "All-Access," which is unlimited meal swipes and \$300 FLEX dollars, "Central 16," which offers 16 meal swipes per week and \$400 FLEX dollars and "Central 12," which is 12 meal swipes per week and \$600 FLEX dollars.

It's important to choose which plan is the best fit for you. If you know you won't be going to the dining hall very often, opt for Central 12 and get the highest amount of FLEX.

Watch prices at the market

Oftentimes, grabbing a quick snack or frozen meal from the markets on campus is the way to go. But a quick market run can quickly turn into a hefty bill.

It's important to watch those sneaky high prices at the market, especially on larger food or grocery-like items.

Check for sheets on the freezer doors that specify prices. See something that you could get much cheaper at the grocery store? Make that trip instead.

Use your meal swipes!

FLEX dollars are great for when you don't have time to sit down and have a meal, but take advantage of meal swipes when you aren't pressed for time.

There are three dining halls available on campus: Dine and Connect at Woldt, The Eatery at Carey and Merrill Virtual Food Hall.

Using a meal swipe and visiting one of these locations is a great alternative to spending more FLEX dollars.

Make use of snacks in your dorm

Chances are, you'll probably have some snacks or small meals lying around in your dorm throughout the

semester. Have those before using your FLEX!

This also helps reduce food waste. Although looking for something fresh may be enticing, there's no reason to waste food.

Staggering trips to restaurants/cafes

Ponder Coffee, Einstein Bagels, Central Eats, Starbucks and many other restaurants and cafes on campus are great options for a bite to eat or a fun drink, although these spots can get pricey.

Stopping every day for a brown sugar shaken espresso at Starbucks or a chicken sandwich from Slim Chickens is just not economical.

Think about next semester

Any unused FLEX dollars from the fall semester will carry over to the spring semester. Although leftover funds don't carry over to the following academic year, those extra few bucks in the spring pay off.

Then, you have room to splurge.

Budgeting FLEX dollars is great practice for real-life finances and your future. Plus, it's always nice to be the friend who has the most FLEX.

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How dining halls might make you feel

By Bar Belian
Staff reporter

As I had my last meal from the Merrill Virtual Dining Hall, I realized what made the food taste the way it did.

I've had many different types of meals from the dining halls throughout the past three years. Chicken alfredo, house salad, breakfast sandwich, pepperoni pizza, the list could go on and on.

Maybe it feels like this because it usually feels healthy.

Personally, I've had a ton of global grill bowls and wraps this year. I could customize them however I wanted, which usually meant I was putting in what seemed like the healthiest options, like taco meat, white rice, some lettuce and sriracha to add some flavor.

The salads from the Eatery in Towers or the Dine and Connect in Woldt weren't that bad either, with tons of variety to put in the salad, even though it won't really change after the first time.

The Delicious Without areas in the dining halls always made me feel healthier too, offering some version of chicken, potatoes and greens.

But the fact that I was eating healthy wasn't what made the food taste as it does.

It could've been the flavor, weirdly enough.

It's common to feel like the food in a dining hall is a bit underrated. People always complain, but sometimes there

is really nothing better than a double smash burger with fries, or a slice of pepperoni pizza that just came out of the oven and has the perfect crust-to-cheese ratio.

Even when the options are plentiful, you might still be inclined to check whether Dine and Connect is serving barbecue chicken and curly fries or Merrill is serving warm dumplings and fruit cups.

Talking about fruit, the sweet treats never felt like they failed. Woldt and the Eatery always had some baked goods, whether it was chocolate chip cookies, marshmallow treats, slices of cheesecake or oranges. Although very limited, Merrill offered milkshakes and cookies that were bigger than your face.

But again, it's possible that it wasn't the flavor that made me feel the way I did.

It might've been because I had no other choice.

By the first month, I was already out of flex dollars because I kept spending them on energy drinks and Subway. Even when I had money to spend, I rarely went to the Slim Chickens or Ponder Coffee. I was at the Market in East, as it was usually convenient and open late at night, where you could get one last cold brew with a side of an Uncrustable, just before close. And as frightened as people were, the sushi there wasn't all too bad, although my digestive system may disagree.

But that's also what made the dining halls feel so reliable. Every day I didn't have money but had a lot of

time, I made sure my 16-meal plan was used to its fullest and kept me fed.

However, as I make the loud, empty noise that comes from finishing a milkshake, I realize that it wasn't any of this.

No amount of availability, taste, sweets or healthiness would explain my feeling.

Because it's not a feeling anymore, it's a memory.

It's the first meal with your freshman roommates, when it is still very awkward to talk to them, but you can still find some common ground.

It's when you go ask your situationship if they want to grab a bite, even though you know you're banking on a miracle for it to work out.

It's when you see your friends, and they give you the most petrifying recap of the night before, and now you can't even eat your cereal.

It's when you screwed up your sleep schedule so bad that you're somehow at the dining halls earlier than the staff, just to get some coffee.

It's when you don't feel like eating, but your friend has social anxiety, so you get dragged along anyway.

It's when you and the one friend that made it out of the freshman year friend group share your final on-campus meals, a vanilla milkshake to sweeten the emotions.

It's when you realize you have to cook for yourself now.

Because change will always happen, whether it's the meals at the dining halls, the people around you, or just you.

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Top places to eat in Mount Pleasant

By Masha Smahliuk-Bootz
Former Editor-in-Chief

As I just graduated from Central Michigan University this May and am preparing to leave Mount Pleasant, I realize that I will miss this little town. It has so many kind people, beautiful parks, a river and my favorite, good food.

If you just arrived as a freshman, first, may I say welcome. Even though Mount Pleasant seems small, it has so much to offer. I am so excited for you to experience it all for the first time and soon call Mount Pleasant home.

With so much love for the town and with a warm welcome for you, reader, here is my list of the top five places to get a nice meal in Mount Pleasant:

Wood Shop Social

This has to be my favorite place. If I am looking for a nice treat, a celebration of a big event or a beautiful date night—Wood Shop Social is always my pick.

This restaurant has the best mocktails in town. As a person who doesn't drink alcohol, its mocktails stole my heart. Beachy Peach, Blueberry Mockjito and Asian Pear Sparkler are the best.

The deserts are also great there. I love its chocolate cake, tiramisu and creme brulee.

Last but not least is great food. I noticed that Wood Shop Social changes its menu from time to time, but it always has some unusual options, such as venison burger and boar sausage. It's mostly an American cuisine, but I love its pasta.

The food, the atmosphere, the interior, the service—I can't stop praising this place. Five out of 5 for me.

Jib-Bob Korean Restaurant

Jib-Bob is the must-visit place if you are in Mount Pleasant. It is conveniently located downtown and is owned by the most charming and kind lady. Maya always has a smile on her face and will greet you so friendly and warmly that it will make you feel like coming home to mom's kitchen.

The food tastes absolutely delicious, fresh and homemade. Bul-go-gi, bibim-bob and job-chaе are amazing. I also love drinks at Jib-Bob as it has Korean soda and many types of tea. I am a huge tea lover, and I can say that Jib-Bob's tea is delicious.

Another thing worth praising at Jib-Bob is the atmosphere. The restaurant's interior has beautiful Korean decor that helps you immerse yourself in the experience. You should definitely check it out.

Ponder

My campus-favorite place to grab a cup of coffee before a night class or a delicious lunch is Ponder. This is the best coffee shop to meet your friends for a cup of coffee.

My favorite drinks there are lavender vanilla latte, brown sugar cinnamon latte and banana bread latte. My go-to food option is egg, avocado and tomato sandwich.

You absolutely must visit Ponder if you're in Mount Pleasant, as dare I say, it's the town staple.

Sumo Sushi & Steak House

The hibachi experience was so much fun at Sumo Sushi. It has great chicken, shrimp and scallop hibachi. Sushi is huge and very tasty at this place, too. The restaurant also offers some fun sushi options, such as the Michigan roll.

Besides the delicious food, the atmosphere is usually fun, as it's a popular place. I loved celebrating some happy occasions there.

Sergey's Bakery

If you're up for a drive with your friends or are interested in experiencing some European atmosphere and authentic pastries, you have to visit Sergey's Bakery in Midland. Dubai chocolate croissants, Ukrainian cake and sourdough will blow your mind. Check out my story on Central Michigan Life's website to learn more about the place.

Frankly, the list of great restaurants in Mount Pleasant can go on and on. From Shin's Korean Restaurant to Los Amigos to Slim Chickens, you truly should try all the delicious food the town has to offer. I hope you love all these amazing places as much as I do and share this love with the people you meet in Mount Pleasant.



Jib-Bob Korean restaurant prepares the night before for the big re-opening Nov. 2.

Get involved on campus!

By Grace Walker
Senior news editor

This time of the year is so exciting, but also exhausting. You have to move into a completely new environment, with roommates that are basically strangers and then head off to classes with even more strangers. Whether this is your current experience or not, the freshness of everything can be overwhelming and you may want to curl up in your dorm and hide.

Even if you feel that way, I can't stress enough how important it is to get out, make friends, join different Registered Student Organizations and just have fun.

Two years ago, I started at Central Michigan University as a transfer student from the University of Michigan-Flint. At the beginning, I knew some people at CMU, but most of the time, I felt completely alone. There were so many new faces, so many new clubs and everyone felt like they were already part of something. It felt terrifying jumping into something new because it wasn't familiar.

Even though it all felt overwhelming, walking through MainStage and forcing myself to find the clubs and

organizations I knew I wanted to be part of lead me to the places I now call home: Central Michigan Life and the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ). What I didn't know at the time was that I was meeting people I now consider family and building skills to something I now consider my whole life.

College life will be fun, stressful, frustrating and, at times, feel completely isolating. You will grow as a person and watch the people you walked into college with grow as well. This is the place to find what your interests are and who your people are. Take advantage of that.

At CMU, we offer hundreds of clubs and organizations to join. If there isn't something that interests you, look again. We offer silly groups like Squirrel Watching Club (our very own reporter Ava Harmon is the president) and Crochet Central to more career focused groups like Business Honors Society and the Student Government Association.

These places are here not only for you to relax from classes, but also to grow your experiences before you even graduate. There are many different organizations that exist to help you get a taste of what your career will be like in the field.

While I have learned so much about what it means to be a journalist in my classes, I wouldn't have gotten all the experience and knowledge I've built up without CM Life or SPJ. Without these two organizations, I wouldn't have become close with those in the real field or my colleagues who I know may one day be working alongside me in the real world.

If no other club or organization looks interesting, CMU has so many other opportunities to get involved. An example of this is our Alternative Breaks program through the Volunteer Center where you have the opportunity to go out to different places around the country and do community service. You can find more information on what that is through the CMU website.

Overall, my main piece of advice is, go to MainStage at the beginning of the year and see what catches your eye. If you can't make it, scroll through Engage Central, a website that lists all the different activities hosted by clubs or the university, and get your feet wet. Otherwise, keep an eye out for flyers and chalk on the sidewalks.

Have fun, and don't be shy. You'll never know what you'll end up liking if you don't try.



Cristin Coppess | Manging editor

Central Michigan University junior Matthew McLaughlin speaks to an interested student during the College of Business and Administration's spring semester Involvement Fair held in the Grawn Hall Atrium, Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2026. McLaughlin is the vice president of CMU's Supply Chain Management Association.



Claire Vachon | Assistant visuals editor

Central Michigan University graduate student Sadiksha Giri listens to student Violeta Martinez's business pitch at the New Venture Challenge in the Grawn Hall Atrium on Friday, March 27, 2026.

Beat the burnout

By Elizabeth Sadecki
Staff reporter

Twenty-four hours in a day often doesn't feel like enough. With classes, assignments, work, friends and hopefully sleep, it can be easy to burn yourself out and prioritize other responsibilities over your own mental health.

Finding balance in college can feel overwhelming and impossible. And although it isn't necessarily easy, it is achievable.

Here are three tips me and Central Michigan University counselor Atefeh Jenrow recommend to help students prioritize their mental health during the semester.

1. Get your priorities straight

Time management is everything in college. How much of your time and attention you give to different areas of your life will impact your mental health.

While it's tempting to focus entirely on fun or school, forgetting the more boring, basic habits can quickly lead to burnout.

Jenrow said students should focus on eating well, getting quality sleep and exercising. It's easier to be anxious or sad if you are physically exhausted. Taking

care of your mental health requires being mindful of your physical health too.

Once that baseline is established, make time for the things that bring you joy amidst fulfilling all your responsibilities.

Whether that's making plans with friends or finding a new hobby, give yourself something to look forward to each day. Also, don't underestimate the power of romanticizing the little things. Listening to music on the way to class or getting a sweet treat after work does wonders.

Identify what's important to you and live a life that reflects that.

2. Find an imperfect balance

You will not be able to go to class, work, complete your assignments, exercise, hang out with friends, take time for yourself and sleep for seven hours every single day. So please don't pressure yourself to.

Taking care of your mental health will look a little different each day. Some days it will mean spending more time alone, others it will look like surrounding yourself with people you love.

Some days it will look like waking up early to treat yourself to a coffee before class, and others will involve sleeping in.

5 Mental Health Tips



Eat Well ■



■ Take Breaks

Socialize ■



■ Exercise

Danica Schmitt | Junior Designer

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Balancing your priorities throughout the week comes with a steep learning curve. Give yourself grace when trying to figure it out. One day you may neglect your schoolwork severely and another you may lock in so hard you forget to go outside. It's better to be consistent than extreme.

To avoid burnout, Jenrow recommends taking little breaks between tasks. Going for a quick walk or calling someone can make focusing on your work less difficult. Letting go of the idea of perfection makes achieving balance easier.

3. Ask for help

No one expects you to adjust to the responsibilities of being in college alone. The university provides resources such as the counseling center and CMU Cares when students need additional help taking care of their mental health.

You can attend individual or group therapy through the center by calling them directly or submitting an appointment request on their website. There's no cost.

Anyone concerned about others or their personal mental health can submit a Cares referral, a form on CMU Care's website. The team will reach out via email to students and staff who have been referred to discuss possible resources to help them.

Despite how it may seem, no one has it all together. Everyone struggles. It's important to stop comparing yourself to others and focus on doing what's best for your mental health.



Danica Schmitt | Junior Designer

WELLNESS FAIR

Explore what wellness looks like for you

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The world of scholarships

By **Blace Carpenter**
Staff reporter

The average cost for a domestic undergraduate student at Central Michigan University is around \$33,000 a year. For international students, the average is around \$40,000.

It is no surprise that going to college is expensive. That's where scholarships and financial aid can help out. Sarah Kasabian-Larson oversees the university's Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid and said that most scholarships can be applied to through CMU's platform Scholarship Universe.

"Our annual endowed and departmental scholarships can be found in a centralized location, and that's called Scholarship Universe," she said. "The student would fill out a questionnaire, and the scholarship tool, Scholarship Universe, will search for scholarships that match them internally."

Kasabian-Larson said that most scholarship applications open at the beginning of October. These scholarships go towards the next academic year and may require extra documentation depending on what donors requested for the criteria.

"For an incoming student that's starting in the fall, when we start the scholarship season, the scholarships

they're applying for are for the next academic year, kind of like in alignment with filing the (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)," she said.

The FAFSA form also helps the university determine how much financial aid they can give to a student.

"The goal here is to help our students plan for the future early so they have all the tools that they need when they are here in the fall, and then coming back for the next academic year, we're able to maximize their financial aid," Kasabian-Larson said.

Scholarship Universe is not the only place students can apply for financial aid to help pay for school.

Kasabian-Larson said that students should check out local scholarship opportunities through community foundation programs, such as the Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation, or through the state of Michigan's Scholarship database.

When applying for outside scholarships, she said to make sure that they are reliable sources and don't gather unnecessary information.

"Looking for the scholarship is the first step and deciphering to make sure that it is a legit scholarship," Kasabian-Larson said. "No one should ever have to give out their personal information, such as their Social Security number ... You shouldn't be paying anyone to take your scholarship application. It should be free



Paige Jaczkowski | Junior designer

because you're applying to receive money to help you through your higher education."

CMU also hosts a scholarship fair for students to find more ways to help afford their time at the university. Kasabian-Larson said the event will take place in late October, and students will receive more information in the fall semester.

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Exploring your major

By Ethan Wallace
Staff reporter

In high school, I didn't know what major or career I wanted to go into until the near end. During my junior year, I started taking dual-enrollment classes through Mid Michigan College.

I told my academic advisor that I was interested in business and finance, only because I thought it was a safe choice with lots of jobs. I took a business class and found out that this was not for me.

Even though I started back not knowing what I wanted to do, I eventually took a sociology class as a general elective. I ended up liking it and I now major in it.

Lauren Cahill, Central Michigan University academic advisor, said that general education classes can help students figure out careers they weren't interested in before.

Even if students have chosen a major but are unsure, it's better for them to go an extra semester to explore options instead of going into a career they don't like, Cahill said.

She said there are students who come in who are undecided about their major. Advisors can gauge student's interests to see what majors or classes they may be interested in.

"Faculty and staff are the experts," Cahill said.

"They are connecting with professionals and are a huge resource."

She said that while at CMU, many students are becoming independent. Students have the chance explore their interests and go into a career they want, Cahill said.

"A lot of times what I do see is students come in with their job or major that their parents do or like," Cahill said.

Along with classes, students should also join registered student organizations (RSOs) and connect with professionals, Cahill said. These can provide unique experiences for students to make connections and learn about potential career paths.

Alongside sociology I also major in journalism. I had a passion for writing so I applied to my local newspaper, the Clare County Cleaver, and started writing articles which helped lead me to find an interest in the field.

In high school, I felt a lot of pressure in choosing the "perfect" career for my future. I found that trying new things to find what I did and did not like helped me figure out what fields I wanted to go into.



Zoey Lawrence | Senior designer

An advertisement for Evolution Fitness. The top left features the gym's logo, which includes a gear and the text "EVOLUTION FITNESS". To the right, the text "ADD MORE TO YOUR WORKOUT" is written in a stylized, outlined font. The main image shows a man in a black tank top and grey pants performing a bicep curl with a dumbbell in a gym setting. Other gym-goers are visible in the background. At the bottom, the text reads: "Memberships start at \$40 STUDENTS GET 10% DISCOUNT!" followed by the website "https://www.evolutionfitnessmtp.com" and the address "1717 S Mission St, Mt Pleasant, MI 48858".

An advertisement for Timber Creek Apartments. The top text says "BEAT THE FALL RUSH!" in large, bold letters, with a smiley face icon to the left. Below this, the phrase "Move in today!" is written in a red, cursive font. A photograph shows a woman in a yellow sweater walking a brown dog on a leash in a grassy area. To the right of the photo, text reads: "Secure an apartment home with a balcony, challenge your friends to a basketball game, or bring your furry friends to our dog run! You do not want to miss out on living at our community." Below this, a list titled "EVERYTHING IS INCLUDED IN YOUR RENT:" includes: "ac, heat, electric", "water, trash, sewer", "pet run", "24-hour maintenance", and "pool, gym". At the bottom, the phone number "989-773-3300" and address "3300 E. DEERFIELD RD., MT. PLEASANT" are listed. A QR code is also present. The bottom right corner features the "TIMBER CREEK APARTMENTS" logo with the phone number "(989) 773-3300" and social media icons for Facebook and Instagram with the handles "TimberCreekAptsMI" and "timber_creek_apartments".

Welcome to game day

By Sydney Neal
Editor-in-chief

For many students at Central Michigan University, athletic events are one of the biggest parts of campus life. Whether it is a packed football Saturday at Kelly/Shorts Stadium or the Toilet Paper Toss inside McGuirk Arena, CMU athletics gives students opportunities to participate in traditions and experience Division I competition throughout the school year.

For incoming students especially, attending games may seem confusing at first. However, CMU Athletics has transitioned to a digital Student Access Pass system that allows students to enter athletic events directly from their phones.

The process is designed to make entry easier while also encouraging more students to attend events across campus.

What is the Student Access Pass?

CMU Athletics introduced the Student Access Pass system as a digital ticketing option for students attending athletic events. Instead of relying only on physical student IDs, students now use a mobile pass that can be scanned at athletic venues.

According to CMU Athletics Student Access Pass information, students receive an email with instructions for downloading their Student Access Pass. The pass is accessed through a mobile device and can be added to Apple Wallet or Google Wallet for easier use on game days.

Once downloaded, simply present the digital pass at the entrance of athletic venues where ticket attendants scan the code before entry.

The Student Access Pass remains free for currently enrolled CMU students and is required for all ticketed sports throughout the academic year.

Football at Kelly/Shorts Stadium

Football remains one of the largest athletic attractions on CMU's campus.

The Chippewas compete at Kelly/Shorts Stadium, located near the center of campus and capable of holding more than 30,000 fans. During the fall semester, game days often become all-day events for students, alumni and community members.

Students typically gather for tailgates in Lot 63 before kickoff before entering the stadium together. Student section seating are positioned behind the opposing team's bench, helping create one of the loudest environments on campus during Mid-American Conference play.

Football games usually take place on Saturdays during the early part of the season before some conference games shift to weekday "MAAction" matchups later in the fall.

Here is the upcoming 2026 home football schedule, all times are currently to be announced:



Makr Hoover | Visuals editor

Football is a big deal in my hometown. And although I didn't go to a lot of them in high school, I still feel it's a part of my DNA. So whenever I see a big football crowd like this, it reminds me of my high school friends and the memories I made with them.

Sept. 12 vs. Colgate (Home opener)
Sept. 19 vs. Wyoming
Oct. 3 vs. Akron (Homecoming)
Oct. 17 vs. Western Michigan (Battle for the Victory Cannon Trophy)
Oct. 24 vs. Miami (Ohio)
Nov. 11 vs. Sacramento State (MAAction)
Click the link to see the full 2026 schedule.
Fall sports beyond football

While football often receives the most attention during the fall semester, several other CMU athletic programs compete throughout the season and offer students additional opportunities to attend outdoor sporting events.

Women's soccer hosts matches at the Soccer/Lacrosse Complex during the fall, with many games taking place in the afternoons and evenings early in the semester. The matches provide a different atmosphere compared to football Saturdays, giving students a closer view of

Division I competition in a smaller venue setting.

Field hockey also competes during the fall season and remains one of CMU's longtime athletic programs. Games are played at Cristy Freese Field which is located next to the Soccer/Lacrosse Complex.

Because many fall sports seasons begin before move-in week, athletic events often become one of the first campus traditions new students experience at CMU. For students looking to get involved on campus early, attending fall sporting events can be an easy way to meet people while supporting Chippewa athletics and its athletes.

Inside McGuirk Arena

Several of CMU's indoor athletic programs compete inside McGuirk Arena, one of the busiest athletic facilities on campus.

Men's basketball and women's basketball, gymnastics

and wrestling all take place there throughout the winter season, while the volleyball team competes inside the arena during the fall.

The smaller arena environment allows students to sit close to the court, creating a more personal atmosphere compared to football games. Student sections are often filled with chants, themed outfits and organized cheering sections during rivalry games and conference matchups.

Student section seating for basketball games can be found behind each basket. Basketball season stretches across much of the academic year, giving students opportunities to attend games before and after winter break.

Volleyball matches are also popular early in the school year because they provide one of the first major athletic events of the fall semester.

Spring sports across campus

As temperatures begin to rise during the spring semester, outdoor athletic events become more common around campus.

CMU baseball plays at Theunissen Stadium, located near Kelly/Shorts Stadium. The stadium hosts both non-conference and MAC matchups throughout the spring season.

The softball team competes at Margo Jonker Stadium, named after the legendary former CMU softball coach. The stadium can be found near

Both baseball and softball games provide more relaxed outdoor environments where students can watch games between classes or spend weekends supporting the Chippewas.

Track and field and cross country competitions

are hosted at CMU facilities throughout the year as well.

Because many spring sporting events occur outdoors, attendance often increases later in the semester when weather conditions improve.

Every Division I sport offered at CMU
CMU sponsors 17 Division I varsity athletic programs.

Men's sports include:

- Football
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Wrestling
- Golf
- Cross country
- Track and field

Women's sports include:

- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Soccer
- Softball
- Lacrosse
- Gymnastics
- Field hockey
- Golf
- Cross country
- Track and field

Most teams compete in the MAC, though some sports participate in affiliate conferences depending on sponsorship availability.

Throughout the year, students can attend athletic events nearly every month of the academic calendar.

More than just sports

For many students, attending games becomes part of their college routine.

Athletic events offer opportunities to socialize, meet other students and participate in traditions tied to campus culture. It's a time to share fun memories with friends and family members. It also gives us a break as students, which will always be very needed as you navigate your time in college.

Many games also include promotional giveaways, theme nights and fan engagement activities designed specifically for students. If you're a fan of free stuff, sporting events will be your favorite place.

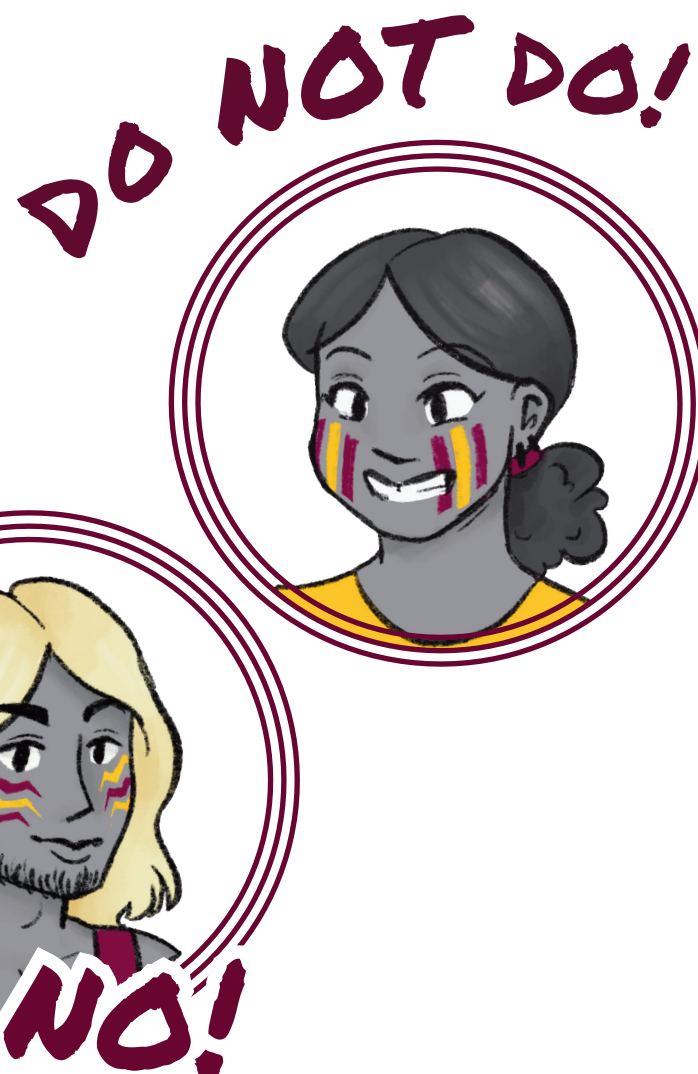
How students can stay updated

Students looking for schedules, game times and ticket information can visit CMU Athletics for updated information throughout the year.

Game schedules, roster information, promotions and venue policies are all listed through the athletics website.

Students can also access their Student Access Pass and mobile tickets through the digital system outlined by CMU Athletics before attending games.

For all in-game content, features and live play updates, follow along with Central Michigan Life on any socials and through our website.



From Big city to small town

By Sydney Neal
Editor-in-chief

During my process of committing to Central Michigan University back in 2022, I explored Mount Pleasant to see where I would spend a lot of my time on campus. Immediately the sight of windmills and empty field for miles scared me.

Growing up in Canton, where almost everything feels within reach, felt completely opposite to the atmosphere of Mount Pleasant. If I wanted a snack at midnight, it was five minutes away. If I needed groceries, there are at least five different stores on the same road. Traffic was constant, people were always moving and life never really slowed down.

I also went to the biggest high school campus in Michigan. The Plymouth-Canton Educational Park, better known as P-CEP, is home to three different high schools all connected on one massive campus with around 7,000 students combined.

Walking between buildings for classes felt like navigating a small city. Thousands of students filled the hallways every day, parking lots stretched endlessly and there was always something happening.

At P-CEP, it was easy to disappear into the crowd. You could walk past hundreds of people a day and never speak to them again. Sitting at my high school graduation, people crossed the stage that I never crossed paths with. Everything was large scale, the classes, the events, the student sections and even the campus itself.

Back then, that environment felt completely normal to me.

Growing up there, I never thought much about how different it was from other places. To me, it was just normal.

Then I came to CMU.

Moving to Mount Pleasant for college was the first time I truly understood what people meant when they talked about “small-town life.” Suddenly, everything was different. The roads were quieter. The pace felt slower. People actually recognized each other when walking downtown. At first, it honestly felt strange.

Back home, I was used to constant noise and movement. In Canton, there is always somewhere to go and something happening. In Mount Pleasant, life feels more intentional. It took me time to adjust to the fact that there were less options for food, traffic barely existed and running into the same people everywhere became a daily occurrence.

But somewhere along the way, the small-town feeling started to grow on me.

There is something comforting about going into a coffee shop or places on campus and seeing familiar faces. There is something different about a college town where the university truly feels like the center of everything. In bigger cities, it is easy to blend into the background. Here, it

feels easier to find community.

At first, I missed the convenience of home more than anything. I missed having access to a Chick-fil-a, big shopping centers and the feeling that everything was constantly moving. But being at CMU taught me to appreciate things I never noticed before. I started appreciating slower mornings, quieter nights and the sense of connection that comes with living in a smaller community.

That does not mean the adjustment was easy. Coming from a larger suburban area to a smaller college town can feel isolating at first. There were moments during my first year when I felt like I had left behind everything familiar. I missed home, my routines and the comfort of knowing exactly where I belonged.

But college is supposed to challenge people. It is supposed to push you out of your comfort zone and force growth. Moving from Canton to Mount Pleasant did exactly that for me.

Now, when I go back home, Canton almost feels overwhelming. The traffic that once seemed normal now feels nonstop. The crowds feel bigger. Life feels faster. At the same time, when I return to Mount Pleasant, there is a sense of calm that I never expected to associate with a place away from home.

I now yearn to spend the majority of months in Mount Pleasant.

I never thought moving from a bigger suburban town to a smaller college town would change my perspective so much, but it has. It taught me that home is not always about size or population. Sometimes, it is about the people, the routines and the places that slowly become part of your everyday life.

Canton will always be home to me. It is where I grew up, where my family is and where so much of my life began. But Mount Pleasant and CMU became something important too. They became the place where I learned how to build a life on my own.



Want to stay in the loop?

By Grace Walker
Senior news editor

As you get settled into your new home and navigate your new life at Central Michigan University, you will find, like most universities, that there is so much going on all of the time. There are so many different things to be a part of, activities to do, games to watch and places to explore at the university and throughout Mount Pleasant.

That's where student media comes in!

There are so many different ways to keep up with what's going on around CMU. Here are just some of the ways to stay informed:

Central Michigan Life: Want to know what's going on at CMU and the community around? Check us out! We are a national award winning student newspaper that reports on everything from CMU sports, events and news from the university and the community around us. And we don't just report on news. We have shows and podcasts that are just for entertainment.

Want to check out more? Find us our monthly newspapers anywhere on the CM Life racks throughout campus and Mount Pleasant, or check us out at cm-life.com. Follow us on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and YouTube to stay updated.

CMU Athletics: CMU offers many, many, many different sports teams including club sports. Want to go to a game or check the scoreboard? Check them out CMU athletics at cmuchippewas.com or on social media.

Moore Hall Television: Looking for student media you can watch? MHTV offers so many student-made shows like News Central, Sports Central and Dungeons and Dormrats. MHTV broadcasts shows made completely by students 24/7 on television, on Vimeo and, with some shows, through YouTube.

Want to check out more? Watch MHTV on Charter Spectrum Cable or on Vimeo. MHTV and its different shows are also on Instagram and YouTube.

Moore Media Records: Want to listen to music from local artists? Moore Media Records is the place for you. MMR produces and records the music of different local bands and artists. Check them out on Spotify, YouTube and Instagram.

There are so many more student media groups to check out. As you make your way through CMU, be sure to check out some of what these student media groups do.























Ella Miller | File Photo

MainStage drew hundreds of students on Sunday, Aug. 25 on Franklin Street between Preston and Bellows. The annual event showcases the over 300 Registered Student Organizations at Central and encourages students to get involved.

Paige Jaczkowski | Junior designer

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Chances of a lifetime

By Zoey Lawrence
Senior designer

Hey reader! Yes, you! Thank you so much for looking at our guide made just for you! As a junior at Central Michigan University, I was once in your shoes. I was scared coming to a big school, and I knew only one person on campus. But being scared or nervous should only be temporary, college is all about what you make of it. Not about who you once were, this is a chance to start fresh and create a beautiful new chapter in your life that you will remember forever.

I honestly could say coming here was the best decision I could have made for not just my career but for my life.

Central Michigan is a hidden gem of a school with so many opportunities. From our vast alumni networks across the country, to passionate faculty who help connect you to job opportunities, to clubs and jobs on campus that offer opportunities for recognition in your field, and so much more.

In my own personal experience, I have had amazing opportunities throughout my time here. I've received national awards, such as best advertising graphic designer in all collegiate media, and other titles with our student media organization, Central Michigan Life, collaborating with registered student organizations (RSOs), and even getting to work under the College

of Arts and Media. Opportunities like these are not as hard to find on CMU's campus, you are always one door away from a chance of a lifetime.

With all of that being said, to pursue those opportunities, I had to grow up, learn how to talk to others and have some pep in my step when I wanted to ask for something. The best part of me talking about it is that it's what college is all about, making those mistakes now while you still can learn and get back up.

The opportunities don't stop with just your career; CMU has so many ways of making friends while you're here. We have over 200 RSOs. Whether you're into squirrel watching, video games, sports, writing, arts, music or even just want to party, there is a place here for you.

Every year CMU holds an event called Mainstage, where every RSO, Greek organization and even some departments set up a table to talk to anyone walking around who might be interested. It's your first big chance to see these opportunities right in front of you and chase them.

I hope that with you reading our edition, you feel confident going into this semester and a little less worried about your new chapter. You got this, and always remember to stay fired up!



Zoey Lawrence | Senior designer





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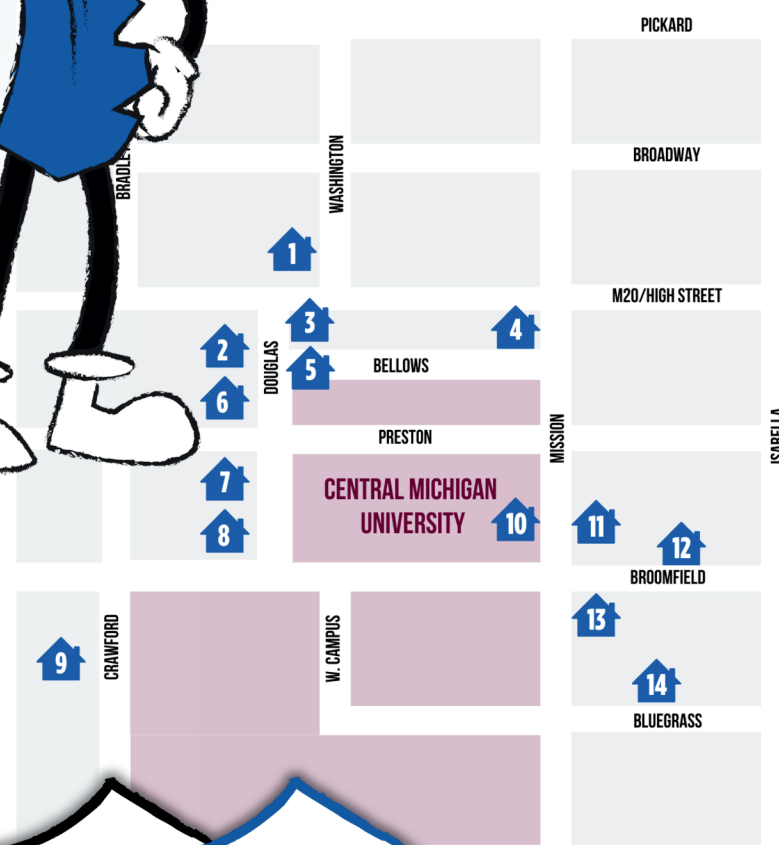
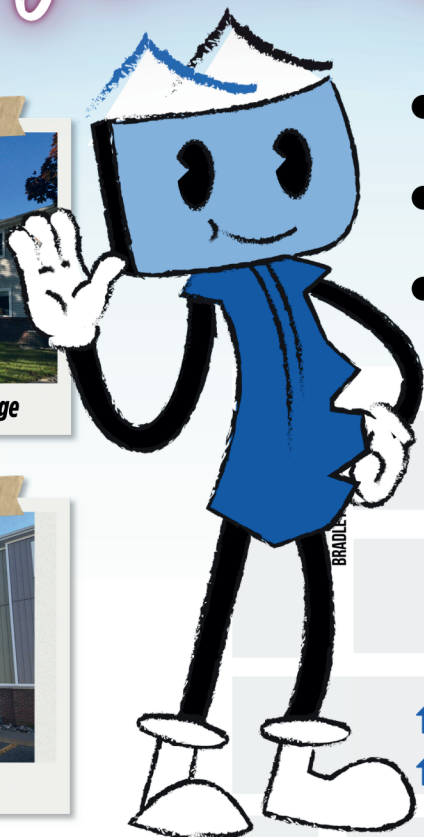
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