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A note from the managing editor



By Masha Smahliuk-Bootz
Managing editor

The edition you're holding in your hands is an example of true watchdog, professional and ethical journalism — from an investigation of the highest paid Central Michigan University employees to coverage of the athletics budget.

It's the last part of the "CMU Budget" project that the university's chapter of the Society of

Professional Journalists has been working on with *Central Michigan Life* for the past year.

It is a product of countless work hours and love to you, our reader. We wouldn't write these stories if we didn't care deeply about our journalism, audience and the university that we call home.

As I am writing this editor's note, I am overwhelmed with pride for every single one of these stories and for all the achievements our team accomplished. Lauren, Courtney, Sydney, Blace, Grace and Noah — this world is so lucky to have your talent and passion.

I am also immensely honored, humbled and excited to lead this 100-year student newspaper next academic year as its editor-in-chief. Being

at *CM Life* for the past three years, I can truly call it my second family.

Next year, I hope to build on the admirable work ethic that *CM Life* already has and to continue producing high-quality local journalism to inform our campus and city communities.

And if there is something I would want you, our reader, to know about what *CM Life* has taught me, it would be to have a big heart that is open to empathy, and big questions that you aren't afraid to ask.

That's why, before you pick up this edition, remember to be curious and to be kind. But also remember to love and to care.

Masha Smahliuk-Bootz
is Central Michigan Life's
2024-25 managing editor.

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On the cover: Photo illustration by Zoey Lawrence with photo assets by Jo Kenoshmeg.

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NEWS

Central Michigan University Athletics are predicted to spend \$27.2 million in 2024-25 academic year. But even with ticket sales, fundraising and game guarantees, Athletics fall short of covering expenses.

\$20.1 million
university's general fund

\$1.8 million
Mid-American Conference distribution

\$1.7 million
Game guarantees

\$1.1 million
Chippewa Club

\$859,115
ticket sales

Fired up! But at what cost?



Jasmine Brookins | Staff photographer

By Sydney Neal
Sports Editor

Despite the roaring crowds and thrilling game-day moments, Central Michigan University's athletic program faces a financial reality that goes beyond the scoreboard.

With a \$27.2 million budget covering expenditures for the 2024-25 fiscal year, CMU's athletics department remains dependent on university subsidies to stay competitive.

While ticket sales, fundraising and game guarantees generate \$7 million in revenue, they fall far short of covering expenses — leaving the university to provide over \$20 million in financial support, according to the Operating Budget.

"The main thing to note is that this is a forecast," physical education and sports professor Jennifer Sieszputowski said. "These aren't the actual numbers... whoever does this each month will be comparing how its matching up to what they forecasted."

Budgetary nitty-gritty

A significant portion of the university general fund support is designated for athletic scholarships and debt service. The 2024-25 scholarship subsidy is set at around \$7 million, funding around 232 total awards, including full and partial scholarships across different programs. However, not all student-athletes are on full scholarships.

The 2024-25 Operating Budget showed the highest expenses as followed:

- Scholarships — \$7,034,688
- Football Expenses — \$4,373,993
- Debt Service for Athletic Facilities — \$2,061,681
- Men's Basketball Expenses — \$1,304,038
- General Facilities & Maintenance — \$1,055,597

On the revenue side, game guarantees were estimated to contribute approximately \$1.7 million to the coffers this calendar year, the budget showed. This includes payments received for CMU's participation in non-conference football games and other scheduled competitions.

Mid-American Conference distributions contributed about \$1.8 million in 2024-25, according to the budget. This includes conference-related revenue sharing from T.V. deals, sponsorships and tournament distributions.

Lastly, ticket sales and athletic fundraising contributed revenues of \$859,115 from ticket trade and \$1.1 million from the Chippewa Club. These contributions from donors and ticket revenue help sustain athletic programs.

"Last year, game guarantees were at \$3.3 million, but this year they're only at \$1.7 million," Sieszputowski said. "That likely means CMU played fewer big-money games against major conference teams."

In the landscape of the MAC, CMU ranks right in the middle out of the 12 team, yet still faces many of the same financial pressures as its peers. According to the most recent data in 2024 from the Knight-Newhouse College Athletics Database, the rankings are as followed:

- Buffalo - \$42.1 million
- Miami (OH) - \$40.6 million
- Western Michigan - \$40.4 million
- Toledo - \$38.7 million
- Eastern Michigan - \$37.2 million
- Central Michigan - \$36.6 million

Expenses on Knight Source are categorized differently than by the CMU operational budget.

So where does the rest of the money come from?

The remaining \$20.1 million shortfall is covered by a direct subsidy from the university's general fund, which is primarily fueled by student tuition and fees, along with state appropriations and miscellaneous university revenue streams. This subsidy, which has grown significantly over the past decade, makes CMU Athletics the single-most heavily subsidized non-academic department on campus.

"(The budget) is a combination of university subsidies and external revenue sources. Overall, our subsidy is approximately 4 % of the university's budget, as it has been for a long time," Amy Folan, the director of Athletics explained. "Like everyone at Central Michigan, we are trying to do more with less, but we focus on providing a premier student-athlete experience, exceptional fan experience and being leaders in the MAC.

Coaching buyouts

Further complicating the department's finances this year is the recent departure of head men's basketball coach Tony Barbee, who was fired after three seasons with a 49-75 overall record and 30-42 MAC record. Barbee had another year remaining on his contract, and his termination is expected to trigger a contractual buyout, as he had a contract salary of \$346,794.

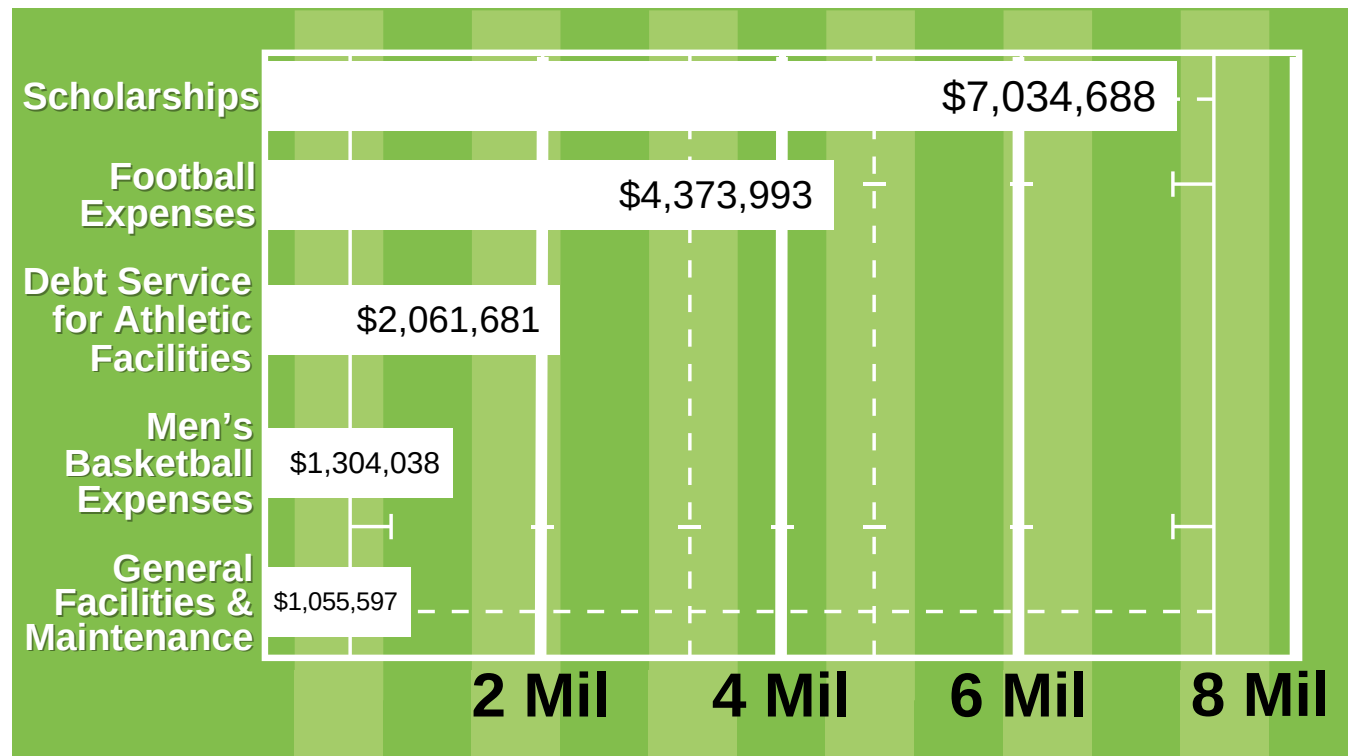
"Coach Barbee's contract buyout is spread out over 12 months and includes an offset provision," Folan said. "The maximum amount of his buyout is \$300,000 but it would be reduced by any income he makes over the next year."

The hiring of a new men's basketball coaching staff brings another layer of financial commitment. While the base salary for the new head coach may be similar to Barbee's, modern contracts often include a range of incentives, retention bonuses and buyout protections, all of which carry long-term budget implications.

"(Buyouts) are covered through department funds through reallocation," Folan said. "The cost of bringing in a new staff is in line with all coaching staff transitions. It is within the range of our conference peers."

In December, CMU named Matt Drinkall as the new head coach of the football program after the retirement of previous head coach Jim McElwain. Drinkall, who most recently served as an offensive line coach at Army, steps into a program that has struggled in recent years.

As of March 2025, the head football coach has a current contract salary of \$415,000, while the men's basketball head coach has a current contract salary of \$346,794. Both were among the top 10 highest paid positions at CMU.



Paige Jaczkowski | Staff designer

A decade of rising costs

The 2024-25 athletic budget continues a trend that's been building for over a decade: rising expenses, stagnant revenues and an ever-growing reliance on institutional support.

In the 2016-2017 operating budget, CMU Athletics had a total budget of approximately \$29.2 million, with about \$22.4 million of that covered through university subsidy or student fees. That left the department responsible for generating around \$6.7 million in its own revenue.

Fast forward nine years, and the budget has decreased by almost \$2 million, while the projected revenue increased.

Athletic revenues, such as ticket sales, media deals and sponsorships have remained flat or declined. Bowl game revenues and postseason payouts, once a significant source of athletic department windfalls, have become increasingly rare amid performance struggles in football.

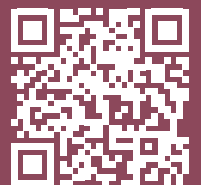
"CMU Athletics is a university unit and feels the same impact as all of our campus peers," Folan explained. "We are always looking to be as efficient as possible with our resources and being able to maximize what we have in order to achieve championship-level success."



Zoey Lawrence | Staff Cartoonist

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Personnel Value

A look at how CMU determines salaries

By **Blace Carpenter & Courtney Boyd**
Staff Reporters & New Editor

The salary of the highest paid Central Michigan Employee reached nearly \$1 million per year. But there are over 2,000 other employees they must pay.

At Central Michigan University, the collective value of the campus faculty and staff in 2024 from the president to the part time janitor was \$171 million, which is 38% of the total operating budget.

But how is that money divided by departments, and who is getting the biggest pieces of the monetary pie?

The top paid employees at CMU

According to a Freedom of Information Act request provided by CMU, the former dean of CMU's College of Medicine, George Kikano, was the university's highest-paid employee before he resigned on March 6, with a base salary of \$750,000. He began his role as dean in 2015 and was appointed to other positions, such as executive vice president for Health Affairs and chair of the board for CMU Medical Education Partners.

Earlier this semester, Kikano announced he was stepping down from his role at the university. This sudden transition halted any plans for external health partnerships for campus clinics, according to the university.

- President MacKinnon is the second highest-paid employee at CMU, with a base salary of \$500,000 a year.
- Here are the other top-paid employees at CMU as of March 2025 (base salaries):
- Head Football Coach Matt Drinkall - \$415,000
- Professor and the Senior Associate Dean of Research Sethu Reddy - \$389,717
- Associate Dean of Clinical Education Steven Vance - \$356,879
- Provost Paula Lancaster - \$350,000
- Former Head Men's Basketball Coach Tony Barbee - \$346,794
- Vice President & Chief Financial Officer Mary Moran Hill - \$319,268
- Zyzelewski Family Associate Vice President and Director of Athletics Amy Folan - \$309,638

Director of Employment and Compensation Cali Clark said that salaries are calculated using CMU's Compensation Philosophy, which outlines that starting salaries are based on factors such as individual qualifications, internal equity with current employees and the external market of university employment.

Some external markets, Clark said, include national universities, Michigan universities, Mid-American Conference (MAC) universities and peer institutions. After these comparisons, she said HR recommends a salary range to the departments.



Paige Jaczkowski | Staff Designer

"It's not an exact science," she said. "There's no exact formula ... we take all of those things into consideration when we're making a recommendation."

The University of Toledo is one of the several schools CMU compares salaries with. Here are the salaries of similar positions:

- Executive Vice President of Health Affairs - \$700,000
- Dean of the College of Medicine - \$550,000
- President – Interim President - \$525,000
- Head Football Coach - \$575,000
- Senior Associate Dean of Research - Interim VP for Research - \$222,697.33
- Provost/Executive Vice President – Interim Provost - \$357,000
- Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services/Chief Financial Officer – Interim VP of Finance - \$192,499.97
- Director of Athletics - \$312,120

The average salary of CMU's salary list

CMU annually releases a list of salaries for different employee groups on campus. The salary list includes nearly every employee's base salary other than senior officers such as college deans, associate deans and other higher administrative positions.

Here are the averages of each group listed in the CMU 2024-25 Salary List:

- Dispatchers - \$54,065 (6 employees)
- Faculty - \$91,677 (755 employees)
- Service/Maintenance - \$42,803 (164 employees)
- Medical Faculty - \$155,859 (39 employees)
- Office Professionals - \$39,370 (223 employees)
- Police Officers - \$89,970 (7 employees)
- Doctoral Research - \$54,245 (14 employees)
- Professional and Administrative - \$69,055 (791 employees)
- Public Broadcasting - \$53,747 (25 employees)
- Supervisory/Technical - \$46,346 (86 employees)

- The entire list has a total of 2,114 employees, and the average salary of all of these positions comes to \$72,406.

“A university is more like a small city than a single company, and it takes a wide range of people with a tremendous variety of knowledge, backgrounds and experiences to function properly,” Executive Director of University Communications Ari Harris wrote in an email to *Central Michigan Life* on May 1. “We’re very fortunate to have highly qualified, experienced, passionate faculty and staff who choose to share their talents with our university community.”

Breaking down faculty pay

In 2023-24, there were over 900 faculty members working at the university in different departments with varying pay and benefits. Amanda Garrison is a tenured professor in the sociology department, as well as the president of the CMU Faculty Association. She said the differences in pay and benefits between professors is attributed to two things: Which of the eight colleges they work in, and whether they are fixed-term or tenure-tracked.

Garrison said that the university used to follow a Responsibility Centered Management Model, or RCM Model. This model made it so each college was in charge of its own funding, and their funding was determined entirely by how many students were enrolled in each.

For example, the College of Medicine and College of Business have the most students and most demand, so their professors are paid more, while the College of Arts and Media and the College of Education and Human Services see fewer students, so professors are paid less in comparison.

“Capitalism determines to some extent how we’re (the colleges and what they teach) valued as sciences,” Garrison said. “Those professors (in business) are often also valued because they’re professionals in the world, too. ... They’re always also going to have more students.

“It should also make sense that health professions would have more money allocated to them, given the number of students they have (and) given the meaning of what they produce and provide, so doctors ... have a higher value because of what they can produce and provide.”

Additionally, Garrison explained that tenured and fixed-term professors are paid differently.

She said tenured professors are usually paid double the salary of fixed-term, and that they have job security as long as they’re actively pursuing research milestones.

She said tenured faculty receive support from their deans to reach their research goals, and their expectations are clearly outlined, as compared to other institutions.

“We have these checkpoints in place to make sure that you get where you wanna be,” she said.

Tenured professors also have benefits such as healthcare, sick days, bereavement days and salary increases each year. Garrison said in the event of misconduct, the university will offer training courses and work with the professors to correct it.

“Even if you do something that’s so awful to a student that’s not against the law, that’s just against policy, you still get training,” Garrison said. “You go through a process. If it doesn’t take and you keep doing it, you’ll still get (training). They’re going to try and try because they don’t want to get rid of you.”

In comparison, she said that fixed-term professors have jobs based on a contract, and their job security is based on whether that contract gets renewed. She said that fixed-term tends to teach more classes than tenure, and if a college goes through budget cuts, they are the first to be fired. She also said that they have little-to-no benefits.

“I think I’ve heard that they might bring (fixed-term) people in at like \$32,000 maybe,” Garrison said. “And coming in now, I think as an assistant, people are making \$75,000 to \$80,000. Think about that difference. That’s a whole person’s salary.”

Garrison said that this disparity leads to grievances across departments. She said that the faculty members should not argue over benefits, but should instead work together to achieve the same benefits and support.

“There’s tension between us because we’re encouraged to look at each other and say, ‘You have more than I do,’” she said. “‘Why do you have more than I do? My work is just as valuable as yours.’ That’s not the place to look. What we have to do is help each other turn around and look back over (at the top)

“This is the problem, not us. If you aren’t getting what you need, we need to stand with you and make sure you get what you need. Not that we give up what we have. You need what we have.”

Other aspects of employment

Outside of the roughly 900 faculty members CMU employs, the university also employs around 1,160 staff members in other employee groups.

Hiring, compensation, benefits and internal promotions of these employees are all handled through CMU’s Human Resources. Clark said that while HR doesn’t conduct the interviews or onboarding processes for new hires, they do handle some of the more technical aspects of hiring, such as conducting background checks, approving candidates, disciplinary action and more.

Clark said that throughout the hiring process, departments communicate with HR to approve candidates and negotiate salaries and benefits once hired.

Alongside hiring, Clark said the HR office handles other issues, such as concerns with supervisors, medical leave, worker’s compensation claims and coaching and training opportunities. She said the trainings, as well as having to terminate employees, is the hardest part of her job.

“Some of the more difficult pieces (of the job) is when a department wants to go through a reorganization and maybe it results in a layoff for an employee or an employee isn’t performing (well),” she said. “They have to sit down and coach them or talk with them about that sometimes. They see that as a difficult time when we’re really trying to help them.”

Clark also said the university has seen issues with retention in recent years, especially when the COVID-19 pandemic happened. She cited that in 2020, CMU had a turnover rate of 14.6%, and in 2021 there was a turnover rate of 18.2%, with 250 faculty and staff members leaving their positions. While the numbers have been declining since (in 2024 it was down to 13.7%), she said it still proves difficult for the university.

“There’s a very difficult employment market right now, where individuals are always looking for the next best thing,” she said. “They might come in and only stay for a year and then they go off because there’s so many job openings and opportunities for individuals. If they’re wanting to increase their pay and that’s the number one priority for them, they might be looking for other jobs outside of the university.

“That’s frustrating, to spend time and money and go through the process of hiring someone and not being able to retain them, but we’re hopeful that CMU is a different culture, where ... you’re wanting to stay.”

Photo Courtesy | Adobe Stock



We do: Advertising

Marketing the university, a multi-faceted effort

By Grace Walker & Lauren Rice
Staff reporter and Editor-in-chief

After 10 years of enrollment decline, the Central Michigan University fall enrollment statistics finally showed an end in sight: a slight increase in enrollment for the fall semester in 2024.

Part of the effort to right the ship comes from the university's marketing and the various strategies it engages to recruit potential students.

Michael Armistead is the coordinator of multimedia content at CMU. If you've seen someone appear in a burst of confetti in a CMU ad on Instagram, it's probably him.

"Everyone that works in the university, our main concern is recruitment," Armistead said. "So we collaborate closely with Jennifer DeHaemers (vice president of Student Recruitment and Retention) and the admissions office to coordinate our messaging to put out on platforms.

"We have seen, for the first time in about 10 years, with both the efforts of my office and the efforts of admissions, the first uptick in CMU enrollment in about a decade. So what we're doing works."

According to CMU's 2024-25 operating budget, University Communications (UComm) has some money to work with when it comes to digital strategy and marketing:

- Digital strategy: About \$1.3 million
- Marketing: Over \$1.2 million

So where does that money get spent? And is it giving a return on investment?

When CMU's budget planning committee sits down to decide where funds need to be allocated throughout the university, they will decide on a base budget for the University of Communication. Then, with its resources, UComm will determine its top priorities for advertising.

"It's a matter of (asking) 'Where are we going to find the most amount of people looking to do the things we want them to do?'" Deputy Chief Marketing Officer Abigail Dean said.

She said there are five main campaigns: awareness, application, visit, deposit and Innovation and Online.

UComm will start pushing ads within these campaigns during the times of year when prospective students are looking for information. Dean said the target audience is anyone between the ages of 12 to 25, with a focus on people in highly populated parts of the state of Michigan.

"We stay in the digital space, because it is the best way to target and to make sure we're in front of the people that we want to be in front of," Dean said. "They are multiple-screen users: They are at once on their

laptops, have their phone next to them and (are) watching something streaming on the TV"

When targeting students online, Dean said they use keywords to make sure their name pops up first in the search results. Many companies and brands will buy certain keywords — at a price of 1 cent to \$36.51 — so their name can show up first.

Despite the larger focus on online advertising, UComm still utilizes traditional media.

Dean said these advertisements are geared toward getting CMU's name out to as many people as possible.

Billboards and commercials are costly, so Dean said UComm will target highly populated areas, such as Grand Rapids, Lansing, the Saginaw/Flint area and Detroit.



Zoey Lawrence | Senior designer

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The administrative typhoon

Central Michigan University has seen a slew of changes in top leadership roles in recent years. Here's how it finds its new executives.

By **Blace Carpenter & Masha Smahliuk-Bootz**

Staff Reporter & Managing Editor

In the past year, Central Michigan University saw several changes in its administration. From former President Bob Davies to former provost Nancy Mathews, CMU parted ways with 179 of its employees and introduced new faces.

Separation Agreements

According to the Director of Employee and Labor Relations Scott Hoffman, separation agreements can be used as a method of maintaining a healthy relationship with an outgoing employee and as a way to help transition them from one job to another.

However, not every employee has a separation agreement with the university.

These agreements are produced for at-will employees, who are “full-time benefit-eligible employees with no designated end date,” according to CMU’s Senior Officers Handbook.

“So senior officers, (vice presidents), deans ... they are all considered at-will employees,” Director of Employment and Compensation Cali Clark said. “So if they separate employment, typically, they’re all eligible for a separation payment.”

These agreements can give an outgoing employee a year’s salary, money from leftover vacation time or even the ability to stay with the university as a faculty member.

“Often they minimize cost from the university,” Hoffman said.

Over the past two years, the college has paid out over \$4 million in separation agreements:

- Davies: \$1,703,112
- Outgoing Executive Vice President for Health Affairs and Dean of the College of Medicine George Kikano: \$1,180,707
- Former Executive Vice President and Provost Nancy Mathews: \$526,333.19
- Former Executive Vice President and Provost Mary Schutten: \$99,820.76
- Former Vice President of Student Affairs Renee Watson: \$226,377.32
- Former Physician Assistant Program Director Debra Kimball-Christie: \$116,915.00
- Former Executive Director of Student Programming and Activities Jennifer Nottingham: \$109,837.04
- Former Football Video Operations Coordinator

John McDowell III: \$63,441.52
CMU does have transitional services for employees who are not considered at-will. Some of those services are allowing employees to maintain their insurance for 18 months, money from unused vacation time, and resources for filing for unemployment or retirement.

“We really try to help with a transitional period until, hopefully, they’re able to find other employment within that period of time,” Clark said.

Search firms

To fill in the highest positions at the university, CMU sometimes hires search firms, Clark said.

Central Michigan Life obtained six search contracts under the Freedom of Information Act. Those documents showed:

- WittKieffer was hired to find a new CMU president on Feb. 29, 2024. Their services cost around \$183,334, according to the letter of agreement.
- Greenwood Asher & Associates was used to find a new dean for the College of Health Professions, according to the proposal signed on June 14, 2024. Their services cost \$84,000.
- Greenwood Asher & Associates was hired again on Jan. 7, 2025, to search for vice president of communications and chief marketing officer. The agreement read that their fees will be “based on the industry standard formula (of) 33 1/3% (i.e., 1/3) of the first year’s estimated cash compensation or GA&A’s minimum fee of \$60,000, whichever is higher.”
- A contract with Bowlsby Sports Advisors was signed on Nov. 21, 2024, to hire a new football head coach. Their services cost \$48,000.
- Parker Executive Search was hired to find a new men’s basketball head coach on April 7, 2025. Their services cost \$35,000.
- College Sports Solutions was hired to find a women’s volleyball head coach on Dec. 3, 2024. Their services cost \$15,000.

Clark said CMU chooses to use search firms because the university hopes to hire the best candidate for the position. Different search firms specialize in certain



Zoey Lawrence | Senior designer

things, such as enrollment, athletics and presidential search, Clark said.

“They are actually, for lack of a better word, a headhunter,” Clark said. “They make contacts, they call people and identify those individuals who might be interested but never thought about applying for a position.”

Typically, the vice presidents are the ones who determine if CMU will use a search firm, and it is normally only for the highest ranking positions at the university, Clark said. The university follows a policy when working with search firms.

When CMU works with a search firm, the university makes sure the firm is following the university’s process: Central still forms a search committee, selects people they want to interview and ultimately makes the hiring decision, Clark said.

Clark said senior positions are hired by the person they report to. For example, Athletic Director Amy Folan hires head coaches and CMU President MacKinnon will hire the vice president of University Communications.

The search process itself is confidential, Clark said, so the candidate’s employment at that time isn’t jeopardized. Search firms also have timelines they work in. Clark said, “Usually a vacancy is filled in within about two months.”

The cost of (college) living

By Masha Smahliuk-Bootz

Managing Editor

Central Michigan University residence halls have been called home by over 4,000 students this academic year, according to Erica Johnson, the interim assistant vice president of Student Affairs.

Students who pay for their room and board contribute to the total revenue of Residence Life, which has been over \$64 million in 2024-25, according to the CMU Operating Budget.

The Residence Life budget is managed by Auxiliary Services, while it functions under the Division of Student Affairs, said Cal Seelye, executive director of Auxiliary Services.

Housing and meal prices

CMU offers three housing communities with 21 residence halls, according to the university's website.

The cost of a standard residence hall room will be about \$6,314 a semester in the 2025-26 academic year, which is a 4% increase from this year, according to a MLive article.

CMU also has several meal plan options that are required for students who live in residence halls. A meal plan will cost \$3,050 per semester in 2025-26, according

to the CMU website. MLive reports that these meal plan rates increased by 3.5% for next year.

Seelye said the decision to increase prices is based on several factors, which are the general increase of the cost of living, minimum wage, food prices and utility costs.

"We look at what the rates are for this year, and then we go through and look at what we see as potential for increase in revenue, and then what our expense is going to do as it ties into that," Seelye said.

He said CMU's Board of Trustees is responsible for approving housing and meal rates.

Johnson said Auxiliary Services and Residence Life work together to ensure that CMU is "a place that students can get a really high quality on-campus experience for a reasonable price."

Residence Life projects

Besides maintaining residence halls and paying staff salaries, Residence Life also pays for construction and renovation projects.

For example, Seelye said Residence Life funded the demolition of Northwest Apartments, which cost a little under \$5 million. Seelye said the office uses reserve funds for such projects.

"If we have a major project come up ... (and) if we don't use the money that we have in reserves, we have to work



Jasmine Brookins | Staff photographer

Central Michigan University students eat dinner in Dine and Connect in the East Community on Wednesday, April 30, 2025.

with the vice president for Finance and Administrative Services to go out and see if we can get, essentially, a loan to pay for that," he said.

Currently, Seelye said, Merrill dining hall is under renovation, but this project is completely funded by Chartwells, CMU's dining services provider.

In the future, Seelye said Residence Life's goal is to start updating South and East residence halls.

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MAY 8, 2025

Congratulations,
CLASS OF 2025

Look Who's GRADUATING!



CENTRAL
MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

📷 Photo: Jo Kenoshmeg

KAMEILLE BURTON



Thank you!
 Congratulations Kameille!
 We are so proud of you.
 Can't wait to see what the future holds for you. We will always be by your side ❤️
 Mom & Dad loves you!

MATTHEW WILLIAM SAND



Matt,
 We are so incredibly proud of you. You have amazed us with your dedication, strength, and kindness. We are so excited to see where life takes you.
 Congratulations!
 Love always,
 Mom, Dad, Mitch, Kelley, Maddox, and Myles

WILLIAM MICHAEL BOULUS III



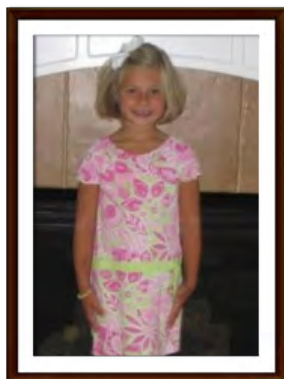
Dear Billy,
 We are so blessed that you are in our lives. We are so proud of you!
 Continue to be yourself and shine your beautiful light wherever you go.
 Love, Mom, Dad and Jennie

ALISON BELLE NEWBERRY



Alison,
 Today is the first of many amazing moments. Believe in yourself, and great things will happen.
 You're capable of anything. Dad and I wish you the biggest
 Congratulations!
 Love, Mom and Dad

TENLEY M. KARBOWSKI



Tenley,
 We are so proud of your hard work & dedication.
 You are going to be an amazing teacher and will have such an impact in the lives of your students.
 Love, Mom, Dad & Zach

BINAH BENET ABBY



Congratulations, Binah Benet Abby!!
 We are so proud of you!! You are the true definition of Philippians 4:13!! Always remember, life will be only what you make it!!!
 We love you so much,
 Love Mom, Barack, Barron, Brailun, Brazil, Bella

SOFIA PATRICIA SANCHEZ

Congratulations Sofia!
 It is time to celebrate your hard work, academic excellence and your dedication to The Marching Chips. We are so proud of you.
 The whole world is out there!

Love, Mom & Dad



Class of
 2025





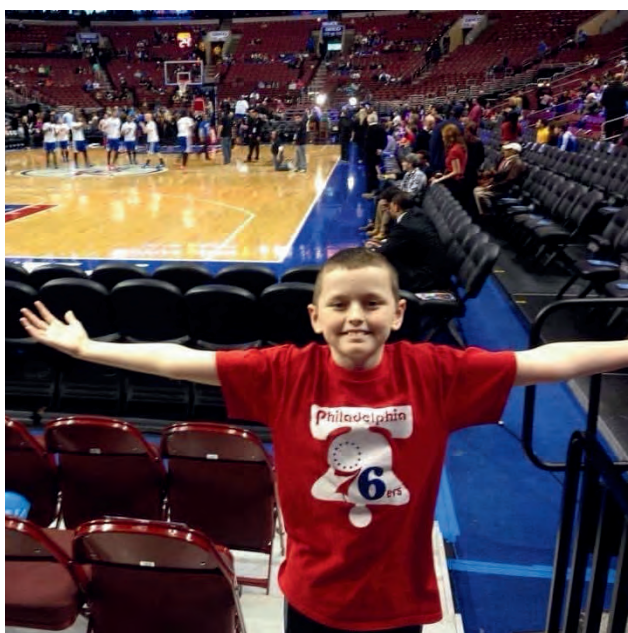
Class of
2025

RYAN MARTIN COOK

Congratulations, Ryan!

We are so proud of you for all you have accomplished at CMU and we can't wait to see all the amazing things the future has in store for you. Wherever you go and whatever you do, your family is always cheering you on! Fire Up!

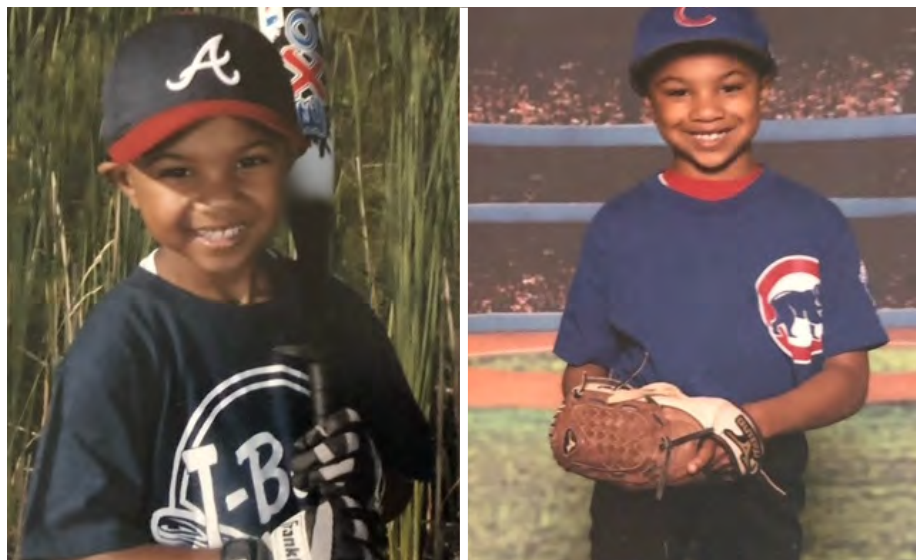
Love,
Mom, Dad, Bobby, Byrd and Emily





Class of
2025

CALEB TY THARPE



Congratulations son! I am so proud of you!
Praying God guides you and you accomplish
BIG things for Him!
Love you! Momma



Class of
2025

KYA NICOLE GARNER- MINNICK

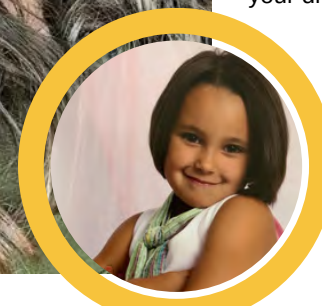


Kya Nicole,

From tea parties to tassels—
you're officially a CMU film grad!
Lights, camera, future!

I can't wait to watch you direct
your dreams into reality.

Love you most, Mom



Class of
2025

ISABELLA KURI- ESQUIVEL

Isa:

We are very proud of the
woman you became.
Keep shining!

We love you:
Dad, Mom, Pato, Adrian,
Marcelo & Maya



Class of
2025

JOSIE PAIGE RANSLEY

With extreme pride &
honor we celebrate your
graduation!

Wishing you continued
success as you continue
your journey at CMU for
your MBA.

Love, Dad, Mom, & Toby



**CENTRAL**
MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY**Class of**
2025

CIARA LYNN CHARLICK

Ciara,

Your journey has been guided by strength, independence, and resilience —fueled by unwavering perseverance, determination, and faith.

Today, we celebrate you and all that you've accomplished as you step into this next chapter as Dr. Ciara Charlick! We are so proud of you and love you deeply.

Isaiah 41:10





CENTRAL
MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Class of
2025

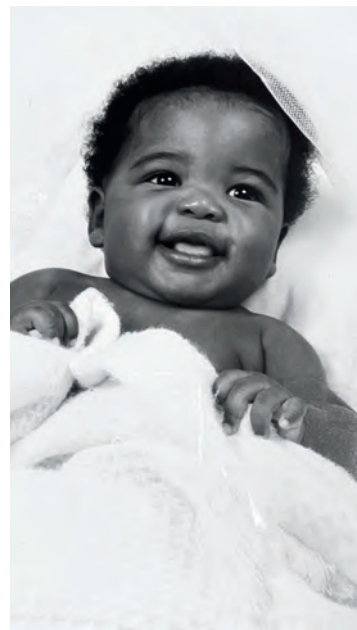
JAMES EARL HENRY JR.



James,

We are very
proud of you !

Love, Mom, Dad,
and Family



OUR DEEPEST FEAR IS NOT THAT
WE ARE INADEQUATE.
OUR DEEPEST FEAR IS THAT WE ARE
POWERFUL BEYOND MEASURE.
IT IS OUR LIGHT, NOT OUR DARKNESS
THAT MOST FRIGHTENS US.
WE ASK OURSELVES, WHO AM I TO BE
BRILLIANT, ACTUALLY, WHO ARE YOU NOT TO BE?
GORGEOUS, YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD.
TALENTED, YOUR PLAYING SMALL DOES NOT SERVE
FABULOUS? THE WORLD.
THERE IS NOTHING ENLIGHTENED ABOUT SHRINKING
SO THAT OTHER PEOPLE WON'T FEEL INSECURE AROUND YOU.
WE ARE ALL MEANT TO SHINE,
AS CHILDREN DO. WE WERE BORN
TO MAKE MANIFEST THE GLORY OF GOD THAT IS WITHIN US.
IT'S NOT JUST IN SOME OF US;
IT'S IN EVERYONE.
AND AS WE LET OUR OWN LIGHT SHINE,
WE UNCONSCIOUSLY GIVE OTHER PEOPLE
PERMISSION TO DO THE SAME.
AS WE ARE LIBERATED FROM OUR OWN FEAR, OUR PRESENCE AUTOMATICALLY
LIBERATES OTHERS.

— MARIANNE WILLIAMSON —



Class of
2025

BRYAN FELICE DIAS



Son, congratulations on your graduation and for completing another important stage in your life. We are so proud of your hard work and accomplishments!

Love, Mom, Dad and Stepdad



Class of
2025

BRITTANY STEVENS



Seeing you graduate fills our hearts with overwhelming joy and immense pride. Your strength, perseverance, and brilliance shine through in everything you do. You've inspired us beyond measure.

We love you more than words could ever express!

-Mr Bear and the kids



Class of
2025

KRISTIN MICHELLE LEMAN



Kristin, From quiet scholar to strong, confident leader. Your journey has been remarkable. We're so proud of what you've become and all that lies ahead.

Love, Mom and Dad



Class of
2025

KINGSLEY ROOSEVELT CALDWELL



Congratulations on your well-deserved accomplishment! We are so incredibly proud of you and all that you've achieved.

As you step into this exciting new chapter of your life, we wish you nothing but success, happiness, and endless blessings.

Love you to the moon and back!
Your beloved family,
Dad, Mom, Kani, Jaida,
Nana, and Grand Ma Moore

AURORA SKY MARTIN

CENTRAL
MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Class of
2025



Aurora, you did it! Double majors; English & History,
triple minors; anthropology, museum studies & creative writing,
& a certificate in Native American studies.

SO PROUD OF YOU!

LOVE YOU!

TIARA MONAE RAND

CENTRAL
MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Class of
2025



Congratulations daughter, you have made us proud.
Seeing your maturity through out your college experience.

Looking forward to your next journey.

We Love You.

CENTRAL
MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Class of
2025

YAZMIN ALIYAH TORRES & AMINA ESTRELLA TORRES

Yazmin & Amina,

¡Sí se puede!

We are so proud of you.

Double the grads, double the pride, double the
reason to celebrate! You both crushed college with
style, smarts, and unshakeable determination!

As you step into this next chapter, never forget
how far you've come and how much you're
capable of. Fire up forever!

We love you,
Mami, Papi, Santino,
PanchoVilla & Harley





Class of
2025

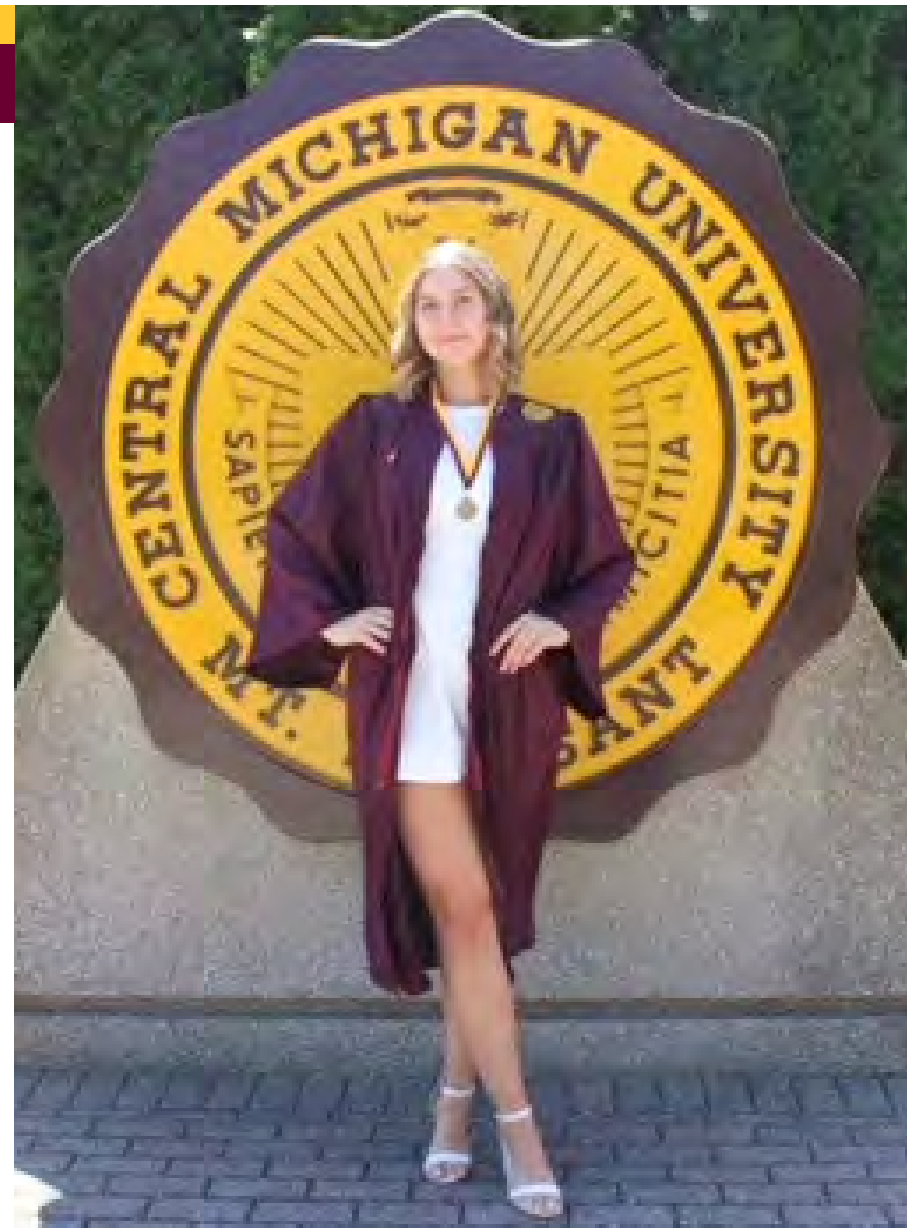
ELENA CAROLINE NEWMAN

Elena Caroline,

It has been such a joy watching you grow into the most amazing young woman. Congratulations on your graduation from CMU! UMB DPT, here she comes!!

Love,

Mom, Chris, Tate, Julie, Macy, Cash, Jimmy
Grandma, and Grandpa





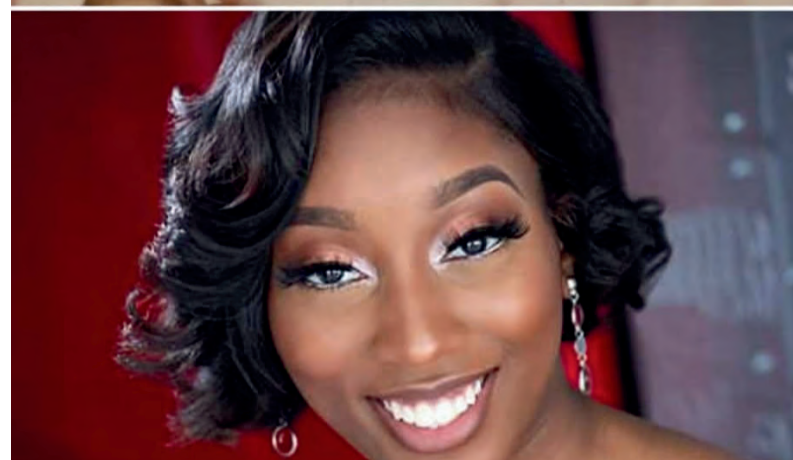
Class of
2025

DREA SYMONE HAMMOND

Congratulations Baby Girl!

We are forever proud of you!

Love Always 🥰🎓
Dad & Mom 🤍
CMU C/O 2025



Class of
2025

ISABELLA GRACE DILIBERTI

Congratulations
Isabella!

You never cease to
amaze us with your
accomplishments.
Looking forward to your
next chapter at UWM!
Enjoy the ride!

Love and Hugs!
Dad, Mom, & Dominic



Class of
2025

EMILY KAY PAAJANEN

Emily,

We are so proud of the
incredible person
you've become.
Congratulations on your
achievement and your
new journey to
becoming a Physician
Assistant. We love you
so much!

Love,
Mom, Dad, Ashley,
Erika & Molly



SAMANTHA TAYLOR BOESKOOL

We are so proud of you Sammy, congrats on all your hard work.

You are so talented, creative and have so much drive to succeed.

We all love you so much and can't wait to see what the future holds

Love Mom, Dad, Brian and Lexi

AMANDA MARIE KORFF

She is strong.
She is fierce.
She is loved.
She is confident.
She is smart.
She is proud.
She is beautiful inside and out.
She is Amanda!
She is a CMU graduate!

We are proud!
Love, Mom and Dad
XOXOXO

VICTORIA PAIGE KNIEPER

Tori,

You're a force of nature and unstoppable. I am so unbelievably proud of you and your accomplishments.

You'll always be half of my heart.

Love, Mom

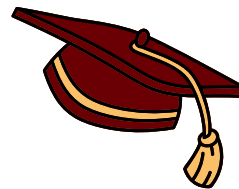
NICHOLAS RYAN PANKOW

Nicholas,

Congratulations on your graduation from CMU. We are so very proud of you, and are very excited to see what your future holds for you!

We Love You Very Much,
Mom and Dad

**Congratulations,
Class of 2025**



#FireUpForever

JORDAN MARIE OLKO

Tori,

You're a force of nature and unstoppable. I am so unbelievably proud of you and your accomplishments.

You'll always be half of my heart.

Love, Mom



**Class of
2025**

**MEGHAN
RITA ACHO**

To Our Amazing Daughter,

From your first day at CMU to this incredible milestone, you've poured your heart, passion, and hard work into every moment. Watching you grow, chase your dreams, and accomplish so much has been one of the greatest joys of our lives.

We are endlessly proud of your dedication, resilience, and the kindness you bring to every challenge. We know you'll continue to shine, push boundaries, and embrace every opportunity that comes your way. Always remember how capable and amazing you are.

Fire Up Chips!

Love always, Mom & Dad





Class of
2025

ROBIN CLAIRE SIBO

Bijoux!!!

You are our sunshine!
Through cloudy days and
lots of laughs, you've
amazed us every step of
the way from the first time
you unlocked your dorm
room door to this moment

Your future is so bright
and we can't wait to see
how you change the world!

Love you mucho mucho.



Class of
2025

AMANDA KOVACS

Amanda,

Congratulations on your
graduation from CMU!
What an incredible
achievement—all your
hard work, perseverance,
and dedication have truly
paid off.

Wishing you continued
success and exciting new
adventures as you chase
your dreams and leave
your mark on the world.

Love, Dad, Mom, and
Andrew



Class of
2025

BRENDAN MICHAEL JANKOWSKI



You made it! We couldn't be prouder of all of your hard work and
accomplishments. The world is yours to explore and embrace.
Make it a great ride.
Love, Your family



Class of
2025

ALEXIS J JEFFREY



We are so proud of you Alexis! The world doesn't know what it's
in for, you will Conquer all you set your mind to! Cheers to the
future, always remember how much you are loved Pess!
Mom & Dad

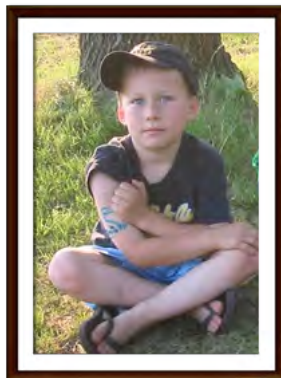
ELIJAH AVERY

Elijah,

Congratulations on your graduation!

We love you so much and are very proud of you—always!

Love, Mom, Russell, Alyssa, Morgan, Rufus, Bobo and Kitten

THOMAS DEANGELO

Watching you grow from that sweet little boy to the strong, driven man you are today has been the greatest joy of my life.

I'm so proud of you—congratulations, my engineer.

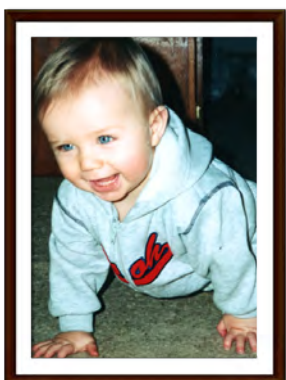
Love, Mom

MAE LYNN KNUDSON

It's been a long haul, we're very proud of how far you've made it and we're excited to see how far you take it!

Congratulations!

Love,

PATRICK JEREMY WILLETT

It has been a joy to watch you grow!

We are so proud of you and wish you all the best in your future adventures.

We love you so much! Mom, Dad, Andrea and Ashley

NICHOLAS EHLMAN

Nicholas,

Congratulations on graduating from CMU! We are so proud of you. You have worked extremely hard these past four years, and now it is paying off. Go out and make all your dreams come true.

We love you, Mom, Dad, Sarah, and Michael

BREYA MICHELLE LENNOX

Breya,

Your hard work and dedication has brought you to this amazing moment.

I am so proud of you and I know you are going to do amazing things.

Congratulations Missy - go place your mark in your classroom!

Love, Mom



Class of
2025

EVAN PATRICK BRAUN

Congratulations Evan,

We are beyond excited and incredibly proud to see you reach this amazing milestone in your life. Watching you grow into such an independent, thoughtful, and strong person brings us so much happiness. We can't wait to see what the future has in store for you!

Love you so much,
Mom & Dad



Class of
2025

SOPHIE ROSE SIKOWSKI



Congratulations on your graduation.
We are proud of you and love you always!
Mom, David, Nana, Aunt Heather, Uncle Tony,
Dominic, Victoria & Cameron

Class of
2025

ARIANNA SARA JOLIE POST



We're so proud of you!

Your dedication and
strength brought you here.
You've earned every bit of
this moment.

Keep shining, dreaming
big, and believing in
yourself.

Love Mom, Dad, and
Brennen



DREW MARIE SHERWOOD



Drew,

We are so proud of all
your accomplishments
and hard work.

We love you very much
and are so excited for
your future!

Mom and Dad

MADELINE ROSE MANARINO



Congratulations
Madeline!

We are so proud of you
and excited to see what
the future has in store for
you!

We love you,
Mom, Dad, Maria,
Joseph & Oliver

JACOB FUSSMAN



Congratulations Jacob!

We are so proud of
you; your hard work
and dedication have
paid off. We are excited
to see what the future
holds for you.

Love,
Mom, Dad, Alexandria,
and Addison

CODY KIRK JEWELL



We are so proud of all
that you have
accomplished so far
and are excited for this
next phase of your life.

Congratulations Bud!

Love, Mom and Dad

ANTHONY JOESPH LELLI



Congratulations on your
graduation, Anthony!

I am so proud of you! It's
been such a delight to see
your passion and
dedication in your field of
Environment Studies.
Excited to see what the
future holds for you. Keep
reaching for the stars, son!

With Much Love,
Mom

LEXUS NICOLE PHINNEY



Lexus,
Who would have known that
a shy, timid and petite little
girl would accomplish so
much during these past four
years.
Cadet Phinney, Chippewa
Battalion, you have
conquered this and will only
keep going. Commissioning
today as a 2nd Lieutenant is
only the beginning of the
next phase. So so proud of
you. Go Army!



Class of
2025



BEN PRATT

Congratulations Ben,

It seems like yesterday you moved on campus to begin this exciting chapter. Your experience as a student athlete over the past 4 years has been amazing. You have grown and learned so much and we are proud of all that you have accomplished in the classroom and on the field.

Onto the next exciting chapter and we know you will have continued success in all that you do!

We love you!
Mom, Dad, and
Scruffy too!



Class of
2025

KENNEDY ELIZABETH MALLORY



Once again you have proven your feet are planted firmly on the ground. The sky is now the limit!
We are so Proud! Love Mom & Dad



Class of
2025

CADEN MICHAEL JARRATT

Congratulations Caden!

We are incredibly proud of the intelligent, compassionate and driven man you have become. It has been an absolute joy to watch you grow and succeed at CMU and in all facets of your life.

Continue to strive for the dreams and desires that God places within you. Looking forward to your next chapter... We love you son!

Fire Up Chips forever!

Love, Mom, Dad, Colton, Mikayla, Makenna



Congratulations, Seniors!

THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING TO LIVE WITH UNITED!



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Navigating uncharted waters

CMU hosts second TEDx event

By **Cristin Coppess**
Staff Reporter

Camera crews fretted around Central Michigan University's French Auditorium Saturday, setting up teleprompters and preparing for the live stream. On-deck speakers ran through their speech introductions as their microphones were checked before the event started. Eager audience members socialized as they waited for the TEDx CMU event to begin.

Carolina Hernandez Ruiz entered and planted herself on the big red dot that marked center stage.

"Welcome to TEDx Central Michigan University," Hernandez Ruiz, the lead organizer and emcee, said. "This is an amazing opportunity to highlight speakers from our community and broadcast them all over the world."

About 70 people attended the sold-out event, with more watching online. CMU's newly formed Division of University Engagement and Student Affairs and the Student Government Association were the primary sponsors.

Exploring the theme "Navigating the Unknown," each talk covered a wide range of topics, varying from the science of early cancer screenings to postpartum depression.

The featured speakers and topics were:

- "How to Raise a Kid (without more screen time)" by CMU Alumnus Dillon Barr
- "Your DNA can tell you your risk for cancer - can you afford to listen?" by second year CMU medical student Madison Miller
- "The Gift of Goodbye, Growing through Grieving" by CMU student Holly Caldwell
- "Ogchidaa - Way of the Warrior" by CMU Alumnus Mike McCreery
- "Trapped in an Untamed Mind" by CMU Student Kelly Lett
- "Paralyzed by Motherhood: Navigating Life through Postpartum Depression" by CMU Graphic Design Professor Annie Peters
- "Navigating the Unknown of AI" by Founder of Black Women in AI CMU Alumna Angle Bush
- "Fail Forward Through Fear" - Former NFL player and CMU Alumnus Jacob Brown

Ameer Hicks, CMU student and the event's head of speaker curation, said the planning committee went through a painstaking process as they developed the speaker list. He said that narrowing down the 70-person applicant pool was



Angle Bush, founder of Black Women in Artificial Intelligence and CMU alumna, describes common fears people have regarding AI at the 2025 TEDx Central Michigan University event held in French Auditorium, Saturday, May 3, 2025.

Cristin Coppess | Staff photographer

a challenge, as there were only eight spots available.

"Our main focus was to see who was really grasping the theme the most," Hicks said. "We are 'Navigating the Unknown' this year. Going off of today's environment, there's so many things we don't know about that a lot of us feel unprepared for."

"This is us stepping into that reality, and hearing about how we all have shared experiences stepping into that unknown."

Each speaker tied the theme of "Navigating the Unknown" into their experiences, sharing their stories with the audience and online viewers.

Bush, the founder of Black Women in Artificial Intelligence and a CMU alumna, discussed the attitude people hold toward AI and her journey establishing herself in the field.

"I implore you to be afraid," Bush said to the audience. "Anytime something has the power to reshape the way that we live, the way that we work and the way that we govern, it deserves our attention and our caution. Be afraid, because artificial intelligence is doing that every single day."

She said that starting from a point of fear puts people in a position to educate themselves.

"Fear can be useful because it wakes us up," Bush said. "Fear can be useful because it causes us to ask questions and continue to ask better questions. And then it causes

us to move forward. Fear takes us to awareness."

Speaker and CMU sophomore Holly Caldwell, shared her experiences dealing with grief as a teenager and young adult. She always wanted to do a TED talk, but finding the right topic proved challenging.

For about a month and a half, she said, she struggled to find the right words that would make her message stick with the audience.

After a lot of trial and error, Hicks encouraged her to be vulnerable and tell her family's story of grief, loss and estrangement after her father's death.

"He helped me find a way to talk about grief and loss in a way that other people could connect to, and understand that what they're feeling is normal," Caldwell said. "Grief and loss are something we all experience, and we're pressured to go through it as quickly as we can. The truth is you don't just go back to normal after a significant loss. It completely changes your outlook on everything."

Caldwell said her experiences dealing with grief, alongside other

mental health issues, helped her research the psychology of grief and its impacts. She learned about the concept of complex grief and, in so doing, was able to move forward in her own healing process.

"I certainly went through a bit of a rough patch while writing," she said. "But I feel like it has been a really good part of the healing process for me. Part of healing is telling your story and sharing what you've gone through with others."

During her time on stage, Caldwell shared her own struggle with grief, detailing how different stages of the grieving process affected her mental health. Additionally, she discussed the science behind ambiguous, complex and traumatic grief and the stages in which they manifest.

She said she hopes that those who heard her speak know they are not alone in their loss. There are many kinds of grief, she said, and she hopes the audience can now put a name to their struggles.

Caldwell encouraged the audience to lean on support systems including family, friends and medical professionals to help support them as they deal with their grief.

"I want people to understand that they are not isolated in their experience," Caldwell said. "It's a universal experience we all go through. But there are ... always opportunities to go through it (healthfully) in the future."

OPINION

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

— *The First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States*

YOUR TURN

We welcome letters to the editor and guest columns. All submissions columns must include a name, address, organization university affiliation (if any) and phone number for verification. Anonymous letters will not be printed. *Central Michigan Life* reserves the right to edit all letters and columns for style, length, libel, redundancy, clarity, civility and accuracy. Letters should be no more than 450 words in length. Longer guest columns must remain under 750 words. CM Life reserves the right to print any original content as a letter or guest column. Submission does not guarantee publication.

Embrace the change

Today this fast-paced world writes an unprecedented history. We, students, are caught at the center of these rapid changes and their effects.

Last semester brought a significant shift in the American political arena, and this January, the United States welcomed its 47th President, Donald Trump. His administration has already offered many changes to university life across the nation.

For example, in a "Dear Colleague" letter, the U.S. Department of Education advised institutions to stop using race as a factor in admissions and stop Diversity, Equity and Inclusion programs.

But for Central Michigan University, the changes didn't happen only at the federal level. In the last year, CMU parted ways with many professionals in its administration and welcomed new faces for the highest positions, including the: president, provost's office, deans of the College of Medicine and College of Science and Engineering, and multiple coaches.

In this edition, *Central Michigan Life* dove into the separation agreements with the previously mentioned employees and search firms, hired to find new professionals.

The university isn't just at a turning point from a new leadership perspective, but also from an organizational stand point.

On April 17, President Neil MacKinnon announced that the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will merge with the Division of Student Affairs to create the new Division of University Engagement and Student Affairs.

The enrollment numbers aren't the same as they were 10 years ago as well. In fact, CMU is now almost half the size, student population-wise, as it used to be, and there has not been a significant enrollment increase in the past five years.

At the same time, CMU is no longer known as the



Zoey Lawrence | Staff cartoonist

teachers' school, but instead tries to offer many new programs, such as nursing.

There have been changes within departments. In 2013, CMU announced that it is "the only medical school in Michigan training doctors to address the needs of residents and families living in more rural regions," according to an MLive article. But in 2024, the College of Medicine declared their plan to expand its programs and move to Saginaw.

In addition, CMU will soon have to decide whether it really needs to be a D1

school and fail to compete with University of Michigan and Michigan State University, or whether it is a local, home-like institution that doesn't do everything but does well at what it chooses to invest in.

Today we have a world completely different from the one it was last May, much less 10 years ago. We know that changes can be scary. But they can also be wonderful. And what is more important, changes are normal, no matter how unprecedented they are.

Administrations come and go, both at the federal and at the university levels, which is something we can just embrace and adjust to.

In fact, you didn't come to CMU to stay the same yourself. You are here to grow, challenge your perspectives and improve your talents.

You will become smarter, stronger, wiser. It is just important to not change your core values: kindness, compassion, respect and honesty.

We at CMLife will grow as well and do our jobs the best we can so that you can have the information you need to be able to govern yourself, make educated decisions and be ready to face changes.

To CMU graduates: you have the power and knowledge to make the changes you want in this world.

To returning students: be curious and open-minded. We will see you soon.

The *Central Michigan Life* editorial board comprises the student editorial leadership of the organization.



By Lauren Rice
Graduating editor-in-chief

Signing off

After three years, it's time to say goodbye

When I was accepted to Central Michigan University in 2022, the big, mailed envelope came with a poster covered in the maroon and gold of CMU branding that simply said "Welcome home."

Up until that point, what I knew about college or university experiences came from movies and TV shows (especially "Gilmore Girls"). So I went into college hoping, but not entirely believing, that I would find a community where I can support and be supported, find lifelong friendships and learn about myself.

I had all kinds of unrealistic expectations, and it wasn't until I was about three

semesters into working for *Central Michigan Life* that I looked up and realized every single one of them had been met and exceeded.

Professionally, I can now put on my resume that I have worked as a reporter and editor, that I learned all variety of hard and soft skills related to the journalism industry. There are career interests that I never would have considered had I not been at CMLife.

But the biggest changes were the relationships built, the community shared and the love found.

The list of people who deserve my thanks (and more) would extend beyond the word count I have to work with, but there are a few people in particular who have shaped my experience so tremendously that I cannot say goodbye without mentioning them.

Kaia Zimmerman, it's a miracle I was able to hold it together for the single semester I was here without you. Your humor and light made this space a home for me when I was settling in, and I'm looking forward to experiencing more of it after graduation.

Courtney Boyd, your resume impressed me when you first applied to work at

CMLife, and I was not disappointed. Thank you for your quality journalism, charmingly blunt editing and for helping me survive the journalism capstone class. When we walk that stage at graduation and go our own ways in the world, know that you have a friend wherever I am.

Masha Smahliuk and I started at CMLife at the same time, working side-by-side for the last three years as reporters, editors and friends. Masha, your relentless work ethic will serve you well, but what I admire most about you is your heart.

The adversity you have experienced and continue to fight through would be enough to harden anyone's heart, but you opened yours to me and that is a strength I will forever appreciate. This newsroom is in good hands next year, and I don't have to remind you to care for it in my absence — we love it much the same.

Regan Foster, your mentorship has been the hallmark of this experience. From plopping myself down in your office to chat most mornings to writing your phone number on my forearm in case I got arrested

covering a political campaign event, I am eternally grateful to have had you in my corner for the last three years.

When you watch me walk the stage at graduation, please know that you have a friend in me, ready to return the favor. I love you.

The people in my personal life who have kept me sane through the (occasionally trying) task of reporting on the happenings of this university will receive my gratitude privately, but I cannot say goodbye without thanking the people I have thought about every day for the last six semesters: our readers.

Every day that I walk into my office, work on a story or plan questions for an interview I am thinking about you. Every good journalist does. I think about what you need to know and how we can provide it. So thank you for reading my words for the last three years and for providing a North Star.

Be thoughtful, kind and loving and you will not fail. In a world with hate to spare, love is a form of protest. Use it bravely.

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SPORTS

Upcoming sporting events

Spring athletics are winding down, but there's still time to cheer on the Chippewas. Here's a look at some of the games and meets that are yet to be contested this season.

FRI-SUN

9 - 11

- Baseball vs. Eastern Michigan series
Theunissen Stadium

TUES

13

- Baseball vs. Oakland
3 p.m., Theunissen Stadium

THURS - SAT

15-17

- Track and Field MAC championships
Scott Park, Toledo, Ohio

Bonds v. CMU



Jasmine Brookins | Staff Photographer

Central Michigan University junior guard Damarion Bonds prepares himself before shooting a free throw after being fouled on Wednesday, Nov. 20 in McGuirk Arena.

By Noah Henson
Staff Reporter

Former Central Michigan player Damarion Bonds has filed a lawsuit against CMU after the school's decision to remove him from the University in February 2025, which his lawyers say is preventing him from being able to transfer to another Division I University.

On March 31, 2025, Bonds filed a lawsuit against CMU stating that the school violated the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution for denying his right to due process as he was not given the chance for a hearing or cross-examination once the complaint was filed against him.

The lawsuit filed with the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan lists CMU, Rochester Christian University, Rochester's Vice President Scott E. Samuels and CMU's Thomas H. Idema Jr. and Mary Martinez as defendants. CMU declined to comment on the ongoing litigation.

"Under the law if you're accused of any misconduct you have the opportunity to be present, represented and a chance to give the full story," Edward Salem, one of Bonds' attorneys said. "During the two hearings they had, Mr. Idema controlled the whole scenario and failed to provide the whole story. This is one of the many facts as to why he was deprived due process."

According to the lawsuit, Bonds attended Rochester

Christian University on scholarship as a student-athlete during the 2022-2023 academic year. In or around late 2022, Bonds was cited for a violation of Rochester University's Student Code of Conduct after a member of the opposite sex made a complaint about Bonds to Rochester officials.

The lawsuit states that the complaints resulted in no further citation or charges to Bonds.

Following the end of the Rochester basketball season in 2023, Bonds decided to transfer to Henry Ford College to continue his athletic and academic career, and was made to sign a Sanction Notice on April 6, 2023, acknowledging the citation earned in 2022.

In the Sanction Notice, Bonds was suspended from Rochester University housing and placed on probation for the upcoming 2023-24 year as well. With Bonds set to transfer to Henry Ford College the following season anyways, he signed the notice.

Bonds was granted the ability to transfer to Henry Ford College, where he was later recruited to join the Central Michigan men's basketball team for the 2024-25 season.

On Oct. 14, 2024, Bonds was asked to complete a Previous Institution Verification Form, with one of the questions asking: "Is this student currently subject to any Title IX or sexual misconduct investigation or grievance process that has not yet completed?"

According to the complaint and demand, Bonds selected "No", since the investigation was not ongoing.

According to the complaint and demand filed by Bonds' attorney, Tarik D. Turfe and Edward Salem, Rochester Christian was asked to fill out the same Previous Institution Verification Form on Oct. 15, 2024, where it disclosed that he was, at one point, the subject of a Title IX investigation surrounding dating violence and sexual assault. The investigation was not completed because the complainant left Rochester mid-investigation.

"The school has a duty and obligation when a transfer happens, especially a student athlete, to get all the forms filled and completed timely," Salem said. "CMU waited over four months, one day before the report was due to the NCAA, to give Damarion Bonds the form he needed to sign."

In the form, Bonds also responded "No" to an application question regarding whether or not he had been dismissed or suspended from a previous school. According to the lawsuit, Martinez, CMU's Title IX coordinator, found this information to be accurate, since Bonds was only dismissed from Rochester as an athlete, but not as a student.

According to the lawsuit, Martinez told the CMU athletic department to look over Bonds' eligibility to continue as a student-athlete because the Office of Civil Rights and Institutional Equity would have recommended that Bonds not be recruited to CMU based on the alleged information that was gained.

"Everybody at CMU recognized that the question was a difficult question, but was answered correctly," Salem said. "If the question was answered correctly, how could

someone have made a false statement on an application?"

During Bonds' season at CMU, CMU's Office of Student Conduct allegedly charged Bonds with violating CMU's Code of Student Rights for presenting false information.

During a November 2024 hearing, the school determined that Bonds violated CMU's code for providing false information, which Bonds later appealed, with another hearing scheduled for Dec. 18, 2024.

However, the verdict was upheld on Feb.

5, 2025, dismissing Bonds from his role as a CMU student and athlete altogether.

Bonds' attorney said that Bonds has suffered as a result of being removed from CMU, with the university jeopardizing his ability to complete his degree and continue his athletic career as he loses a year of eligibility as a result of the verdict.

The filed lawsuit read the Bonds family endured emotional and psychological distress as a result of the actions taken by the defendants.

Due to Bonds being dismissed from the school, he is ineligible to be recruited by another university as a student athlete until the litigation is resolved.

"He is ineligible right now because he was dismissed from the school, that means he has to be enrolled at a different institution," Salem said.

According to his attorney, Bonds looks to move on from Central Michigan next year as both a student and an athlete.

"We're going to reinstate his eligibility and he is going to move on next year," Salem said.

"Why would he want to return to CMU?"

Salem is seeking equitable relief for Bonds, as they believe this harms his future as a potential professional athlete, though an exact number has not been listed.



Jasmine Brookins | Staff Photographer

Central Michigan University junior guard Damarion Bonds looks for the best route to get inside to the net in McGuirk Arena, Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2025.





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Park Place Apartments

Life through our lens: A look back at this semester

Curated by Jo Kenoshmeg and Ella Miller

Visuals editors

Spring 2025 saw great changes, both here at Central Michigan University and across the nation.

On campus, we welcomed new members of the administration, saw shake-ups in some major teams' coaching staffs and experienced changes in some major long-term projects. Through it all, the brilliant, bright, colorful and controversial, *Central Michigan Life* photographers were on-hand to document.

These images reflect some of Mount Pleasant's seminal moments, as captured by (from left) Mark Hoover, Jasmine Brookins, Zoey Morse, Jo Kenoshmeg, Soil Gordon, Alivia Cranick, Ella Miller and Mary Nowosacki. To see more of images from the semester and beyond, scan the QR code.



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Music Building Lot #33	:42	:12	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Washington/Ojibway	:44	:14	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Anspach/Pearce	:45	:15	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Ronan/Grawn	:47	:17	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Main St./Gaylord	:48	:18	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
MMC/Doan Center			UPON REQUEST
Washington/Clayton	:05	:35	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Larzale	:06	:36	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Wightman	:07	:37	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Park Library	:08	:38	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Music Building Lot #33	:12	:42	EVERY 1/2 HOUR

GOLD ROUTE

SAC/McGuirk	:13	:43	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Stadium Mall			UPON REQUEST
TJMaxx			UPON REQUEST
Walmart			UPON REQUEST
Copper Beech	:26	:56	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
The Reserve	:28	:58	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Jamestown Apts.	:30	:00	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Broomfield Mall			UPON REQUEST
Music Building Lot #33	:42	:12	EVERY 1/2 HOUR

DEERFIELD

Towers	:15	:45	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Deming/Edgewood	:16	:46	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Westpoint Village	:18	:48	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
The Heights	:20	:50	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Lexington Ridge	:25	:55	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Theunissen Lot#70	:27	:57	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Commuter Lot #75	:29	:59	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
SAC/McGuirk	:30	:00	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Music Building Lot #33	:42	:12	EVERY 1/2 HOUR

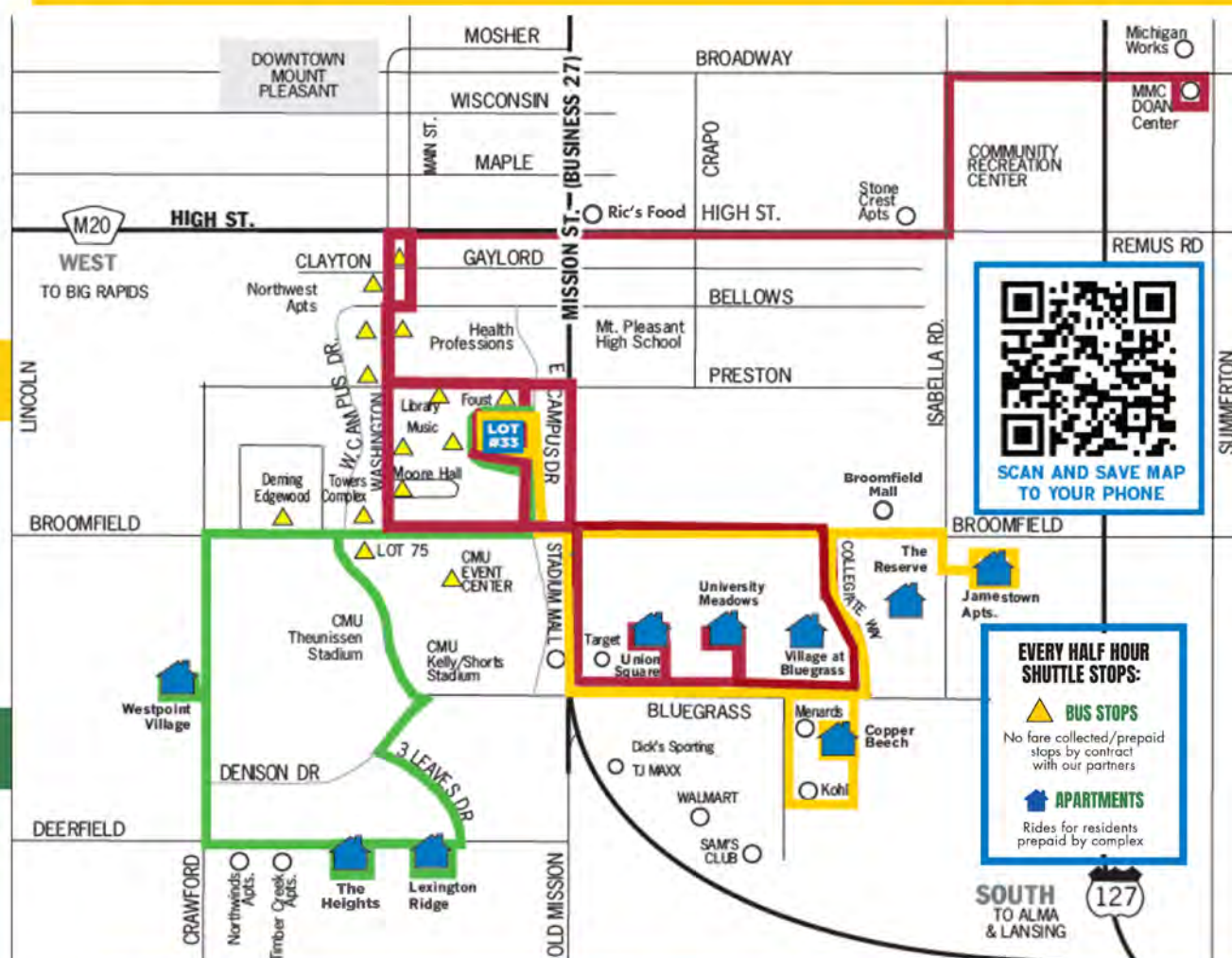
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S	U	B	B	Q	G	N	I	P	M	A	C	C	E
T	E	N	T	S	I	H	O	T	D	O	G	S	R
H	I	K	I	N	G	E	F	A	M	I	L	Y	C
R	O	R	E	W	I	N	D	S	U	R	F	T	S
L	E	G	K	W	A	T	E	R	M	E	L	O	N
S	R	E	W	O	L	F	N	U	S	W	E	N	U
G	S	R	O	A	D	T	R	I	P	C	G	B	S
T	F	I	S	H	I	N	G	N	I	F	R	U	S
G	N	I	M	M	I	W	S	I	C	A	N	O	E
R	N	L	A	K	E	N	O	I	T	A	C	A	V
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