

6 movies for Thanksgiving break

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Eagles win in men's basketball thriller

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The Eastern Echo

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U-M regents vote to proceed with data center project in Ypsilanti Township

Lilly Kujawski
Editor in Chief

At their Nov. 19 board meeting, members of the University of Michigan's Board of Regents voted to proceed in building a research computing center in collaboration with Los Alamos National Laboratory in Ypsilanti Township, amid outcry from community members.

Regents approved the proposal 7-1, with Regent Paul Brown, who has previously emphasized the need for community consent of the project, voting against it. Brown said he believes U-M can identify a community that will welcome the project, and asked regents to take pause before proceeding.

As the regents approved the project, about 150 members of the community gathered outside Alexander Ruthven Building in Ann Arbor to protest the facility, which they describe as a data center. U-M categorizes the facility as a high-performance computing center. The vote took place during U-M President Domenico Grasso's last board meeting before President-elect C. Cybele Raver will begin her five-year term Dec. 1.

Construction of the project is anticipated to begin in late 2027, U-M reported. According to meeting documents, the first phase of the project will be approximately 150,000 gross square feet. Subsequent expansion of the facility will be determined by "research mission requirements once Phase I is operational," meeting documents stated. The first phase of the project is estimated to cost $450 million and total cost of construction for phases one and two are not to exceed $785 million. The final facility size is not expected to exceed 300,000 gross square feet.

The board also approved a resolution to build a community partnership and $5 million investment program intended to benefit residents of Ypsilanti Township. The partnership focuses on investments in education, parks and recreation, community organizations, infrastructure, environmental enhancement and public safety. The framework for the program must be presented to the U-M regents by March 31, 2027.

Despite the resolution's intent, Ypsilanti Township Supervisor Brenda Stumbo told *The Eastern Echo* that it does not represent true partnership with the community. Stumbo, the township trustees and other local leaders have been vocal in their disapproval of the data center, with formal opposition through resolutions and a utilities moratorium.

As a public institution, U-M is exempt from local zoning laws, meaning the project doesn't require township approval to proceed.

"I do not think this will meet the needs of our community because what our community needs is not to have Los Alamos, the research and development and brains of nuclear war," Stumbo previously told *The Echo*. "Because that will be the brand that we will forever be known for."

Los Alamos National Laboratory, a research laboratory within the United States Department of Energy, is known for its central role in developing the atomic bomb. This association has been a point of concern for some residents.

The inclusion of the community partnership resolution by the university was largely the result of community advocacy, Brown told *The Echo* after the meeting. Brown said that so far, however, there hasn't been a good partnership between the university and the community, so he understands frustration from residents and Stumbo.



University of Michigan regents and administration members watch a presentation about the computing center plotted for Textile Road in Ypsilanti Township at the Nov. 19, 2026, U-M Board of Regents meeting. *Lilly Kujawski / The Eastern Echo*

"I'm hoping we can do something that the community wants," Brown said.

Part of the problem, Brown said, is both sides have raised meaningful points, be it the real benefits of the project voiced by the university or the valid concerns raised by the community.

"Instead of acknowledging both of those facts, the university, I think, has kind of pretended like there are no negative consequences," Brown said. "I think if both sides acknowledge those things, then you can start to have a dialogue of ... Is there a way to do this project? And there might not be that is appropriate."

Brown, who campaigned on the issue during his reelection bid in which he kept his seat on the board, said it can be difficult to be the lone voice of opposition on the board, but he hopes to advocate the position of Ypsilanti Township residents.

"I don't begrudge my colleagues. There was massive pressure put on me ... the president came straight out and said: I want everybody to vote yes on this," Brown said. "You get alienated when you don't, but they respect my decision as I would theirs — as I do theirs."

Regent Sarah Hubbard voted yes on the project, but said U-M needs to proceed alongside the local community, which is what she said the partnership resolution commits the university to doing.

"Partnership works both ways, and to be a partner you have to both give something," Hubbard told *The Echo* after the meeting. "What we continue to hear from some in the community — not everyone — is just [opposition], and it's tough to have a discussion about a partnership when one side won't actually engage in the facts and the project."

Through the partnership, U-M would also look to work with Eastern Michigan University, Hubbard said. She said even though U-M is in Ann Arbor, not Ypsilanti, the two cities are neighbors and there are joint benefits for both.

When asked how she responds to community members who claim that the project could contribute to environmental injustice or racism, Hubbard said: "I don't think they really understand what this project is."

Hubbard said the project is different from a data center. The township, Hubbard said, "is having one of the best partners available to be a steward of that property. ... It could be smelter. It could be chemical manufacturing on that property, it could be something that the concerns would be legitimately far more serious. We're talking about a building full of computers."

SEE DATA CENTER, PAGE 3

For more data center coverage, see page 8

Eastern Michigan University police investigate scooter thefts

Savannah DeBock
News Reporter

More than 25 scooters have been reported stolen on campus in the past three months, Eastern Michigan University police said. This is more than double the total number of thefts for the entirety of 2025, and 22 more than 2023 and 2024 combined, based on reports from the police department.

While larceny has always been a concern for the EMU police, the increase has raised more concerns.

In previous years, the common target for larcenies on campus was bikes. Officer Andrea Elliott told *The Echo* that the increased reports have caused concerns, and she feels the situation is considerably worse with the scooters this semester than in previous years with bike theft.

One reason behind the increase is the growth in scooter use, officer Jhonny Benitez said.

Each semester, more and more electric scooters are seen on campus. While registration with the police is not required, the department strongly recommends that students and staff register their scooters and their bikes with DPS. The department reports that it has registered 298 bikes and scooters since 2013.

As more scooters appear on campus, so does the number of larcenies, Benitez said.

Baiyok Sukterm, an EMU student athlete, had been using her scooter for more than two years when one morning she found it missing.

"I told a teammate she could borrow it," Sukterm said. "I had parked it on the bike rack in front of Lakeview ... I went to check, and the only thing left behind was the lock."

Sukterm was using a snake or rope key lock: a rubber coated cable that wraps around the lock chord in a spiral. Sukterm said that she had not taken the time to tighten the lock properly. The thief only had to slide it up the frame to free the scooter to take it.

As soon as she saw it gone, she called the EMU Police Department to report it stolen and went in to give her statement. A week and a half later, the police called her to let her know they had found her scooter.

"They told me a group of 14-year-olds came and took a few of them," Sukterm said. "Mine didn't have a lot of battery life, so they abandoned it when it ran out."

Since then, Sukterm said she has been very careful to lock her scooter properly and hasn't had any more issues.

Benitez said campus police have been cracking down on scooter thefts in the past two weeks.

Two suspects involved in multiple cases were arrested in early November. Charges of larceny have been submitted to the Washtenaw County prosecutor, who will decide whether to make the charges official. While scooter theft is a misdemeanor charge, it could turn into a felony if the added value of the stolen items reach more than $1,000.

During the investigation, police reported that four scooters were found in the possession of one suspect. Another scooter was found with a second suspect.

Investigators said there is no way to know if all of the scooter thefts are related, as the times and locations of the incidents have been sporadic. Some cases have one suspect, while others are a group, Benitez said. Though most cases have been perpetrated by juveniles, they have happened during and outside of school hours and sometimes even later at night. Typically, he said, the stolen scooters were poorly locked or unlocked and left unattended.

SEE THEFTS, PAGE 3

Letter from the Editor

Consider donating to *The Echo* during EMU 'Giving Trueday'

Dear readers,

Happy Thanksgiving! I can't believe November is almost over. *The Echo* is preparing for its last print edition of the semester, but before we welcome December, it's time to pass the turkey, the pie, and give our thanks for the people and blessings that fill our lives. Here at *The Echo*, we're grateful for all of our readers and your continued support.

This Giving Tuesday, please consider donating to bolster *The Echo*'s award-winning journalism and help us move into a new space! Each Giving Tuesday, Eastern Michigan University launches its "Giving Trueday" fundraiser campaign. In 2027, *The Eastern Echo* will move out of its King Hall office and into a new home. This year, *The Echo's* goal is to raise $5,000 to help outfit our new office space.

From updated desktop computers to on-the-ground multimedia essentials, your gift will help equip our team with everything we need to fulfill our mission of providing timely, accurate, high-quality coverage of the EMU and Ypsilanti community. As Ypsilanti's only print newspaper, we don't take our responsibility lightly. Whether it's breaking the latest data center news, covering City Hall, or bringing readers the top local events, you can count on us to deliver the headlines that matter most.

However, we can't do it alone. We believe independent student journalism is worth investing in, and with your help, we can equip our reporters and creators with the tools they need to do their best work. If you're interested in joining our mission, please visit give.emich.edu/giving-trueday-2026, where you can find our campaign under the College of Arts and Sciences tab or by searching "*The Eastern Echo*." Or, scan the QR code below for a direct link.

Thank you for supporting *The Echo*, whether it's reading our stories or sharing our work with your friends and family. If *The Echo* has touched your life, please consider thinking of us this Giving Tuesday.

Sincerely,
Lilly Kujawski
Editor in Chief

The Eastern Echo

The Eastern Echo serves the Eastern Michigan University and Ypsilanti communities as an independent student-operated newspaper. Founded in 1881 as *The Normal News, The Eastern Echo* distributes weekly print editions on campus and throughout the surrounding Ypsilanti community during the fall and winter academic semesters. *The Eastern Echo* also publishes online year-round. Published content is subject to copyright and may not be reproduced without prior written consent of the newspaper.

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THE ECHO MISSION

The Eastern Echo *informs the Eastern Michigan University and Ypsilanti communities by highlighting newsworthy content in a fair, accurate and timely manner.*

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CORRECTIONS

At *The Eastern Echo*, we correct our mistakes. If we got it wrong, we want to make it right. Errors should be brought to the attention of the editor-in-chief by email: editor@easternecho.com.

Where to purchase *Cellar Roots Vol. 52*, EMU's Fine Arts and Literary Magazine:



News trivia contest: *How well do you know your local news?*

Here's a quiz (with prizes) about this week's news. Email your answers to **Advertising@EasternEcho.com**; If you get all of them right, you'll win two free tickets to HollyDazzle at the Michigan Renaissance Festival Grounds while supplies last!

1. Which Roald Dahl movie was adapted into a 2009 stop-motion film by director Wes Anderson?
2. Which men's basketball team did the Eastern Michigan University Eagles beat on Nov. 21, 2026?
3. On Nov. 19, Ypsilanti Township hosted a discussion panel about the University of Michigan and Los Alamos National Laboratory data center. What EMU building was the event held in?
4. What is the name of the event featuring original artwork in the Ypsilanti Firehouse Museum this month?
5. Which item has been a recurring target of theft around campus recently?



Scoop Says...

Happy Thanksgiving! Enjoy your break. The Eastern Echo prints again for its final paper of the fall semester on Dec. 8. Don't forget to grab a copy.

Echoes Around Campus

Welcome to the newest section of *The Eastern Echo* print edition. Each week during the school year, Echoes Around Campus will feature brief, paid submissions from readers. Do you have someone or something to shout out? Do you have an announcement to make, a special day to celebrate or do you just want to put your thoughts or pictures out into the world? Make a submission today by scanning the QR code below. Pricing starts at only $5. *The Eastern Echo* reserves the right to edit or decline all content submitted to Echoes Around Campus.

Looking for inspiration? Here are some ideas from our staff this week.

Pet of the Week: Penny the mini pig

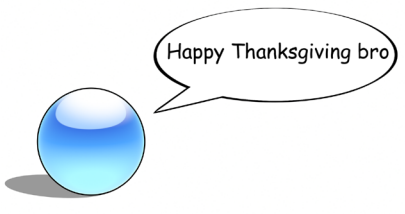
AnnaBelle Favre



Scoop, what do you think of Thanksgiving? Should turkeys get rights?

Lyndsay Tusen





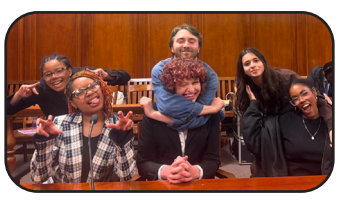
Yiri Thompson

Shout out to the EMU Smash teams, Y'all did great at WTDSA!

Zechariah Nard

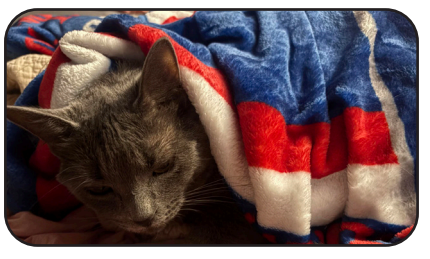
Go EMU Mock Trial!! Woooo!!!

Laura Meriweather



Thanksgiving break hibernation incoming...

Lilly Kujawski



Thanksgiving break should be longer.

Myla Speidel

My favorite color is pink. No wait maybe blue. Green is also a good color too. Bro I cant decide.

Zeinab Agbaria

Happy birthday to one cool chick: the EMU Student Center! Congratulations on 20 years of laughter and love. Let's hit the bars next year, diva!

Lilly, Laura and Zeinab

Guys! Webkinz is sunsetting their Movie Maker feature this month. Like, any day now. Screen record your childhood productions while you can!

Laura Meriweather

Hire me for face painting and so much glitter!
Contact: Wonder Wolf Entertainment

AnnaBelle Favre



Are you looking for a creative and collaborative work environment? Consider joining The Eastern Echo, where we welcome contributions in disciplines ranging from writing and photography to graphic design and advertising. Interested in applying? Visit EasternEcho.com/page/hiring and email managing@EasternEcho.com with any questions.

The Eastern Echo

Where to find *The Echo:*

On-Campus:

Alexander Music Building
Boone Hall
Downing Hall
Counseling and Psychological Services
EMU Department of Public Safety
EMU Rec/IM
Ford Hall
Halle Library
Judy Sturgis Hill Building
King Hall
Lakeview Apartments
Mark Jefferson Science Complex
Marshall Building
McKenny Hall
Phelps and Sellers Halls
Pierce Hall
Porter Building
Pray-Harrold Building
Rackham Hall
Roosevelt Hall
Sherzer Observatory
Sill Hall
Strong Physical Sciences Building
Student Center
The Commons
The Eastern Eateries
The Honors College
The Village
Trinity Health IHA Urgent Care
Walton and Putnam Halls
Welch Hall
Westview Apartments
Wise Hall

Off-Campus:

Aubree's Pizzeria & Grill
Bank of Ann Arbor
Barber-Me-Locz
Basil Babe
Benito's Pizza
BIGGBY Coffee
Black Stone Bookstore & Cultural Center
Book Love Bar
Bridge Community Café
Café Liv
Candy Coated Creamery
Chef Restaurant Mediterranean Grill
Cottage Inn Pizza
David's Books
Domino's Pizza
Eagle Crest Golf Club
EMU Credit Union
Insomnia Cookies
Jet's Pizza
Jimmy John's
Laundry Pro
Luca's Coney Island
Lucky Garden
Ma Lou's Fried Chicken
MAÍZ Mexican Cantina
Miny's Mexican Restaurant
Northern Grind
Peninsular Place
Plant Based Coneys
Sidetrack Bar and Grill
SPARK East Innovation Center
Speedys Big Burger
Standard Printing+Design Co.
Subway (Eastern Plaza)
Sweetwaters Coffee & Tea
The Golden Egg
Thompson & Co.
Trinity Health Ann Arbor Hospital
U-M Health Ypsilanti Health Center
Washtenaw Auto Care Center
Wild Side Smoke Shop
Ypsi Real
Ypsilanti City Hall
Ypsilanti District Library
Ypsilanti Food Co-op

County commissioners approve Ypsilanti park grant application, consider transportation contract

Yana McGuire
Guest Reporter

During their Nov. 18 meeting, Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously on a resolution to ratify the submission of a $380,000 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant application to fund the construction of green stormwater infrastructure at Ford Heritage Park located in Ypsilanti Township. If the grant funds are awarded, Ypsilanti township will match $20,000 towards the project and $20,000 for staff labor as an in-kind match.

The proposed project would include the planting of 50 trees, two rain gardens and one wildflower prairie, according to the grant application. In addition, 20,600 square feet of turfgrass would be converted into native planting within the project area.

The location of the green stormwater infrastructure was strategically chosen to reduce flooding on the soccer fields which will reduce the number of game cancellations. It would also solve the problem of sediment and erosion build up near the parking lot. An estimated 3 million gallons of stormwater would be collected annually, which would also improve the quality of surface water in and around Ypsilanti township.

Close to one mile of walking paths would be added to the existing Ford Loop Trail. All of these improvements are with the intention of improving the "Low access to Opportunity" rating the Ford Heritage Park received from the Washtenaw County Community and Economic Development office's Opportunity Index.

However, the Board's decision to rectify the application submission does not mean fund disbursement has been approved. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation will be the ones to determine whether the requested funds will be approved.

A resolution to extend a contract for free transportation for older adults totaling 2.2 million dollars with the existing providers, Jewish Family Services, People's Express and Western Washtenaw Area Value Express, was also discussed during the meeting. The contract would fund each provider $733,333 and extend services from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2027. The current contract is set to expire Dec. 31, 2026. If approved, the contract would be funded through the Old Person Millage.

During the public discussion, Eveliina Taylor, managing director of People's Express, stated that their organization currently provides free transportation to over 1300 riders monthly, which included residents from Ypsilanti, Saline and Pittsfield Township. Almost 50 percent of their trips' purposes are medical, with Ypsilanti Dialysis Care and DaVita Dialysis of Ypsilanti being the top destinations.

"The feeling you get when you tell an older adult that you get to ride for free, that smile, it's a feeling like no other," Taylor said. "Oftentimes, I'm repeating, yes, for free. There's almost a disbelief that this service is available."

Andre Yastchenko, Jewish Family Services transportation director, stated that over the past year they were able to offer more than 11,000 trips with 7,000 trips being for medical purposes, which contributes to improving an older adult's quality of life.

"We take the welfare of our clients very seriously," Yastchenko said. "We train our drivers to watch for signs that an individual is not doing well on that particular day — unusual bruising, difficulty speaking or walking. Those symptoms, if they are observed, they're immediately reported by the driver to either the client's family, emergency contact or, in the lack of the above, to our GFS staff."

However, Commissioner Yousef Rabhi questioned whether older adults understood the services provided were free.

Rabhi stated that because of a mention of a sliding scale for free mentioned on the Jewish Family Services website, the website should be clearer on the free services being funded by the county government.

"We are a service provider," Rabhi said. "And as a service provider, the people that are receiving these services are not receiving charity. They are receiving a service that they are entitled to."

The older adult transportation contract extension resolution was introduced and passed as a first reading agenda. It will need to pass through the second reading before a final approval is made.

Corner Health Center's director of programs, Ashley Anderson, sought 240,000 worth of allocation to help cover sexual and reproductive medical expenses of young people between the ages of 12 and 25.

Anderson stated that in the Board's decision to decline the advancement of Washtenaw County Healthcare Access millage during a second reading in August, an allocation was made for Washtenaw Health Project and the Health Department, but not for Corner Health and other organizations like them.

"As young people face barriers to Medicaid, insurance, access, and confidential care, we are asking that you consider 240,000 worth of allocation for critical needs," Anderson said. "$85,000 of this will be for STI testing and treatment for an estimated 75 to 100 additional young people and 120,000 for contraceptive support, including LARC's emergency oral contraceptives, and health education support for the rest."

In her response to public discussion, Commissioner Crystal Lyte expressed her full support of Corner Health and appreciation of its presence in the county, especially Ypsilanti. Lyte also offers a solution to the funding issue.

"The Corner Health was included in the millage and since you were included, I would suggest that you go directly to WHP (Washtenaw Health Project) to request the 240,000 because it is there," Lyte said.

Suspect arrested after burglaries reported at EMU in Student Center, King Hall



A burglary was reported at King Hall at Eastern Michigan University on Nov. 16, according to the EMU Police Department's daily crime log. *Marie White / The Eastern Echo*

Laura Meriweather
Managing Editor - Operations

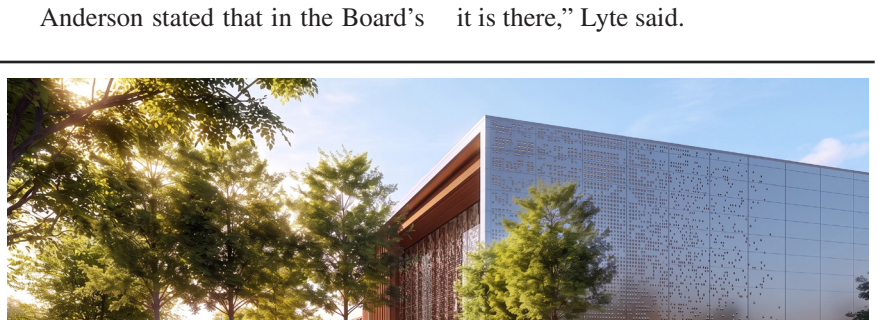
A suspect was located and arrested in connection with two reports of burglary at the Eastern Michigan University Student Center and King Hall in November, EMU Police Chief Matthew Lige confirmed Thursday, Nov. 19, 2026. Both burglaries were reported within a week of each other, according to the EMU PD's daily crime log.

An officer radioed Sunday, Nov. 15 that he was on his way to inspect broken glass in one of the lower windows at King Hall, as heard in police audio preserved by CrimeRadar. On Monday, officers discussed a breaking and entering report that "an unknown subject broke a window, gained access into a teacher's office and ransacked some other rooms over the weekend." Lige said that a laptop was stolen from King Hall.

The Student Center burglary, which was reported Nov. 12, did not involve forced entry, but instead involved entry into an unlocked office, reported EMU PD's daily crime log.

Lige told *The Echo* that the stolen property had been returned as of Nov. 19.

In order to minimize the risk of having property stolen, the EMU PD recommends people keep doors locked and avoid propping them open, even when just stepping away. In addition, officers advise against leaving items unattended, and recommend the use of lockers, bike locks and registration, and the immediate reporting of stolen Eagle ID cards. More safety tips can be found on the EMU PD website.



Preliminary rendering for the University of Michigan research facility plotted for Textile Road in Ypsilanti Township. *Courtesy of U-M*

Data center

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Stumbo previously told *The Echo* that she wanted the university to put pause on progress of the project, as U-M welcomes a new president and Michigan introduces a new governor, Gov.-elect Jocelyn Benson. Benson has vowed support for a moratorium of data centers in the state.

U-M officials contend that the project will support research breakthroughs, including medical and cancer treatment advances. During a presentation shown to the regents, Todd Hollon, a research professor of neurosurgery and program director of Artificial Intelligence in Neurosurgery at U-M, explained that the project will benefit advances in neurosurgery.

"Our computational resources at present do not meet our scientific ambition as an institution," Hollon said. "Currently, our research and our laboratory is limited to brain tumors, and it's limited not because of lack of ideas or data or talent; it is limited because of a lack of our computational infrastructure."

U-M student Ellie Reeds, a sophomore who is involved in research at the school, spoke during the public comment portion of the meeting in opposition of the project, saying it is an act of environmental injustice. Reeds also said the university should wait to move forward until more data, including student opinions, can be gathered.

IBEW Local 252 union representative Geoff Morning spoke during public comments, placing support behind the project. Morning, who grew up near the Textile Road site, said the project will bring jobs to the local area and vitalize the community.

U-M has reported that project will create 300 union construction jobs, 200 permanent research positions and 30-50 technical support roles.

Thefts

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

As the scooters ran out of power, they often were left. Police said most of those scooters were found after being abandoned.

Benitez said while he has been involved in investigating the scooter theft cases, he emphasized that the investigation is a team effort with the entirety of the EMU Police Department.

Elliott and Benitez were at the student center Thursday, Nov. 12, for the third time this semester to offer free registration of any scooters or bikes on campus. The department also offered free locks during the registration event. While the officers said there most likely won't be any more registration events on campus as the weather gets colder, the EMU Police Department is open 24/7 for any issues, involving registration or report of stolen property.

The officers said the best way to prevent theft is to keep scooters locked properly in designated areas on campus, and take off the battery when not in use. Any lock is fine, though U-locks are considered among the best because they are hard to break. Snake locks also work well, but need to be tightened down. If there is no available bike rack, locking the scooter by passing the lock through the back wheel can render it unusable, and make it more obvious that it might be stolen if someone was carrying a scooter away. Typically, a properly used lock alone is a sufficient deterrent.

In case of a lost lock key, the police would much rather help someone cut the lock than have another report of stolen property.

Other preventive measures to heighten the chance of retrieval are keeping an air-tag or other tracker on the scooter or e-bike, and registering the bike or scooter with the EMU police department. Customizing the scooter also allows for quicker identification.

What to do if a scooter is stolen

EMU's Department of Public Safety recommends taking the following steps:

1. Report it immediately. The best way is to call, but going to the police station is another option. The faster the police are aware of the theft, the better the chances to locate the scooter before the suspect leaves the area.

2. Go to the police station and answer the officer's questions. They will be trying to determine the time period in which the scooter was stolen, the location, the price and ways to identify the vehicle. This is when having a scooter already registered is especially helpful. Distinctive features might help identification as well, but the suspect might try to remove them, which is difficult with a police department registration sticker.

3. Police investigators will look at the cameras and use their other resources to identify the suspect and locate the stolen property. Because campus officers are deputized to work both in Ypsilanti and with the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office, they can conduct the entire investigation themselves and go to a suspect's house if needed. Typically, the same officer who takes the theft complaint will participate in the entire investigation.

4. Once the property is located and retrieved, the police will contact the owner, by a call or in person to ensure it gets returned.

5. The owner signs a property release at the station and gets their scooter or bike back.

If the scooter isn't registered, and not distinct enough, the police might not be able to return it immediately and the scooter is kept in safekeeping.



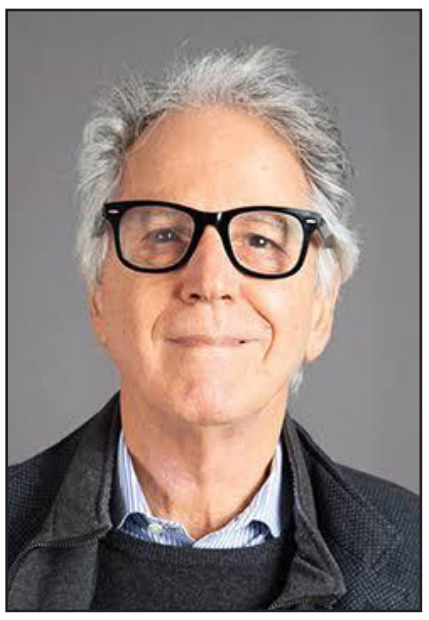
Four scooters, retrieved from a suspect house's during an Eastern Michigan University police investigation, sit in a safe-holding room at the department's offices on campus in November. *Courtesy of EMU Police*

Officers said they try to return it to the right owner, but without some sort of identification, that might be difficult.

Benitez also said he wanted to remind everyone that it is never a burden to call the police for any reason, and that stolen property is definitely worth the call.

EMU police can be reached for emergencies by calling 911 on campus or by calling 734-487-1222 for non-emergencies. The police station is located at 1200 Oakwood St., Ypsilanti.

EMU professor releases new book on jazz, counterculture, spirituality



English professor David Calonne.
Photo courtesy of Eastern Michigan University.

Lelaina MacDonald
News Reporter

David Stephen Calonne, a lecturer in the English department at Eastern Michigan University, published "Jazz, Counterculture, and the Sacred" with Oxford University Press on Oct. 5. Calonne has written and published other books in the past such as "The Spiritual Imagination of the Beats," "Diane de Prima: Visionary Poetics and the Hidden Revisions" and others.

His newest book focuses on the ways in which jazz musicians and composers pursue spiritual paths within their work and lives. Calonne discusses jazz composers and artists Sun Ra, Charles Mingus, John Coltrane, Alice Coltrane, Nicole Mitchell, Anthony Braxton, Don Cherry and Sonny Rollins, along with their interests in Buddhism, Hinduism, Gnosticism, Kabbalah, Sufism and Ancient Egyptian religion.

Q: What is your book "Jazz, Counterculture, and the Sacred" about?

A: I should say, I was born in Los Angeles. So, I was an adolescent in the 1960s, basically. You probably know that was a period of a lot of turbulence in American society. The term I use in the title is called counterculture. Now, that is kind of a new term, but it basically means, you know, whenever you have a society, there's a main culture of people who kind of follow the regular way of doing things. Then there are often people who are trying to find a new way, and suggest alternatives to political and social arrangements, or art, in terms of creativity. The counter, meaning not against culture, but counter as an alternative — it is oppositional in terms of music, poetry, dance, art, politics, gender relations. The young people in the '60s were advocating for new ways of thinking about those things. I'm a musician; I play classical piano. From a very young age, I've been very interested in music — all kinds of music. So, that's the jazz part. And then the sacred I've been exploring the last 10 years in a whole series of books, about the relationship between religion or the sacred or spirituality, you could call it, and literature.

Q: Does the book talk about how these topics all connect, or are the topics separated into sections?

A: These topics have always interested me separately, but this book is a chance to put them together. I think I tried to show how they connect. When I talk about a certain piece of music, like John Coltrane, I didn't mention him before, but he's probably the most famous of the group of musicians. He was a saxophone player, and in fact, this is his centenary this year, his 100th birthday.

He got very interested in all kinds of spiritual traditions. For example, his most famous piece sort of tries to explore the connection between Buddhism and Hinduism, and even Christianity. In a way, some of these musicians were combining these different traditions. They tried to kind of show that they were open to all these different traditions. I have a section here on the way Coltrane does that. So, I look at his music, but then I try to show how these Buddhist or Hindu ideas are expressed in the music. Also, it's tied to the struggle for Black equality in America. This is really a book about Black music. I do then connect them to the Black musicians to the white counterculture of poets and writers because my interest is in literature, as I said. So I tried to tie Black freedom into it too.

Q: Who inspired you to write this book? What musicians and writers inspired you?

A: It's interesting you ask, because some of them were a new discovery for me. I knew one of the most famous people, Sun Ra — that's the first chapter. And Coltrane, of course. But somebody who I discovered while writing it hung out in my hometown of Los Angeles — Don Cherry. And I didn't know much about Don Cherry, and he was very interesting. I would say it was really more the intersection between these things — music, counterculture and spirituality — rather than individual musicians or poets. Yeah, I would say an answer to your question was more, again, trying to find the connection between those things.

Q: How long have you been working on this book? What was the process of writing it like for you?

A: I started right around COVID, believe it or not. Spring of 2020. It went through several drafts, as is typical of university presses. I sent off a first draft, and what they do is they send it to two people to read it. If they both think it's wonderful, then you're all set. So, I got some feedback — positive — and some other suggestions for improvement. I rewrote it. Then there was a bit of a delay, because I think largely maybe because of COVID. Also, publishing was sort of upside down those years. So, it's taken a while. It was just published this October, but yeah, it took me maybe three years to really write it.

Q: What do you hope readers take away from this book?

A: I just hope that they can see that these movements were really connected in American cultural history — that it's almost trying to separate them, maybe. And also, there was a way in which poets and writers started to realize how powerful music was. They are inspired by poetry, but then, by the time the '60s came, the real attention was getting turned towards rock and roll and the power of music, I think, in a way. But then, also, political activity and gender equality, getting rid of racism, the anti-war movement. There is a sense in which political opposition and political struggle is also part of it. So I think maybe that's what I'm trying to do now that you ask me. It's almost like you can't pull these things apart from each other, you know?

Q: Do you have a favorite portion of the book?

A: I think the first chapter, Sun Ra, was the guy that started it all. He was the guy who started this whole Afro-futurism idea, right? I think that was very interesting, that chapter. They were all interesting, and Don Cherry, because I didn't know about him. Cherry also had a close friendship with Allen Ginsberg. Coltrane, of course — they were all interesting. Oh, and two chapters on women: Alice Coltrane, the wife of John Coltrane, and Nicole Mitchell. I have two chapters on these women composers, and also, I tried to pull other Black women composers into the argument. Alice Coltrane was very interesting, too.

Q: Where can readers buy your book?

A: It's on Amazon. I think Literati in Ann Arbor; they have it on their website. I don't know if they have it in the bookstore at this point.

Q: Is there anything else you would like readers to know about your book?

A: I think it's a book that maybe is good that came out now for a couple of reasons. One is the anniversary; it's the centenary of Coltrane. Also, we're in times now where I think these ideas are important.

Those interested can purchase Calonne's book on Amazon, the Literati Bookstore website and the Oxford University Press webpage.

Six movies for EMU students to stream over Thanksgiving break

Bilal Ahmed
News Reporter

Whether it's heading back to a childhood bedroom, surviving an awkward family dinner or staying put in Ypsilanti for the long weekend, Thanksgiving break puts college students in seasonal limbo. Eastern Michigan University students looking to unwind after midterms and pre-holiday papers can queue up a themed watch list built around crisp autumn aesthetics, chaotic family gatherings and the bittersweet feeling of returning home. These six films capture the energy of a college Thanksgiving break.

'Son in Law' (1993)

The 1990s comedy "Son in Law" centers directly on the college-to-hometown culture shock many freshmen experience during their first trip home.

After spending a semester at a California university, sheltered South Dakota farm girl Becca brings her eccentric, party-loving dorm friend, played by Pauly Shore, home for Thanksgiving. To shock her conservative parents, she introduces him as her fiancé.

The film leans into campy humor while capturing how quickly a few months on campus can shift a student's perspective on their family and hometown.

Genre: Comedy
Runtime: 1 hour, 35 minutes
Where to watch: Available to rent on Amazon Prime Video, Apple TV and YouTube

'Knives Out' (2019)

For students craving autumn aesthetics paired with family drama, Rian Johnson's "Knives Out" delivers chunky knit sweaters, falling leaves and a sprawling New England mansion.

When a wealthy crime novelist dies shortly after his 85th birthday gathering, eccentric detective Benoit Blanc, played by Daniel Craig, investigates the author's greedy, backstabbing relatives while the writer's loyal nurse tries to stay out of the crossfire.

With sharp wit and a family tearing itself apart over money and politics, the whodunit plays out like a high-stakes Thanksgiving dinner turned murder mystery.

Genre: Mystery, Comedy
Runtime: 2 hours, 10 minutes
Where to watch: Available to rent on Amazon Prime Video, Apple TV and YouTube

'Fantastic Mr. Fox' (2009)

Wes Anderson's stop-motion adaptation of Roald Dahl's novel offers an autumn color palette filled with burnt oranges, golden leaves and an indie-rock soundtrack.

The story follows a former chicken thief trying to settle into a responsible domestic life with his wife and quirky son, until his animal instincts pull him into one final heist against three ruthless local farmers.

Beneath its dry humor and cozy visuals, the film's themes of balancing family expectations with personal identity resonate during the college years.

Genre: Animation, Comedy
Runtime: 1 hour, 27 minutes
Where to watch: Available to rent on Amazon Prime Video, Apple TV and YouTube

'Garden State' (2004)

Returning home on break often means running into old high school classmates and realizing everyone is growing at different speeds — a feeling at the heart of Zach Braff's "Garden State."

The 2000s indie drama follows a struggling young actor who returns to his New Jersey hometown after years away, reconnecting with old friends who never left and meeting a quirky local, played by Natalie Portman, who pushes him to confront his distant family.

Moody and nostalgic, the film captures the surreal experience of walking familiar streets as a slightly different version of yourself.

Genre: Drama, Romance
Runtime: 1 hour, 42 minutes
Where to watch: Available to rent on Amazon Prime Video, Apple TV and YouTube

'Pieces of April' (2003)

For any student staying in an off-campus apartment near EMU over the holiday — or anyone who has ever tried to cook a real meal in a cramped kitchen — "Pieces of April" hits close to home.

Set on Thanksgiving Day, the scrappy indie follows an estranged twenty-something, played by Katie Holmes, who invites her suburban family to her tiny, rundown Manhattan apartment, only for her oven to break hours before they arrive.

Her desperate scramble to borrow oven space from neighbors balances dry comedy with a heartfelt look at pride, forgiveness and makeshift community.

Genre: Comedy, Drama
Runtime: 1 hour, 20 minutes
Where to watch: Available to stream on Tubi and Pluto TV, or to rent on major platforms

'The Myth of the American Sleepover' (2010)

Filmed nearby in metro Detroit, David Robert Mitchell's "The Myth of the American Sleepover" offers a dreamy, low-stakes portrait of suburban Michigan youth on the cusp of adulthood.

Set over the final weekend of summer before college begins, the ensemble story follows four young people wandering through their hometown in search of first kisses, late-night parties and closure with the places they are about to leave behind.

Watching the film during fall break feels like looking in a rearview mirror at the exact hometown life many EMU students stepped out of just a few months ago.

Genre: Drama, Coming-of-Age
Runtime: 1 hour, 36 minutes
Where to watch: Available to stream on AMC+ or rent on major platforms

For students looking for more entertainment options before classes resume, campus streaming portals and local Ypsilanti video rental spots, including the Ypsilanti District Library, offer free and low-cost ways to catch up on fall favorites over the break.

What's the Move?
Nov. 24 - 30

Lelaina MacDonald
News Reporter

Ypsi Fine Arts Club — Nov. 25

Every other Wednesday, the Riverside Arts Center hosts a free art presentation night.

Attendees may present two pieces of original artwork; however, attendees are not required to present. Ranging from artists, art lovers, collectors and curators, people from Ypsilanti and beyond can join the Riverside Arts Center for an inspirational evening.

The Riverside Arts Center is located at 76 N. Huron St., Ypsilanti, and the event is from 5-8 p.m.

Depot Town Comedy Open Mic Night — Nov. 25

734 Brewing Company hosts its weekly comedy open mic night on Wednesdays. This is a free event with stand-up comedians from around Ypsilanti and Southeastern Michigan.

Each set ranges from five to 10 minutes each.

734 Brewing Company is at 15 E Cross St., Ypsilanti. The open mic night begins at 7:30 p.m. and will conclude at 10:30 p.m.

Thanksgiving Dog Parade — Nov. 28

If you're looking for a fun and impactful way for you and your dog(s) to participate in a community event, the Thanksgiving Dog Parade may be perfect.

Organized by hear.say brewing, participants and their furry friends can join a 1K walk to raise money for improv scholarships, the EventBrite webpage says. Those who are interested can purchase a $25 ticket online, which will include a hat and voucher for discounted beer and food combo.

Participants can meet at 2215 West Stadium Blvd., Ann Arbor, for the start of the parade at 11 a.m. The parade will end at 1 p.m.

Krampusmrkt — Nov. 28 & 29

For the sixth year in a row, Holy Bones is hosting its annual Krampusmrkt during the last weekend of November.

This event will feature all kinds of original artwork, hand-poured apothecary, ethically sourced oddities and unique dark-holiday gifts that, according to the Holy Bones website, nod to ancient Alpine traditions, nocturnal creatures and the untraditional spirit of the season. In other words, the Krampusmrkt will have Halloween and Christmas items.

There will also be an opportunity for those interested to take photos with Krampus. Abigail Breimayer, a professional Special FX makeup artist who specifically specializes in hyper-realistic monsters, gore and cinematic practical effects for filmmakers and haunted houses, is bringing her full-scale Krampus to the event. To take photos, guests pay $10 and then they can use the provided professional tripod.

The Krampusmrkt will be held at the Michigan Firehouse Museum at 110 W Cross St., Ypsilanti, over the weekend from 1-7 p.m. on both Saturday and Sunday.

Ypsi Artisans Holiday Market — Nov. 28 & 29

The Ypsi Artisans is having its sixth annual holiday market Nov. 28 and 29 from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. at the Ypsilanti Freighthouse.

With over 40 Ypsilanti-based small businesses, crafters and nonprofit organizations, there will be lots of items to enjoy. There will also be live entertainment, local food vendors and a festive atmosphere.

Pet photos with Santa — Nov. 29

The Briarwood Mall is having an evening dedicated to pets meeting Santa. Bring your pets to take a photo with Santa at this special event from 6-8 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 29.

Pet photos will be taken and available for purchase at this event at the Von Maur Court. Reservations are not required for this event.

Resilient Eagles overcome 17-point deficit to stun Denver 70-68



No. 3 Jabri Fitzpatrick, power forward for Eastern Michigan University's men's basketball team, dribbles the ball during game Nov. 11 versus Great Lakes Christian College at George Gervin GameAbove Center. *Ruby Brannon / The Eastern Echo*

Ruby Brannon
Sports Editor

A slow start and early Pioneer dominance

On Saturday, Nov. 21, Eastern Michigan University hosted the University of Denver in Ypsilanti, marking just the second all-time meeting between the programs and the first-ever matchup inside the George Gervin GameAbove Center. Early on, Denver completely controlled the tempo and physical tone of the contest.

Driven by Kam Martin's 13 first-half points, Oskar Stumer's interior effort, and Summit League Player of the Year Carson Johnson, Denver physically pushed EMU around on the perimeter and dominated inside the paint.

The Pioneers held the Eagles to just 22 points on 50.0% field-goal shooting and a frosty 14.3% from beyond the arc in the opening 20 minutes, building a comfortable 33-22 halftime lead. Head Coach Billy Donlon reflected postgame that EMU was "totally outclassed in every aspect in the first half," comparing Denver's physicality to a line of scrimmage in football where the Pioneers beat EMU to every loose ball and controlled the glass.

The hole deepened early in the second half when Denver's Shaun Wysocki hit a three-pointer with 15:12 remaining, extending the Pioneer lead to 17 at 47-30.

Donlon's halftime gut-check and tactical adjustments

Faced with a mounting deficit, Coach Donlon delivered an intense halftime message to his squad in the locker room. Rather than focusing purely on schematics, Donlon targeted his team's toughness and pride. The coaching staff showed video clips illustrating how out-toughened the squad was in the opening frame. Donlon challenged his players to mirror the work ethic of the university community, emphasizing that Eastern Michigan is a gritty institution built on hard work and fight.

Tactically, Donlon and assistant coaches John Bowler and Vince Fritz implemented crucial second-half adjustments.

The staff shifted to a smaller, faster lineup, sliding Emanuel Richards to the four spot alongside Mohammad Habhab at center, allowing EMU to trap ball screens and execute relentless full-court pressure.

Defensively, EMU contained Kam Martin, holding Denver's first-half leading scorer to zero points in the second half by playing his drives tighter. Offensively, the Eagles improved floor spacing, generating open perimeter looks and attacking the rim.

Second-half surge and late-game heroics

The tactical shifts paid immediate dividends as EMU ignited a game-closing 40-21 run. The Eagles sizzled after the break, shooting 60.7% from the field and 54.6% from three-point range. Emanuel Richards, who was scoreless in the first half, sparked the rally by pouring in 18 second-half points, including three triples. Mohammad Habhab anchored the interior effort, finishing with 17 points, seven rebounds, and a career-high-tying four steals.

The climax arrived in the final minute of regulation. Trailing by two with 1:10 remaining, Habhab converted a game-tying layup off a setup pass from point guard Braelon Green, who finished with a game-high six assists.

After Denver retook a 68-66 lead, Green found Jabri Fitzpatrick on the wing with 37 seconds left. Fitzpatrick drained a dramatic three-pointer to give EMU its first lead of the night, 69-68. Fitzpatrick then added a clutch free throw with five seconds left to seal the final 70-68 victory.

Postgame reactions: Culture, character, and program vision

In his postgame interview, an emotional Donlon lauded his team's character, declaring, "That's Eastern Michigan basketball. That's who we are." Donlon highlighted his team's bench contributions and full-court depth, which wore down Denver's seven-man rotation over 40 physical minutes. Donlon also emphasized how athletic success elevates the profile of EMU's top academic programs, including cybersecurity, nursing, engineering, business and education.

The historic comeback moves EMU to 4-1 overall and 3-0 at home, marking the program's best start since the 2019-20 season and its largest deficit erased in eight years.

NCAA decision eliminates Week Zero with standardized 14-week season starting in 2027

Shane Kowalski
News Reporter



Eastern Michigan University football players knock down cement walls at Rynearson Stadium in Ypsilanti, Michigan, to kick off the action for the Sept. 26 game against Lindenwood University, from St. Charles, Missouri. *Bradan Copeland / The Eastern Echo*

For years, what was called Week Zero in college football — a pre-season opening of sorts for NCAA Division 1 teams — belonged to a few. The season wasn't fixed to an exact length, and while most teams played a dozen games over a 13-week calendar, quite a few used Week Zero to add a 14th week.

The early contests were considered exceptions, approved for a variety of reasons including travel to international locations or to Hawaii.

In 2026, Eastern Michigan University was among the teams who played its first game of the year during that pre-season weekend of Aug. 27-29, days ahead of the official Sept. 3 — Labor Day weekend — start of the NCAA Division 1 season. There were 26 college games scheduled across the country during that last weekend of August.

The NCAA Division 1 Cabinet, during its June 23-24 meeting, confirmed an April recommendation to change the calendar, turning what was Week Zero into the first official week of the season. Saturday, Aug. 28 was set as the start of the 2027 season, which will last for a fixed 14 weeks. The change becomes effective Aug. 1, 2027.

"The cabinet adopted Proposal No. 2026-37 as expedited legislation to specify that, in bowl subdivision football, an institution shall not play its first contest with outside competition before the Thursday preceding the Saturday that is 14 weeks before the first Saturday in December and to eliminate all first contest date exceptions," the committee stated in the June 23-24 meeting report, as posted on the NCAA's website.

Essentially, the calendar change allows any team to play the week before Labor Day. The teams will then be able to schedule their 12 regular-season games over a 14-week season that ends the Saturday after Thanksgiving.

"The NCAA's stated rationale is to simplify scheduling and eliminate potential competitive advantages from other teams starting early," said Greg Steiner, Eastern Michigan University's senior associate athletic director.

Steiner said that for the Eagles, the change means only that the season calendar starts a week earlier.

Student athletes were to report July 28 this year, and began practicing July 29, Steiner said. That was a week earlier than teams that did not participate in Week Zero. Regardless of the schedule changes, Steiner said, the calendar remains the same for practices.

The change also provides the opportunity for teams to have open Saturdays in the 14-week schedule, Steiner said, which will add flexibility with the conference realignment, such as Sacramento State moving up from the FCS, or Football Championship Subdivision, to the FBS or Football Bowl Subdivision. The championship subdivision includes smaller schools with smaller budgets and fewer scholarships. North Dakota State is the other school that moved in 2026 to the larger bowl subdivision.

College football fans won't see much of a difference, other than the possibility of more games to watch the week before Labor Day.

"I don't really see this as much of a big deal," fan Logan Clausen said. "I would honestly love to see football be played in August instead of having no football in August."

Other fan responses were similar, but many said the change is an interesting and understandable path. Some said the decision provides fairness in playing opportunities.

Eagle Sports Tips & Tales: Nov. 22 - 29

Jeffrey Ellingsworth
Sports Reporter

Eastern Michigan University students are heading into Thanksgiving break, but the athletics program doesn't stop, with EMU's football and basketball teams seeing an action-packed week.

Here are all the tactical tips and historical tales to guide athletes and sports fans as EMU takes on rivals at home and away.

Nov. 22: Women's basketball at Butler

Tale: The Eastern Michigan women's basketball team continues its six-game road trip Sunday, traveling to Indianapolis to take on Butler. The Eagles are looking to pick up their first win of the season after an overtime loss to Oakland on Nov. 18.

Tip: The Eagles need to protect the ball and avoid giving Butler easy scoring opportunities. Limiting turnovers, getting back on defense\ and controlling the boards will be especially important against an undefeated opponent. Eastern also needs strong offensive contributions from Oliwia Pelka and Peyton Hill to keep pace.

Nov. 24: Men's basketball vs. Kennesaw State

Tale: The Eagles are taking their talents south as Eastern Michigan heads to Cancun, Mexico, for the Cancun Challenge. Eastern opens the tournament Tuesday against Kennesaw State after completing its three-game home stand with a comeback victory over Denver.

Tip: Eastern needs to bring the defensive intensity it showed in the second half against Denver. The Eagles cannot afford another slow start or a large early deficit. Controlling turnovers, winning the rebounding battle, and getting Emanuel Richards involved offensively will be key to maintaining momentum.

Nov. 24: Football vs. Kent State

Tale: The Eastern Michigan football team returns to The Factory for its final home game of the 2026 season as it welcomes Kent State for a Tuesday night MACtion matchup. The game will also serve as Senior Night, with the Eagles recognizing program members before kickoff.

Tip: Winning the battle at the line of scrimmage will be crucial for Eastern Michigan. The Eagles need to establish the run, protect the quarterback, and avoid costly turnovers. Defensively, pressuring Kent State's quarterback and limiting explosive plays will help Eastern control the game in front of its home crowd.

Nov. 25: Men's basketball vs. UTEP or College of Charleston

Tale: The Eagles will wrap up their time in Cancun with their second Cancun Challenge game on Wednesday. Depending on the tournament results, Eastern Michigan will face either University of Texas at El Paso or the College of Charleston.

Tip: Regardless of the opponent, Eastern needs to maintain its defensive intensity and avoid falling behind early. The Eagles will also need to share the ball and find consistent scoring beyond their leading scorers. Taking care of the ball and finishing possessions with rebounds will be key to ending the tournament on a high note.

Nov. 29: Women's basketball at Michigan State

Tale: Eastern Michigan closes out the week with another in-state matchup as the Eagles travel to East Lansing to take on Michigan State. The Spartans will present another tough challenge as Eastern wraps up its six-game road trip.

Tip: The Eagles need to limit Michigan State's second-chance opportunities and keep the Spartans from controlling the pace. Strong defensive communication, disciplined rebounding, and capitalizing on open shots will be key. Eastern also needs to put together a complete 40-minute performance against its Big Ten opponent.

EMU alumna named one of JCI USA's 10 Outstanding Americans



EMU Alumna Courtney Smith, founder of the Detroit Phoenix Center, was recently named one of JCI's Ten Outstanding Young Americans becuase of her work in preventing youth homelessness. *Photo courtesy of Jennifer Foster.*

Kate Stephenson
News Reporter

Courtney Smith, an Eastern Michigan University class of 2014 alumna, was recently named as one of Ten Outstanding Young Americans by Junior Chamber International.

The TOYA program honors leaders between the ages of 18 and 40 who exemplify excellence in a variety of fields, such as science, entrepreneurship, military service, philanthropy and the arts, according to JCI.

Smith is the founder of the Detroit Phoenix Center, which offers support services such as mentorship, educational support, life skills training, mental health services and housing assistance to high risk youth in the Detroit area. DPC offers services to youths aged 12 to 24 who are experiencing instability, the website says.

Smith said that her time at EMU was very formative in her philanthropic career. She studied sociology and social work and volunteered with EMU's Vision Volunteer Center to lead service projects in Detroit. She said she also wrote her honor thesis on the lived experience of homeless college students.

"I was very involved in service on campus and working to remove barriers for young people in Detroit and other communities," she said.

She said her service projects included working at local shelters, visiting art installations in the city and volunteering at community gardens. Additionally, Smith said she worked with the Mentorship, Access, and Guidance in College program at EMU which supports students who may have experienced homelessness or foster care.

Smith said colleagues and faculty at EMU were also formative in her endeavors.

"Throughout my journey at Eastern, I was a youth advocate and organizer," she said. "It was really amplified through some of the mentorship that I received on campus through various professors who really poured into me."

She said she was motivated to found the DPC after seeing that young people's needs were often ignored during periods of social change, such as during the recent revitalization of Detroit.

"I felt like young people were being left out of that narrative," Smith said. "I saw some systemic barriers that young people were facing that were not being addressed, such as housing insecurity, chronic absenteeism and violence."

As someone who has experienced homelessness and the foster care system herself, Smith explained that she wanted to find a way to make a difference. She said she was further motivated by her own losses.

"What really amplified my work was losing loved ones to the harsh realities of some of the broken systems that exist," she said, adding that she wants to use her passion for the community to close some of those gaps.

The DPC was created to be a low barrier, drop-in style location for youth to get help, Smith said.

"Young people really prefer low barrier resources," she said. Smith added that she wants the center to be a safe place for youth that does not require them to navigate multiple systems to get support and services.

The center offers comprehensive services in a variety of categories, she said.

"We've grown into a multiprogram, full service organization," she said. "[The services] really allow young people to move from crisis to stability."

Smith explained that she cares deeply about amplifying the voices of youth.

"As a person that truly believes that those who are closest to problems need to drive solutions, creating a space where young people's voices can be elevated was resolute for me when starting the Detroit Phoenix Center," she said.

There are many plans for the future of the center, she said.

"We are truly building an ecosystem so that young people don't have to navigate so many fragmented systems to be able to access the services that they need," she said.

Smith said she hopes the DPC can become a model for organizations in other communities to help address and prevent youth homelessness.

The Echo Q&A Series: Zachary Lewis focuses on the competitive side of gaming

Jan Hernandez
News Reporter

As the esports coordinator for Eastern Michigan University, Zachary Lewis oversees the competitive gaming teams on campus. He also serves as adviser for the Eagles Gaming Club. Lewis's roles put him on the front line of the esports world, as he works with students competing in games, such as Valorant, League of Legends, Rocket League, Overwatch and Super Smash Bros. He also serves as a champion in the e-gaming field, sparking enhancements to the competitive program infrastructure.

Q: How does competitive gaming at EMU differ from recreational gaming?

A: There are two ways that gamers can compete on campus. They can be recruited into or try out for the EMU esports program, or they can compete through the Eagles Gaming Club, where students form their own teams. EMU Esports is a lot more like professional sports. We have coaches, we travel and compete in the ESports Collegiate, and our players receive scholarships and have contracts. (ESports Collegiate is the governing body for college-level gaming competitions.)

Q: How does EMU recruit players for its competitive teams?

A: There's regional recruiting and championship recruiting. Regional recruiting is a big part of Eastern's identity. A student might already be considering Eastern, but esports could be the reason they choose Eastern over Central, Western or Michigan. Championship recruiting happens less frequently and usually involves players competing at a very high level. We do a lot of networking with coaches and players, and sometimes players reach out to us because they see that we have a really strong team.

Q: Is the recruiting process similar to what football and basketball players go through?

A: It's very similar. We are actively recruiting, holding signing days and have players sign a letter of intent before building our rosters for the next season. Our athletes have a full schedule of required practices and weekly matches. Beyond that, they are expected to maintain their own training and wellness. Just like a football player has to eat right and work out outside of team practices, esports players have to manage their schedules and keep themselves in peak physical and mental form to perform for their team.

Q: What do practices look like for the competitive teams?

A: Each of the five major titles has its own dedicated coach. The day-to-day practices are a collaborative effort between the coach and team captain. The captain primarily helps with scheduling, accountability and team culture, while strategy and roster decisions are handled by the coach. The coaches specialize in their games and help develop the players.

Q: EMU competes in several different games. How are the matches and season structured?

A: EMU's esports program has teams competing in five main titles: Valorant, League of Legends, Rocket League, Overwatch and Super Smash Bros. We play a full year-long schedule with weekly matches, with different games competing on different days throughout the season before moving into the playoffs.

At the club level, though, students can compete in literally anything. They have chess, Fortnite, Apex Legends, as well as secondary Overwatch and Super Smash teams. The list changes depending on the students' interests.

Q: What is one of the biggest challenges competitive players face during the season?

A: One of the great terms that people realize is very true is: availability is the best ability. Students are students first, here at Eastern. They have to balance school, jobs and their home life. Scheduling yourself and finding time to make the most of your team's schedule is a challenge. You can't just show up to practice and call that good for the week. You still have to play the game on your own and make sure you're getting reps in.

Q: How does EMU help esports players balance their competitions and academic responsibilities?

A: Scholarship players receive priority registration, and team schedules are planned around students' availability. This helps players balance academic responsibilities with team practices and competition.

Q: What is one misconception about competitive esports you would like to clear up?



Inside the esports gaming lounge at Eastern Michigan University, students compete against each other — and as teams against other university or college teams — in games like Valorant, League of Legends, Rocket League, Overwatch and Super Smash Bros. The lounge, located on the first floor of Student Center is home to the university's competitive league teams and the Eagles Gaming Club. *Jan Hernandez / The Eastern Echo*

A: Our players have to view their game more as an obligation, more as a job, more as something that they have to practice as an art form. They have to commit themselves to it more than something they can just sit down and enjoy. Sometimes a strategy, character or way to play might be the meta, and that requires you to play that thing with your team over and over until you or your teammates master it.

That can be challenging, but it's also one of the more satisfying ways to play games. Even though initially you might have to view the game like a job, you start to find other ways to have a good time, like working with and enjoying your teammates. Some players don't even consider themselves gamers. They just like competing.

EMU's esports program offers students more than just an opportunity to compete in their favorite video games. Through team practices, coaching and weekly matches, players learn to communicate, work together and make decisions under pressure while balancing their academic responsibilities. The program brings competition and campus community together, giving students a place to develop as both players and teammates.

Holy Bones to host sixth annual Krampusmrkt



Customers peruse the products at the Krampusmrkt, held at the Ypsilanti Freighthouse in Depot Town on Friday and Saturday, Dec. 6-7, 2025. Dozens of vendors offer arts of all kinds at the annual market, from plushies, to apparel, to art prints and jewelry. The market is organized by the Holy Bones Festival and Events group. *Gray Connor / The Eastern Echo*

Lelaina MacDonald
News Reporter

For the sixth year in a row, Holy Bones is hosting Krampusmrkt, a handmade holiday artist's market.

The Holy Bones website states that guests should "expect a highly curated, immersive market" which will include original artwork, hand-poured apothecary, ethically sourced oddities and unique gifts of all kinds. The items being sold will be a mixture of Halloween and Christmas vibes, giving a "Krampus" effect.

Krampus refers to the folkloric creature said to accompany Saint Nicholas. While Saint Nicholas rewards the good children, Krampus is said to punish the ones who have behaved badly.

Those who attend the Krampusmrkt will be able to support small businesses with the event taking place on Small Business Saturday and Sunday. When purchasing a gift or item at the market, buyers are funding an artist's livelihood and taking home with them a homemade piece, stated organizers on the event website.

In addition to shopping, there will be a photo opportunity for guests. Abigail Breimayer, the mastermind behind Krampus of Monroe, who is also a professional Special FX makeup artist, will have her full-scale Krampus available at the market for people to take photos with.

"This is an intense, movie-quality practical effect featuring full facial prosthetics, custom teeth and nails, cinematic contacts, a full fur suit, and hand-sculpted wooden hoof boots," organizers said on the website.

Guests may pay $10 to take photos with a provided professional tripod.

Holy Bones hosts several artisan markets throughout this year. A new change this year, Holy Bones' markets have now moved to a new location in the Ypsilanti Firehouse Museum, located at 110 W. Cross Street, Ypsilanti.

Those interested in Krampusmrkt's mixture of the spooky and the jolly can come Saturday, Nov. 28 from 1-7 p.m. or Sunday, Nov. 29 from 1-7 p.m.



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Ypsilanti Township data center discussion panel criticizes recent U-M approval



Jay Coghlan, executive director of Nuclear Watch New Mexico, speaks at a panel about the University of Michigan and Los Alamos data center in the Eastern Michigan University Student Center ballroom, Nov. 19. *Kate Stephenson / The Eastern Echo*

Kate Stephenson
News Reporter

Ypsilanti Township hosted a discussion panel at Eastern Michigan University on Nov. 19 about the recently approved data center to be built by the University of Michigan in partnership with Los Alamos National Laboratory.

The panel was held in the ballroom of the Student Center from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and was free to attend. The discussion hosted five panelists from various occupational backgrounds.

The panelists were Ypsilanti Township attorney Douglas Winters, Executive Director of Nuclear Watch New Mexico Jay Coghlan, Inaugural Director and lecturer of the Tishman Center for Social Justice and the Environment at the University of Michigan Michelle Martinez, state of Michigan Tribal Legislative Liaison Jamie Stuck, and state Rep. Jimmie Wilson, D-Ypsilanti.

The panel also included input from Brenda Stumbo, supervisor of Ypsilanti Township.

The topics discussed included racial and ethnic bias, environmental harm, energy consumption, nuclear weaponry, Native American perspectives and financial incentives.

Four out of the five panelists expressed that they are staunchly opposed to the construction of the data center. U-M has maintained that the project is not a commercial data center, instead describing it as a high-performance, research computing center. The facility will split the location between a U-M-managed academic research center and a LANL-managed federal research center. U-M has said its research will advance medical and scientific breakthroughs.

For LANL's part, the university has affirmed that, "No hazardous nuclear materials will be stored or used on-site, no weapons production will occur at the site and the facility will not conduct real-time defense operations. The laboratory's work at the center will include computational modeling for nuclear stewardship — helping ensure the safety and reliability of the nation's existing nuclear stockpile without live testing — as well as broader national security research in areas such as energy infrastructure and cybersecurity."

Winters spoke first, expressing his distaste for the U-M regents decision. He said Ypsilanti Township is in the lowest part of the economic opportunity index and has 40% Black and brown residents. He presented those factors as reasons why U-M chose to build in Ypsilanti rather than Ann Arbor.

"[U-M] came here because they did not feel that the township would have the political will or the stamina to push back," he said.

Winters added that the proposed location for the data center is between two Native American trails. He said there is a high risk that construction workers will run into burial grounds on the property and that archaeological surveys should be conducted before work begins.

He emphasized concerns that information about some of the activities inside of the data center will remain secret and restricted from citizens.

"They cannot guarantee the security of our community," he said. "Right now, we have a high value target located in the midst of our community, endangering our businesses, our schools and our residents."

U-M has said that the project has not been classified as a Tier 1 High Value Target Risk by any federal agencies, despite concerns from the township.

Winters said Ypsilanti Township residents are not interested in financial benefits offered by U-M. In addition to advancing the progress of the project on Nov. 19, U-M regents also approved a community benefits package totaling $5 million to support local education, infrastructure and other investment opportunities.

"Money is not a license to disregard a community's rights," Winters said. "The history of this country was not written by people who simply accepted what they were told."

He finished by expressing his frustration with U-M's decision, which was announced three hours prior to the beginning of the panel.

"Every citizen believes that democracy means something more than being invited to a meeting after all the important decisions have already been made," Winters said.

Panelist Coghlan spoke next. He discussed the funding that Los Alamos is receiving, the merging of AI and nuclear weapons, and eugenics.

"What is happening here is the clearest example, that I know of in the world, of the merging of artificial intelligence and nuclear weapons," Coghlan said. "And that is not a good idea."

Coghlan highlighted cuts to funding in renewable energy research. According to the Department of Energy, funding for energy efficiency and renewable energy has been reduced to zero in 2026, after being cut nearly in half in 2025.

Coghlan also explained the potential negative environmental impacts that could result from the center.

"Don't trust a thing that Los Alamos lab says," he said.

He said LANL's motivation for building a data center in Ypsilanti is Michigan's abundance of water.

"You've got water, and we don't in New Mexico," he said. "New Mexico is growing increasingly arid."

Michelle Martinez, inaugural director and lecturer at U-M spoke next. She discussed the negative environmental impacts and energy consumption required by data centers.

"Because data centers run so hot, they need cooling systems," she said. "A new facility can create a substantial new load, meaning that we're looking at new power infrastructure in Michigan for the first time in many decades."

Martinez said that Michigan, along with other states, has three main components that make it ideal for data center construction: water access, energy and infrastructure capacity and cost incentives such as tax breaks.

Martinez said the construction of data centers will lead to a rise in the cost of energy throughout the country, especially in Michigan.

Martinez highlighted that nearly a quarter million people in Michigan had their electricity shut off last year, especially those in low socioeconomic areas. She said she is concerned that an increase in energy costs will ultimately contribute to an ongoing affordability crisis in Michigan.

Martinez pointed to a map of the state that illustrated energy shutoffs by county.

"We know that it's not just in one neighborhood," she said of the energy shutoffs. "It's all over the state. But particularly in Detroit, right? When we're looking at these different data sets, we can see where people are getting hit the hardest, and it is deeply racialized."

Jamie Stuck, state of Michigan tribal legislative liaison, spoke next.

He did not take a position on U-M's decision to approve the data center. Instead, he discussed the government's lack of consideration of Indigenous groups while planning the construction of the center.

The state of Michigan website says, non-tribal governmental units have an obligation to meaningfully engage with tribes and tribal leaders on matters that may impact their tribal communities and citizens.

"Because of those treaties, and because of the ability for us to have co-sovereignty with the state of Michigan and with the federal government, we have political status," he said. "That status mandates consultation, and that hasn't happened yet."

State Rep. Jimmie Wilson spoke last. He expressed his support for a moratorium on data centers and highlighted the need for teamwork to resolve social issues.

From 8 to 8:30 p.m., the panel answered questions from the audience.

Brenda Stumbo, supervisor of Ypsilanti Township, said any unanswered questions would be answered, with responses made available on the township's website. Martinez's and Coghlan's presentation slides are also available on the website.

Audience member and Ypsilanti resident, Dan Erickson, shared his thoughts with *The Eastern Echo*.

"I think it's irresponsible and disrespectful in a number of ways for [U-M] to be doing this," he said.

Erickson, who graduated from U-M with a degree in computer science and mathematics, said he believes the data center will invite nuclear harm from the government into the Ypsilanti community. He said he believes U-M's decision is money-motivated and misguided.

He said he felt hopeful following the panel discussion because it showed him that the opposition is very organized.

"This makes me feel a lot more confident," he said.

'Not in Ypsi, nowhere, never': residents protest data center vote

AnnaBelle Favre
Managing Editor - News

On the afternoon of Thursday, Nov. 19, an estimated 200 students and community members protested outside of the Alexander G. Ruthven Building on the University of Michigan's campus in Ann Arbor.

As the regents voted to approve the Textile Road data center project in collaboration with Los Alamos National Laboratory, some Ypsilanti residents raised signs and yelled chants to voice their dissent. U-M describes this project as a high performance computing center and has purchased 144 acres in Ypsilanti Township for the building.

Beginning an hour before the regents meeting, protesters began lining the street and sidewalk with posters and chants fighting against the proposed data center. The data center protest coincided with a demonstration from U-M's graduate student union.

Data center protest

Editor and researcher from ypsidatacenter.org and resident of Ypsilanti Township Andy Melichar told *The Echo*, "We built a website that has all the information about this project that the university does not want us to know. We're here to protest the vote that they're holding today ... We don't want that in our backyard, and I don't think most of the people in Michigan want that in Michigan."

Juliet Heinley, another resident of Ypsilanti Township, said that she came to protest the data center because it affects her, as well as her friends, neighbors and people she doesn't even know directly.

"I don't want them to have to live in the fallout of living next door, across the street or down the river from this data center," Heinley said.

She described her fears of air, water and noise pollution: "The negative health outcomes of communities that have data centers put in them are outrageous."

Frustration with U-M's communication

While much of the protesting was aimed toward the data center as a whole, many community members expressed frustration with what they described as a lack of communication from the university about the project.

Ypsilanti Township Supervisor Brenda Stumbo carried a "Hail no Los Alamos data center" sign and told *The Echo*, "I'm shocked that they added this to the agenda so quickly without notifying the host community, which is Ypsilanti Township. The University of Michigan Board of Regents are elected by the people, for the people and they are funded by the taxpayers of the state of Michigan."

Stumbo is in her 10th term as township supervisor and said that in her 37 years of leadership, she has "never met elected officials that treat people and other elected officials the way we have been treated. It's really gross to me ... This project is clearly a partnership with the University of Michigan and the Department of War, and if you'd have asked me in my lifetime, would the University of Michigan be a supporter of war? I would have said 'Hail no.'"

Stumbo said that she warns everyone she meets not to trust U-M, specifically the Board of Regents and vice presidents. She mentioned her gratefulness for the support of Regent Paul Brown, who has expressed opposition to the project and voted against it Nov. 19.

Heinley explained her frustrations with the U-M leaders to *The Echo*: "There has been zero meaningful community engagement about it. There has been a miniscule amount of going through the motions of listening, but not really listening."

U-M hosted two town halls in Ypsilanti regarding the project in September, as well as some previous community engagement events.

Educating students and community members

Ypsilanti may be hotspot for data center information, but protesters at U-M said they came, in part, to educate students who have no idea what their university is doing.

U-M student Lou Ridgeway told *The Echo*, "The U-M community really doesn't know about this data center or that it's being built with their tuition money. We've been tabling at a whole bunch of campus events to try to both spread awareness and really drill the message every day for these people that we don't want this data center."



Outside University of Michigan's Board of Regents meeting Nov. 19, protesters rally against the U-M and Los Alamos planned data center. *Maddy Makin / The Eastern Echo*

Melichar also noticed the lapse in information just one town over from the data center site.

"I was here for like two minutes, and a student came up to me and said: on behalf of the students, I'm sorry that they are doing this to you guys. It does not reflect what the students believe — that made all of the effort worth it," Melichar said. He said that most of the U-M students walking by had no idea that their school had a data center proposed in Ypsi, and that his goal was to educate those who do not know what is going on.

Ridgeway had a table set up offering postcards for peace for people to write.

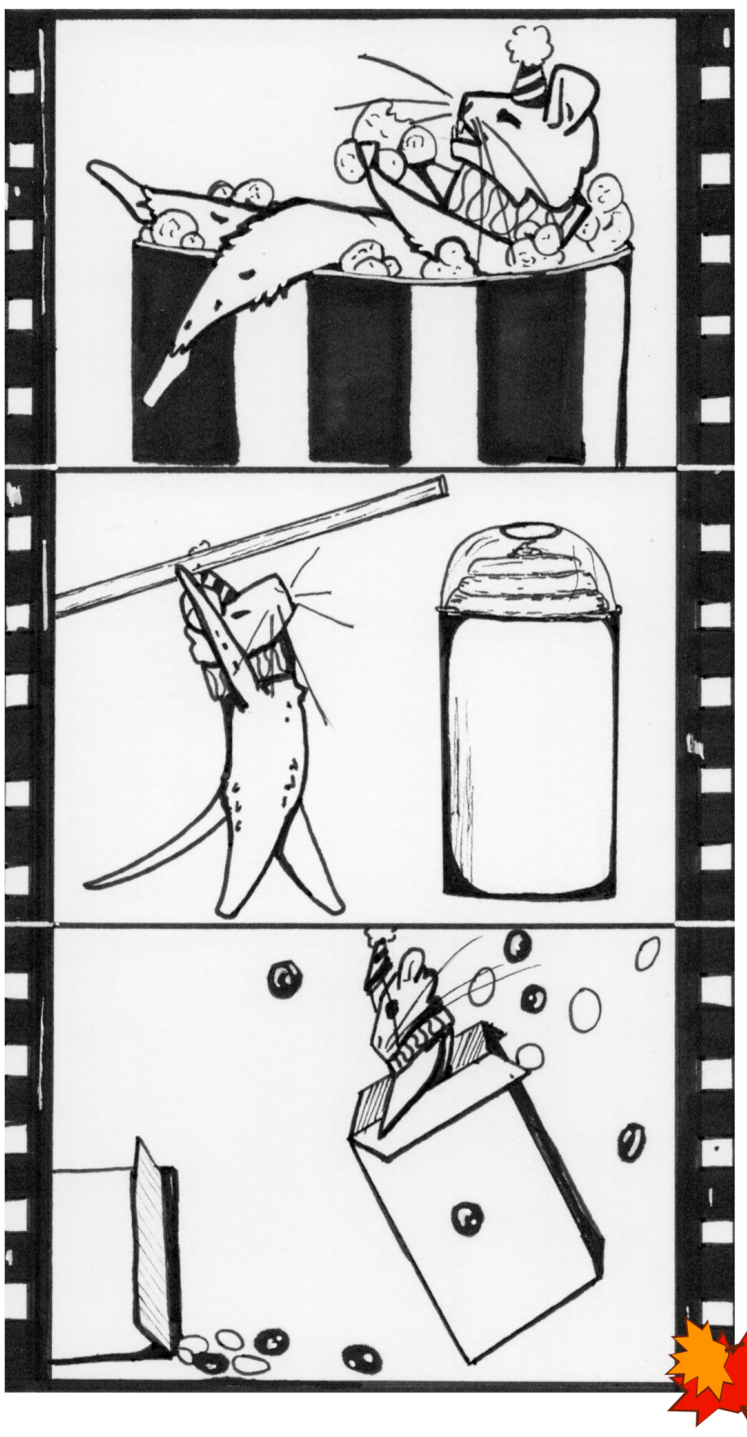
"We've been doing these postcards for months and just letting people who are building this data center at all levels [know] that we do not want this. We're writing to the people at Los Alamos and U-M, but also the Smith group, who is the architecture firm designing this data center," Ridgeway said.

Marching dissent

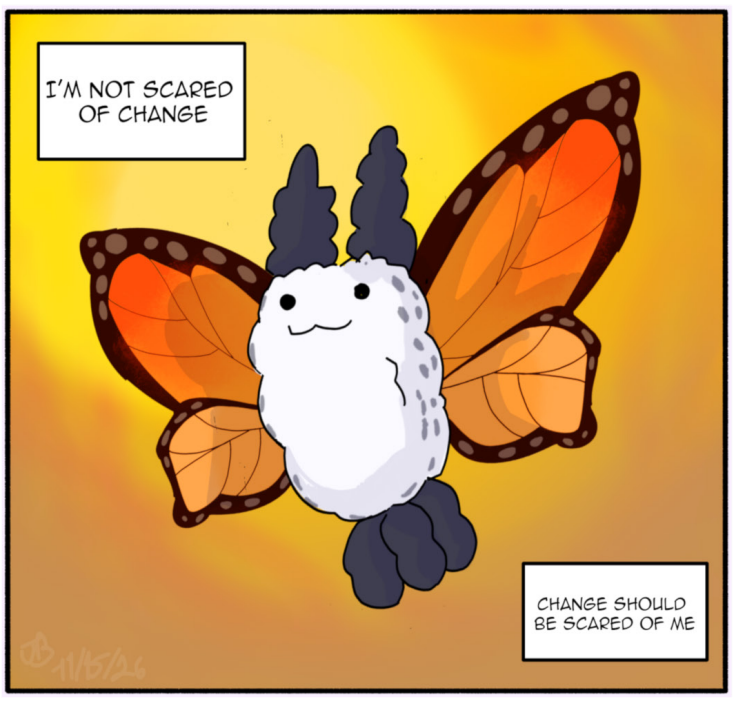
Once the regents meeting began, protesters walked through Ann Arbor. They chanted "5, 6, 7, 8, we will fight the AI state," and "We don't want no data center: not in Ypsi, nowhere, never," for the duration of the meeting.

Happy Thanksgiving from the Echo!

Movie Snacks | Jamie Owens



CHANGE | Julia Bartlett



Those Rooms In The Back | Yiri



The Cookie Thief! | Katelyn Hollis



City Angel Part 6 | AJ Grams



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Food and community at EMU



Attendees get their picture taken at a polaroid station at International Student Association's Worldsgiving on Friday, Nov. 20 in the Student Center Room 310. *Lee Hammock / The Eastern*



Attendees write letters for their families that will be sent out by the Office of Access & Opportunity at International Student Association's Worldsgiving on Friday, Nov. 20 in the Student Center Room 310. *Lee Hammock / The Eastern Echo*



Guests eat foods from cultures around the world at International Student Association's Worldsgiving on Friday, Nov. 20. *Lee Hammock / The Eastern Echo*



From left, Roman Karas, Winter Chutipassakul and Ethan Oats show off their postcards at International Student Association's Worldsgiving on Friday, Nov. 20. *Lee Hammock / The Eastern Echo*



From left, African Student Association Vice President Chidera Egele and Director of Marketing and Media Mariama Camara help serve up jollof at ASA's Jollof Wars on Friday, Nov. 20 in the McKenny Ballroom. *Lee Hammock / The Eastern Echo*



Attendee shop from Jewelry made by Jaqueline at African Student Association's Jollof Wars on Friday, Nov. 20 in the McKenny Ballroom. *Lee Hammock / The Eastern Echo*



Ghana wins third place at African Student Association's Jollof Wars on Friday, Nov. 20 in the McKenny Ballroom. *Lee Hammock / The Eastern Echo*



Attendees wait for the results of the Jollof Wars to be announced on Friday, Nov. 20 in the McKenny Ballroom. *Lee Hammock / The Eastern Echo*