



**Michigan Legislature**

**House Appropriations Subcommittee on Higher Education**

**Representative Kim LaSata, Chair  
Representative Larry Inman, Majority Vice-Chair  
Representative Rob VerHeulen  
Representative Aaron Miller  
Representative Jon Hoadley, Minority Vice-Chair  
Representative Yousef Rabhi**

**Testimony Presented By:**

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Chancellor**

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Good morning Representative LaSata and members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Higher Education.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to provide an overview of the University of Michigan-Dearborn, share information about student, faculty and staff accomplishments, and talk about the impact we are making in southeast Michigan.

I'll begin by expressing my appreciation for, and support of, Governor Snyder's recommendation to increase higher education funding by \$36.6 million in fiscal year 2018. The Governor's budget demonstrates his continuing commitment to Michiganders to provide support to Michigan's public universities and its students. The increase would go directly to ensuring access to UM-Dearborn for students of varying socio-economic backgrounds and other programs aimed at preparing talented, career-ready graduates who stay to work and live in Michigan.

UM-Dearborn is a metropolitan university committed to improving the quality of life in southeast Michigan. Since our founding in 1959, we have been shaped by a history of interaction with business, community, government and industry. The result is a comprehensive university offering more than 100 undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degrees, as well as hands-on experiential learning in a variety of areas: arts and sciences, education, health and human services, engineering and computer science, and business. We are dedicated to supplying our region with well-educated and creative thinkers, as well as entrepreneurs, small business owners and innovators who are prepared to lead.

We aim to provide the academic excellence of the University of Michigan in service to metro Detroit. Our campus is dedicated to extending its impact as an effective partner in the continued economic recovery in metro Detroit. A great metropolitan region needs a great university committed to its progress. UM-Dearborn achieves metropolitan impact by its commitment to making a Michigan degree accessible to students of varying means, strengthening student-learning experiences through research, intense classroom instruction, internship and co-op opportunities, and aligning curriculum and research with industry and community needs. This commitment is carried out in a culturally diverse and inclusive setting, reflective of today's work and living environments.

I would like to share information about our most important strength – our students. I will also talk about some of our efforts to provide an affordable high-quality education and our efforts related to student support. You will find this information and other important facts and figures about UM-Dearborn in your folder.

With more than 9,100 students currently enrolled, we continue to experience small but moderate growth. This year, 96 percent of our undergraduate students are Michigan residents, coming to us from 43 counties in the state.

UM-Dearborn continues to hold high standards for students wishing to attend. The fall 2016 freshman class had an average GPA of 3.56 and an average ACT of 24.9.

41 percent of our undergraduate students transferred to UM-Dearborn from another university or college. Transfer students had an average GPA of 3.26.

With such a large population of transfer students at UM-Dearborn, it is important to note that we understand the importance of forging strong partnerships with other institutions, specifically Michigan's community colleges. Our continued growth and success partially depends on those students interested in attending a community college for a year or two before transitioning to UM-Dearborn. Not every student is academically or financially able to attend a four-year university right out of high school. Knowing this, we do all we can to ensure a seamless transfer process. We offer a Transfer Hub on our website, specific to ten partnering community colleges, where potential students can obtain all the information they need or ask questions to a transfer admissions counselor. This HUB allows students to see course-by-course what credits are easily transferable to UM-Dearborn. I want to point out we do a great job ensuring course work completed elsewhere easily transfers to UM-Dearborn, exceptions to transferable course work generally falls into physical education and arts-related categories. Additionally, we currently have four Reverse Transfer Agreements with Henry Ford College, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Macomb Community College and Schoolcraft College.

While our students are incredibly qualified, some may not fit the "typical" image of a college student. At UM-Dearborn:

- 48 percent are the first in their family to attend college

- 44 percent are PELL eligible
- 41 percent have dependent-care responsibilities.
- 41 percent work while earning their degree – with 26 percent working more than 16 hours per week

College is a big adjustment for many students. I am proud to say that we take a university-wide approach to addressing the needs of all of our students, including students working during college, caring for a child or simply returning to school at a non-traditional age. I could list all of the programs we have to assist our students, but given my allotted time to speak, I would like to highlight two programs surrounding academic advising and affordability.

The first is the Student Advising and Resource Team, which we refer to as START. START assists incoming students, beginning with orientation, by providing academic advising and resources. START focuses time and attention on ensuring students have a strong foundation as they transition into the university and orient to campus. They work closely with the academic unit advising offices to ensure students receive accurate information relating to their major. This initiative is important because we work closely with students to map out their time to degree completion, advise on courses they should take, so if they were to change majors, core courses would still be applicable toward a degree and help students determine the right mix of courses so they can be successful. In its first year of operation, START has logged nearly 2,000 appointments since September!

In conjunction with advising, the university is utilizing a first-ever two-round early warning system, which allows the university to assist students struggling academically early to provide the additional resources needed to succeed. Finally, our advising team works with the Career Services Office to assist undecided students in selecting a major, while encouraging all students to meet with career counselors.

The second program designed to assist students with making good decisions is called fastFOURward. This initiative is a communications effort to help students graduate earlier and save money. As I mentioned, many of our students work while attending UM-Dearborn. Unfortunately, many of them choose to take 12 credit hours or fewer so they can work to

help pay for school. fastFOURward is an informational campaign that communicates techniques and benefits of finishing coursework in four years.

The effort informs students that they can save nearly \$9,000 in tuition and fees at today's rates by finishing their degree in four years. While we know not all of our students can graduate in four years, every year earlier than what a student may have planned for is extra money in the student's bank account. This savings figure does not include the substantial opportunity cost of the year of salary missed in a career when delaying graduation.

While taking 15 credit hours per semester may not be possible for all students, we encourage students to take at least 12 credits in both the fall and winter semesters along with 6 credits in the summer. While this plan results in less savings, it allows students to work additional hours, if needed. New this year, students who have taken 24 credit hours in the fall and winter semesters are eligible for a scholarship to offset the cost of taking a few courses in the summer.

These are just two programs that we have recently implemented to help students be more successful. Not only do these programs help students be more successful but the university graduates more talent each year to support the needs of industry, non-profit organizations and our communities.

While UM-Dearborn takes pride in the number of degrees we confer, we also gauge our success on how well our students do in obtaining their goals after graduation. One measure of this involves an annual survey of our graduates. Our 2015-2016 student survey results show that 96 percent of our graduates who completed the survey achieved their post-graduation goals, with 80 percent having accepted employment, 9 percent attending graduate school, 5 percent doing an internship or co/op, and 2 percent choosing to delay a career. The survey, with data from nearly half of our 2015-2016 graduates, showed that of those who responded, 97 percent of those who accepted employment were staying in Michigan to work and live – an outstanding return on investment by the state.

The starting salaries graduates earn can also measure the success of our efforts. Results from a recent report from the U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard show that UM-Dearborn graduates have the 4<sup>th</sup> highest starting salary among the 15 public

universities at \$45,600. This is more than \$12,000 above than the national annual starting salary.

While the success of our students is critically important, so too is ensuring access to an affordable college education. With 76 percent of our students applying for financial aid and 44 percent of our students being PELL eligible, UM-Dearborn recognizes the financial challenges the majority of our students face.

The university approaches this responsibility seriously by keeping tuition increases moderate, achieving annual cost savings and providing financial assistance to our students.

Each year we work hard to keep tuition increases low, carefully balancing the need for an affordable education while providing students with access to the high-quality faculty, courses and facilities needed for a Michigan degree. Since 2009, on average, the university has been able to reduce its annual expenditures by \$741,000 a year. A detailed report of our cost savings can be found in your folder.

Our efforts are working to relieve some of the financial burden on students. A recent report from *The Project on Student Debt*, an initiative of the Institute for College Access and Success, indicated that UM-Dearborn students' average loan debt is nearly \$2,800 below the national average and \$3,000 below the Michigan average.

We are proud of these efforts, and we remain committed to providing a quality education at an affordable cost while providing our region and state with great talent.

The strength of our academic programs is ensured by the innovativeness and seriousness by colleges maintaining their curricula. Our four colleges have many points of pride that continue to make a difference in southeast Michigan and beyond. Our students not only receive a quality education but are exposed to many experiences that fuel their personal passions and allow them to lead after graduation.

Our College of Engineering and Computer Science is home to nearly 3,100 students. This is a significant number considering enrollment was just over 1,500 students in 2010. While some of this growth can be attributed to recession recovery, we know that STEM-related

fields are in high demand and UM-Dearborn provides the high-quality education that produces career-ready engineers upon graduation.

The college had more than \$5 million in research expenditures in fiscal year 2016, with 56 percent of research grants coming from industry – an important link between classroom teaching and providing our students with real-world, career-ready experiences.

The college's success is also realized through our strong corporate partnerships, including at Ford Motor Company, where UM-Dearborn serves as a top recruiting pipeline in the country. As you may imagine, given our heavy involvement and partnership with industry, we are a major talent pipeline for most of the automakers and their suppliers in the state.

#### ***Experiential Honors Program***

The college recently developed an Experiential Honors Program aimed at inspiring the intellectual and leadership growth of our students beyond academics. The program equips students with knowledge and skills that enhance leadership skills and student preparedness to meet the challenges of their future engineering careers. The program is structured to allow students to complete the requirements through elective credits within the degree program, meaning no increase in credit hours to degree completion. Students earn the credit through faculty supervised co-operative education experiences with industry, working on an engineering research project and working on engineering design projects with the aim of bridging the gap between engineering education and practice.

This program recently launched so I look forward to updating you in the future on its success. It is, however, a great example of how UM-Dearborn continues to prepare our students with practical, real-world experiences so they are best prepared for employment and leadership positions upon graduation.

The College of Education, Health, and Human Services continues to bring new opportunities to meet current and future workforce demands for non-clinical skills in the health care sector, while continuing to offer one of the state's exemplary educator preparation programs. In addition to providing high-demand academic programs, the synergies between education and health and health care have led to seamless, collaborative and shared-learning strategies that prepare professionals to become better informed about complex

health-related issues and allow for greater comprehension and teaching about the complexities of the issues surrounding health and wellness.

### ***Stackable Certificates***

The college is at the cutting edge of addressing the need for paraprofessionals in the field of mental and behavioral health in the state of Michigan and our nation. The college's innovative stackable paraprofessional certificate curriculum, funded by a Health Resources and Services Administration grant from the federal government, provides both current students and individuals currently working in the field the opportunity to qualify for the entry-level paraprofessional licensure in mental and behavioral health, social services and child life specialists. Our students, after receiving this certificate and licensure, may then work in their chosen field while continuing with their education toward an undergraduate degree. This program not only allows for practical, real-world experience, it provides people with additional job opportunities.

### ***Hotspotting***

In addition to new academic programs, the college is vested in research opportunities. Faculty and students are working to identify hotspots in the state where it is possible to have a positive impact on the health of our citizens. The college is working with an insurance company to examine Medicaid and Medicare data to better understand where patients are seeking care the most. This care could be in the form of a doctor's office, a trip to the emergency room or hospital admittance. The college evaluates the data to identify the most efficient and cost-effective use of health care. In other words, this work helps identify who is coming into an emergency room or who is being admitted to the hospital who does not need to be admitted. This research also identifies which visits could have been prevented by other, less expensive, health-care alternatives. The analysis of this data helps the college work with the payer and social service agencies to develop programs that help better guide patient's health-care decisions. Hotspotting and the programs developed from it not only help to reduce health-care costs, but encourage and educate citizens about healthy living practices.

UM-Dearborn's College of Business, one of only 786 schools worldwide to be accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, has consistently received



recognition from *U.S. News & World Report*, having been ranked among the top undergraduate business programs in Michigan and the second best part-time M.B.A.

#### ***eCities***

Each year since 2007, the college has operated an entrepreneurial and economic development-benchmarking program for municipalities in Michigan. eCities is an annual research study that examines community-level factors that influence entrepreneurship, economic development and job growth. Local communities that participate in the project receive benchmarking reports showing their performance at creating inviting business environments and encouraging entrepreneurial growth. The focus of the project is to learn and share the “best practices” to attract entrepreneurial development and create business growth across the state of Michigan. Understanding best practices and utilizing these concepts across Michigan will have a positive impact on the state’s economic future.

#### ***iLabs Research***

Finally, iLabs also offers our students experiential learning and research opportunities with organizations such as Ford Motor Company, Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport and the Capuchin Soup Kitchen. Companies and non-profit organizations seeking research support hire our students and faculty to provide data that is used to improve business practices, showcase economic impact or improve customer service.

Finally, our College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters, our largest college, offers more than 40 undergraduate and graduate programs. The skills provided allow students to think creatively and develop solutions to various challenges facing industry and community organizations. The college is diverse and purposeful in its offerings.

### ***Mapping Lab***

Our Geospatial Analysis and Mapping Certificate and Geospatial Analysis Mapping Lab, which provide students with the experience and knowledge in theory and application of geographic information systems and remote sensing, is one of only a handful of such programs nationally.

### ***Mars Research***

One of our college faculty members, Mark Salvatore, is a participating scientist on NASA's Mars Science Laboratory *Curiosity* rover mission. He and his students are investigating how the cold and dry Martian climate influences the geologic and chemical investigations being performed by the rover. Our researchers are also using the mountainous terrain of Antarctica as an analog environment here on Earth as both planets' terrains are examined for similarities and differences. They are also directly involved with the daily operations of the rover, helping to decide which geologic units to investigate, which analyses should be performed and how to delicately balance driving and stopping for scientific inquiry for a rover already past its primary mission. This work proves that UM-Dearborn undergraduate students and supporting resources are capable of competing with the world's leading academic institutions, such as Caltech and MIT, for investigating planetary surfaces and environments.

### ***K-12 Outreach***

UM-Dearborn continues to make one of its most unique assets, our 300-acre Environmental Study Area, available to students, school groups, and the public. Faculty and staff at the university's Environmental Interpretive Center provide programs that promote environmental sustainability through community education and scientific research. This past year, the center provided more than 300 K-12 educational programs to nearly 12,000 students throughout the region. While many schools in the region face financial realities that limit educational field trips, the university is able to host school children free of charge and offer students educational, engaging and fun learning opportunities they might otherwise not be able to experience.

I would now like to take a moment to discuss the Performance Funding Formula. In general, UM-Dearborn supports the metrics as a good way to distribute funding increases through the appropriations process in a fair and equitable way. I would urge consistency so we may continue to develop programs to improve our performance metrics.

Finally, as I conclude my testimony and address any questions you may have, I would strongly urge the subcommittee to support the Governor's recommendation and resist any efforts to make cuts to the higher education budget. This year, UM-Dearborn has a total operating budget of \$140 million, of which \$24.8 million comes from the state, the remainder is tuition and fees. Tuition at UM-Dearborn is directly linked to the amount of funding we receive from the state. We do not have a large cash reserve, endowment or alumni with the financial capacity to fundraise at substantial levels in order to stave off sizeable cuts in state funding. Cuts to the budget will not only impact tuition, but the university's ability to continue graduating career-ready students that by and large stay in the state following graduation.

We are proud of our students, our efforts to make a college degree affordable and obtainable to students of varying means, and the partnership we have established with the state of Michigan.

I thank you for the opportunity to address the subcommittee and I welcome any questions you may have.

