

**University of Michigan Flint Testimony
Chancellor Susan Borrego
Michigan House of Representatives
Appropriations Subcommittee on Higher Education
Thursday, February 28, 2019**

Good Morning Chairman VanSingel, Vice Chairs Bollin and Anthony, members of the committee, staff, and guests. I am Dr. Susan E. Borrego, Chancellor of the University of Michigan-Flint.

I'd like to welcome and congratulate the new members, and thank those serving on this committee in support of the great work of higher education in Michigan.

As I want to be respectful of the time limits provided, today I will provide you with an overview of our university, how we've made our university accessible to all students, and address your targeted questions. Afterward, I would be happy to answer any additional questions you may have.

The University of Michigan-Flint was founded in 1956 on a commitment to bring a quality Michigan education to Flint and the surrounding area, and we have done exactly what we set out to do.

In the process, we've equipped our students with knowledge, experiences, and skills to make lasting contributions to the businesses, organizations, and communities they help shape.

We are regularly ranked by US News and World Report for being "The Best in the Midwest." We are the third most affordable among public universities in the state, with the lowest on-campus housing costs, which means a degree from UM-Flint is a great value to parents and students alike.

Those students may choose from one of 204 areas of study, including 66 graduate programs, within our 5 schools and colleges like our new School of Nursing formally established in 2016. And, with more than 20 new programs launched in the past four years, we're continually updating our areas of study to ensure our students are prepared to enter the Michigan workforce with the skills they need to succeed.

While our focus is always maintaining academic excellence, what makes the UM-Flint experience unique is our commitment to engaged learning – providing our students with hands-on experience and real-world learning to prepare them for life after graduation.

We are in the heart of downtown Flint. We encourage our students to learn through working in their future careers through fieldwork, groundbreaking research, and community service in the Flint community. This approach ensures that our students-undergraduates as well as graduate students-apply what they're learning in the classroom to solve challenges in the world beyond the classroom walls.

Whether it's our nursing students partnering with the Genesee County Department of Health to do blood draws for at-risk children affected by the Flint water crisis; our physical therapy students holding a PT clinic in a local shelter for Flint residents who have exhausted their insurance; our business students helping residents with their taxes; helping map lead pipes in the city; or our efforts in early childhood education, we believe in putting our classroom learning to work.

Our students. With over 7,500 students, we offer a 13-to-1 student-to-faculty ratio that means personalized instruction to ensure our students succeed. Over 92% of our current students are from Michigan, while more than 300 international students hail from over 40 countries.

Upon graduation, these students will add to our alumni family that now numbers over 46,000; 80% of which still reside and work right here in Michigan. That's crucial in our state's mission to retain talent within the state.

But to retain talent, we must create talent. That only happens when we make education accessible.

While we are one of the most affordable among the 15 public universities, we know that there are those who need additional assistance. During Governor Whitmer's State of the State, I was pleased to hear about her initiative regarding the Michigan Opportunity Scholarship that, in our case, would provide two years of tuition assistance for students demonstrating financial need.

With nearly 40% of our students receiving Pell grants and 89% receiving some type of financial aid, it remains our goal – much like that of the Governor – that finances should never be a barrier to obtaining a quality education.

To that end we have provided multiple ways for students to obtain some relief when it comes to financing their education. Starting in high school, UM-Flint has partnered with 25 area high schools and school districts to create innovative dual enrollment opportunities. Specifically,

UM-Flint has 9 early colleges and 25 Dual Enrollment Education Partnerships in place that offer high school students not only a chance to experience a college setting, but a chance to earn college credits. That means students can graduate earlier, saving money on tuition costs in the process.

Additionally, we have signed on as a major partner to the Flint Promise, a scholarship for students who graduate from Flint Community Schools with the anticipation that we will see them in maize and blue soon. Some preliminary numbers were released by this program last July that showed the potential of this program: out of the approximately 600 eligible students in Flint last year, over 300 –more than half–had submitted applications.

Last year, we provided over \$73 million in financial aid for our students. This year, we have dedicated an additional \$18 million. In the past few years alone, we have also created 151 new privately-funded scholarships for our students, for a total of close to 300.

However, in some cases, accessibility is not about finances, but about location. At UM-Flint, we offer more than 20 complete programs online or in mixed-mode format. Our online students, who make up almost 20% of our student body, experience the same curricula, course content, faculty-led classes, and learning outcomes as do our face-to-face students. From Flint to Alpena, from St. Clair to Traverse City, each of our students receives the same high-quality educational experience.

This year, we launched our newest online program, a Bachelors of Science in Psychology. This degree joins eight other degrees offered entirely online, such as our Substance Use Treatment and Intervention degree.

We know the risks associated with the opioid crisis. Now, UM-Flint offers Michigan's only online bachelor's degree for treatment and intervention of substance use. And with the demand for substance use and behavioral disorder counselors expected to increase 22% nationwide through 2024, faster than the average for all other occupations, we are working to ensure that Michigan will be able to meet this need.

One key to our effectiveness in offering the mixed-mode programming for our online degrees is our partnerships with Michigan's community colleges. And these partnerships go far beyond online learning.

Transfer students comprise almost half of our student body, or 43%. In fact, our percentage of new incoming transfer students is the highest out of all 15 publics. We have over 80 articulation agreements with Michigan Community colleges that allow students to apply credits earned in specific programs toward a UM-Flint Bachelor Degree. Seventeen of those agreements are specifically for Nursing, 12 are for Applied Science, and 13 target Business Administration- key hiring demographics for the state.

In other cases, accessibility is simply about providing the opportunity to attend our university. Our signature program, Promise Scholars, is our best example of providing a chance to those who are willing to put in the work to succeed.

Through this program, economically or academically disadvantaged students from across the region are provisionally admitted to UM-Flint because they have demonstrated a willingness and strong potential to obtain a 4-year degree with the proper support – support we are able to provide at UM-Flint.

This program provides a hands-on, holistic approach where students receive 360-degree wrap around services focused on academics, life balances, and physical and mental health. We are currently in the third year of our first cohort of students and the trends are encouraging. We look forward to seeing their progress at year four.

Ultimately, with accessibility comes accountability. As the Chancellor at UM-Flint, I appreciate the importance of our institution's accountability as it relates to performance.

The introduction of performance funding in Governor Snyder's administration was a way for all universities to be held accountable to four common elements: six-year graduation rate, total degree completions, institutional support, and the percentage of students receiving Pell Grants. We are sincere in our belief that to be good fiscal stewards of the dollars you provide to us, we must support students' successful completion of their degree.

While we are steadily improving our six-year graduation rate, when it comes to performance funding we believe the university is penalized in the six-year graduation metric for appealing to the new traditional student – students, for instance, who may be older, returning to school, or attending part-time due to fiscal or family challenges.

Currently, the six-year graduation metric only counts first-time, full-time student graduation rates. For a university like ours that has 43% of its student population who transferred to the University or 44% of students who are part-time students who do not count towards the funding metric,

we are losing critical dollars of performance funding even though we support these students through real-life circumstances until the time they graduate from UM-Flint.

To remedy this issue, I suggest that the model include part-time students and transfers into the 6-year cohort. If our goal is to create graduates, and we meet that criterion, then all of our graduates, regardless of status, should be counted.

Before I conclude my remarks, I want to briefly touch on the work we have done in the area of sexual assault since I last spoke to the legislature; and also mention some of our future work.

In response to the mandate from the Legislature regarding sexual assault training and reporting on campus, our university coordinated multiple trainings for campus student leaders and individuals who hold campus affiliations such as orientation leaders, resident advisors, housing desk assistants, club sports athletes and coaches, and many others on how to prevent sexual assault, properly handle the reporting of these assaults, and the provision of support mechanisms for survivors.

Additionally, the university provided all students with sexual assault informational sessions both in-person and online to ensure all were aware of the policies, procedures, resources, and support in cases of sexual assault. And most importantly, we created a campus guide and website that provides all of the on-campus and community resources available to students, faculty, and staff who are survivors of sexual assault.

Our work in this area earned us inclusion in the NASPA Culture of Respect cohort, a nationally competitive initiative run by one of the largest student affairs' professionals organization in the country.

Looking forward, we recently broke ground on our addition to the Murchie Science Building thanks to the generous appropriation approval through capital outlay in 2016. As most UM-Flint students will have a class in Murchie at some point in their academic career, and others will make it their home as STEM majors, it was imperative that we expand classroom, lab, and study space to accommodate our growth in this area. Between 2006 and 2016, we experienced a 58% increase in undergraduate STEM majors and 350% increase in graduate STEM majors.

We are also looking to further expand to the University Tower building purchased in 2016. This existing building is ready to be retrofitted into classroom space, and we are asking the legislature for its support in helping us achieve this goal through the Capital Outlay process.

And finally, this is a bittersweet moment for me as I will move on from the university to other opportunities this summer. If someone would have told me that a 15-year-old emancipated teenager from down river would grow to become the Chancellor of a major university in her home state, I can't tell you that I would have believed it.

But I am sitting in front of you as proof that educators taking an interest in and believing in your potential can motivate you to do whatever you set your mind to do. I hope my legacy is that I have brought that same spirit to this university. It has been my pleasure working with all of you in the legislature and serving the University of Michigan-Flint. Thank you, and Go Blue!