FROM THE VP

Message from Les

A recent infographic in The Atlantic posed the question “Should You Go to College?” They follow this with a statement indicating students sometimes view college as a requirement, a way to launch a career, and for some, a four-year party. That said, the main point of the piece is that college does pay off for most and should be viewed as a low-risk, straightforward investment.

As we think about this investment and the payoff, it’s important to consider what goes into it, not only from the student standpoint, but also that of the university. Much can be said about this investment and its value to society. According to a recent report by the President’s Council of Michigan, the unemployment rate for college grads in Michigan was 4.1 percent in 2012 and 10.6 percent for those with only a high school diploma. While the unemployment rates are lower, the investment the state is making has decreased and students are forced to shoulder more of the cost burden.

With these increased costs, it only makes sense that students are more discerning of their return on investment. At Michigan Tech, we take pride in ensuring student investment pays off, whether in the form of a deep-rooted appreciation for learning, a life spent searching for new knowledge, or a rewarding and successful career. You’ll find numerous examples of this investment and its return throughout this edition of the Student Affairs and Advancement Connection. From the four GLIAC championships our student athletes brought home this past year, to the story of intern Chais Eliason—serving his dream internship with NASCAR, or the millions of dollars raised to support student scholarships to the celebration of ten years of the Reading as Inquiry program, the evidence is clear. Michigan Tech students are smart; they see value in the investments we make in them, and they realize that going to college, particularly a college like Michigan Tech, does pay off.

In just a few weeks we will be welcoming more than 1,500 new Huskies and celebrating the return of those continuing. Speaking about education, noted scholar, writer, and activist Parker Palmer suggests that a tool is only as good as the hand that guides it. As we await the arrival of new and returning students, I look forward to the hand we all share in helping to guide their success.

With gratitude and best wishes for a productive fall,
In 2011, President Mroz made increasing the representation of female students on campus an explicit priority. To that end, Michigan Tech’s goal is to enroll 35 percent female students by the year 2020. To reach this goal for undergraduate enrollment, the institution needs to enroll at least 34 more female students than the previous year each year until 2020, assuming flat male enrollment.

The institution has made strides toward that goal the last few years. In 2005, the College of Engineering only enrolled 612 females, just 16 percent of their total enrollment. That number now stands well past 830, or 20 percent. In comparison, in 2011 the American Association of Engineering Education found that just 18.2 percent of undergraduate engineering students were female.

Projections indicate that new undergraduate female students will be up more than 9 percent (35 students) from last year’s incoming class, pointing to the largest number of incoming female students in Tech’s history. Twenty-eight of the 35 are underrepresented minority students.

The increase in female students can be attributed to a variety of new, targeted initiatives put forth by the undergraduate admissions office. In 2012–2013, these included:

- a female recruitment campaign highlighting the opportunities and lifestyle on campus—both academically and socially—for female students.
- 414 donor-sponsored scholarships awarded to women pursuing degrees in the College of Engineering.
- a women’s visit weekend (Woo-Hoo! Weekend) in February for admitted students. Participants stayed with current student hosts in the residence halls, met and interacted with female faculty and current students, and experienced a moonlight snowshoe hike on the Tech Trails.
- regional Sunday brunch events, allowing prospective female students to meet one another and interact with alumnae from their area.
- the third Women’s Leadership Institute in May for current high school juniors—30 students from five states participated in the on-campus program.

—John Lehman and Allison Carter

Enrollment Preview: 2013

The most academically talented, most diverse, most female represented incoming class in Michigan Tech’s history:

- Incoming undergraduate enrollment projected to increase by 120 over last year
- Incoming class with one of the highest number of female students in history
- Most diverse incoming undergraduate class in history
  - Anticipate minority enrollment up more than 18 percent from last year (more than 45 students)
  - 28 of the 45 additional students (60 percent) are female
- Incoming first-year class has the highest average ACT composite score in history
  - 26.7 ACT versus 26.3 last year
  - Risen 1.6 points since 2005
Over the last ten years, the Reading as Inquiry program has successfully introduced first-year students to college-level reading, inquiry, and discussion during orientation. Over the summer, incoming students are asked to read a selected book and be prepared to discuss it in a group setting with a faculty or staff member and student leaders. Except for the first year of the program, when students read Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, the author of the work has come to campus to give a talk to the campus community, and this year is no exception with Kristen Iversen coming to discuss her book *Full Body Burden: Growing up in the Nuclear Shadow of Rocky Flats* on August 27.

Much of the success of the program can be found in the enthusiasm of the students, parents, and facilitators. Students often identify their first year at Michigan Tech by recalling their book. Parents and families are invited to participate in a book discussion during move-in weekend, and we often hear stories of the entire family reading the book together. Many of our facilitators have been participating in the program since its inception and more recently we have had community members ask to participate in leading a book discussion with our first-year students!

In celebration of our tenth year, there will be a dessert reception and author meet-and-greet on Tuesday, August 27 at 7:00 PM in the Van Pelt and Opie Library.

—Heather Simpson
A generous donation from the family of Waino Wahtera allowed for a summer remodel on the first floor of the Administration Building bringing Financial Aid, Enrollment Services, the Dean of Students, Student Disability Services, and COMPASS together under one roof. The Wahtera Center for Student Success opens just in time to greet the entering class of 2013. The center is more than a space: the donation will enable an expansion of outreach and achievement initiatives and services dedicated to encouraging academic student success at Michigan Tech. The unit currently known as COMPASS will be redefined and serve as the staff for the Wahtera Center.

New initiatives for fall 2013 include peer academic success coaches, extended outreach for readmitted and reinstated students, academic skills workshops, and new success skills classes. These efforts are intended to support student success at Michigan Tech, regardless of where students are in their undergraduate academic careers. The efforts will continue to foster the relationships and support existing services like the learning centers and academic advising, as well as identify new opportunities for collaboration.

Academic success coaches are successful students who provide direction and support to peers who need assistance developing the skills that support success and retention like how to study, time management, using campus resources, and working with faculty. The coaches will have their own space in the center, and students can choose to schedule appointments or stop by during walk-in hours. The six coaches hired for fall represent a variety of backgrounds, majors, and life experiences.

In spring 2013, the Dean of Students Office, in conjunction with COMPASS, began piloting extended outreach for students who had been granted appeals for reinstatement or were readmitted after being academically suspended. These efforts included one-on-one outreach and referrals to resources. Over the summer this process has been refined and students will have some intervention based on their individual challenges, including: meetings with staff or academic success coaches, attendance at workshops, enrollment in a success skills class, or referrals to other areas. Participation and ongoing success of these students will be tracked.

The academic skills workshops and success skills classes provide different audiences the opportunity to develop or refine their study strategies in slightly different ways. The workshops are intended to assist experienced students in becoming deeper learners and refining the skills they already have to become more successful.
The success skills courses focus primarily on new students and all of the pieces required to make the academic and personal transition from high school to college. New this year, the course required for all first-year students on probation after the fall term will also be required for first-year students on probation for the first time returning for their second year. A course connected to a success initiative that ties financial aid, academic skills development, and learning centers together will also be piloted to a select group of new students.

If you have concerns about a student’s academic performance and would like to make a referral, please contact staff at the Wahtera Center for Student Success at 487-3558 or success@mtu.edu. Please feel free to encourage students to stop by the Center or directly contact staff for additional information.

Staff moved back into the remodeled space mid-July. Watch for information about the grand opening of the Center on September 26, 2013.

Donor-Funded Initiatives

The Generations of Discovery campaign has already funded a lot of good for our students and campus community. And through the generosity of our many kind donors, some of the initiatives we’ve been able to undertake so far include:

**Scholarships**
- $6.39 million in demand-fund scholarships
- $21.2 million in endowed-fund and planned-gift scholarships

**Programs, facilities, and other initiatives**
- A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum
- Bill Rose geoscience student travel endowment
- Chemistry Learning Center
- Classroom chalkboards
- Cuyana Range archeology
- Engineers Without Borders endowment
- Enterprise team support
- Eric Whitacre residency and concert
- Fernstrum 3D printer in the School of Technology
- Fernstrum Family adaptable classroom
- Fisher Hall research facilities or Institute of Quantum Phenomena
- Graduate School fellowships
- Great Lakes Research Center laboratory
- Hockey enrichment
- Humanities Digital Media Zone
- Ice arena renovation
- Library archives
- Lighthouse Learners
- MacArthur undergraduate fellowship
- ME-EM lobby renovation
- Men’s and women’s cross country endowment fund
- Nordic ski trails
- Paul and Susan Williams Center for Computer Systems Research
- Pavlis Institute
- Peace Corps Master’s International program
- Pep Band
- Precollege programs
- ROTC programs
- Rozsa Class Acts endowment
- SAE support
- SBE LSGI trading room for APMP
- Sherman Field turf
- Silicon Valley spring break trips
- Varsity alpine skiing
- Varsity women’s soccer
- Video scoreboard
- Wahtera Center for Student Success
- William G. Jackson Center for Teaching and Learning
- Women’s basketball

**Initiatives funded with corporate support**
- Career Center and Job Fair
- CN Endowed Fellowship in Rail Transportation Program
- Denso KRC Student Design Center
- Enterprise team support
- Mind Trekkers
- Silicon Valley spring break trips
- Student organization support
- Endowed chairs and professorships
- Dave House Professorship, Dean of Engineering
- Dennis Wiitanen Endowed Professorship in Electric Power Systems
- Franklin St. John Professor in Metallurgical and Materials Engineering
- House Professorship in Computer Engineering
- House Professorship TBD
- James and Dolores Trehewey Professorship, SBE, APMP
- John and Cathi Drake Professorship in Mechanical Engineering
- John and Joan Calder Professorship in Mechanical Engineering
- Richard and Elizabeth Henes Chair in Mechanical Engineering
- Richard and Elizabeth Henes Professorship in Mathematical Sciences
- Richard and Elizabeth Henes Professorship in ME-EM Power Systems
- Richard and Nancy Witte Professorship in Materials Science and Engineering
- Rick and Jo Berquist Assistant Professorship of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, SBE
- Robbins Chairs of Sustainability (Chemical Engineering, ME-EM, SFRES)
- Ron and Elaine Starr Professorship in ME-EM
- William and Gloria Jackson Professorship in Computer Engineering
Racing into Co-op

When Chais Elason, third-year mechanical engineering student, came to Career Services for help in his co-op search, he had a very specific request, “I want to work in NASCAR.” This wasn’t going to be easy, as most race shops hire from the University of North Carolina and other regional engineering programs in the southeast. But, after regular meetings with Career Services advisor Julie Way and numerous letters and phone calls, Chais was hired as one of only two engineering co-ops at Hendrick Motorsports, the most successful racing shop in NASCAR. Chais works in the shop housing Jimmie Johnson and Dale Earnhardt Jr.; he’s enjoyed lots of winning, but you’re more likely to find Chais doing serious engineering work behind the scenes than soaking in glory in Victory Lane. During a race in Charlotte, Julie had the opportunity to meet Chais’s supervisors and found that they absolutely love him and his crazy smart technical skills, positive attitude, and tireless work ethic. They can’t wait to hire him when he graduates and have tried to convince him to transfer to UNC to finish so he can stay close and keep working for them. But Chais is 100 percent committed to earning his ME degree from Michigan Tech, and he’ll be back this fall. Hendrick’s just going to have to wait a little longer for their Michigan Tech star.

Student Spotlight: MICUP

Student: Ryan Sarmiento
School: Delta College, Civil Engineering
Post MICUP Plan: University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) Fall 2013

What were you up to this summer at Michigan Tech?
This summer was nothing less than perfect. I had a full load from my research and fundamentals of construction engineering class. There were so many opportunities through this program, and I tried to take advantage of as many as possible. I found myself networking with professors, graduate students, and undergraduate students. They showed me the tricks of the trade as I tried to develop my character, personality, and intellectual mindset. Overall, Michigan Tech has been great and it has shown me sides to life that I never knew existed.

What is your research about?
My research objective was to study biologically inspired tissue adhesive nanocomposite hydrogel with enhanced adhesive and material properties. We designed an injectable adhesive that is practical for various wounds and incisions.

What have you discovered about yourself, the field you are exploring, and Houghton/Michigan Tech?
Over the past seven weeks, I have learned numerous things about myself, my field of interest, and the beautiful city of Houghton. I found myself put into the most diverse environment I have ever experienced in my life. In the end I found myself adapting to the diverse setting while working with others from different cultures to achieve a finished product. As a young lad, I invested time to come up to Michigan Tech for Summer Youth Programs, and I developed a great sense of what I wanted to do for a career and which engineering field most interested me. The MICUP program only reinforced my career choice through both the class and research work. Michigan Tech has been like a second home to me, and I have always felt comfortable on campus.

What did you do to wind down and relax while you were here in Houghton?
I found the weekends to be the perfect time to go on hikes, canoe trips, and just hang out with friends and unwind after a long, busy week. There were so many activities during my stay in Houghton. I enjoyed Michigan Tech’s Portage Lake Golf Course as much as possible, because it helped me relax and get my mind off of school work and my research. The beautiful scenery of the Keweenaw Peninsula occupied most of my weekends, exploring the numerous waterfalls and Tech Trails.

Student: Izabela Birsanescu
School: Wayne County Community College, Science (Bio-Chem)
Post MICUP Plan: University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) Fall 2013

What were you up to this summer at Michigan Tech?
From having a snowball fight in June and diving into Lake Superior to burning ticks off and sinking into sand bars, my experiences at Michigan Tech have been priceless! I came to Tech expecting an adventure and I have gotten more than my fair share. I have hiked, biked, rode, sled, played, and swam for the entire duration of my stay. Rain or shine, there was always something to do. How could I be bored in such a place?

What is your research about?
As an aspiring biologist, computational quantum chemistry did not look attractive. With Dr. Valenzano’s help, I was able to understand the research and the detail involved. My research employs different sciences with the hope to improve today’s water purification systems. We incorporated present work with new tactics that would create a drastically improved purification method. Not only does our research address normal filtering and purification of water, it also addresses the bactericidal effects of certain cations to help with decontamination.

What have you discovered about yourself, the field you are exploring, and Houghton/Michigan Tech?
I will never forget the experience of being thrown completely out of my comfort zone and having soared as a result. I not only enjoyed every moment of my experience at Michigan Tech, I have also changed my major and looked further into continuing research. I looked at a whole new area that affected my career decision. While becoming a physician is still at the top of my list, majoring in biochemistry is still an option. MICUP has taught me that expanding my borders and stepping out of my comfort zones is completely necessary to better understand myself.

What did you do to wind down and relax while you were here in Houghton?
There was never a dull moment. Whenever I had any spare time, I would bike around town and take pictures. I made the most friends while at the gym and at the dining hall. After a while, we began planning different activities, from swimming and grilling to camping and sight-seeing. Even when alone, I would explore the Tech Trails and exercise. I have found that the best thing to do on a rainy day is to make fun games to play as a group. We did everything from karaoke and movies to board games and cooking. I did not merely meet new people on my stay at Michigan Tech but have made lifelong friends and invaluable connections.
A Year of Husky Success

2012–13 was a banner year for Michigan Tech athletics with four varsity teams claiming Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (GLIAC) titles.

Only three years into the program, the women’s soccer team reached the pinnacle of the GLIAC with an 11–1–1 record. Tech ousted Tiffin in the first GLIAC tournament soccer game in Houghton before falling to Saginaw Valley State in a shootout in the tournament semifinals.

The football team seized just the second GLIAC title in school history with a 7–3 record. The 2012 GLIAC North Division champions claimed their only other GLIAC title in 2004 (they won seven titles as member of the Northern Intercollegiate Conference).

The men’s basketball team made it back-to-back GLIAC North Division titles in 2011–12 and 2012–13 after a 16–6 league mark last winter. The Huskies, who were 21–9 overall, advanced to the semifinals of the NCAA Midwest Regional before losing to the eventual national champions Drury.

The women’s basketball team continued its dominance in the GLIAC with a fifth North Division title in the last six years. Tech defeated Kentucky Wesleyan in the Midwest Regional—its 12th NCAA Tournament win in the last five years—before falling to eventual champion Ashland. The Huskies finished at 21–9 overall.

—Wes Frahm

Student Spotlight: 4.0 GPA Athletes

“Time management is important. I make sure I give myself time to have fun, but when it’s time to work, I work hard.”

Hoffman, who owns the school record in the heptathlon, helped the soccer team to its first conference title in 2012. She is majoring in exercise science and biological sciences and plans to attend dental school following graduation.

According to Stebner, the keys to success are “dedication and balance. Being a student and an athlete are full-time commitments on their own. Doing them together requires a lot of effort, perseverance, and time management.”

Stebner, a hockey player, maintains his 4.0 GPA in biological sciences with a minor in psychology. He is a two-time winner of the WCHA Scholar-Athlete Award. With four goals and 16 assists in 95 career games, the defenseman hopes to pursue a professional career in hockey. He ultimately plans to attend medical school back in his home province of Alberta.

—Suzanne Sanregret

“Organization and communication,” said Hoffman, an Academic All-American on the soccer team this past fall.

Melanie Hoffman and Brad Stebner are two of the nine Michigan Tech student-athletes who hold 4.0 grade point averages while participating in intercollegiate athletics. How do they do it?
The Center for Diversity and Inclusion invites the campus community to participate in several events focused on social justice and inclusion.

The Social Justice Lecture Series is intended to introduce a broad range of topics encouraging critical thinking, healthy debate, and the challenging of assumptions.

Please mark your calendar for the upcoming series (all times and locations to be announced).

October 3, 2013—Mark Bishop, from the Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR), will visit many colleges throughout Michigan to share information on the findings in “Report on LGBT Inclusion under Michigan Law with Recommendations for Action,” the result of a grant provided by the TIDES Foundation to the MDCR.

October 10, 2013—Michael Reyes is a social justice activist, poet, and hip-hop artist known for his ability to combine history, current events, and performance, into a fusion of education and entertainment. Unique and at the vanguard of spoken-word and poetry, Reyes brings to life what it means to be Latino in the United States. Hailing from the Windy City, he draws musical inspiration from fellow Chicago artists like Kanye West, Lupe Fiasco, and Common, while following and adding to the poetry traditions of Corkey Gonzales, Miguel Piñero, Nikki Giovanni, and The Last Poets.

February 14–15, 2014—Amy Freeman serves as the assistant dean in the College of Engineering at Pennsylvania State University. She is co-PI on the NSF-sponsored Toys’n MORE grant and currently manages several retention programs targeting more than 2,000 women and underrepresented technical students at all levels of the academic and career development pipeline. (Freeman will also be presenting at the Society of Women in Engineering regional conference being held on Tech’s campus.)

March 18, 2014—Sandra Fluke is a recent graduate of Georgetown University’s Law Center, and in September, 2012, Fluke took the stage as a featured speaker at the Democratic National Convention, delivering an impassioned speech about the election and what its outcome could mean for women everywhere. She continues to remind audiences across the country that basic human rights matter more than ever.

April 4, 2014—Richard Blanco holds degrees in civil engineering and creative writing and has been featured on CBS Sunday Morning, National Public Radio’s All Things Considered, Fresh Air with Terry Gross, and various conferences and venues. Richard was the fifth poet in US history given the honor to write a poem for a presidential inauguration. On January 21, 2013, he read “One Today” as an honorary participant in the official ceremony. (Richard Blanco is the featured guest for National Poetry Month, coordinated by the humanities department.)

For additional information, contact Sezi Fleming (smflemin@mtu.edu) at 487-2920.

FERPA: Releasing Non-directory Information

Non-directory information is information about a student that generally cannot be released without the student’s consent. This list includes information such as grades, GPA, credits enrolled, country of citizenship, and gender. FERPA does allow disclosure of non-directory information without consent in certain situations. These include:

• A health or safety emergency
• A request by authorized personnel from an accrediting organization or educational authority

• An institution where the student is expected to be enrolled if the disclosure relates to the student’s enrollment or transfer
• In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or received

Because of the requirements regarding the disclosure of non-directory information, all requests should go through the Registrar’s Office. Email registrar@mtu.edu if you have a FERPA question.