



To: Andrew Storer, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
CC: Bill Roberts, Vice President for Advancement
From: Dennis Livesay, Dave House Dean of Computing
Date: July 10, 2023
Re: Dave House Dean of Computing - Annual Report

Leading the College of Computing at Michigan Tech has been the highlight of my career thus far. We are doing good and impactful work with aspirations of profoundly advancing the university, region, and beyond. Since arriving, I have encouraged us to focus on: *(i.)* maintaining the momentum, *(ii.)* improving morale and coming together as a team, *(iii.)* doing a better job of telling our story, and *(iv.)* establishing a culture of bold aspirations. Moreover, everything we do is evaluated through the prisms of growing enrollment, increasing externally funded research, being more diverse and welcoming, and better engagement with industry. As I have documented elsewhere, we have made group progress on both sets of objectives. The revenue generated by the Dave House Dean of Computing endowment has been a huge part of this success.

PERSONNEL COSTS. The revenue generated from the endowment generates a significant and (mostly) stable set of funds that I can invest to keep moving us forward. Currently, the bulk of the budgeted expenses are for personnel costs, including portions of several staff positions and some of the administrative stipends for college leadership. Under ideal circumstances, both would be included in our base budget, and we are working with the university to make that happen. However, the Dave House funds allow us to move quicker and cover these costs now, giving the university more time to include them in the normal budgeting process. In particular, I have sketched a five-year budget transition plan that has been shared with the Provost regarding “rightsizing” the college’s base budget and how Dave House funds will be used during the transition.

STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS. Dave House funds are also used to pay for strategic investments that can significantly move us forward. There are too many instances of this to describe them all, but two recent examples are provided. The most recent example is a request for proposals (RFP) that I wrote with Dean Johnson from the College of Business. As we prepare for the new building – the Center for Convergence and Innovation (CCI) – the RFP was created to encourage computing and business faculty to brainstorm a broad range of potential convergence efforts to occupy the building. Specifically, the RFP seeks proposals for convergence programs that bring together faculty, research, and/or academic programs to create a handful of “Centers of Excellence” that support the convergence concept. A second example is my plan to use Dave House funds to support our upcoming Forward Together college-wide discussion of how to align our organizational structure to our mission and vision.¹ In particular, given the importance and potentially contentious nature of this discussion, Dave House funds are being used to hire a professional facilitator who has significant experience in higher ed to ensure that we get started on the right foot.

¹ This effort will be launched at our college-wide retreat in August. An early draft of the retreat pre-reading material is provided in Appendix 1.

DAVE HOUSE ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF COMPUTING. Funds are also used to support the Dave House Associate Professor of Computing, which is a title currently held by Dr. Keith Vertanen (Department of Computer Science). Funds are transferred to an index managed by Dr. Vertanen each year to support his research and professional development. Specifically, *“This professorship was created with the intent to recruit and retain the most distinguished and highly sought nationally and internationally celebrated professors and support world-class research in the educational department specified by the donor.”*

DAVE HOUSE DEAN OF COMPUTING. Finally, keeping with the donor’s intent, funds are also used to provide additional compensation and support professional development for me as the holder of the position. For example, the funds have and/or will be used for travel to professional meetings, leadership coaching, and professional development training. Upon agreement with the Provost, my additional compensation has corresponded to 10% of my institutional base salary, which is less than a fifth of the gift agreement maximum.

GOALS FOR 2023 AND BEYOND. Even with our recent successes, there is still much for us to do and the list of 2023 goals below is admittedly longer than I would like (which I have simply copied from my annual self-reflection provided to the Provost in January). While the list is long, all flow from current activities and represent a natural progression of ongoing activities.

- To maintain a sharp focus on enrollment growth
- To complete and implement our plan to grow externally funded research, including building a culture of externally funded research in our units where that did not exist previously
- To complete and submit our ABET self-studies
- To complete ongoing faculty searches, and to launch 3 new faculty searches this fall
- To expand our industry engagement and workforce capacity building efforts, which includes piloting the EV Scholars and continuing to engage with downstate partners (i.e., Michigan Central)
- To make our DEI efforts more visible and to better connect specific efforts to our strategic plan
- To explore creation of a Department of Data Science within the College of Computing
- To continue to address concerns about college vs. departmental identity and turf, meaning what is the responsibility and identity of each department relative to each other and to the college as a whole?
- To continue planning for the Center for Convergence and Innovation
- To better integrate our disparate advancement activities, specifically focused on building a robust culture of alumni giving
- To continue working with the Provost and CFO on aligning our budget to current and future growth

While not necessarily a goal for 2023, we also need to better support entrepreneurship and innovation. Many units across campus have developed such programs (i.e., the College of Business and Husky Innovate), but much of this space globally is dominated by technology and computing efforts. Given that, our lack of activity is a missed opportunity. We must do a better job of assisting our students and faculty that wish to pursue these opportunities, which will hopefully include collaborating with other units, like the College of Business. The Center for Convergence and Innovation will be an important step in that regard.