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President

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: APRIL 26, 2024

Investiture Ceremony Recap / Introduction of Our Prosperity Agenda

I want to sincerely thank everyone who attended, participated in and helped organize my presidential investiture ceremony on March 18. Held at the Detroit Institute of Arts, this was a very meaningful opportunity for me to visit with Warriors and Tartars past and present, as well as government officials, community partners, former colleagues, and friends and family, and help usher in a new chapter at Wayne State University.

During the event, I introduced our [Prosperity Agenda](#), which will guide our institution to achieve the objectives laid out in WSU's ['Our Moment in Time' Strategic Plan](#). This organizing framework bridges directly to our community and advances our progress toward achieving our strategic plan goals. It will guide us as we fulfill our shared promise to better the lives of our students, support our faculty in pushing the boundaries of knowledge and innovation further, and strengthen the bonds that interconnect Wayne State and our community. The Prosperity Agenda is anchored by three pillars:

- Accelerate Mobility for Our Students
- Empower Health for Our Urban Neighborhoods
- Fuel Innovation for Our Competitiveness

WSU's Prosperity Agenda is our shared commitment as a university community to our city, region and state — and beyond. It is a call to action for each of us to work shoulder to shoulder with unprecedented commitment and enthusiasm to create a Wayne State University that stands proudly as an engine of opportunity that drives prosperity for our community. I am excited to see the great things we will do together, guided by this agenda to reach the milestones in the strategic plan.

2024 Giving Day

Our annual Giving Day, held on Thursday, April 11, was a resounding triumph. The commitment and spirit of our Warrior community was on full display throughout the day, spanning generations, geography and roles. Together, we surpassed all expectations, raising a record-breaking **\$2 million** from **more than 2,000 donors** — nearly double our goal and last year's record — to fuel a future of prosperity for Wayne State University. These contributions for our students, faculty, research and urban programs will pave the way for transformative change over generations and progress within our community and beyond. The generosity shown by our Wayne State community only adds to my excitement and optimism about our institution's future. Together, we will continue to build upon the legacy of excellence and opportunity that defines this great university. Thank you to everyone who contributed and helped make this day so successful.



STUDENT IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

CLAS student Adaure Iwuh is WSU's first Truman Scholar

Adaure Iwuh, a student in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, was recently awarded the prestigious 2024 Truman Scholarship, making her the first recipient from Wayne State. The Truman Scholarship, established by Congress in 1975, recognizes outstanding academic excellence and leadership among students across the United States. Adaure, born in Pittsburgh and raised in Malawi, is a fourth-year public health student who aims to address maternal mortality and morbidity rates, particularly among African American women, upon graduation. Her journey from Malawi to Detroit and her commitment to public health exemplify Wayne State's dedication to fostering community leaders. With guidance from mentors and support from Wayne State's Office of Fellowships, Adaure secured internships and meaningful experiences throughout her education, culminating in this significant achievement. Her selection highlights the university's commitment to providing students with mobility through academic, personal, and professional growth.

Wayne State engineering senior embarks on career at Ford Motor Co.

Senior Ashley Jones is set to defy gender and racial norms as she pursues a career in mechanical engineering within the heavily male-dominated automotive industry. Inspired by her upbringing and fueled by her passion for cars, she has secured internships at Ford and garnered numerous scholarships, including the prestigious STEAM Sports Foundation Women of Color Scholarship. With a track record of academic excellence, mentorship by distinguished processors, hands-on career experiences and active involvement in engineering organizations, Ashley is poised to make waves and prepared to challenge stereotypes and excel in her role as a product development engineer at Ford Motor Co., following in the footsteps of her mother, who has been an engineer at the company for nearly three decades. Ashley serves as a symbol of hope and inspiration for aspiring female engineers, demonstrating that with determination and perseverance, barriers can be overcome, and mobility can be achieved.

School of Medicine celebrates successful residency placements for seniors at Match Day 2024

With a remarkable 98% match rate, the WSU School of Medicine continues to pursue empowering health within our community and beyond, even as competition intensifies nationwide. As students embark on their next phase of medical training, the diversity of specialties and geographic destinations reflects the dedication and achievement within the Class of 2024. Learn more about Match Day [here](#).

Wayne State grad students earn fellowships in support of NASA's mission

The Michigan Space Grant Consortium (MSGC) has awarded graduate fellowships to four Wayne State University students at \$5,000 each to support research and public service projects relevant to NASA's interests. **Elliot Furr** aims to recover chemical elements from waste materials, while **Alex Hoffman** focuses on enhancing the safety and efficiency of battery systems. **Benjamin D.E. Oreskovic's** work on refractory oxides aligns with NASA's interest in turbine engines, and **Jihan Abou Halloun's** research targets improving solar cell efficiency for space missions. These awards highlight Wayne State's commitment to student research, mentorship, and fueling innovation.



Political science major lands Campus Vote Project internship

Sophomore Rachel John recently secured an internship with Campus Vote Project, where she champions student voting rights. With a double major in political science and global studies, Rachel's actively engaged in campus life, serving on the Student Senate and collaborating with the Dean of Students Office to promote civic engagement. Her achievements reflect Wayne State's College to Career initiative, which provides students like her with real-world experiences essential for their professional journeys. Supported by faculty and staff mentors, Rachel exemplifies our culture of civic engagement by contributing to initiatives like the Voter Friendly Campus designation. Through her efforts, she shapes her own future while inspiring fellow students to embrace their agency in shaping tomorrow's world.

Ajmia, Marouf lead athletics individual highlights

Freshman swimmer Khalil Ben Ajmia won the 1650 free at the NCAA Division 2 Championships, becoming Wayne State men's swimming's first national champion ever in the event. **Men's fencer Eyad Marouf** was named a First Team All-American at the 2024 NCAA Fencing Championships after compiling a 17-6 record over two days at the championships, which were hosted by Ohio State.

FACULTY IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

Pilsner awarded \$3.4M NIH grant to investigate biomarkers for better reproductive success

Wayne State University was awarded a \$3.4 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to revolutionize male fertility diagnosis. Led by **Professor J. Richard Pilsner, Department of Physiology**, the innovative project aims to introduce a novel biomarker of sperm fitness by examining mitochondrial DNA levels in sperm. By focusing on mitochondrial DNA copy number and deletions, Dr. Pilsner's team hopes to provide more accurate predictions of male reproductive health and improve clinical care. This grant will support the project until January 2029, utilizing data from large-scale studies to better understand male infertility and reproductive success factors. Dr. Pilsner's work signifies a crucial step toward recognizing the male partner's contribution to reproductive success and may lead to new treatments for male infertility.

College of Engineering developing advanced manufacturing education for HS students

Led by **Professor Leela Mohana Reddy Arava**, the College of Engineering will spearhead an innovative three-year project to train students in hydrogen and fuel cell technologies, particularly targeting underrepresented minority students from high school to graduate levels. The initiative includes a six-week summer internship program for high schoolers and will use Wayne State's "Mobile Energy Lab" to reach underserved communities, aligning with our commitment to diversity and inclusion. The grant falls under the Department of Energy's (DOE) initiative on Low-Cost, High-Throughput Electrolyzer Manufacturing. It signifies a strategic investment in building a skilled workforce for energy innovation and sustainability and comes shortly after the DOE and the State of Michigan announced a substantial investment of \$75 million in incentives and grants for Nel Hydrogen's new factory in Plymouth, aiming to create more than 500 high-tech jobs and advance clean energy initiatives.



INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

Wayne State graduate programs earn top USNWR rankings

Wayne State University maintains its standing as a national leader in graduate education, with more than 50 programs listed in *U.S. News & World Report's* 2024 Best Graduate Schools rankings. Notably, our law and health sciences programs garnered high recognition among peers. The Law School's full- and part-time law programs, along with various health-related programs such as nursing, pharmacy and social work, secured notable positions on the list. This success was only possible through our exceptional faculty and their top-tier academic prowess. We were also ranked 109th among top public schools in *U.S. News and World Report's* 2024 Best Colleges rankings, reaffirming our position as an institution of excellence.

Wayne Law program recognized among nation's best

Wayne Law's master of studies in law program was ranked as one of the best nationwide by The Princeton Review. The program offers concentrations in human resources and health law, among others, and launched a comprehensive new bar exam preparation initiative to enhance student success, accessibility, and mobility in the legal profession.

MEDC expands Michigan Scholars program to include WSU

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) recently expanded its Michigander Scholars program to include Wayne State University, providing scholarships to students interested in pursuing careers in the electric vehicle, mobility or semiconductor industries. This initiative offers students financial support, internships and networking opportunities with partner employers including BorgWarner, Magna and Nissan, among others. With a focus on fostering industry partnerships and preparing students for successful careers, the Michigander Scholars program aligns with Wayne State's commitment to mobility, economic development, and its College to Career initiative, equipping students with industry-relevant skills.

TechTown Detroit marks 20th anniversary

TechTown Detroit commemorated its 20th anniversary by unveiling a special logo highlighting its inception within Wayne State and its ongoing partnership with the institution. The logo blends TechTown's blue emblem with Wayne State's "W" shield, symbolizing the deep-rooted collaboration. This milestone is a testament to our commitment to economic prosperity and innovation in Detroit. Originally established by WSU, Henry Ford Health, and General Motors to foster tech-based ventures, TechTown has since broadened its scope to bolster small businesses and tech entrepreneurs across Wayne County. Since 2000, it has served more than 6,000 businesses, created nearly 23,000 jobs, and raised more than \$408 million in startup and growth capital, prioritizing diversity and inclusivity. Collaborating closely with Wayne State's Office of Economic Development, TechTown continues to empower entrepreneurs and small businesses through various programs and initiatives, ensuring equitable economic impact and mobility across Southeast Michigan.



Hatch Detroit Top 10 Event (April 11) and Hatch Off (May 9)

Hatch Detroit began in 2011 and embodies the spirit of community-driven entrepreneurship and innovation, empowering locals to vote for the businesses they wish to see flourish. With its integration into TechTown's entrepreneurial ecosystem in 2022, the contest continues to nurture the aspirations of small-business owners, with notable successes like Next Chapter Books, which was founded by Wayne State alumni Jay and Sarah Williams. Facilitated by dedicated individuals such as Christianne Malone, the contest showcases the collaborative efforts of Wayne State University, TechTown and the broader community in fostering local entrepreneurship. TechTown Detroit recently hosted the Hatch Top 10 event, a retail competition that gives entrepreneurs the chance to win a cash grant and other benefits to open a brick-and-mortar storefront in Detroit, Hamtramck or Highland Park. On May 9, the 10 finalists will compete at the Hatch Off event, which will determine the recipient of a \$100,000 cash grant from Comerica Bank along with in-kind services from TechTown aiding in the establishment of their inaugural storefront.

Humanities Commons facilitates conversations

The **WSU Humanities Commons** continues to foster inclusive dialogue and diverse perspectives through community events, including a well-attended talk on the complexities of anti-Zionism and antisemitism led by professors **Brad Roth, Law School, Department of Political Science**, and **Howard Lupovitch, Department of History, Director for Cohn-Haddow Center for Judaic Studies**, in addition to **Professor Anne Duggan, Department of Classical and Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures**, who provided an exploration of unconventional female narratives in "Not Your Typical Disney Princess: French Amazonian Warrior Tales" for Women's History Month. Across disciplines, CLAS faculty receive local and national recognition for their exceptional contributions, from groundbreaking research to innovative teaching methods. Notably, **Professor Tiffany Abrego, Department of Psychology**, spearheads a pioneering initiative providing free mental health services for youth, aiming to both support young people as well as inspire future mental health professionals.

Darin Ellis honored for work on behalf of Wayne State's first-year students

Dr. Darin Ellis, associate provost for academic programs and associate vice president for institutional effectiveness, and professor, industrial and systems engineering, was recently honored with the Outstanding First-Year Student Advocate Award by the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition. Recognized at the center's 43rd annual conference in Seattle, Darin — who will celebrate 30 years at Wayne State this summer — was lauded for his decade-long commitment to enhancing the first-year experience at Wayne State. Through his innovative leadership, he has facilitated transformative changes, providing students with better academic resources, expanded intellectual opportunities, and improved support systems, ultimately enhancing student success and retention rates. Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Laurie Lauzon Clabo has emphasized the importance of Darin's work in fostering positive first-year experiences, highlighting its long-term benefits for students and the university community.

Celebrating the 35th anniversary of the WSU 'Study-in'

Earlier this month, we commemorated one of the remarkable moments in our university community's storied history, the Wayne State "Study-In" of 1989. Students, alumni, and faculty and staff gathered to



celebrate and recognize the 35th anniversary of this culture-changing event, a pivotal moment in our university's history – and one that continues to reverberate with its profound educational and social impact. On April 12, 1989, courageous students of color began to claim the Helen Newberry Joy Building. For the famous week and a half that followed, these leaders ignited a movement that galvanized our campus and captured the attention of the entire city of Detroit ... and beyond. The WSU Department of African American Studies was soon established. We were proud to honor the legacy of those visionary students who dared to challenge the establishment, young leaders who refused to accept injustice, and those who joined the cause from afar to demand a more inclusive, representative academic environment. The department has since emerged as a true inspiration, fostering excellence both in and out of the classroom, promoting social justice, and engaging with our community in impactful ways.

Athletic Department highlights

On March 9, Wayne State's fencing program hosted the NCAA Midwest Regional, which attracted fencers from Ohio State, Notre Dame, Northwestern, Cleveland State and Detroit Mercy to compete. Head football coach Tyrone Wheatley was selected for induction into the National Federation of State High School Associations National Hall of Fame. Currently, 518 individuals have received this prestigious honor, and Coach Wheatley is just the ninth person from Michigan to be inducted. The Department of Athletics partnered with A Kid Again Michigan. In February, more than 80 kids and family members attended a basketball doubleheader at the Wayne State Fieldhouse as part of a partnership between the Department of Athletics and A Kid Again Michigan, an organization serving Michigan families raising children living with life-threatening conditions. They provide cost-free, fun-filled destination events — called Adventures — throughout the year. The Adventures allow families to take a break from doctor visits and hospital stays and enjoy quality time together.

Salute to Detroit & the Arts

The College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts' "Salute to Detroit" was held Monday, April 15, at the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Symphony Hall. It was a great opportunity to hear the work of our University Winds Symphony, Symphony Orchestra, Jazz Big Band and Choirs. Detroit is a world-famous cultural center, and I'm proud to be part of a university that adds so much value to our city's vibrancy.

This past weekend, CFPCA celebrated the work of its dance students with its annual Spring Dance concert, titled "Echos of the Future." The shows, which took place over three days, celebrated our vision for the future and reconnected to the college's history as it celebrates 95 Years of dance. Among the highlights was an original repertory piece choreographed by Amy Miller, NYC Gibney Dance's Director of Learning and Leadership, performed by the Class of 2024. The evening also featured original works by the emerging student-run Company Six and WSU alum Leah O'Donnell, who created an original dance theatre work reflecting her prolific international career in concert and commercial dance. The event was a great celebration of the Maggie Allesee Department of Theatre and Dance's rich dance history and emerging talent, and I'm so proud of the hard work of all students and faculty.

The Art@Wayne Open House is celebrating the end-of-the-semester projects from the James Pearson Duffy Department of Art, Art History, and Design. Several individual course projects from Ceramics, Metalsmithing, Printmaking, Sculpture, Industrial Design, Graphic Design, Fashion Design, Digital Art, Core Studio, and Photography are on display, as well as the Undergraduate and Graduating Seniors



Exhibition. I invite you to take a trip over to the Art Building and Old Main all day on Friday, April 26, to see these works!