

***House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Higher Education
Saginaw Valley State University
President Donald J. Bachand
February 29, 2016***

Senator Schuitmaker, Representative McCready and members of the Higher Education Appropriations Committees; on behalf of the faculty, staff and students at Saginaw Valley State University, welcome to our campus.

First, thank you for your continued advocacy for higher education funding. Your steadfast leadership has assisted with reestablishing an investment for the approximately 9,800 students at SVSU and almost 300,000 students in the State of Michigan. Because of your continued investment in higher education, our institution has been able to remain the best value for college students in Michigan with the lowest tuition among the public universities in our state while still delivering quality academic programs.

SVSU remains vigilant to be cost-effective through various cost-saving measures. One of our points of pride is energy efficiency. SVSU remains a leader among the 15 public universities with the lowest utility costs per square foot.

As part of our overall strategy, SVSU aims to have strong community partnerships and continued collaboration with regional partners. There are many examples of these partnerships including with the Saginaw Community Foundation, Saginaw Police Department, Michigan State Police, and numerous community agencies in the Project Safe Neighborhood Grant. We recently opened a community writing center at a public library in the city of Saginaw.

Also, we are working with the Bay County Health Department in the operation of a University Clinic that provides health care to those who otherwise might not receive treatment, as well as conducting water quality testing at public beaches. We have also partnered with the Midland Area Community Foundation on a county-wide health study.

These various partnerships are examples of why SVSU received the Community Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Only seven percent of U.S. colleges and universities have achieved this designation.

SVSU also has embraced the advancement of STEM education. We know it is vital to our region and our state.

As you walked into Curtiss Hall today, you likely noticed our new mobile laboratory, a result of a generous gift and ongoing partnership with our region's leading employer, The Dow Chemical Company. It is outfitted with scientific equipment to travel to K-12 schools in Michigan's Great Lakes Bay Region and beyond to introduce students to hands-on learning opportunities, and ultimately increase interest in the STEM fields: science, technology, engineering, and math.

Our commitment to STEM education is deep, growing and connected to our community. In addition to the donation from Dow, we received a 5 million dollar gift from the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation. It provides funding to support SVSU student and faculty research, as well as outreach efforts to improve STEM learning among K-12 schools in the Great Lakes Bay Region.

A gift from the Dow Corning Foundation has resulted in a partnership to positively affect middle school and high school students' perceptions, attitudes and knowledge of STEM through the establishment of a network of STEM teachers.

These partners – and others – have chosen to work with us because of the recognized expertise of our faculty and our deep commitment to fulfilling our mission as a regional public university.

I hope you see the theme of SVSU working together with leading employers and K-12 schools to build a robust and sustainable pipeline of well-educated STEM talent. These outreach programs are still in their infancy, but already in the current academic year, there are an estimated eleven thousand (11,000) K-12 students in our Great Lakes Bay Region being taught by teachers who participated in one of our professional development experiences offered last summer.

Before closing, I do have comments about the Fiscal Year 2017 budget proposal that has been set forth by Governor Snyder. SVSU is very supportive of the proposed 4.3 percent increase in operations funding for the public universities from Governor Snyder. We also support the 4.8 percent tuition cap that has been proposed by the Governor. We further endorse a tuition restraint formula that uses either a percentage or a fixed-dollar amount for the FY17 budget, as recommended by the House of Representatives in the FY16 budget proposal. Refer to Appendix A in your packet.

Our institution is also very supportive of the current distribution formula in the FY17 proposal of 50 percent of the higher education funding tied to the FY11 budget, while the other 50 percent is funded through the performance metrics.

Finally, SVSU also supports the idea of following similar language from the community college budget, which outlines a task force of representatives from each public university, who would evaluate and make recommendations for the performance funding indicators every fiscal year. Refer to Appendix B.

In closing, again, SVSU thanks you for your continued advocacy for higher education and your continued support for increased funding from the Governor.