MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

September 11, 2026

President Guskiewicz called the meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 9:00 a.m.

Trustees present: Rebecca Bahar-Cook, Mike Balow, Dennis Denno, Renee Knake Jefferson (Zoom), Sandy Pierce, Brianna Scott, Kelly Tebay, and Rema Vassar.

University officers present: President Guskiewicz, Provost and Executive Vice President McIntyre; Senior Vice President Frace; Secretary Fletcher; Vice Presidents Beekman, Guerrant, Hintz, Priya, Rugless, and Swain. Faculty liaisons present: John Aerni-Flessner, Justin St Charles, Liz Gardner. Student liaisons present: JJ DeFeo, Kassidy Do, Maddie Hanes and Priyanka Kothari.

President Guskiewicz provided the following statement.

I'm going to call the September 11th, 2026, meeting of the Michigan State University Board of Trustees to order and ask if there is a motion to approve today's agenda.

All actions taken were by unanimous vote of the Trustees present, unless otherwise noted.

1. On a motion by Trustee Pierce, supported by Trustee Scott, the **BOARD VOTED to approve** the proposed agenda.

2. President's Report

   So, we're going to kick off. We'll start with my remarks. I want to share that I'm going to try to keep my remarks relatively short today, given that we have a full agenda and a high number of public commenters that have signed up to speak later. I also want to be sure to point out several important events that are happening on campus this afternoon, including a 9/11 tribute recognizing our first responders and those who protect us every day, as well as the Leinweber Center for Engineering Digital Innovation Center celebration, where we will recognize the many donors who have made this building possible. I'll apologize now should I need to leave early for these events prior to the conclusion of public comment, but I will take time to view the recorded meeting transcript should that need to happen. It's been a great start to the beginning of this fall semester. Amy and I enjoyed meeting students and their families as we moved them into their residential halls over a few days two weeks ago and several other campus events. Once again

Michigan State University is the number one choice for Michiganders, something we're proud of. We've enrolled students from all 50 states in this incoming class, all 83 Michigan counties and 127 countries, which is why I like to often say that we're not only Michigan's State University, but we are a leading global public research university, something that we're very proud of. The moments that Amy and I have shared with students and their families over the past few weeks remind us just how great it is to be here at Michigan State University at this time and how much we've appreciated the positive sentiments that were sent our way over the past several months, as well as for many of you that are here in the room today. With MSU's outstanding leadership team working in collaboration with our board of trustees and the institution's strong momentum that's powered by our world class faculty and dedicated staff, we are one team and I talk often about the importance of that, and I'm very optimistic about our upward trajectory. I know a lot of our alums and donors feel the same way, especially given the great success that we enjoyed since the start of our Uncommon Will Far Better World campaign. In the last fiscal year, nearly 64,000 donors contributed a record-breaking $736 million, totaling just shy of $2 billion toward our $4 billion capital campaign and 72 percent of those funds are to support our academic and research mission. We're going to celebrate some of that later today with the new Leinweber Innovation Center, Digital Innovation Center. On the research front, I'm proud to announce that we will reach our 2030 strategic goal of $1 billion in annual research expenditures this year. As I like to say, the dollar amount is nice to talk about a billion dollars, but the impact of our discovery and innovation is what makes a difference, not just for those of us here in Michigan, but across the country and in the globe. From the Facility for Rare Isotope Beams, expansion of the nation's chip testing capacity for critical next-generation semiconductor devices, to learning how insects might help us detect PFAS contamination, MSU science is making a difference. As a researcher and educator myself, I like to think of possibilities in terms of imagine if. I often will talk about imagine if. So, imagine if a school of humble origins became a global exemplar of broad land-grant access to the most impactful cutting-edge knowledge, discovery, and innovation. Imagine if that institution's dedication to the democratization of higher education served as a beacon of inclusion, as well as a home for robust scholarly debate in an era of social fragmentation and division. Imagine if educators could turn even the most shocking of events and experiences into important learning opportunities to empower students the wisdom that they can carry into an uncertain future. Doing this starts with imagining, and our university founded as an expression of faith in the progress of humankind through knowledge and understanding is doing all of this and more. We are doing this by investing in our excellence, including through some specific means that we'll discuss later today. Those include the establishment of an endowment to support our Williams Scholarships, a full ride scholarship with an experiential education component for top scholars. I loved hosting our new Williams Scholars alongside our alumni and university distinguished scholars at Cowles House just two nights ago. We'll also consider today the continued expansion and upgrading of facilities for our top-ranked school of packaging. In that vein, I look forward to joining trustees and other university

leaders, faculty, staff, and students in celebrating the construction of our Leinweber Center for Engineering Digital Innovation later this afternoon. The Leinweber Center is supported by MSU's largest private gift for an academic facility, $50 million from the Leinweber Foundation, as well as $60 million in state appropriations. It will add 265,000 square feet of research and learning space to our campus, and importantly, it will expand our capacity to train more of the engineers that Michigan needs while expanding talent options for interdisciplinary approaches for 21st century challenges. This center brings together six of our colleges here on campus to do this important interdisciplinary team-based science. Speaking of contemporary challenges, I enjoyed yesterday's Board of Trustees Stakeholder Forum and our three discussion group topics developed with the assistance of a campus survey earlier this year focused on harnessing artificial intelligence responsibly, the second topic on people, culture and organizational effectiveness and third, on creating a connected Spartan experience from enrollment to graduation. I appreciated the board's efforts to engage with university community members to explore important topics that will continue to impact MSU into the future. It was a great morning with over 60 participants across the campus landscape, and I appreciate all of you that are in the room today that participated in the event yesterday. I'd also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the Board of Trustees' approval this summer of a revised code of conduct. It reflects a commitment to continuous improvement in how we govern and lead. While no single action solves every challenge, establishing clear expectations and standards is a meaningful step in the right direction. It provides a stronger foundation for collaboration, respectful dialogue, and thoughtful stewardship as we work together to serve our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the broader community. Codes of conduct are common practices for organizations. Many of us serve on boards and are asked to sign these as well and many of our peer institutions, R1 institutions, here in the state and beyond, have similar codes of conduct. This was a prudent step forward, and I appreciate the board's commitment. Our world-class faculty sit at the heart of the university's excellence. So, I'm looking forward to our endowed faculty investiture September 29th, followed by my State of the University address. The investiture is a highlight of our academic year as we celebrate the extraordinary faculty members whose scholarship, teaching, and service strengthen our university and extend its impact around the world. The State of the University address is an opportunity for me to connect that faculty excellence to the ways Michigan State is answering the challenges of today and tomorrow. I hope that many of our colleagues and others here can join us at the Wharton Center's Pasant Theatre that day. Finally, I'd like to say a bit about today and 9/11. We often talk about the transformational impact that MSU has on our graduates and recently profiled online one alumna whose trajectory reflects the relevance of her college experience to today's world. Rina Rakipi was a first-generation American student from Dearborn whose father served as a Marine in Operation Desert Storm. Her family's background inspired her to enroll in James Madison College's International Relations major, where she pursued a specialization in international security before graduating in 2019. Today, thanks to the inspiration of our faculty, the support of college guidance staff, and her growth

through multiple internships, she's helping safeguard Americans as an operations coordinator in the threat hunting subdivision of the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. She is a Spartan making a difference, and we couldn't be prouder. This brings me to a truly sentimental event that has affected how we value our security, our world, and ourselves. Today is the 25th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Once again, we remember the lives lost and those whose lives were forever changed. I know trustees will have more to say about this event, including how Michigan State responded to it, the faculty members who lent their expertise in the aftermath, and the scholarships established for children of those who perished. As a globally engaged institution, we also recognize the profound impact on Muslim and Arab American communities and the importance of fostering understanding across differences. This is particularly critical for a university where we believe that learning and scholarship can help us confront misinformation, fear, and division. So, I was proud to join Provost McIntyre and other leaders at a fundraising launch event last month for our Arab and Arab American Education Initiative. This year also marks the 20th anniversary of MSU's Muslim Studies program. For two decades, the program has brought scholars, students, and communities together to deepen understanding of Muslim societies and cultures through teaching, research, and public engagement. This work remains especially meaningful as we reflect on the lessons of the past 25 years. All of us who vividly remember it have our own ways of commemorating September 11, 2001. As I mentioned, I'm planning to join participants from our university and local community, including first responders who protect us every day at an event later today at Ralph Young Field. As we remember, we imagine a better world built on the lessons of the past and share the optimism that by confronting our challenges with resilience and resolution, we can overcome them. Thank you. We'll now turn to the rest of today's agenda and I'll turn to Board Secretary Fletcher for public participation on items Germane to the agenda.

3. Public Participation on Items Germane to the Agenda

1. Tom Munley— Battle for Spartan Swim and Dive, Dan Bartholomae's contract

Thanks so much, Tom. President Guskiewicz, that'll conclude our public participation on items germane to the agenda. With your indulgence, I'll move straight to the consent agenda for today's meeting.

4. Consent Agenda

Secretary Fletcher provided the following statement.

Consent agenda is used to group routine items for consideration in one motion, increasing meeting efficiency and allowing more time for items that may require further discussion or attention. The following items are included on this meeting's consent agenda.

A. Approval of the minutes from June 12, 2026.

B. Personnel Actions and information reports, appointments and other personnel actions listed in Attachment A.

Budget and Finance Committee

C. Fund Functioning as an Endowment: Joseph R. and Sarah L. Williams Scholarship Fund

D. Authorization to Proceed—Packaging Building Phase 2.0

E. Authorization to Proceed—Construct New Transportation Services Building

Academic Affairs

F. Revision of the Board of Trustees Bylaws

Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee

G. Conflict of Interest (approval of contract terms)

- Michigan State University (MSU) and Fraunhofer USA, Inc. Master Services Agreement

On a motion by Trustee Denno, supported by Trustee Pierce, the **BOARD VOTED to approve** the proposed consent agenda.

THE BOARD VOTED to approve the recommendations.

5. Research Presentation

Vice President Priya introduced Dr. Zhaojian Li, a Red Cedar Distinguished Associate Professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, who gave a presentation on the Latest Innovations from MSU's Apple Picking Robot. (Appendix A)

Vice President Priya provided the following remarks.

All right. Thank you, President Guskiewicz and good morning, everyone. Actually, it's very exciting to introduce today's speaker because it combines two of my very favorite topics, agriculture and robotics, and I think you'll enjoy it very much. Today, as all of you know, researchers are applying artificial intelligence, robotics, sensing, to support various aspects of agriculture, such as improving the yield of production, trying to harvest the crops, strengthen the workforce challenges that this industry has, and I think you will see all aspects of these things in the presentation today. One of our researchers leading the work at the cutting edge of

combining engineering and agriculture is Dr. Zhaojian Li, a Red Cedar Distinguished Professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering. Dr. Li has been a member of MSU faculty for nearly a decade. His research sits at the intersection of machine learning and control theory with applications ranging from robotics and intelligent vehicles to other complex engineering systems. Throughout his career, Dr. Li has combined academic excellence with real-world experience, including roles in industry at Ford and General Motors. His work has attracted more than $10 million in research support from NSF, Department of Agriculture, US Army, ONR, and other leading industry partners. His honors include MSU Innovation of the Year Award and 2021 NSF Career Award, which is a very prestigious honor, and a few weeks ago, I had the chance to spend time in his lab with this very brilliant student, Kyle Leonard here, who after graduating with a Ph.D. is now leading an entrepreneurial role, a company called Agri-Dynamics, which they co-founded together, and this company is doing very well, and you will see some aspects of that company. So, before I invite Dr. Li, I think we should give a round of applause to Kyle for all the work he has done. And with that, I'll invite Dr. Li to come down here and talk about his research.

Trustee Scott provided the following comments after the presentation.

You're putting me to shame, Dr. Li, because yesterday in our stakeholder forum, one of our topics was around AI, and I talked about the fact that I feel safe as a trial attorney. I don't think my job will ever be replaced by robots, but I also brought up agriculture and I specifically brought up farming and those that do the picking and all of this, and now you come up with this technology that basically is like, Brianna, you were wrong. So, I'm just wondering, as I think of this, we're likely moving into this age. So, I love this technology, but I'm wondering what you are doing to deal with the different densities, the different weather patterns, things of that nature. It sounded like you said that even with the picking, you can determine if the crop is ready to be picked versus if it's not. So are you doing more research around that so that there isn't the, I guess, the loss of product because it's picking the wrong things or because of weather patterns, it's not recognizing certain things. I'm wondering if you could speak to that as far as technology. Because you have an 85 percent success rate is what you were saying, correct?

Dr. Zhaojian Li provided the following response.

Yeah.

Trustee Scott provided the following comments.

So, could you speak to that?

Dr. Zhaojian Li provided the following response.

Yeah, thank you very much for the question. Yes. So, in our system this year, we're going to have what we call selective harvesting. So, we're going to look at the fruits across the workspace, we're going to see estimated size and maturity of the fruits. So, it's likely we're going to do multiple runs. So, the first pick, and then we'll come back to the second pick. This is exactly what the growers are doing right now. So even for human pickers, they do multiple passes. I want to mention that the growers' expectation is not that the robot can pick 100 percent of fruits. So, the expectation is that as long as we can pick 70 percent, even like 60 percent, then they can have a small crew to pick the rest. That will help them greatly. Because right now, it [harvesting] heavily relies on seasonal workforce, which is really costly and hard to manage. So, thinking about that before the harvest season, they have to plan accordingly ahead of time. As you mentioned, the erratic weather patterns happen. So, they plan to have the crew arrive at a certain date but if there's some erratic weather, they may come too early, which will increase the cost. If they arrive too late, then there's not enough time to harvest. So, there's a lot of headaches to manage that seasonal labor workforce. So, the ideal case that the robot can pick the majority of fruits and then they have a fixed crew, they manage, that can pick the rest. So that's their kind of ideal scenario to work with the robots. Yeah.

Trustee Scott provided the following comments.

Thank you.

Dr. Zhaojian Li provided the following response.

Thank you.

Trustee Bahar-Cook provided the following comments.

The first one is when the robot is pulling the apples off of the tree, is it a sucking or is it a grabbing? Like what is it doing?

Dr. Zhaojian Li provided the following response.

Yeah, good question. Yeah, I haven't got time to go through all the details, but how it works is that we use a 3D perception to localize the fruits and then we do planning to select which to pick first and then when we select the fruit to go first, then we have a vacuum and a soft grabber. So, we approach the fruit and because of the suction force, it will hold the fruit. Then we do rotation and then retract to pick the fruits. So that's why we can pick the fruits gently to mitigate the bruising, possible bruising.

Trustee Bahar-Cook the following comments.

And then I was listening to the radio recently and they were talking about some of the robotic services that you can find in Asian countries. Very specifically, somebody went to get a hot dog from a robot. The robot dropped the hot dog, didn't realize it, and then was expecting payment. So, do these robots, are they aware if they drop the fruit or, you know what I mean? Like if the sucking stops sucking, the vacuum stops?

Dr. Zhaojian Li provided the following response.

Yeah. Yes, yes. So how it works right now is we pick the fruits, and then we have a dropping spot for the fruit, but we also have sensors. We know that whether it's a miss or it's a pick, because we have, it's a vacuum pressure sensor. So, after we reach the fruit, and then we'll take the measure at the pressure of the vacuum chamber. So, if the pressure dropped significantly, we know that, okay, we got the fruit. And if it's a miss, we will give a second try. And then that's all. We're not going to continue focusing on one apple, but we're going to give it a second time. But if not, we're going to move on to the next apple. Because some of the apples are really kind of hard to pick, and it's better to leave for the human picker to pick. Yeah.

Trustee Bahar-Cook provided the following comments.

Do you think that this technology will eventually change how farms look? And what I mean by that is, you know, the robot's ability to go down the orchard probably depends on what the weather has done recently. And there's, you know, if there's a big windstorm and there are all of a sudden branches, that kind of thing. So, do you expect that travel pattern for these robots to change the way farms look?

Dr. Zhaojian Li provided the following response.

Yes. I haven't got a chance to talk about the longer vision of our research and as well as the commercialization efforts, but we plan to have a unified, integrated platform. Right now, this platform is just for harvesting, but harvesting season is only like 3 months to 100 days. We want this platform to be able to be used across the year for growers. For example, we want to develop technology to do pruning. We want to utilize the same hardware perception algorithms. So, all we need to change is the factor to a season, and we develop algorithm that we can do pruning, and we can do weeding, we can do precision spraying. So, we want to utilize this platform as much of it as we can. And then also later, the growers said that after picking the fruit, how about you also do the logistics, just to send the fruits to a storage room for us. So yeah, we expect that, we envision the future orchards will be less people, but the people working on the orchards are doing not this kind of harsh labor to pick the fruits, but they manage the machines. For example, if we have two crews that manage 10 machines, harvesting, pruning, and do weeding, etc. So that's kind of the future of farm we are envisioning.

Trustee Bahar-Cook provided the following comments.

Okay, and then real quick, because I know we're trying to get through the agenda, what was the hardest piece to solve? Was it a software problem or a hardware problem?

Dr. Zhaojian Li provided the following response.

Great question again. So yeah, this is a system and we have so many modules, right? We have the 3D perception we talk about. That's the starting point. We have to have accurate apple locations, the tree structure, and so that we can have that as an initial start point to start. Then we need to have great mechanisms to pick fruits. We try so many things, grippers. We have the hands. We try so many things, but it turns out that this vacuum-based approach is most efficient, cost-effective, and also, it's fast and also, the planning algorithm, control algorithm, and also the decision making under uncertainties. So, it's a system and all the modules have to work together, and they have to be compatible with each other. So, there are a lot of challenges we have overcome over the years, and we are confident that with a bit more work, we'll be able to make this a reality, and the growers can use that. Yeah. Thanks.

Trustee Tebay provided the following comments.

I'm curious what sort of, I know you had said like the apple crops are still like majority picked by hand. Is that what sort of motivated you to choose apples as like what you wanted to build a robot for?

Dr. Zhaojian Li provided the following response.

Yeah, good question. So, when I joined MSU in 2017, my background is controls AI and at that time, we start to see a renaissance in robotics research. So, I said I'm going to do some robotics research, but I was wondering what kind of robotics I should work on? But MSU is big for agriculture, right? So, I said I'm going to combine the strength of MSU's agriculture research with my robotics research. So, then I said I'm going to do agricultural robots. But within agriculture, it's huge, and I did some research to talk to different subfield in the agricultural space. I found this apple picking robot has huge impact. At the same time, it's interesting in terms of research. It's fundamentally challenging. Because sometimes people will think, ok, picking apples is really easy. So, one time, I talked to someone, they said that, yeah, this can be just undergraduate project. So, it's a really hard problem to be able to pick one apple versus that you can pick the apples reliably, cost effectively, and make this economically viable is a completely different story. So that's where we started and over the years, we talked to so many growers and make us more and more motivated because the sector is indeed in the huge crisis, predominantly because of the labor crisis.

Trustee Tebay provided the following comments.

One other question. I don't, this is my ignorance about apple harvesting, but like, does the, would the robot be able to recognize if like an apple wasn't ready to be picked?

Dr. Zhaojian Li provided the following response.

Yes, so we did some prelim study for certain varieties. So, for example, we did like Fiji. Fiji is the kind of high value honey crisp, those kinds of fruits and they also change color. For some green apples we haven't tried, but we already developed algorithms for some of the high value crops. Yeah, we were going to continue to expand the research and one thing I also want to mention is that after apples, this technology can be easily extended to other tree fruits, such as pears, peaches, avocados, etc.

President Guskiewicz provided the following comments.

Dr. Li, this is fascinating, and what I love about it is its sort of bridging our expertise in agriculture research and mechanical engineering, it's sort of interdisciplinary research, how do you take this from the R&D stage that you're kind of in and scaling it such that we can have hundreds or thousands of these out across farms across the nation?

Dr. Zhaojian Li provided the following response.

Yeah, so Keyi and I co-founded Agri-Dynamics Robotics with a goal that we can accelerate the process because doing research versus developing a commercial product is quite different. So we are in the process that we're pushing the new machine. It's very close to a commercial product this year and we're going to deploy and then we see where we are at. Our expectation is that this version will already be very close to meet the expectations from the growers performance-wise and cost-wise. We intentionally make the system really simple and effective, as well as cost effective. So, we hope that this version, we can already get contracts from growers. So, we plan to have two business modes. One is direct sales; the other is a robot as a service. So, we talked to different sizes of growers. For larger size growers, they prefer to purchase and manage themselves because they already have an engineering team to manage. But for middle size growers, they prefer us to send the robots to harvest for them and then take care of the harvesting. Yeah, we hope that this year we can basically push it through and then we hope that we're going to receive continuous VC funding and then we can scale. So, our goal is to make 10 machines next year. Five of them may be direct sales and five of them will deploy as a robot as a service.

President Guskiewicz provided the following comments.

Well, thank you. Great job.

6. Committee on Budget and Finance

Trustee Pierce presented the Trustee Budget and Finance Committee Report and the following recommendations and resolutions noting that items 1,2,3 have been approved as part of the Consent Agenda.

Trustee Pierce provided the following report.

Okay, well, in the consent agenda, our committee, secretary Stefan went through items number one, two, and three which were moved for approval in the consent agenda. So, we don't need to go through those, but I will say that the committee also received updates on the capital planning process, which is quite extensive and our 2027 capital budget, the state of Michigan's capital plan, and the RHS reserve framework. We also reviewed the liquidity pools report and the 2026 first quarter investment performance report. I just want to also please call out that on the committee with me as the chair is Trustee Scott, Trustee Tebay, and Trustee Vassar, but because this area of the organization under Lisa Frace, our CFO is so large, almost a $4 billion budget, nearly every trustee, I want you to know, attends every session of the Budget and Finance committee because it's so important. So, I want to thank all of you for that. That concludes my report.

Trustee Balow provided the following comments.

Oh, I'm sorry. I thought we were going to say just a word about the two projects with the authorization to proceed, the packaging building and the transportation services.

Stefan Fletcher provided the following comments.

No, Mike, those were the...sorry Trustee Balow, those were part of the consent agenda earlier on.

Trustee Balow provided the following comments.

My apologies, because I was just, you can decide. I just thought it would be appropriate so people would know, like, the purpose of the building, kind of the total cost, where the money's coming from. I think that's something interesting, but are we past that?

Stefan Fletcher provided the following comments.

We are past that. I mean, some of that is also available. I'll redirect people to the publicly available materials to look at as well. So, thank you.

7. Committee on Academic Affairs

Vice Chairperson Knake Jefferson presented the Trustee Academic Affairs Committee Report and the following recommendation, noting that item 1 was approved as part of the Consent Agenda.

Trustee Renee Knake Jefferson provided the following report.

Yes, good morning. My report will be short and sweet. The committee discussed the Board of Trustees governance protocols when we met, and then we also received several updates from the provost, including the preliminary enrollment report, updates on MSU medicine, unionization, and the John A. Hannah Distinguished Professorships. This concludes my report.

8. Committee on Audit, Risk and Compliance

Chairperson Scott provided the following report noting that item 1 was approved as part of the Consent Agenda.

Trustee Scott provided the following report.

Thank you, President Guskiewicz. The Audit Risk and Compliance Committee had a consent agenda item number one, which was moved for approval via the consent agenda. The committee discussed several items, including the institutional assessment, the annual internal audit plan, and the Office of Audit Risk and Compliance overview, the Title IX case certifications process, and NCAA compliance. I would also like to thank all of the board members also, I believe, have attended the last several of the ARC committee meetings, which I also think Trustee Pierce is a very important committee on this board. So, I thank them as well for their engagement and that concludes my report. Thank you.

9. Committee on Student Life and Culture

Trustee Denno presented the following report.

Thank you. Student Life Culture Safety Committee received a presentation from Vice President for Student Affairs, Jim Hintz, on Spartan Forward, the new strategic framework for the Division of Student Affairs. The presentation highlighted the work underway to build a stronger and more connected Division of Student Affairs and establish a shared direction for supporting the Spartan experience. Spartan Forward centers that work around four commitments: belong, engage, thrive and lead, focused on community connection, involvement, engagement, holistic well-being, purpose and impact. The framework also connects the work of student affairs to the priorities of MSU 2030 and to the evolving needs and expectations of today's students. That part of the Student Life, Culture and Safety Committee was live-streamed and open to the public and on

behalf of the entire board. I'd like to thank Lizzy King and Jim Hintz and their entire team for being thoughtful and caring in their engagement with students. In addition, the committee met separately with a group of awesome students to hear directly about their experiences and perspectives at Michigan State. These conversations continue to provide the committee and the entire MSU board with an important opportunity to hear directly from students about their experience. This concludes my report.

Trustee Vassar provided the following remarks.

Point of clarification. Thank you for live streaming this meeting. I think that's the first time that's ever happened on this board. I'm wondering how people know to go to that live stream. How do folks know to access it? How do they know that the link exists? How is it marketed? I'm just curious.

Secretary Fletcher made the following comment.

Yeah. So, I think we have put the dates up on the board website. The link is the same link that we use for the live stream for other sessions at the board. So, it's the same live stream link you would use for tuning into these meetings, for instance. So upcoming dates are available on the board website.

10. Liaisons Report, Chairperson's Report, Trustees' Comments
Trustee Scott provided the following remarks.

We will now hear from the student liaisons their reports and we will start with our at-large then go to ASMSU, RHA, and then COGS.

JJ DeFeo, At-large Student Representative, provided the following report.

Thank you, Trustee Scott. For those who don't know me in the room, hello, my name is JJ DeFeo, I am the at-large student liaison to the Board of Trustees for the 26-27 school year. You know the folks up here have heard what I'm working on several times now, but for those who haven't, I'll keep it brief. So, I want to, you know, the early things I want to work on this year are opening up more spaces in living learning communities and on campus overall 24/7. More social spaces help students. That's extremely clear from the research and I'm very thankful for everyone's help on that. We're making great progress already. Doing everything I can to ensure that academics never get in the way of students' highest duty, which is their civic duty to vote. Improving transportation on campus and around campus, including safe bike infrastructure, improving our public transportation, and working on safer road design near and around campus, improving the student housing experience, including existing on-campus housing experience, potential future university housing, and fostering and furthering MSU's relationship and cooperation with East Lansing City and other off-campus housing authorities and partners to build more housing within walking range of campus and ensuring that

it's affordable. I have lots of other things that I wanna work on throughout the year, but for the sake of brevity, those are my early priorities. Thank you to the university's leadership and the board for being so receptive and working so closely with me to already be making progress on these important priorities. I yield.

Maddie Hanes, ASMSU President, provided the following report.

My name is Maddie Hanes, if you haven't already met me. I'm the ASMSU and student body president, student liaison to the Board of Trustees. I'm very excited to get started this year. I just wanna start with a few quick updates on internally for ASMSU, which is Michigan State's undergraduate student government. We have over half of our general assembly seats, which it's our legislative body filled. We have fall elections coming up at the end of September with hopes of a full assembly by mid-year. This year, we're taking a big focus on academic governance seats and putting students in rooms with productive conversations. Our focus generally is just putting students in rooms for productive conversations and not having an adversarial nature when we don't need to be. Moving forward from that, we also are continuing our collaboration with the Association of Big Ten Students. The focus of that group is on affordability because across all the conference, we're seeing a raise in tuition and living costs. This is not only a burden on students, but an attack on higher education, as affordability isn't simply about money, it's about access. The United Michigan Student Government's focus is on affordability and in-state retention of industry professionals and postgraduate spaces. As public institutions in the state of Michigan, our purpose is in furthering the future of Michigan economy and industry. The United Michigan Student Government Coalition truly believes that. So, we're gonna be working with legislators across the state to try to further both support of higher education and support of in-state retention. We at ASMSU continue to ask for communication and collaboration and transparency from the Board of Trustees admin leadership all across the board. The Board of Trustees stakeholder forum yesterday was a good first step, but I hope only the first step in re-engaging with the MSU community and students to build trust and belief in our leadership. We are looking forward to the productive year ahead with a full staff and a fantastic executive team. I have high hopes of the great year ahead and I yield my time. Thank you.

Kassidy Do, RHA Representative, provided the following report.

Hello everyone. My name is Kassidy Do. I am the 57th session president. In RHA's pursuit to better maintain and benefit the on-campus living experience, we reaffirm student sentiments about the MSU holding itself accountable to its 2030 sustainability goal, and in doing so, encourage the board to continue to listen to RHS administration and make adjustments to the university based on professional recommendations. RHA's goals for this year are to maintain our momentum. This year has seen the emergence of previously seen inactive hall governments and neighborhood organizations. We want to increase our engagement to on-campus undergraduates, making it easier for them to get involved in student leadership,

making it easier for them to navigate campus, then making it easier for our campus partners to reach out to them as well. Thank you, and I yield my time.

Priyanka Kothari, Council of Graduate Students President, provided the following report.

Good morning, everyone. My name is Priyanka Kothari, president of Council of Graduate Students, and it is really good to be back on campus. As I look around, I'm encouraged by the energy I see from our graduate and professional students. COGS had a wonderful summer, and we are coming into this academic year with a strong sense of momentum. A fall welcome celebration brought together 500 graduate and professional students. It was especially great to see President Guskiewicz and his wife there and handing out COGS gifts to students. Our first full council meeting was this Wednesday, and we saw that same energy. It was one of our highest attended meetings in a very long time. We had to bring in additional tables and chairs, and that is such a good problem to have. We want to keep that momentum going, and for that, COGS is looking forward to appointing a director of media on an ad hoc basis for this semester to see how we can creatively think about strengthening our communications with the broader graduate student community. We're also looking ahead to an important piece of policy work, the revision of graduate student rights and responsibilities at MSU that I believe will be coming to the board later in spring. COGS advocacy in partnership with the grad school was instrumental in the birth of his document in 1971 and we have collaborated closely with the grad school for four revisions since then, the last time being in 2014. That is a long time ago. We are continuing that tradition as we rework the graduate students' rights and responsibilities, or GSRR. This is particularly significant because the GSRR will guide the graduate student experience not just right now, but probably for the next decade or so. So, we want to create something that reflects the realities of today and as well as forward-looking but also being formally rooted in our values and the fundamental role of graduate students in our university. I also want to speak to the concerns our students are facing. COGS represents a diverse body of 10,500 graduate students, and many of whom, including myself, are international students who are navigating significant changes to immigration policy, specifically the ending of duration of status and the changing CPT/OPT guidelines. This is particularly concerning for graduate students and doctoral students because most Ph.D. student programs are designed around five years of study, and this pushes us in a very precarious situation. These policies, the impact of them, are already becoming visible to us. Our fall welcome celebration has historically brought together 500, sorry, 700 attendees, and this year we only had 500. I mean, don't get me wrong, 500 is a great turnout, and we are very proud of it, but the decline is something we cannot ignore when we consider the broader environment, uncertainty in higher education, graduate admission moratoriums, and budget cuts. Students are questioning what the future of graduate education looks like here at MSU. We understand that not everything is in our control, but much is, and we only ask for what we can do and to do this by. Yesterday's stakeholder engagement forum was one encouraging

example of that. I want to recognize the board and administration for responding to the feedback and for expanding the conversation to include many more students than last year. That kind of engagement is important, and we welcome it. But there is much work yet to be done. As an institution, we experienced a summer of uncertainty within the MSU administration that has led to an erosion of trust in the community. As we return back, it is important that the board regains that trust. We need to acknowledge and address the elephant in the room. To the board's credit, the student and faculty liaisons did engage in authentic and open conversations about these issues, and I appreciate the willingness to engage with us honestly about it, but it cannot stop there. It is equally important for the broader campus community to get some answers to where we stand and how we will make progress on our collective goals. We are looking at our leaders, and we ask these difficult questions because we deeply care about the institution. No matter what, every moment is an opportunity. From where we stand, we have an opportunity to strengthen graduate education, to rebuild trust, and to make sure that the policies and decisions we make today serve students not only for now, but for the decade ahead. It's a great job, but the one that we are all prepared for. Before I conclude my remarks, as we meet on September 11, I also want to take a moment to remember the lives that were lost that day and to thank our first responders. It is ultimately a reminder that people and communities are the ones that add the things that matter most. In moments of uncertainty, how we come together, how we care for each other, and how we build trust matters. Thank you very much.

Trustee Scott made the following remarks.

Thank you. And thank you to each of you. I just want to say, number one, welcome to those of you that are new. We look forward to working with you this year. We also want to thank those that have decided to return. We really appreciate the engagement that you all provided, the advocacy on behalf of the students and it's so inspiring, I believe, not just to myself, but other trustees to hear from you all the ideas that you have. You represent very well your constituents here at the university and I know there are not a lot of students in the room, but I want to acknowledge that for those that may hear this later, that your advocacy is well received. We want to continue those conversations, and again, we look forward to working with you throughout the year. Thank you. We'll move on to our faculty liaison report.

John Aerni-Flessner, faculty liaison, provided the following report.

Thank you, Chair Scott. I'm John Aerni-Flessner, a historian in the College of Arts and Letters and the current Faculty Senate Chair. It's good to be back in this room as it signals the start of another academic year. As wonderful as the peace and contemplative silence of a university campus in the summer is, the return of students and the return of life to town with the start of fall semester is the lifeblood of the university. Students are the reason we are all here. The energy and youthful optimism, the eagerness to learn about the world are rejuvenating and

regenerative for all of us. So it is that we welcome all the new students, faculty and staff to campus here in 2026. Faculty Senate and University Council start to meet this coming week and in the following weeks, and we will welcome a new generation of senators as we carry on the tradition of robust shared governance here at MSU. While there is optimism around the return of faculty and students to the classroom, I do want to note from a faculty perspective that there is a lot of worry, trepidation even, on campus at the start of this year. This stems from a confluence of national and international factors, conditions here in Michigan, and local campus events. Federal attacks on higher education continue, which contribute to the sense of unease on campus. It is with pride that we note that the MSU administration is on the forefront of protecting academic freedom and the rights of students who want to study at MSU to do so no matter where they come from in the world. We thank the administration for signing on to lawsuits challenging the new visa regulations that would limit the amount of time our international students could have on campus to complete their degrees. Limits that in many cases would not allow our international students to fully complete their degree programs here in East Lansing or in Grand Rapids or on our other campuses. This is not the only federal headwind, as our research grants and the criteria through which they are awarded by federal agencies have been profoundly and often illegally altered in the past few years. We therefore also stand in solidarity with the board, the president, and the provost in calling for the return of a federal grant system driven by the criteria of merit and peer review rather than being dictated by the whims of short-term political objectives. Our research and the knowledge, health, and well-being of the general populace benefit when politics stay out of the granting system. The peer review process to determine which research should get funding has helped make American higher education the envy of the world. The system rests on this foundation, and we stand in solidarity with the board and administration of MSU in supporting the return of merit-based peer review to all federal research funding. At the state level, we appreciate efforts made this past legislative year to increase funding for higher education, but we also note that the state of Michigan continues to lag behind many of our peer states in terms of funding public institutions. Like the student leaders in this room, Faculty Senate leadership regularly liaises with our Big Ten Academic Alliance peers as well to share common challenges and unite around our common interest in pushing forth the academic missions of our institution and of higher education as a sector. The Senate leadership at MSU has also worked hand in hand with our colleagues in Ann Arbor to initiate an organization of Faculty Senate leadership from all 11 of Michigan's public four-year higher education institutions. This organization aims to highlight common challenges across the higher education sector in the state and to provide a platform to strengthen faculty voice in the legislative process in Lansing. We look forward to working with our peers this year to build out and strengthen this network to better advocate for the higher educational needs of all Michiganders or Michiganians, whatever your persuasion. Finally, we need to address the whiplash of announcements around MSU's top leadership this summer. Like many members of the MSU community, faculty were buffeted by announcements in May and then in early July about the future of MSU's most

senior leadership. With the recent history of turmoil in MSU's presidential office, faculty were fearing the worst. Like most members of the public, MSU's faculty were left in limbo for five weeks, wondering about the strategic direction of the institution and what institutional leadership might look like in this academic year. When this was eventually resolved, the faculty members of the steering committee called a confidence vote to better understand how faculty felt about MSU's leadership, the president and the board of trustees. It was an exercise designed to provide feedback to those in power. It was also designed to allow faculty a voice. No one was quite sure how faculty felt about leadership. The decision to call into session the Academic Congress allowed us to poll the 4,103 faculty of MSU in an egalitarian fashion. One person, one vote per person, no distinction for status or employment category. A barometer of trust and confidence in leadership, as I noted in a State News op-ed at the time. The exercise brought some clarity about how faculty felt and should be read as a sign of how engaged faculty and others are on campus. People want to be heard, and they want to have voice in processes that impact their working lives. They want to see shared governance not just as a principle, but as a north star guiding institutional thinking. The process generated a lot of discussion, most of which was conducted in a profoundly civil way, in a democratic way, in the press, through personal correspondence. While there were a few discordant voices who levied ad hominem attacks, the vast majority of faculty model democracy and good practice by disagreeing in civil ways, a give and take of ideas without the requirement that we all end up in agreement. It is our hope as Faculty Senate leadership that the best practices of civility, discourse, and democracy shared governance continue in this academic year across the institution. Thus, as this year starts, the faculty of MSU look to keep their eyes ever on the mission, the words of which were approved by our board of trustees on April 18, 2008. We are, and I quote, an inclusive academic community known for our traditionally strong academic disciplines and professional programs, as well as our liberal arts foundation. We quote, Connect the sciences, humanities, and professions in practical, sustainable, and innovative ways to address society's rapidly changing needs. These are the words that sustain us through the long days in the classroom, in the labs, writing grant proposals, building community partnerships that slowly over time change lives in this state and in the wider world. We play the long game here in the university system, confident that our efforts will change the world for the better through innovation, through sending new graduates out into the world to shape communities large and small, and by the belief that working for the common good can and will improve lives in the present and future. The faculty are here to continue working for MSU as we have been every year since 1855. Let's have a world changing year. Go green.

Trustee Bahar-Cook provided the following report.

Good morning, everybody. Just a couple of weeks ago, I had the chance to tour our state-of-the-art golf facilities and wow, I was impressed. I started golfing during COVID and I am not a good golfer, but I could imagine what it would be like if I was, to have this really unique facility on campus. A big thank you to Coach Lubahn

for conducting the tour, gracious enough to offer me golf lessons that I'm not going to take him up on, and Casey also made sure that all of the trustees got some swag. So that'll be coming, look for it. It's pretty cool. Thank you for that. For those that don't know, MSU Forest Akers golf courses offer two 18-hole layouts, an east and a west course, a practice facility and two pro shops. I'm in a ladies league that plays on Wednesdays in the summer and it's a fantastic course to get to. The courses have earned national recognition, including repeated golf week and golf pass honors for the West and East courses, as well as recognition for the Golf Center as one of the nation's top public practice ranges. MSU also has the Lasch Family Golf Center, which is home to our men's and women's golf teams. The center includes an indoor practice area, student athlete lounge, men and women's locker room, coaches' office, video room, weight rooms, and other amenities. It's a really nice area for the men and women's team to sort of congregate together and build some of those relationships that we all know help make MSU a special place for so many of us. Together, our men and women's golf teams have captured 18 Big Ten championships dating back to the 1970's. These outstanding courses and facilities have played an important role in that success along with the incredible coaches who have led our programs over the years. Let's keep those championship wins coming, Spartans. I'd like to thank you, President Guskiewicz, for speaking and attending the Lansing Rotary Club's August 28th meeting. I share in your excitement about a brand-new academic year and our entering class. You spoke on a number of different topics, everything from our continued investment in new facilities on campus like the Student Rec and Wellness Center, the Leinweber Center for Engineering and Digital Innovation, to how we're preparing our students for the jobs of tomorrow and the role of artificial intelligence and the Green and White Council and the way the Green and White Council plays in that endeavor. I'm excited for what the year ahead will bring and continue to look forward to working with you, the administration, our faculty, and especially our wonderful students. I do also want to say publicly it is very fantastic to see you still at the head of this table. So, I'm very grateful for that. I also want to thank our faculty and student liaisons for the lunch we had on September 8th. I thought that was a really great opportunity for us to hear from you in a less formal setting and I welcome those opportunities. So, appreciate the fact that you all made time for that, especially so early in the year when I know it's probably still a little crazy. That's all I have to say. Thank you.

Trustee Tebay provided the following report.

Hello, everyone. I want to echo Trustee or Chair Scott's comments and also Rebecca's and express my gratitude to the students and appreciation for all of that you do. I say this a lot, but I truly find it incredible the amount of time that you put into your outside classroom activities and what it means to your colleagues. And I want to acknowledge, like, I know the student body is appreciative, but I don't think they quite understand how hard you all work on behalf of them. I honestly don't know how you do it. So, thank you for the time that you put in, it matters and people notice that it's really important what you do. So, I just wanted to acknowledge you

all and I'm looking forward to working with you this year. Also, some exciting news to start off with. The US News and World Report has released its 2026-27 Best Global University rankings, which places MSU in the top 6 percent of institutions worldwide. This rank is 127 out of 2,250 institutions, spanning 105 countries, and it's a jump from six places from last year's ranking. Among the 289 colleges and universities ranked in the United States, MSU is number 46, and it's consistently ranked in the top 50 among institutions through this ranking's 12-year existence. MSU's education and educational research subject ranking continues to excel, earning a number 11 ranking globally and number one in the U.S. MSU also ranks number 16 in plant and animal sciences globally and number five in the U.S. I also want to send a huge congratulations to Dr. Mona Hanna, Associate Dean of Public Health in MSU's College of Human Medicine. She recently received the key to the city of Flint, one of the highest civic honors recognizing extraordinary leadership and lasting community impact. Dr. Mona earns national recognition for exposing the Flint water crisis, helping uncover elevated blood levels in the children and driving lasting improvements in environmental health policy and infrastructure. Through her leadership in the Flint Registry and Rx Kids, Dr. Mona has transformed the health and well-being of thousands of children and families in Flint and across Michigan. The latest recognition adds to an extraordinary list of honors, including being named one of Time's 100 most influential people in the world and one of USA Today's Women of the Century. I also want to go back to a comment that President Guskiewicz made in his comments about 9/11 and the creation of the Muslim studies program here at MSU. 9/11 as a small-town girl from the thumb of Michigan had a profound impact on me as a 13-year-old watching this play out. And it actually was what motivated me to go to James Madison College and study international relations with a Muslim Studies specialization. And so, I wanted to acknowledge the Muslim Studies program here at Michigan State. I was part of that program when I was an undergrad here in the early 2000s. It was only a specialization at the time, and now it is a minor and I want to acknowledge Dr. Muhammad Khalil, who is the director of the program, who is my professor his first year here at Michigan State, and his leadership of this program has been tremendous and we are very lucky to have him here at Michigan State. Yes, it's fun to run into him on campus and talk about his children who were literally babies when I had him as a professor and now, they're like very grown. And on this day of remembrance, I always feel like I have a little bit of a silver lining because September 11th is my parents' anniversary and so I just want to, I know my parents are listening. I want to acknowledge their anniversary. Happy anniversary. It's 44 years of marriage for my parents today. So, thank you.

Trustee Balow provided the following report.

Always good to get the electronics out of the way and look at something on paper and talk to people for real here. Good morning to everyone. What a great day today is to be back here on campus. You know, we trustees are on campus, some of us more than others because we live in other parts of the state. But there's a certain amount of energy that presents itself when we're here and you can feel it. We felt

it yesterday when we were in the stakeholder engagement forum. It's too bad we can't do more of that, but I echo the sentiments that if we can grow that, get more student participation, in particular, would be most awesome. But when we have a chance to interact with the faculty and the students, it's truly gold. That's the best part of doing this job. My comments today kind of have a beginning, a middle, and an end, and you'll understand that in a minute. And in the beginning, I just want to recognize some of the good things that are happening here. Our Michigan State University for Veterans and Military Affiliated Students has received the 2026 Innovator Award from the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency for its Psych Armor program. It's a nationally recognized online training program designed to help students, faculty and staff better understand and support MSU's military connected community. I think how important that is when you think about people that have served overseas and dealt with the psychological stresses and wanna come back and have a productive life, and a lot of them do that here at Michigan State. There is a big wall between their experience and how they're able to communicate that to people that had never gone over there. And that is something that should never be forgotten because we've gotten past the days of the post-Vietnam era where people who served were vilified just for doing their job and oftentimes today you hear people say, thank you for your service, which is totally wonderful. But beyond that, I think the average citizen doesn't really know what to do and it's hard to know what to do and oftentimes there isn't something to do other than have empathy and understanding for a struggle that people went through, which will be part of them for the rest of their lives and so any effort that we can make here through our most excellent Veterans Affairs organization is worthy of your support and I encourage you to find ways to get involved and participate in that kind of training. Along those lines, MSU is also launching Spartan Canine Shield, a new initiative and partnership designed to airlift injured police and military canines from across Michigan to the world-renowned MSU Veterinary Medical Center for Advanced Emergency and Critical Care. Now think about that. Like, what better place to take care of these heroes, these working dogs that pulled people out of the rubble on 9/11 on that day and have become trusted partners to our first responders? Speed is critical. MSU has developed a hospital-wide alert system that can immediately mobilize emergency surgery, anesthesia, blood bank, imaging teams before an injured canine arrives on campus. And if you ever have any doubt about the importance of police, military, or other working dogs, talk to one of the handlers and talk to the bond that's formed between them and the unquestioned loyalty that these animals give to save lives. It's really something. I have more to say on 9/11. We'll kind of come back to that in the end. The second part, the middle, part of what we do here at Michigan State and part of our participative democracy is to try to lean into difficult things and that's a struggle sometimes because particularly I find with, I'll say the younger generation, but people of my generation are just as guilty. When you're presented with a difficult situation, the easy thing to do is pretend it doesn't exist or turn away, but we're better served when we lean into it together and try to solve problems as a team. And to address kind of Dr. Aerni-Flessner and Priyanka's comments, the summer was a difficult time for a lot of us, and the school collectively could have done a heck of a lot better job at

communicating to its stakeholders what was going on. That's something that we can acknowledge and work on. But what I can say this is much of what was going on before is exactly what we're going to do going forward. Think of MSU as a large, to borrow my naval background, aircraft carrier that has tremendous weight and tremendous momentum and heads through the ocean. There's days that are good and there's days that are bad, but that ship is still headed toward its mission, much as MSU is. And I would encourage you to go to, if you doubt that is true, go to our website where Dr. Fletcher has put a most excellent resolution tracker where you can look back however many years and see like how many resolutions, we passed and how many of them were unanimous, about 98 percent, and then some of them were contested, but they still passed and we move forward and that's how we do things here. We all have a role to play. We've heard now from our student government, our faculty liaisons, some trustees and the president, and soon to hear from members of the public who are also a stakeholder, all have a role. Our role again as trustees is oversight. We do not work here. We are not supposed to work here. We don't draw a salary from here. We're on the team in that we want MSU's ultimate success, but we're not on the team to go along. Like our role is to be able to question, to push, to oversee, and to call things out from wherever we so choose, whether it's in the boardroom, in the back room, on the street corner, in the press, or wherever it might be. We are your elected officials. You can petition us. You can approach us. We are, some of us, contact information is published on our website. We are happy, I'm speaking for myself and others can answer their own, to talk to you at any time that's mutually convenient about matters of MSU policy. Don't ask me about U.S. tax policy, but if it's a matter of policy on this campus, that's fair game, and I'd be happy to engage so that's important. The last thing I'll say is we do have some work to do. Before the president's departure and return, and I'm glad he's back because he is a really good leader for our institution and we're working together, but again working together means there's healthy friction between the board and the administration to push, prod, check, and question and the institution and the public is better served in that regard. To that end, we're working through some things. We have a difference of opinion on the board as to when it's appropriate to speak and when it's not, but I would just offer you this. In a country that values free speech as part of our freedoms that were in the First Amendment passed in 1791, few things are more precious to the average American than to be able to speak out on things that they believe in without fear of retribution. We just heard from the faculty about how important it is that Michigan State University as an institution is not told what it can do, say, teach, or anything else. We would expect the same thing from the elected officials which are here to oversee this institution. Despite the intentions, our current code of conduct, which is very unique, I've checked, I haven't been able to find one like it anywhere else, nor the signature requirement that goes along with it, probably needs to change if we're gonna be true to our ideals which we've talked about both yesterday and today. So, thank you for that. Now I'm going to come to the end. Today is 25 years since 9/11, as we discussed. Just think about the historical significance of that, though. For those of us that lived through it, it goes without saying that every 9/11 anniversary, we say things like this. Where were you? What did you do? How do

you remember that? Much like our parents, I'm speaking about my parents' generation, talked about 1963 and the assassination of John F. Kennedy, much like their parents talked about December 7th, 1941, and what they were doing at Pearl Harbor. With the current generation, and I look at my kids and some that are younger, and I think that they know 9/11 from a history book, and that's just shocking to me, you know, because you can never know it from a history book like you could know it for those of us that were alive and even more so for those of us that were there that day, some of those people I've talked to. I've lost friends that were serving after 9/11. That day, it's not just a day, it's an era. It'll never leave me as it'll never leave many of you. There's a connection to MSU. Three MSU faculty members lent their expertise to ground zero operations in the days and weeks following 9/11. Forensic anthropologist Norman Sauer, who is now retired, and Joyce DeJong, our current dean of the College of Osteopathic Medicine, helped with federal efforts to identify victims of the disaster. Dr. Steven Karageanes, who is a clinical assistant professor in the College of Osteopathic Medicine, traveled to Ground Zero the night of 9/11 to assist with medical and rescue operations. A September 11 scholarship program was established to provide full MSU scholarships to 11 young people whose parents were killed in the terrorist attacks. Many individual and departmental efforts to help were launched, including the contribution by hospitality business students and alumni of $2,000 to the Twin Towers Fund established by then Mayor Rudy Giuliani. Those are the ones we know about. I can guarantee you there's probably more. I would encourage you, if you know more, to reach out to us at trustees@msu.edu. In the years to follow, we can build some sort of memory book to honor those that had a connection to 9/11. And the very end is just context. We talked about leaning into issues. We talked about not being afraid to be uncomfortable. We talked about the greater good. And you think about how Americans came together on that day and what we're capable of. Apparently, unfortunately, when we have a common enemy, and then it falls apart after that sometimes. but we don't have to be that way, and we can show the way here at Michigan State University by dealing with the issues in a way that acknowledges there is a greater good. The place is bigger than any of us. The place will survive long before all of us in this room are gone. It's what we do today to make that better tomorrow, together that's important because that's time well spent and time not wasted. So, with that, I yield the rest of my time. God bless you and your families, and I hope you have a wonderful weekend. Thank you.

Trustee Denno provided the following report.

Thank you. So just again, thank you to all our first responders, especially those in law enforcement for all you do for our communities. Thanks.

Trustee Pierce provided the following report.

Thank you. I also want to recognize September 11th, which was designated as a National Day of Service and Remembrance in 2009, to honor victims and their families through unity and public service. At that point when it happened, one of

my customers lost his 26-year-old son in one of the towers, which was heart-wrenching for anyone that knew anyone that lost a life for this country, frankly. So very, very sad. I want to go back to packaging because Trustee Balow mentioned we should give some more details, which I know are in the portal, but let me just talk a little bit about packaging since it was approved. It's a $42,500,000 project. Seventeen million dollars will come from donors and $25,000,000 will come from our century bond. So, there's a lot of support around the packaging facility. What everyone should know is that 40 percent of packaging engineers come from Michigan State University and we are the only Ph.D. program in packaging in this country. So, there's a lot to be proud of and I cannot wait to actually see all of that come to life. There's a 93 percent career placement rate at graduation. Just incredible. That's under the leadership of Dr. Brian Via, who was appointed in July of 2026 and will continue to expand our reach. So, I really, really appreciate that he has joined in that leadership role. I'm going to go on to soccer, which by the way, I don't have an athletic bone in my body, but women's soccer stands as number five in the nation. So, our six-year-old granddaughter, Kennedy, when I read her that, she said, well, when I get to Michigan State, we're gonna be number one. So, a few more years, I hope you're all here to hear it. Men's soccer sits at number 10, and t what I was really, really proud of is that they have a 3.66 team cumulative GPA and the women's team 3.71 cumulative GPA last spring. That's huge. If I can just end by making a few comments around the code of ethics, I would appreciate your indulgence. First of all, the updated code of ethics that we approved does not prohibit disagreement or public discussion. It does not prohibit a trustee from sharing their position on an issue. The code reinforces expectations around factual integrity, confidentiality, respectful conduct, and fiduciary responsibility. Standards that are common to governing boards across sectors. It's been my privilege to serve in many for-profit and nonprofit organizations, and I know personally and professionally, that having clear standards of practice and guidance supports constructive disagreement and ensures the ability to meet expectations of our service. So, I think that they are appropriate and certainly have never been intended to stop us from constructive disagreement. So that's my comments. Thanks.

Trustee Vassar provided the following report.

So generally, I don't feel age, right? I don't feel old, I don't feel young, I don't feel, I just don't really pay attention to age. It's only when I'm around really, really young people that I feel like, wait, hold on. JJ said yesterday, and I'm still, and I've quoted you three times now because I'm still trying to wrap my mind around this. He said yesterday, you know, we're Generation Z, and Generation Z, we don't want to feel pressure at work. I just need to sit at your feet, JJ, and figure out how you came to this and how I can live that life. He said it very clearly and so I've been thinking about that, but then I didn't feel really old, I really don't think about age. I felt really old just now because Kelly Tebay. Wow. So, she said she was 13. 13? Wow. So, I was a middle school counselor. Wow. Jesus. No, it's okay. It's okay. It's all right. I was a middle school counselor on September 11th in 2001, and Kelly was a baby.

With that morning, our school went into its first ever lockdown. What I remember most 25 years later isn't just the enormity of what happened. It's how fast the fear moved through that campus. Grief for families we never met was instant, but it got quickly crowded out by something more primal. I learned that day, and it shaped what I think about every year in education, fear is toxic. When students are afraid, when staff are anxious, when faculty are dubious, when the adults in the building are not okay, learning stops. That's a full stop. Learning stops. I think about that lesson today, every day, in a very different campus doing different work. I just want to have a personal word really quickly before I begin. I want to just take a personal moment. Today would have been my father's birthday. He was a veteran when he passed. He was laid to rest with a military burial. He's also the person who named me. That's a whole story. I'm just not going to get into it. I was scarred for a little while. I'm over it now. But Rema is an Arabic name. At the time that I was born, he was practicing Islam, and he gave that name to me, which means great beauty from within. I'll just say really quickly, my brother's name means the beautiful one and he came before me. So, I feel like when they saw me, they were like, I hope she has a good personality, beauty from within. My grandmother used to say, if you're not cute, you got to be kind. So, I just try to be kind. And I do, I do. I think I've grown into that name, and I try to live my life being beautiful from within. So, I spend my life trying to live into that name, and I'm grateful for him. But he was an American soldier practicing Islam, naming his daughter beauty from within. This is not a contradiction. It's this country at its best. The kind of diversity that makes America beautiful and it's exactly the kind of diversity that allows universities to thrive. This board serves as a space for free thought, where new ideas are created that actually change our world. That only happens when we relish, not merely tolerate and certainly not quell the full diversity sitting around the table and walking through campus. Welcome. Good morning and welcome fellow trustees, President Guskiewicz, faculty, staff, students, and members of the MSU community. We begin the academic year with genuine optimism. It is wonderful to see the energy on campus and welcome all the new and returning Spartans. And this was a banner year as our provost shared with us, particularly for underrepresented students that came through in large numbers. We're so happy about this. Thank you for your hard work for this, and we just want to give you a hand. I urge all students to dive headfirst into the Spartan experience. Join a registered student organization, that's RSO. Step out of your comfort zone, pursue new passions. Make this university your own. It is our pleasure to have you here. You have a rare window, rare window to stretch your horizons and build lifelong connections. So, take full advantage of everything our university has to offer. I want to lift up the MAGIC program and shout out to Joy. For nearly 30 years, the Maximizing Academic Growth in College or MAGIC program has helped incoming students make a smooth transition from high school to university life. The impact speaks for itself. In 2025, the cohort of 150 students, 16 students earned a perfect 4.0 GPA. 42 percent of those students earned a 3.5 or higher, and 68 percent earned a three-point GPA or higher, and 90 percent remained in good academic standing. These programs are super important. MAGIC eases the first-year anxiety that students often feel by giving a space for community at that third space that kept

coming up yesterday in our community engagement meeting. They give them cultural and social strategies while connecting them with peers and mentors and faculty and alum. So, what began as a proposal for a summer transition program in the 1990's by Murray Edwards, shout out to Murray, today serves as a launchpad for future Spartan leaders, introducing them to campus resources, connecting them with faculty and staff, and a place to make lifelong friendships. I want to sincerely thank the assistant director of the Office of Multicultural Enrichment and Advocacy and the Multicultural Center and MAGIC coordinator, Murray. Murray is like, I don't know if you know Murray but get to know him. He's like, maybe he's been here 45, 50, 60 years. He's probably not that old. I don't do well with age, but thank you, Kelly Tebay. He's been here a long, long time. He has institutional memory of the good, the bad, the ugly, the fantastic about MSU. So, get to know him. For nearly three decades, he's mentored students and he's given unwavering leadership and support for Spartans. I also want to acknowledge the Multicultural Center. It earned major statewide recognition over the summer, receiving both a 2026 AIA Michigan Building Award and an AIA Detroit Architectural Honor Award. These just validate what we already know. MCC is the heart of our campus. It's shaped by students, for students, with generations of student leaders and campus advocates creating a shared vision of a campus environment where all students can thrive and succeed. Last night, I was in the MCC for the Spartan Remix. I got my shirt. I get a shirt every year. I beg, and then I just pay, right? I attended the Spartan Remix. It's something I try to do every year. In years past, it's been outside under a tent. This year, for the first time, it was held in our new multicultural center, a building I watched rise from the ground up and there was a DJ and there was a violinist and it was the same person. I'm telling you it was what the young people say, lit. The space was full of students, beautifully and visibly diverse in every sense of the word. They were dancing and laughing and being with one another in a room built exactly for that purpose. And that's what I mean when I talk about diversity being relished and not merely accommodated. That room last night was the promise of this university fully realized, if only for an evening. Our job, this board's job, is to make sure that room and everything it represents does not stay, bless you, the exception, it should be the rule. The remix is also the theme for my conference. I have an annual conference centering Black children in education and the theme we adopted this year was the remix because you can drop an old school beat, you know, add new rhythms, make it bounce. A remix doesn't erase what came before. It honors it. And it builds something new and better on top of that. That's what it was last night in the Multicultural Center and that is what I'm asking this board and this university to do with our promises to students, to every organization. Don't erase what's here. Remix it into something worthy of the students walking through our doors. I have a couple more things, and I'm almost done. As we begin the new academic year, I want to say that our optimism, our genuine optimism, has to be paired with specifics. Like too often, universities offer students broad language about belonging and opportunity, and too rarely attach dates, dollars, and deliverables to those words. This year, I want us to commit publicly and, on the record, to promises we intend to keep to every student, and especially to those who have been historically underrepresented and

underserved by this institution. Dr. Gardner, did I say that right? Talked yesterday about transparency, fairness, equity. Those were the three adjectives or nouns, actually, they're nouns, transparency, fairness, and equity nouns, things yesterday. I wanted to speak directly to something, during the Student Life and Culture meeting that is chaired by Trustee Denno, but that's not the name of that committee anymore, is it? Student Life, Culture, and Safety Committee. Okay, okay. I don't want any smoke. Students from Culturas de las Razas Unidas, I took Spanish for four years, for what? Our Latinx student organization under CRU shared that they remain a little bit frustrated and uncertain about their funding, uncertain about this university's continued commitment to identity-based student programs and organizations, and uncertain about what planning even looks like for the year ahead under a new structure and too many students confused by this organizational structure. I don't think it's enough for us to simply hear that frustration and Jim Hintz believes the same. He listened, took notes during that meeting and responded. He came to the meeting yesterday with a clear and transparent funding structure that he'll have to explain. I think you should. Everyone should explain their choices. It's not a big deal. Just do that, right? And I think it's the intentionality of your leadership is to be commended. I appreciate that. That infrastructure, and you already have agreed, is to be evaluated by its actual impact on student outcomes, not by how quietly we can implement it, right? Because we're not gonna do it quietly, and I'm grateful for that. I am asking on the record for clarity, right? Keep informing us of a clear funding commitment, especially for minoritized folks. We talked about the Black celebratory, I'm sure there's going to be a commitment to that on that's added to that sheet. A clear structure, a clear plan communicated directly to every MSU organization and to us so that we're apprised, so that Spartans can plan for a vibrant year. I thank you for your work. I do want to say that this policy keeps coming up that I didn't sign. And people, oh, no, you can talk. You really can't, because the policy states that if there's a policy that is passed, you can no longer speak about it. It also has some very ambiguous language about whether or not it's negative. What you say about the university is negative, right? Well, that's subjective. I could say, I don't want to give you an example. Anything can be taken any way and can be twisted any way. The policy is problematic in that it does quell First Amendment rights. That's just what it is. Yes, you can talk about the policy until it becomes a policy and then you have to shut up. That's not democratic. It's not American. It's actually anti-American. But I want to say when I have said that, clearly, because I believe in transparency, I think in this moment it requires it. Immediately in June, because of things that were said about me from different folks in different places on the on the campus in June, I received all kinds of messages that were unambiguous. That language might be ambiguous. Theirs were not in their intent. They warned me never to come to East Lansing again. Never. Via text, e-mail, they called my phone, they followed me from my house. Real threats. So, I want to be equally unambiguous in my response. I was elected by the people of the state to do this job, and I intend to do it. I will be here today. I'll be here in the weeks to come. I'll continue to show up. And with the security detail, if that's what's necessary for my safety, because I do want to go home. Because transparency, equity,

accountability and fairness for this MSU community are not optional extras. They are the job. I'm not intimidated. I'm annoyed and vexed but not intimidated. Please know. You cannot trust institutions that do not welcome questions that bring transparency and accountability. Jim Hintz, I'm thankful that you're welcoming transparency and accountability. It engenders trust. That is true of how this board treats its own members and it's true of how the university treats students who are asking right now for answers. That's fine. Answer. There is no participation without safety. Now for the students who need to trust that we're showing up for them with transparency and truth, that we're showing up for them, putting bickering and petty attacks aside, they want to know that we're showing up as leaders. And it's not true. A trustee who has to weigh a security detail against simply doing her job deserves better. I don't deserve any of this. There's no protection without relationship. So, a real relationship is also built on transparency and fairness and accountability, not on managed messaging. So, as we begin this year, my ask is simple. Let's make the promises worth making, that align with our land grant institution's mission. Let's make those promises and let's meet them. Go green.

Trustee Scott provided the following remarks.

Thank you. I want to echo President Guskiewicz reflections on the anniversary of September 11th, as today we do pause to remember the nearly 3,000 lives that have been lost and the courageous list of first responders who ran toward danger and all of the service members who answered the call in the days and weeks afterwards. We also recognize how profoundly that day has reshaped our world, altered our lives in many ways. For many of our students, September 11th is a history learned through textbooks rather than through a lived memory. This generational bridge reinforces our core responsibilities as a university to cultivate empathetic, civically engaged Spartans who model genuine civil discourse, embrace service to others, and contribute meaningfully to the world around them. I believe today there is a memorial celebration commemoration of what happened, and I do believe it's open to the public, Kevin, is that correct? So, I would invite any of you who wish to and have the ability to at one o'clock to attend that. Kevin, where was it again?

President Guskiewicz provided the following remarks.

Ralph Young Field.

Trustee Scott provided the following report.

I also want to go into what will be my first as the chair to discuss the president's evaluation. In accordance with the Board of Trustees policy 202, the presidential performance evaluation policy, the board chair provides a readout of the president's evaluation process at the first regularly scheduled board meeting of the academic year. The board recognizes substantial progress of President Guskiewicz during the last annual evaluation period in advancing Michigan State

University's strategic priorities, strengthening our institutional stability, and positioning the university for long-term success. The president has continued to provide excellent leadership, advancing MSU's 2030 strategic framework, building a stable leadership team, securing a record $736,000,000 in philanthropic support during the last fiscal year, and driving several initiatives that support student success, research excellence and operational effectiveness. The board also acknowledges President Guskiewicz decision earlier this summer to remain at Michigan State University, something that we are all very grateful for. The ultimate decision reaffirmed both his and his family's commitment to the Spartan community and the university's future. The outpouring of support, which I'm sure many of you witnessed from across the stakeholder groups factored into his decision and towards that decision, it showed a visible community support of Kevin's vision and the desire for institutional stability. Since that time, President Guskiewicz has worked intentionally to maintain positive momentum and deepen engagement across the university community and beyond. The board appreciates that ongoing work will be furthered, including through a university-wide engagement tour this fall. These efforts build on various stakeholder engagement efforts that the President has initiated, including regularly dining hall dinners with students and the President's Student Leadership Council, sustained engagement with faculty and staff through various meetings, forums, summits, and events, The Spartan Bus Tour, which has connected more than 200 faculty and academic staff with communities across Michigan while fostering new partnerships and collaborations, and the Community Partnership Roadmap, which are creating a more coordinated approach to relationships with community and local governments, civic organizations, business leaders, K through 12 partners, and regional economic development organizations. The board and the president agree that efforts in this area are key to building upon the institution's momentum. In closing, the board appreciates the president's vision, his willingness to listen, his responsiveness to concerns, and the attempts constructive dialogue across the expansive and diverse university community. This commitment has helped to create confidence in the university's direction. It has created stability, and we look forward to a continued positive trajectory for MSU under his leadership. We thank you. And I know several of my colleagues have also discussed the stakeholder engagement forum. So, it was my pleasure to take part in this, which is the second year of the stakeholder engagement, and I too was really happy to see more student involvement in that forum alongside students, alumni, and other stakeholders from the community. I was proud to see more outstanding campus engagement this year, and I want to thank those who submitted the 444 theme suggestions and over 260 members of the community who applied or who were nominated. Our three themes address key areas of growth and opportunity for the university, and I was also impressed with the passionate and meaningful dialogue and conversations that took place throughout the morning. I want to thank the planning team, Stefan in particular, and the team that he put together for putting such a great day before us and all of the participants who took the time out to share their unique perspectives and expertise and provide feedback and the other contributions that they gave to provide the board with vital insight and direction as

we continue to move the university forward. I was also honored to represent the Board of Trustees at the end of course celebration of the Warrior Scholar Project Academic Boot Camp this past summer. This year marked the third year hosting the project and our first time hosting the actual program, which is a week-long boot camp for transitioning service members and veterans. We know that veterans are an extraordinary asset to the university community, not only bringing their unique perspectives that enrich campus conversations, but also the leadership skills and the maturity that is shaped by responsibility, and most importantly, that they bring a commitment to serving something larger than themselves, which is in essence what it is to be a Spartan. Our visiting scholars put in incredible work during the week-long intensive, working and studying for 15-hour days alongside an incredible business faculty that helped them build case studies, explore entrepreneurship, and navigate how to prepare for a college campus as a civilian. I would like to thank the Center for Veterans and Military Affiliated Students Director, Patrick Forystek, or Forystek, sorry, and staff for their work to host WSP, but also for the work that they do to support that community at this university each and every day. It was a wonderful program and if any of you have never heard of it, I invite you to take a look at the website to learn more about it. In continuing with my busy summer, I also had the opportunity to join the university advancement team for an annual retreat in our beautiful new Student Recreation and Wellness Center. It was a fitting setting for great conversation centering on health, personal wellbeing, organizational resilience, and long-term strength of MSU. It was a wonderful way to meet and discuss how to continue to align our fundraising and alumni engagement efforts with the university's broader strategic priorities as we move forward together as one team. Our discussions focused on how a healthy, more supportive culture with shared goals fuels the momentum and helps to build a deeper relationship across the university and with our community abroad. I would like to thank Vice President of University Advancement, Kim Tobin, along with her team for having me, as well as the entire advancement team for their hard work throughout the year to propel the university forward. I would also like to just take a moment to talk a little bit about the code of ethics and conduct that has been discussed. The purpose of the code is to ensure that the board can effectively serve our students, our faculty, our staff, parents, research partners, taxpayers, and the broader public. It reinforces the fiduciary, ethical and professional responsibilities that accompany leading a major public university. The policy is not about limiting speech or restricting board members from raising concerns, providing oversight, or questioning decisions, instead it establishes standard governing practices. The updated code of ethics does not prohibit disagreement or public discussion, nor does it prohibit a trustee from sharing their position on an issue. The code reinforces expectations around factual integrity, confidentiality, respectful conduct, and fiduciary responsibility, standards that are common to governing boards across sectors, as we've already heard from Trustee Pierce. Elected officials have a responsibility to maintain confidential information. Such information as information regulated by law or because of contractual obligations or consistent with our own policies. Debate and dissent are not the same as disclosing confidential information or spreading misinformation. The purpose of the

code is to help ensure that the board can effectively govern in service to our students, faculty, and staff, parents, and again, our research partners, taxpayers, and the broader public. We are expected as trustees and we will continue to ask the hard questions and to engage in robust discussions. The purpose of the policy is to reinforce the fiduciary ethical and professional responsibilities that accompany governing a major public institution. The Board of Governors at Wayne State University also have a code of conduct, which includes provisions very similar to the code of ethics and conduct approved by the majority of this board. The code is also similar to the State of Michigan's State Ethics Act, which provides standards of conduct for public officers and employees, including those appointed to public university boards. Furthermore, elected members of even our state legislature are expected to follow rules of the respective House and Senate chambers as enforced by the speaker and majority leader. Again, these codes are not about limiting speech or restricting members of governing boards from raising concerns, providing oversight or questioning decisions. Instead, they establish good governance and good governance practices. And lastly, I will just state again, as it's already been stated plenty times in the press previously, that the Office of General Counsel supported the board in amending the code of ethics and conduct. The policy had not been updated since 2020. But going even further, a third-party legal review confirmed that the code supports the Michigan Constitution. It does not inhibit it and that we have the authority placed in publicly elected university board members to place such a code in effect. I would lastly just like to thank everyone that again was involved in the stakeholder forum. I forgot to acknowledge our faculty who was also there earlier. We appreciate your participation and the resources of information that you all provided. I also would like to thank President Guskiewicz personally now that I'm off script, for believing in Michigan State University enough to remain here. It was a grueling summer and spring, but I am delighted that you made that decision along with your family. We are lucky to have you, and we look forward to continuing to work with you and the great leadership that you are providing this institution. So, thank you. That concludes my remarks.

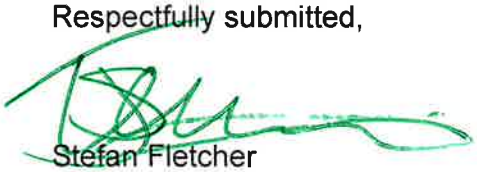
11. Public Participation on Items Not Germane to the Agenda

1. Dan Getsberg — BOT and the Government of MSU
2. James Thurston — Celebrating Swim & Dive history and alumni meet
3. Victoria Fasakin— First Amendment Rights
4. Mark Ludwig — Need for a trustee code of conduct
5. Jeremiah Wheeler —Support for students
6. Missy Chola — Unfair treatment of trustees who are protecting students
7. Lucius Vassar — Perspectives of a father, husband and alumnus

12. Request to Adjourn

On a motion by Trustee Pierce, supported by Trustee Balow **THE BOARD VOTED to adjourn** at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Stefan Fletcher
Secretary and Chief of Staff to the Board of Trustees

We Build Rugged Physical AI to Solve Farm Labor Crisis

Starting with Apple Harvesting



Zhaojian Li
Department of Mechanical Engineering
College of Engineering

SPARTANS WILL

Problem



LABOR SHORTAGE

60%

of farmers reported critical labor shortages[1]



HIGH COST

56%

of operating costs for specialty crops is labor & keeps increasing[2]



CROP LOSSES

15%

of fruit is lost annually due to delayed harvests or rough handling[3]

Sources: [1] Fruit Growers News Labor Survey, 2024; [2] USDA-ARS; [3] Virginia Tech Extension, 2025 / Johnson et al., 2024.

Our Journey

8 sec/fruit, 50% success



6 sec/fruit, 70% success



4-5 sec/fruit, 85% success



2020 — **2021** — **2022** — **Dual Arm** — **2023** — **2024** — **2025**



Proof of Concept



6.5 sec/fruit, 65% success



5 sec/fruit, 75% success



Field Tested in WA & MI Orchards

3D Perception

>97% detection rate | mm localization precision | edge deployable



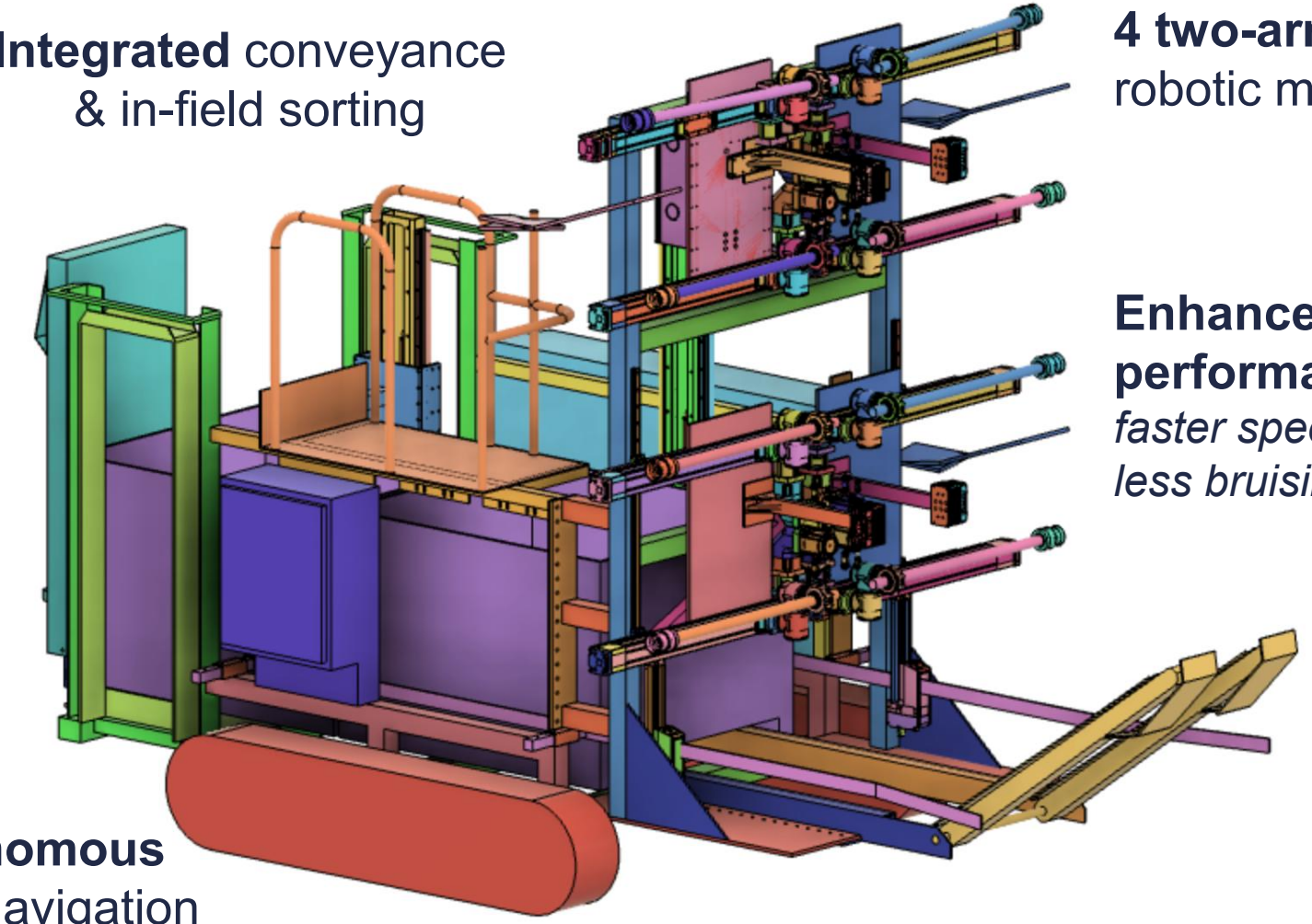


- Custom-made 3D camera
- Designed for outdoor, high-precision

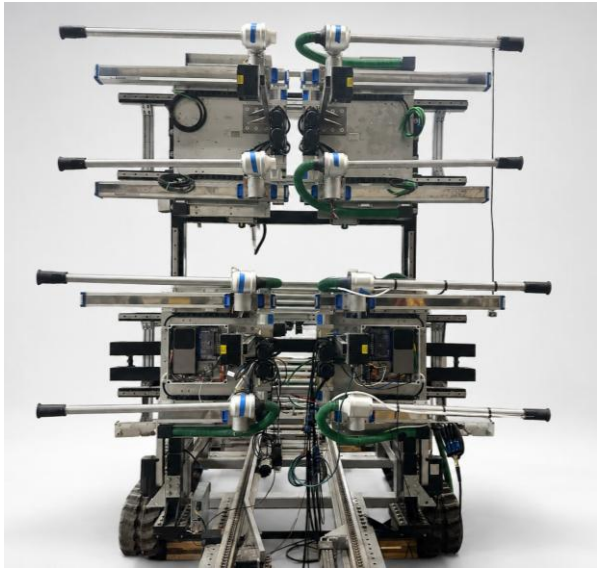


Module -> Full System

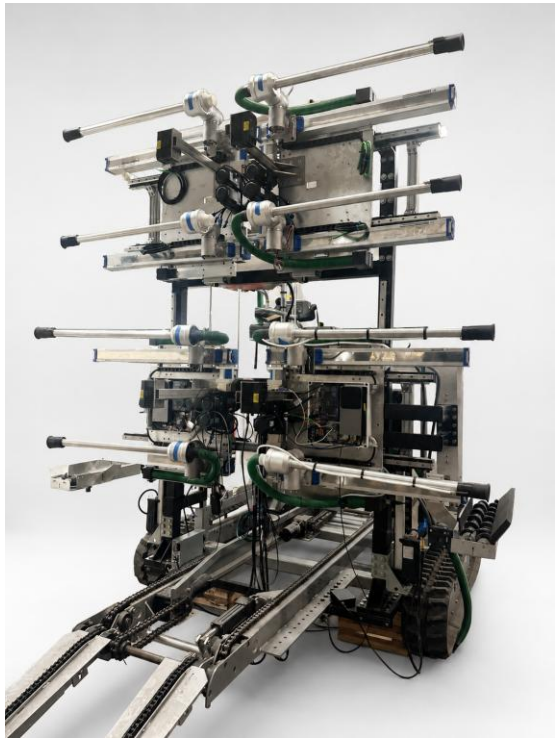
Integrated conveyance
& in-field sorting



4 two-arm
robotic modules



Enhanced performance
faster speed,
less bruising

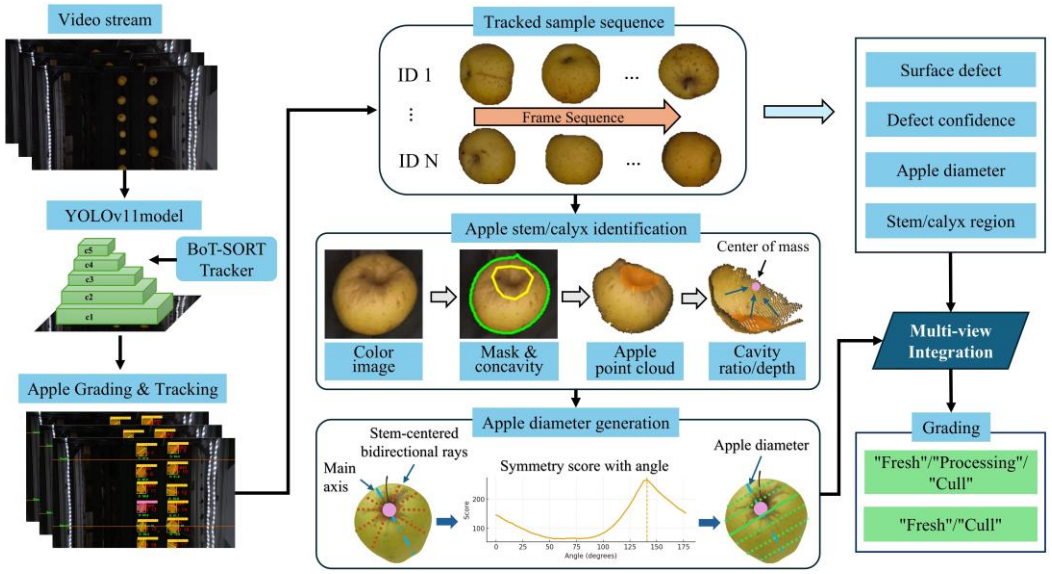


Autonomous
in-row navigation

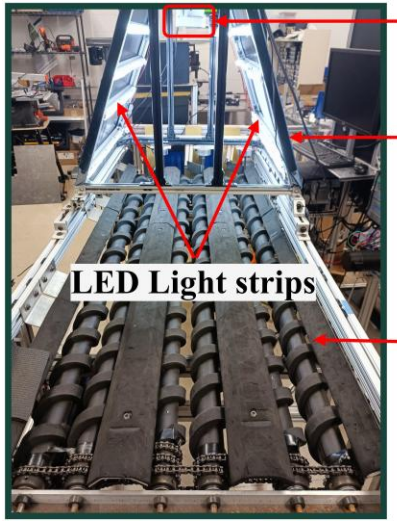
In-Field Sorting

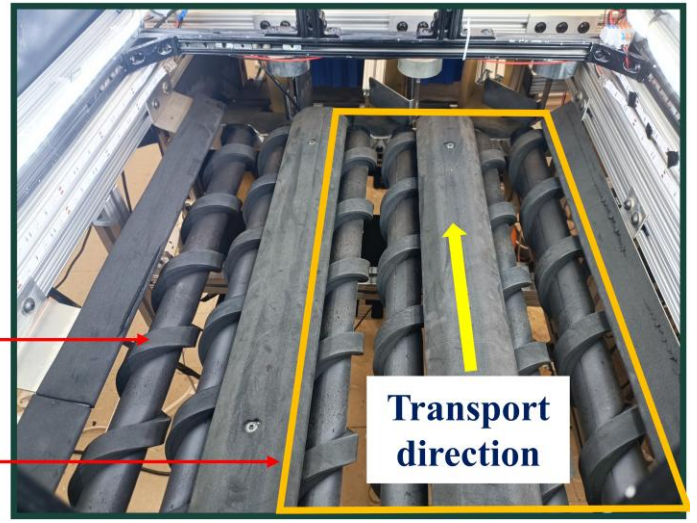
Dataset & Model





Collaboration w. Dr. Yuzhen Lu (BAE)





97% Accuracy





>20,000 acres

Committed for 2026 Harvest Season

Schwallier's • COUNTRY BASKET •

NWFM

NEW ERA'S AMERICAN APPLE

WASHINGTON FRUIT & PRODUCE CO.

ACN INC. SINCE 1905

Acknowledgements

- USDA, NSF, and MTRAC for funding support
- MSU Innovation Center and Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP)
- Partner growers (Schwallier's, Schweitzer, Riveridge etc.)
- Department of ME and COE
- 15 undergrad students
- Grad students and collaborators (Dr. Renfu Lu from USDA, Kyle Lammers, Kaixiang Zhang, Keyi Zhu, Chaaran Arunachalam, Pengyu Chu, and Jiajia Li)



2023 ASABE Rainbird Engineering Concept of the Year Award



2026 MSU Innovation of the Year Award



Demo Day at YziLabs AI Convergence Summit

Thank You!

Questions?



E-mail : *lizhaoj1@msu.edu*

https://agridynamics-robotics.com/

THE END.