



*EMU prepares students to serve
and lead in a global context*

SPRING 2026

WESTERN DISTRICT MENNONITE CONFERENCE

EMU ANNUAL REPORT

Greetings and blessings to our Mennonite congregations and churches!

We have been working hard to position ourselves to better serve our students and fulfill our mission. Within our academic divisions, we are doing this by reconfiguring our academic structure from three schools to two divisions. The new leadership structure will help the university work more efficiently and encourage greater integration and collaboration across academic programs.

Two deans have been appointed to lead the academic divisions, with both officially beginning their roles on July 1, 2025. The **Rev. Dr. Sarah Ann Bixler**, serves as dean for the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences division. **Dr. Michael Horst**, serves as dean for the Behavioral, Health and Natural Sciences division. The two divisional deans work closely with **Dr. Tara Kishbaugh**, inaugural dean of faculty and student success, and **Jonathan Swartz**, dean of students, while reporting to the provost.

In our reimagining this past year, another development to emerge is the new pathway curriculum projected to roll out during the Fall 2026 semester. This framework repackages EMU's general education/core curriculum into four focused pathways, each aligned with university values. The pathway curriculum will help students develop in-demand soft skills that enhance their career readiness in a competitive job market. Students will likely select a pathway in the second semester of their first year, with guidance provided to help them choose the option that best fits their goals.

A few celebrations:

- EMU has been recognized and included on the 'Best Colleges in America' list from Money.com. [EMU earned a 3.5-star rating \(out of five stars\) on the list](#), outperforming several of our neighboring schools. See the [full](#) news story here.
- Total giving for fiscal year 2025 was our second best in EMU's history - surpassing \$7 million. Financial aid is among our highest priority, and \$4.1 million has been raised this year towards new scholarships.

While we work toward these successes, the political landscape continues to be at the forefront of our attention. Reduction of Department of Education staff and potential impacts to student loans, Pell and other need-based grants are the primary areas where we are gathering information and data. For our current and incoming students, EMU has provided 100% of our students with financial aid and 1:1 financial counseling from our staff. We remain committed to supporting access for students and communication about how we continue to navigate these changes.

EMU is boldly preparing to continue our rich commitments and shape leaders who carry hope into a changing landscape. Thank you for your partnership in prayer and support in our mission together.

In gratitude,

Rev. Dr. Shannon W. Dycus
Interim President

How can EMU serve you?

Contact the church relations office to schedule the president or a faculty guest speaker:
540-432-4200 or
ChurchRelations@emu.edu

Western District Connections to EMU

Students

Spring semester 2026 has one seminary and 11 undergraduate students enrolled from the Western District Mennonite Conference.

Giving

The Western District Mennonite Conference churches gave over \$14,600 in matching church grants to their students during the year ending June 2025.

- ▶ **Rev. Dr. Shannon Dycus**, interim president
- ▶ **Kirk Shisler**, vice president for advancement
- ▶ **Troy Martin**, director of financial aid
- ▶ **Braydon Hoover**, vice president for enrollment and marketing
- ▶ **Luke Litwiller**, director of undergrad admissions

Our Vision

We will open new pathways of access and achievement for all students who aspire to grow as unifying leaders equipped with intercultural competence, oriented toward peace and justice, and rooted in an active faith modeled on the life and teachings of Jesus.