

What you missed at Michigan State this summer



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Most Michigan State students spent their summer away from campus, but things involving the university still continued.

Here's what you might have missed while away from East Lansing.

MSU welcomes new university president

The Board of Trustees unanimously approved Samuel L. Stanley Jr. as MSU's next university president in May.

Stanley officially started his term as president Aug. 1.

"Dr. Stanley is an empowering, compassionate and thoughtful leader, who will work tirelessly alongside our students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees and broader Spartan community to meet the challenges we face together and build our future," Dianne Byrum, chair of the Board of Trustees and co-chair of the presidential search committee, said in a university press release.

Ex-dean William Strampel sentenced

William Strampel — former dean of MSU's College of Osteopathic Medicine (COM) — was sentenced to one year in Ingham County jail Aug. 7 after being found guilty of misconduct in office and two counts of willful neglect in regard to overseeing ex-MSU doctor Larry Nassar upon returning to his position after a 2014 Title IX investigation.

Strampel was charged with misconduct in office for using his position as dean to "proposition, manipulate and, in my view, oppress women," Judge Joyce Draganchuk said on the day of his sentencing.

Twelve members of the jury and compelled witnesses aided Strampel's verdict throughout the seven days of trial, which began May 30.

Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel released a statement the day of Strampel's sentencing, saying, "Today's sentencing sends a resoundingly clear message to public officials: If you brandish your power to demean, insult, harass, objectify and abuse women, you will be held accountable."

Developments in the Healing Assistance Fund fraud, second-wave survivors speak

Seven individuals were charged with false pretenses in connection with fraudulent claims into the Healing Assistance Fund. MSU women's basketball players Maxann Reese and Donita Johnson were among those charged.

Reese and Johnson received nine counts of false pretenses among them both, amounting to between \$20,000 and \$50,000.

The \$10 million fund was established to provide counseling and mental health services for survivors of Nassar's abuse. Addressing the Board of Trustees about the fund has been a topic of concern for the Parents of Sister Survivors Engage (POSSE) since last October.

Termination of the fund drove criticism of former MSU Interim President John Engler. The board has since reestablished an intermediate healing fund in late February.

Valerie von Frank — on behalf of POSSE — said at a June 21 board meeting that survivors “don't control their trauma and its aftermath.”

Second-wave Nassar survivors have yet to be determined as a topic on the Board of Trustees' agenda despite the climate surrounding the issue.

“We're just waiting. We're waiting for you to take action,” von Frank said.

Trustee Dianne Byrum announced an independent investigation into the university's handling of reports against Nassar's sexual abuse. Attorney General Dana Nessel has been vocal about her disapproval of the investigation due to the university denying the release of documents from the previous investigations and for determining to not reject attorney-client privilege.

The next Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for Sept. 6.

Ex-MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon's primary hearing continues

Former MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon was charged with two counts of lying to a peace officer in a violent crime investigation and two counts of lying to a peace officer in a four year or more crime investigation. The decision to put Simon on trial or not is to be determined.

Simon retired from her tenured faculty position at MSU the same day a report obtained by NBC from the US Senate Subcommittee investigation was issued, determining that MSU, the FBI, USA Gymnastics and the U.S. Olympic Committee fell short of defending survivors of Nassar's abuse.

Upon retiring, Simon will receive \$2.45 million along with president emeritus and faculty emeritus status.

Reclaim MSU is among those in the MSU community apprehensive of Simon's retirement payout. According to the Lansing State Journal, Simon's court cases have cost the university more than \$672,000.

MSU receives 'Golden Padlock Award'

MSU received the “Golden Padlock” award by the non-profit organization Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE). Their focus is on investigative reporting.

The award is given to the “most secretive publicly-funded agency in the country.”

MSU Prevention, Outreach and Education Department releases first annual report

MSU's Prevention, Outreach and Education Department (POE) released their first report, including 10 initiatives, during the summer semester.

POE reached over 72,000 individuals in the MSU community. The Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence Prevention Program and The Bystander Network Program commanded high completion rates.

POE stated that their first year was “exciting and successful.”

Progress will continue after hiring a climate and response specialist this year.

MSU Agrees to reform Title IX

In light of the civil rights investigation relating to Larry Nassar, MSU is now in agreement to revise procedures dealing with sexual misconduct with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, or OCR.

The agreement aims to implement a better complaint resolution process and to manage complaint responses through a neutral designated official. Additionally, it targets medical practitioners by implementing a chaperone policy for sensitive procedures.

This agreement comes after the College of Osteopathic Medicine has faced multiple sexual assault allegation cases.

Michael Phinn, a medical resident at COM, pleaded guilty to multiple counts of sexual assault.

Several women have come forward, opening an investigation into sexual comments allegedly made by Robert W. Wiseman, a physiology professor in COM. Kroll Associates, a firm MSU hired for this investigation, found Wiseman’s behavior “unwanted, persistent and pervasive.”