

Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce

*Thursday, February 06, 2014*

## CHAMBER COMMENTS ON BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

***Statement from Rick Baker, President and CEO of the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce on Governor Snyder's budget proposal which calls for an increased investment in higher education.***

Higher education is a major economic player in West Michigan with an impact of more than a billion dollars. This sector not only produces skilled graduates, but creates permanent jobs, benefiting area businesses and employees in significant ways. This adds to our area's ability to compete and prosper.

Higher education in West Michigan is also a great value. For instance, Grand Valley State University tuition remains below the state average and the university has been recognized as one of "America's 100 Best College Buys" for many years in a row. The colleges and universities in West Michigan are a catalyst for economic success and accountable for their performance with students, and for their contributions to the overall quality of life in the region.

The Governor's budget calls for a funding increase for our colleges and universities tied to performance measures, including a focus on affordability. We applaud the Governor for proposing this key investment and the Chamber looks forward to working with the Governor and Legislature as they move through the budget process.