



Northwestern
Michigan
College

Board of Trustees

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October 26, 2020

The NMC Board of Trustees completed a performance evaluation of President Nick Nissley at the October 26, 2020, Board of Trustees meeting. The evaluation with President Nissley was held in closed session, pursuant to his request and in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

The overall rating of President Nissley's performance is "Very Effective," stating his performance is at a very high level, demonstrates a high degree of proficiency and frequently exceeds standards of normal expected performance.

Sincerely,

Chris M. Bott, Chair
Board of Trustees



**NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Presidential Performance Evaluation

President Nick Nissley, Ed.D.

October 2020

Performance Ratings:

Outstanding – Performance is clearly and consistently outstanding. Demonstrates a very high degree of proficiency. Consistently exceeds standards of normally expected performance.

Very Effective – Performance is at a very high level. Demonstrates high degree of proficiency. Frequently exceeds standards of normally expected performance.

Fully Effective – Performance is satisfactory and consistently at a level expected of employees.

Marginally Effective – Performance is only marginally acceptable. Meets performance requirements only periodically or only in certain areas. Specific areas for future performance improvement are indicated.

Ineffective – Performance is poor, clearly below the level of acceptance. Improvement is mandatory.

1. Maintain Momentum	
<p>While NMC was on the proper course prior to 2019, Pres Nissley took the helm under unprecedented conditions which could not have been predicted when he was hired. He embraced the challenge and has maintained NMC progress. <i>(Doug Bishop)</i></p>	Fully to Very Effective
<p>Nick has not only been able to maintain momentum under the current situation, but has also overseen a major pivot with our delivery of education services to our students. He has also assumed the role of the voice of NMC in our community. He has worked with the Faculty, Staff and Executive team to meet the challenge created by Covid-19 and to convey to everyone that we have a plan and that plan is in place.</p> <p>By example the recent Memorandum of Understanding with Michigan Tech regarding Fresh Water Studies, and the completion of the West Hall Innovation Center. <i>(Chris Bott)</i></p>	Very Effective
<p>His listing of 565 meetings, which covered NMC leadership, faculty, staff, students, donors, partners, and a variety of committees and board meetings, supports his outstanding commitment to maintaining momentum. <i>(Ross Childs)</i></p> <p><i>(Michael Estes)</i></p>	Outstanding
<p>The College successfully navigated the challenges of the shut down in March. I was impressed with the quick pivot to virtual classes and good planning for fall semester, including introducing new training for faculty in online teaching. Kudos to our faculty and staff for the work they put into making those shifts happen.</p> <p>Vicki and team's ability to present a balanced budget to the Board despite COVID impact is to be commended. I'm glad to see ongoing advancement in building programs like the MOU with Michigan Tech to collaborate on Great Lakes research; it shows that the College is not just "surviving" COVID, but is continuing to innovate and thrive.</p>	Very Effective

<p>As we settle into our current normal, it is important that we stay on track for strategic planning in 2021 even if the pandemic persists. <i>(Rachel Johnson)</i></p>	
<p>The original purpose of this priority was to ensure that despite the change in leadership, all elements of the college's strategic plan would continue uninterrupted. While this primarily falls to administration, staff, and faculty, it is incumbent on the person in the role of president to ensure that everything is on track. This involves a significant amount of communication, support, and diligent follow-up. While the board has not seen first-hand this operational level work, it is clear that the work of the strategic plan has not faltered; in fact it is remarkable how much has been achieved during the pandemic (i.e the Innovation Center). I believe that all members of the leadership team, as well as those on the front line, are very committed to NMC, our community, and especially to the success of the students. Nick has recognized this as well, and is working hard to steer the work using student success as a focal point. <i>(Janie McNabb)</i></p>	<p>Very Effective</p>
<p>Momentum has been maintained largely due to two factors: (1) Nick wisely asked the faculty and staff to plan and implement the tactics necessary to deal with Covid-19, rather than imposing solutions from the top down; and (2) pre-Covid-19 expectations and aspirations of students, faculty, and staff were modified but not totally disrupted by the tactics put into place. The feed back from faculty and staff is that they had a role in planning and implementation which empowered them.</p> <p>Helping students learn is a goal, and keeping the process moving has been an important element in achieving that goal. <i>(Kennard Weaver)</i></p>	<p>Very Effective</p>

2. Build relationships with both campus and community members	
<p>President Nissley has touched the necessary bases for both campus and community relationships. I expect as he learned more of the community his effectiveness will even increase. He clearly understands and appreciates the necessity of relationship building. <i>(Doug Bishop)</i></p>	Fully Effective
<p>Considering the relationship map that was developed prior to Nick coming on board and the unexpected restrictions that resulted from Covid-19, Nick's ability to listen and learn without what often works best to create relationships (person to person meetings), he has done an excellent job of using the technology to have as many meetings as possible via zoom, and to make the most of meetings that are face to face.</p> <p>I listened in on one of the townhalls and was impressed with the overall tone of the meeting. There was great interaction between Nick and his team, staff and faculty. I am not sure if the public are able to listen in on these meeting, but it would be great for them to do so.</p> <p>I am also aware that Nick has connected with various groups in the community and is invited to the table to discuss common issues.</p> <p>It will take time to build long-lasting relationships, but he is well underway. <i>(Chris Bott)</i></p>	Very Effective
<p>The 87 faculty, 51 students, 35 staff and 11 educational partners clearly support his building positive relationships with campus. His listing of Rotary, Traverse Connect, IAF, Economic Club, Front Street Irregulars, and visits to businesses, enabled the creation of the 20 member "Kitchen Cabinet," a very valuable community relationship tool. <i>(Ross Childs)</i></p> <p><i>(Michael Estes)</i></p>	Outstanding
<p>Glad to hear that President Nissley is on track to complete the 2020 relationship building (PRM) goals. I am impressed with how well the President and his staff adapted to restrictions on in person meetings. In terms of time spent with various stakeholders, I feel that this first year was appropriately weighted more toward building relationships with internal constituencies.</p> <p>I would expect to see this particular goal evolve from "meeting" to creating ongoing pathways for engaging both campus and community members. President Nissley can't be everywhere and do everything, so will need to prioritize areas that need his continued and sustained engagement and identify areas where NMC needs a presence that can be delegated to others. I would like to see President Nissley lean into strategic community leadership opportunities in the near future. <i>(Rachel Johnson)</i></p>	Very Effective
<p>Nick appears to be a natural when it comes to relationship-building. He is approachable, listens well, and sees value in everyone's perspectives. The list of many meetings - both before and during the pandemic - shows effort in outreach and connection. However, it is Nick's ability to truly engage in-the-moment that people</p>	Outstanding

<p>remember about him. This leaves an impression and allows everyone he meets with to feel that they have been heard, and that they play an important role in the college. In Nick's interview, one of the comments he made stuck out to me -- he said he believes in the power of "line of sight," where everyone, regardless of their job or connection with the college, can clearly see the line between their work and the overall success of the institution. Nick has stayed true to that belief in his work at NMC. I believe that it will have far-reaching implications in developing a positive, connected culture both internally with staff, faculty, and students, as well as with community members.</p> <p><i>(Janie McNabb)</i></p>	
<p>Nick has made initial and some follow-up contacts with a broad spectrum of community members. The number and breadth of contacts is impressive, and many people have been included in the process. The feedback from community contacts has been positive.</p> <p>The selection and strengthening of the ongoing primary contacts will need to be continually adjusted over time to promote NMC's goals, but maintenance of communications with all aspects of the community will remain important.</p> <p>The ability of community members to communicate with the college, either the President or another relevant person, is important to maintaining the college's support of the community. The community needs to be able to communicate at appropriate levels, and the means to do so should be well known.</p> <p><i>(Kennard Weaver)</i></p>	<p>Very Effective</p>

3. Build knowledge and expertise about NMC as a community college along with other Michigan community colleges and related legislative structures.	
<p>In my opinion, President has done a fine job in this area. His effectiveness will only increase when he becomes more cognizant with the leadership of our sister institutions.</p> <p><i>(Doug Bishop)</i></p>	Fully to Very Effective
<p>Nick has rapidly gotten up to speed with our Michigan funding system for Community colleges and how our legislature works. I recently had the opportunity to participate in a virtual meeting with Nick, Gabe, John Roth and Representative John VanSingel. Nick thanked both for meeting with us and proceeded to put NMC at the front of the conversation. Nick had a grasp of our funding issues and was able to navigate the political environment and also advance the request of support related the BSN for Nursing. He also put on the radar the future capital projects of NMC.</p> <p>I came a way from this meeting realizing that Nick has plugged himself into what is NMC and how we have to reach out to our representatives and promote the message of what NMC does and what assistance it needs from the State.</p> <p>His most recent meeting with TC Connect that hosted the Governor this past week. Again, representing NMC and providing a united front for the region and getting recognized for the efforts that NMC has taken to keep our students, staff and faculty safe while reopening the campus for limited use under Covid-19.</p> <p><i>(Chris Bott)</i></p>	Very Effective
<p>He has become active in MCCA and the Presidents Committee as well as reaching out to local legislative leaders, and attended the State of the State Address. His contacts with former alumni and alumni board members reinforced his knowledge of the NMC history.</p> <p><i>(Ross Childs)</i></p>	Outstanding
<p><i>(Michael Estes)</i></p>	
<p>I'm glad to hear that President Nissley used his relationship building to tease out themes related to NMC's strengths and challenges. That will be important as we move forward with our strategic planning.</p> <p>NMC's operations, legislative and budgetary constraints, accreditation requirements, etc. are all very complex. I have been impressed with Nick's ability to learn quickly. For a new community college president, his knowledge and expertise about NMC, Michigan community colleges, and legislative structures is good. This is an area where I would expect ongoing development in future years.</p> <p>Editorial Note: I struggled with how to rate this one because I think that given the time on the job Nick has been very effective at learning and building knowledge, I just think it takes more than 9 months to get to the point where one could build expertise in this area.</p> <p><i>(Rachel Johnson)</i></p>	Fully Effective
<p>Nick is spending time with leadership council, staff, faculty, and student groups in order to learn more about NMC's internal structures and operations. He is also connecting with community and stakeholder groups in order to learn about their</p>	Fully Effective

<p>perspectives of the college. He is working with Northern Strategies 360 to better ascertain the legislative structures and impacts in the state of Michigan. And his ongoing conversations with MCCA have been an opportunity to learn from other community college presidents. It appears that much of this learning has been through the lens of the pandemic; hopefully the ongoing communication will offer additional opportunities to learn more about how history has shaped our current format, for context, as well as to continue building his knowledge base.</p> <p><i>(Janie McNabb)</i></p>	
<p>Nick has been learning about NMC, and its place in its peer group and its legal and political structure. This is not an easy task, and early impressions will no doubt give way as new information becomes available. But he has made a good start.</p> <p>His challenge going forward is to reserve and continually adjust his judgment about how to support or modify NMC's stance, as he continues to learn. The communities which the college serves are not static, and the college cannot settle into a mold and stay there.</p> <p><i>(Kennard Weaver)</i></p>	<p>Fully Effective</p>

4. Other Comments/Overall Evaluation	
<p>I believe, overall President Nissley has performed admirably and as we expected when he was selected. Coming in after a President of unusually long tenure and who was generally the leader of his fellow executives on a state level was a tough call, but he appears to have been up to the challenges. The current environment has prevented more interaction with the board, which I believe would have enhanced his performance and give more opportunity for individual feedback. I felt strongly about his selection at the time and that feeling has been vindicated.</p> <p><i>(Doug Bishop)</i></p>	Fully to Very Effective
<p><i>(Chris Bott)</i></p>	Very Effective
<p>He is “as advertised.” Good selection!</p> <p><i>(Ross Childs)</i></p>	Outstanding
<p><i>(Michael Estes)</i></p>	
<p>One thing I think all new CEOs should do after their first year is a 360 review. I would like to request that the PPC look into incorporating one in President Nissley's first formal annual review.</p> <p>I have been very, very impressed with President Nissley's ability to step in and lead the college through such a unique, challenging, and unexpected time. This would have been difficult for a tenured President, I can't even imagine doing it with only a few months on the job.</p> <p><i>(Rachel Johnson)</i></p>	Very Effective
<p>While it might have been tempting to put these three priorities on hold due to the pandemic, Nick was able to shift into more of a leadership role without losing focus on them. In fact, he used the urgency of the situation to quickly establish new relationships and learn throughout the process.</p> <p>I think that the college and the community overall have benefitted from Nick's leadership skills. He has been strategic from day one, going well beyond the three priorities we gave him to guide the college's responses to the pandemic, our communications with the community, and to also participate in community-wide efforts like the Joint Operations Committee. It appears that he has great faith in his leadership team, which is an essential component of leading an organization the size and scope of NMC, and was critically important to me as a trustee.</p> <p><i>(Janie McNabb)</i></p>	Outstanding
<p>The three goal performances evaluated in this session are short-term, introductory measures. They are the means to achieve the college's goals, not ends unto themselves. Learning as a key to increasing personal economic wealth and community well-being is our main goal.</p> <p>Nick has made a solid beginning. He needs to maintain his progress, while necessarily dialing back on some activities in order to concentrate on others. He will need to continue making and modifying his attention and goals, as he learns more.</p> <p><i>(Kennard Weaver)</i></p>	Very Effective