



**Northwestern
Michigan
College**

Board of Trustees

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The NMC Board of Trustees recently completed an evaluation of President Nissley. This year the Board of Trustees contracted with the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) to coordinate its review process. The process included a core leadership competency evaluation, an evaluation of progress toward the strategic plan and ACCT-facilitated interviews with each trustee.

Overall, the board agreed President Nissley is meeting expectations. They pointed to several 2022 successes, including the successful negotiation of a collective bargaining agreement with the Michigan Education Association, the development of new maritime certifications in the Great Lakes Culinary Institute, and the focus on the implementation of the strategic plan, NMC Next. The Board of Trustees also complimented President Nissley's leadership skills in improving morale at the College, specifically with the faculty, and serving as an advocate for NMC in the community and in government affairs.

Moving forward, the Board of Trustees recommended that President Nissley address challenges more proactively, enhance engagement with the board and in board meetings, oversee a comprehensive facilities utilization and master plan, and work closely with the NMC Foundation as it works to align its new strategic plan with the strategic priorities of the College.

The Presidential Performance and Compensation Committee will be meeting in the coming months to solidify 2023 goals and make recommendations for the 2023 presidential review process.

Sincerely,

Rachel A. Johnson
Chair, Board of Trustees
Chair, Presidential Performance & Compensation Committee

NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE

Presidential Evaluation Summary Analysis Report

October 2022

Prepared by the Association of
Community College Trustees (ACCT)
Washington, DC



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SUMMARY AND PROCESS OF NMC 2022 PRESIDENTIAL EVALUATION PROCESS

The Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) Board of Trustees contracted the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) to coordinate its 2022 presidential evaluation process. The primary purpose of periodic evaluation is to assess how well the president has performed in carrying out the board's policies and priorities. The emphasis is on identifying what works well and what can be improved.

The process the NMC Board undertook included three parts. A customized survey instrument was designed to evaluate the typical core competencies of a community college president. The survey instrument was first distributed to a selected group of internal and external stakeholders and the anonymous, collated results of the stakeholder survey were provided to the Board of Trustees as part of their reference documentation. The Board of Trustees then completed the survey instrument and ACCT also conducted individual interviews with each member of the Board of Trustees. A summary of those interviews highlighting common themes is included with the results of the board survey as part of the evaluation.

The average rating across all items in the evaluation survey by stakeholders was 3.64, the average rating across all items in the evaluation survey by board members was 3.45. The table on the next page displays the average rating for each item in the evaluation by the Board of Trustees. The evaluation is based on a Likert scale of 1-5 (1=Does not meet expectations; 2=Meets some expectations; 3=Meets expectations; 4=Exceeds expectations; 5=Significantly exceeds expectations). Respondents also have the option of selecting "Don't Know." Don't know responses convert to 0 (zero) but are not counted in the averages.

Based on comments provided in the survey instruments and from the interviews, the president was credited with successes including negotiating the union contract, addition of new staff (VP for Strategic Initiatives and special assistant on DEI), leading the college through the pandemic (shifting to online, and the return to campus), redesigning programs (culinary, police academy), adding new programs (fresh water institute, aviation program) and improved morale at the college and improved relations with faculty. The president was also given credit for being a great advocate for the college at the legislative level and in the community. He is also credited with being the voice of NMC and is able to communicate the NMC story in compelling ways.

Areas for growth or development include improving communications with the board, addressing challenges more proactively, balance delegation of responsibilities with demonstrating true engagement.

The evaluation process should help the board and president develop the goals and priorities for the year ahead.

INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP & STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS	AVG
1. Possesses a vision, assists the board in establishing goals, and provides leadership for others to progress toward vision and goals.	3.43
2. Executes college planning and assessment activities for continuous quality improvement.	3.14
3. Provides effective oversight on the College's Strategic Plan and ensures accountability at all levels of the college.	3.00
4. Maintains high standards for ethics, honesty and integrity in all personal and professional matters.	4.43
5. Supports a culture of innovation, demonstrates flexibility, and encourages creativity in responding to priorities and uncertainties.	4.00
FINANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY	AVG
6. Allocates resources and prioritizes the budget to meet the College mission, goals, and strategic plans.	3.43
7. Carefully manages finances in ongoing operations, and audits reflect appropriate management of financial resources.	3.29
8. Ensures accountability measures are in place to maintain quality and appropriate resource allocation to promote student success.	3.33
9. Provides financial models that offer revenue diversification that align with the College's strategic goals.	3.00
HUMAN RESOURCES	AVG
10. Ensures College compliance with employment and nondiscrimination laws and regulations.	3.57
11. Provides leadership and resources for the professional development of staff and maintains own currency about developments in education and particularly community colleges.	3.43
12. Promotes a positive work environment for employees and seeks ways to continuously improve and creates an atmosphere which contributes to positive morale.	3.86
FACILITIES	AVG
13. Provides effective leadership for implementing technological support of teaching, learning, and the operations of the College to accomplish the strategic goals and priorities of the Board.	3.29
14. Ensures maintenance and upgrades of all capital assets of the College.	3.14
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES & QUALITY	AVG
15. Demonstrates a commitment to institutional excellence.	3.71
16. Implements programs to support quality and equity throughout the College.	3.43
17. Provides effective leadership in establishing and maintaining accessible, comprehensive student services that promote student success.	3.43
18. Ensures the overall quality and continuous improvement of instruction to meet student needs.	3.57
19. Ensures a system of continuous curriculum development.	4.00
20. Meets current community and industry needs.	3.14

EXTERNAL & INTERNAL COMMUNITY RELATIONS	AVG
21. Demonstrates ability to work effectively with external stakeholders, e.g., community groups, governmental agencies, local schools, employers, and the community at large.	3.57
22. Promotes and advocates for the College at the local, state, and national level.	3.86
23. Maintains College excellence with national and regional accrediting agencies.	3.57
24. Promotes the College through effective interactions with internal stakeholders, e.g., College Unions, College Foundation.	3.43
25. Actively participates in College and community activities.	4.57
26. Effectively works to build and maintain community partnerships that contribute to serving the needs of the community at-large.	3.71
27. The president promotes the value of the college to the community and its role in meeting regional needs and expectations.	3.86
RELATIONS WITH THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES	AVG
28. Offers advice to the board requiring action based on thorough study, analysis and thoughtful evaluation of input from faculty, staff, students and external points of view.	3.14
29. Carries out board governance policies and college values in a conscientious manner.	3.14
30. Provides sound monitoring reports to the Board on all aspects of College operations.	3.14
31. Keeps the Board informed of all actual and anticipated litigation, specific community concerns, media coverage, trends, and internal or external changes.	3.29
32. Effectively interacts with the members of the Board, committees, and the board as a whole.	3.29
STRATEGIC GOALS & PRIORITIES	AVG
1. Future-Focused Education: Enhance offerings through flexible academic pathways, innovative instructional delivery models and relevant, hands-on educational experiences to empower global learners for the future.	3.14
2. Student Engagement and Success: Develop and deliver comprehensive support services, robust engagement opportunities and a vibrant collegiate experience to foster learner success, goal completion and employability.	3.43
3. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI): Cultivate an inclusive environment that fosters a sense of belonging and delivers equitable opportunities so all are able to thrive and succeed.	3.00
4. Community Partnerships and Engagement: Enhance collaborations that advance community engagement, economic and workforce development and innovative opportunities for lifelong learning.	2.86
5. Institutional Distinction and Sustainability: Leverage distinctive programs that strengthen institutional sustainability and expand global connections for our learners and communities.	3.29
AVERAGE	3.45

PRESIDENTIAL EVALUATION SUMMARY OF PHONE INTERVIEWS
WITH MEMBERS OF THE NMC BOT

This summary is based on telephone interviews conducted between September 19-30, 2022, with NMC Board Members: Douglas S. Bishop, Chris M. Bott, Rachel A. Johnson, Laura J. Oblinger, Andrew K. Robitshek, Kenneth E. Warner, Kennard R. Weaver. Each board member was asked the same questions. Summary cites comments in general and specific as noted.

1. WHAT IS YOUR OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE PRESIDENT'S PERFORMANCE DURING THE PAST YEAR?

Overall, most trustees rated the president's performance as average, good or satisfactory, with one trustee describing President Nissley's performance as great. Trustees specifically pointed out he is energized, productive, student focused, and is visible on campus. Additionally, he was credited with improving relations with the faculty. One comment was ["He has made good first steps in his first "normal" year leading the college"].

2. GIVEN THE CHALLENGES OF THE PAST YEAR, IN WHAT WAYS HAS THE PRESIDENT SHOWN LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION? PLEASE PROVIDE EXAMPLES.

Trustee responses were mixed on the president's demonstration of innovation. Several trustees described the president as maintaining the status quo and were unable to cite evidence of innovation. However, three trustees cited the president's handling of the pandemic as positive, including the president's communications through the pandemic, shifting the college to online quickly and smoothly, and shifting back when COVID restrictions were lifted.

Specific examples of innovation and leadership that were cited included the addition of the VP of strategic initiatives, engagement with the pursuit of the community college BSN, police academy changes, reimagining the culinary program, the "at sea" certificate, expansion of the aviation program, building consensus and the successful union negotiation.

Trustees also identified areas where they would like to see future leadership, including a facilities utilization study and master plan that is in sync with changing environment and community needs, finding ways to better control college costs and diversifying college revenues.

3. THE BOARD SHOULD ENSURE THERE IS A STRATEGIC FOCUS IN IDENTIFYING OUTCOMES FOR PROGRAMS AND A COMMITMENT TO ACHIEVING THOSE OUTCOMES. HAS THE PRESIDENT ENCOURAGED STRATEGIC DISCUSSION AND DISCOVERY OF IDEAS AMONGST THE BOARD? IN WHAT WAYS?

Trustee responses were aligned with one another on the strategic planning process. However, two trustees indicated that it is too early to fairly evaluate the president in this area. Some felt the president too often defers to the committee and/or staff to respond to questions from board members. Four trustees indicated they would like the president to be more involved in steering/directing the implementation of the plan, and to be the one who delivers reports to the board on the progress on the goals. Board members are mindful of the policy role of the board and staying focused on ENDS.

4. IN YOUR OPINION, HAS THE PRESIDENT HELPED THE BOARD TO DEVELOP BOTH LONG- AND SHORT-RANGE INSTITUTIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES? HAS THE PROCESS BEEN INCLUSIVE, AND HAS IT INCORPORATED MEASURABLE AND ATTAINABLE GOALS?

Board members were someone split on this question, with three trustees describing the strategic planning process as being inclusive. Three board members also reiterated they feel the president relies too heavily on staff (VPs and others) to report on outcomes.

An area for development (cited throughout the interviews and reflected in the survey results) is for the president to improve his communications with the board. For example, the property utilization plan was not communicated effectively to the board or the community at-large.

5. AMONG THE PRESIDENT’S RESPONSIBILITIES IS KEEPING THE BOARD INFORMED ABOUT REGIONAL, STATE, AND NATIONAL ISSUES AND TRENDS, (FOR EXAMPLE, THE CHANGING CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS OF THE STUDENT POPULATION; CHANGING NEEDS OF EMPLOYERS). IN YOUR OPINION, HAS THE PRESIDENT BEEN EFFECTIVE IN HELPING THE BOARD TO UNDERSTAND THESE ISSUES AND TRENDS?

The majority of trustees agreed that the president keeps the board apprised of regional and state level issues and trends. He provides regular updates in a timely and understandable manner.

The president was given credit for working with the legislature in seeking approval for the BSN. He was also given credit for nurturing partnerships with the 4-year colleges for this much needed offering.

An area for development is to be better informed about the national trends in community college education, and to have a deeper understanding of employer needs, changing demographics, and DEI. It was also noted the president needs to engage the board on the challenging issues the college faces, and how the college can meet changing needs.

6. PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE PRESIDENT’S LEADERSHIP STYLE. PLEASE CITE EXAMPLES TO SUPPORT YOUR PERCEPTION.

The majority of trustees gave the president positive remarks on his leadership style. Trustees agreed he is a great advocate for the college, has a “can do” attitude, is welcoming, visible and likeable; he was described as congenial and approachable, and a great representative of the college. His personal skills are a strength, as well as his presentation skills and he uses social media effectively. He was credited with improving the morale at the college.

Two trustees described the president as passive and reactionary. It is recommended the president should be prepared to respond to challenges as they arise rather than waiting for the situation to explode. Several instances throughout the interviews and the survey instrument indicate that board members feel the president tends to delegate too many responsibilities.

7. HOW EFFECTIVE HAS THE PRESIDENT BEEN IN POSITIONING THE COLLEGE TO BE RESPONSIVE TO EMPLOYER NEEDS? HAS THE PRESIDENT SHOWN LEADERSHIP IN RESPONDING TO THE COMMUNITY’S INTERESTS/NEEDS?

The majority of Trustees agreed the president has been active in building partnerships with the business community. It was noted that he attends numerous community events, participates on local boards, and meets with local business leaders. He is said to solicit input from the business community on how they see their relationship with the college and how/if the college programs align with local needs. Examples cited include the freshwater research institute, and reimagining the culinary program.

The president should continue to broaden/solicit input from the community.

HOW EFFECTIVE HAS THE PRESIDENT BEEN IN ENSURING THE COLLEGE IS OPERATING EFFICIENTLY?

All the trustees indicated they are confident in the college operations, budgets, and finance. All the trustee agreed that the budget is balanced, the college is in good standing, and the college is run efficiently

Nearly every trustee gave positive comments about the senior team but again noted the president relies too heavily on his VPs. It is recommended that the president take more ownership of these responsibilities, and demonstrate an understanding of the college operations.

FISCAL OPERATIONS

HOW EFFECTIVELY DOES THE PRESIDENT COMMUNICATE THE FISCAL CONDITION OF THE COLLEGE?

The trustees agreed they feel informed and are comfortable with the financial reporting. They are comfortable with the budget process and agreed there are good procedures in place. The president is very effective and transparent with the board on the fiscal condition of the college.

The president seems to have built trust and strength among the senior team. He seems to be working well with staff. He was given credit for hiring a VP for Innovation, and a senior advisor on DEI.

An area for development is the president needs to be more proactive in stepping up when it comes to challenging issues, for example, the changes at the foundation and fund-raising changes.

DOES THE PRESIDENT PROVIDE THE BOARD WITH A BUDGET THAT IS ALIGNED WITH THE COLLEGE'S PRIORITIES AND MISSION? (CITE EXAMPLES)

Trustees agreed that the budget aligns appropriately with the college's priorities and mission. Trustees also agreed that processes and reports are presented well. One example was allocating funds for new positions (VP of Strategic Initiatives, DEI position) technology upgrades, and student success efforts.

The president needs to communicate clearly and appropriately on projects, for example "reimagining the culinary program," and the potential sale of vacant property to a developer for senior housing.

HOW EFFECTIVE HAS THE PRESIDENT BEEN IN MAINTAINING CURRENT FUNDING AND/OR SEEKING NEW FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES? (CITE EXAMPLES)

Trustees most agreed funding has been stable. He worked well with the Michigan Community College Association in advocating at the state level for funding. He has been successful at keeping tuition in check and below inflation. The capital campaign was successful.

To some extent new funding sources are constrained by state formulas and statutes. But it is recommended that the president continue to pursue other funding sources and focus on revenue diversification.

HOW EFFECTIVE HAS THE PRESIDENT BEEN IN IMPLEMENTING FACILITY UPGRADES THAT SUPPORT TEACHING, LEARNING, AND THE OPERATIONS OF THE COLLEGE? (CITE EXAMPLES)

Three trustees indicated it is too soon to tell in the president's tenure to evaluate this question fairly. All agreed that he does a good job of keeping the board aware of the routine maintenance. However, one trustee indicated he was quite effective and has demonstrated interest in college facilities.

Recommendations to pursue include update the facilities utilization plan, prepare the facilities master plan, conduct a needs analysis, and provide data to inform decisions, complete the heating/cooling conversion to geothermal, complete the library upgrade.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS/CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES

IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT HAVE BEEN THE PRESIDENT'S MOST SUCCESSFUL ACCOMPLISHMENTS?

Trustees agreed the president is effective at telling the NMC story. Trustees also credited him for improving morale around the college, raising awareness (advocating) for the college, new positions (VP of Strategic Initiatives and special advisor on DEI, and the successful negotiation of the union contract. Specifically, he was credited with improving relationships with the faculty, building trust between the leadership and faculty,

It was recommended that the president continue to grow into his own and demonstrate confidence as a leader.

IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT WERE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES THE PRESIDENT HAD TO OVERCOME OR MANAGE?

Trustees agreed, navigating the pandemic was one of the biggest challenges the president had to manage. Other challenges include senior staff turnover, being new to the community, dealing with the foundation issues, declining enrollment, the culinary program.

Recommendations include finding his path and establish a leadership style that projects him; implement the strategic plan; address conflict and challenges (stop deferring to staff); continue to support innovation (Great Lakes Program, Aviation Program, Police Academy,); meet employer needs; promote credentialing.

DO YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS ABOUT AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT FOR THE PRESIDENT? (PLEASE BE SPECIFIC)

Across the survey instruments and the interviews, improving communications was cited several times as an area for development. Specifically, keep the board informed, do not be afraid to share challenges.

Other areas to focus on include look for ways to diversify revenues, improve the College infrastructure, be more engaged with executive staff, (trust them), become more involved with the business leaders of the community.

