



**Northwestern
Michigan
College**

Board of Trustees

1701 East Front Street | Traverse City, Michigan 49686-3061
Ph (231) 995-1010 | boardoftrustees@nmc.edu | www.nmc.edu

October 23, 2023

The NMC Board of Trustees recently completed an evaluation of President Nissley. This year's evaluation was derived from the same process and evaluation of 2022 to provide consistent measurement. The process included a competency evaluation from the President's Council and each Trustee, as well as a self-evaluation from President Nissley.

The College's Board of Trustees is pleased to report that we agree with the success in President Nissley's performance. The Board is looking forward to the areas of growth and opportunity for 2024.

The Presidential Performance and Compensation Committee will be meeting in the coming months to solidify 2024 goals and make recommendations for the 2024 presidential review process.

Sincerely,

Laura J. Oblinger
Chair, Board of Trustees
Chair, Presidential Performance & Compensation Committee

2023 Presidential Evaluation – Trustee Responses

| | |
|--|------------|
| 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. | 3.71 |
| 3. Provides effective oversight on the College's Strategic Plan and ensures accountability at all levels of the college. | 3.14 |
| 4. Maintains high standards for ethics, honesty and integrity in all personal and professional matters. | 4.57 |
| 5. Supports a culture of innovation, demonstrates flexibility, and encourages creativity in responding to priorities and uncertainties. | 4.29 |
| FINANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY | AVG |
| 6. Allocates resources and prioritizes the budget to meet the College mission, goals, and strategic plans. | 3.71 |
| 7. Carefully manages finances in ongoing operations, and audits reflect appropriate management of financial resources. | 3.43 |
| 8. Ensures accountability measures are in place to maintain quality and appropriate resource allocation to promote student success. | 3.57 |
| 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. | 3.43 |
| 11. Provides leadership and resources for the professional development of staff and maintains own currency about developments in education and particularly community colleges. | 3.71 |
| 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. | 3.14 |
| 14. Ensures maintenance and upgrades of all capital assets of the College. | 3.57 |
| EDUCATIONAL SERVICES & QUALITY | AVG |
| 15. Demonstrates a commitment to institutional excellence. | 4.00 |
| 16. Implements programs to support quality and equity throughout the College. | 3.71 |
| 17. Provides effective leadership in establishing and maintaining accessible, comprehensive student services that promote student success. | 3.71 |
| 18. Ensures the overall quality and continuous improvement of instruction to meet student needs. | 3.57 |
| 19. Ensures a system of continuous curriculum development. | 3.57 |
| 20. Meets current community and industry needs. | 3.29 |

2023 Presidential Evaluation – Trustee Responses

| 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. | 4.29 |
| 22. Promotes and advocates for the College at the local, state, and national level. | 4.43 |
| 23. Maintains College excellence with national and regional accrediting agencies. | 3.71 |
| 24. Promotes the College through effective interactions with internal stakeholders, e.g., College Unions, College Foundation. | 3.71 |
| 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. | 4.29 |
| 27. The president promotes the value of the college to the community and its role in meeting regional needs and expectations. | 4.29 |
| 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. | 3.29 |
| 29. Carries out board governance policies and college values in a conscientious manner. | 3.57 |
| 30. Provides sound monitoring reports to the Board on all aspects of College operations. | 3.29 |
| 31. Keeps the Board informed of all actual and anticipated litigation, specific community concerns, media coverage, trends, and internal or external changes. | 3.71 |
| 32. Effectively interacts with the members of the Board, committees, and the Board as a whole. | 3.57 |
| STRATEGIC GOALS & PRIORITIES | AVG |
| Strategy 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. | 4.00 |
| Strategy 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. | 3.71 |
| Strategy 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. | 3.71 |
| Strategic 4--Community Partnerships and Engagement: Enhance collaborations that advance community engagement, economic and workforce development and innovative opportunities for lifelong learning. | 3.89 |
| Strategy 5--Institutional Distinction and Sustainability: Leverage distinctive programs that strengthen institutional sustainability and expand global connections for our learners and communities. | 3.86 |
| AVERAGE | 3.74 |

| <p>What were the highlights of the President's Performance in the past year?</p> |
|--|
| <p>1. Significant progress on several planning processes, including Foundation Strategic Plan and Facilities Master Plan 2. Introduction of creative community partnership programs like Oops, Firefighter degree program, etc. 3. Legislative wins for aviation funding and congressional earmarks for geothermal 4. Continues to excel at championing college through storytelling, on-campus visibility with students & employees, and being the face/voice of NMC [Rachel Johnson]</p> |
| <p>President Nissley's highlights include many initiatives that have brought the College to the forefront of our community, our state, its students and donors. This includes the millions of dollars that have been received in the past year for impactful initiatives such as the FRIC, the Aviation program, and more. President Nissley's effort to be the idea generator behind the Office of Possibilities (OOPS) which is a program that now has become an impact player in our community to support entrepreneurs has brought NMC to the table of entrepreneurial innovation which is not typically a table our College has been at. Additionally, President Nissley has been instrumental in the dynamic process to enhance its MOU with its Foundation. Benzie County Annexation, although has not come to full fruition, has certainly been driven in a positive and inclusive process involving the County, the PC, and the Board - a great example of true collaboration. In addition to these very strategic initiatives, President Nissley has been wildly successful on our campus with our students, engaging every day in some level of student activity if not at least roaming the hallways. This student and faculty engagement has provided for one of the most effective Union Contract agreement processes ever and has built an energy on campus that has created a community of inclusion. Finally, President Nissley's highlight in the past year is his ability to have taken feedback from the previous evaluation and enhanced his communication with BoT as well as creating an engaged BoT and President relationship. [Laura Oblinger]</p> |
| <p>First, a comment on this process: It might be easier to give us space under each item to comment on strengths and concerns, as well as these summary items. For example, for several of the items I scored "3", I did so because I don't know enough about Nick's role in the item question (e.g., the question pertaining to accreditation). Turning to the highlights, there were many. The College has moved from a "survival" mode during Covid to some pretty impressive program development. Examples include the reimagining of GLCI and the growth in valuable certificate programs, like Culinary-Maritime (which I believe could become quite sizable); the focus on aeronautics; the water tech area. Major new initiatives, like FRIC, while high risk, hold the potential to have an enormous impact on the region, the College, and well beyond. Some of the programmatic improvements are likely to be highly beneficial, but they were "handed" to us (e.g., the BSN - not what we sought but maybe a good compromise). Flexible academic pathways and instructional delivery models seem a real strength - good for learners, good for the College. In general, Nick is leading an excellent effort to leverage and build upon NMC's distinctive programs, of which there are quite an impressive number. His encouragement of innovation is tangible, including everything from specific new educational programming to OOPs. In a different vein, Nick's involvement with students, faculty, and staff is truly outstanding (and morale building), as is his involvement in the community (including</p> |

2023 Presidential Evaluation – Trustee Responses

| |
|---|
| <p>all the boards on which he sits). Nick gives the impression of having twice as much time in his day as the rest of us. His promotion of the College, in the community and also, importantly, with the state and national legislature, is yielding significant returns. Altogether, it's an impressive and encouraging record of novel and evolving contributions. [Ken Warner]</p> |
| <p>The President has become visible more comfortable in his role and particularly has improved with Board communications. Doug Bishop]</p> |
| <p>He is maintaining good contact with the public and our community partners. Getting more active at the State level. [Chris Bott]</p> |
| <p>Obtaining funds for the initial stage of the DiscoveryCenter.[Kennard Weaver]</p> |
| <p>Strategic plan implementation [Andy Robitshek]</p> |

| <p>What areas could the President's performance improve upon?</p> |
|---|
| <p>1. Need continued effort and bold leadership on revenue diversification - this may include cutting expenses related to programs that don't fit our future directions. 2. Seems there is a need for team-building among President's Council and developing more buy-in for President Nissley's leadership from his senior team 3. Continue to calibrate the mix of visible on campus versus visible in the community. My perception is that Nick is viewed as very college-centric as it pertains to his community engagement. [Rachel Johnson]</p> |
| <p>After President Nissley's first few years in his role as the College's President, community leaders are anxious for his view, his reflection, and opinion on matters within the community. I believe President Nissley's next move in growth is to begin "speaking up" when in community meetings and initiatives and on Boards he contributes to. [Laura Oblinger]</p> |
| <p>Some of the survey questions asked about quality improvement. It struck me that, three years into membership on the board, I haven't heard Nick (or anyone) talk specifically about processes for evaluating the quality of teaching or teaching programs (while we do hear quite a bit about innovation in teaching methods, mostly from instructors presenting at the monthly board meetings). I'm sure there must be regular evaluation procedures in place, but I'd like to feel more comfortable that quality assessment gets sufficient attention. The second area where I believe we could see some improvement is in the student success coaching domain. I'm not convinced that the College is devoting sufficient resources to it. Further, we may be missing a bet by not having a community member mentoring arm to our success coaching. I imagine there are lots of alums and community members who would be very pleased to mentor our students, speaking periodically with them, checking in on them and offering useful feedback and encouragement. I realize this would take time and resources, but several of the presentations at ACCT and MCCA's annual meeting seem to indicate a real payoff to effective success coaching. In addition to helping both new and returning students, this could (further) build community support for the College. My third and final concern regards the handling of high-level staff transitions. The departure of the previous Executive Director of the Foundation still remains something of a mystery to me (however warranted it may have been). More recently, I found the tone of an email announcing the departure of an administrator disquieting. I understand some of the reasons for the way the message was delivered, but I still thought the email could (and should) have been phrased in a warmer, more supportive manner. As well, I was a bit surprised that an internal candidate was promoted as the departing official's replacement, not on an interim basis, without a search. The replacement may be terrific, possibly ideally suited to the job. But my understanding is that Nick has indicated previously that high-level positions should undergo searches. This all falls into the area of personnel management with regard to the some of the very most important personnel decisions, hiring and termination. These concerns notwithstanding, I want to emphasize, as my response to the highlights question indicates, that I consider Nick's management of the College to have been very positive this past year. [Ken Warner]</p> |
| <p>He could make even more improvement in personally addressing trustee questions which come up in action item discussion, rather than allowing staff to be included in the discussion phase. [Doug Bishop]</p> |

2023 Presidential Evaluation – Trustee Responses

| |
|---|
| His ability to be seen as the one making the final decisions, and owning them. Needs to be more proactive in heading off problems and not letting them drag out. [Chris Bott] |
| Actively seeking input from the business community beyond just those selected by the College to serve on advisory boards. [Kennard Weaver] |
| Stronger financial knowledge [Andy Robitshek] |

NICK NISSLEY
PRESIDENT'S EVALUATION
SELF-ASSESSMENT
FALL 2023

OVERVIEW

The following two frameworks – (1) NMC’s five strategic plan priorities, and (2) the seven core competencies/key leadership accountabilities help frame my president’s self-evaluation – they describe the leadership priorities and competencies that focus my everyday actions leading the College. I have also used these to focus and frame my communication with/reporting to the Board of Trustees. In turn, when communicating with internal and external stakeholders, they have framed my communications. I have appreciated the Board’s helpfulness in affording me these frameworks. They have been invaluable tools to help me prioritize, focus, and lead the College.

NMC’s Five Strategic Plan Priorities

The College’s Strategic Plan, *NMC Next*, has served as a means of prioritization, focusing my attention on the five strategic priorities articulated in the plan:

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.
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. *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB)*: Cultivate an inclusive environment that fosters a sense of belonging and delivers equitable opportunities so all are able to thrive and succeed.
4. *Community Partnerships and Engagement*: Enhance collaborations that advance community engagement, economic and workforce development and innovative opportunities for lifelong learning.
5. *Institutional Distinction and Sustainability*: Leverage distinctive programs that strengthen institutional sustainability and expand global connections for our learners and communities.

Seven Core Competencies/Key Leadership Accountabilities from The President’s Evaluation Instrument

Last year, a new evaluation instrument was developed by the President’s Performance and Compensation Committee (PPCC). This instrument articulates seven core competencies/key leadership accountabilities, to be used in evaluating the President’s performance:

1. Institutional Leadership & Strategic Planning Process
2. Finance & Accountability
3. Human Resources
4. Facilities
5. Educational Services & Quality
6. External & Internal Community Relations
7. Relations with the Board of Trustees

The following is a self-assessment of my performance, organized by these two frameworks, and is intended to afford the College's Board of Trustees an overview of how I have led the College, during this past year.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-------|
| OVERVIEW | p. 1 |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | p. 3 |
| SEVEN CORE COMPETENCIES/KEY LEADERSHIP ACCOUNTABILITIES FROM THE PRESIDENT’S EVALUATION INSTRUMENT | p. 5 |
| (1) Institutional Leadership & Strategic Planning Process | p. 6 |
| (A) Benzie Annexation | |
| (B) Founding the Freshwater Research and Innovation Center | |
| (C) Strengthening the NMC Foundation + College Relationship | |
| (2) Finance & Accountability | p. 7 |
| (A) Budget | |
| (B) Contracting With a Third-Party Payroll Administrator (Edustaff) | |
| (C) Addressing GLCI’s Decade-Long Growing Deficit | |
| (D) Successful Legislative Advocacy to Earn Funding Support | |
| (E) Innovation, and Revenue Diversification in Support of Financial Sustainability | |
| (3) Human Resources | p. 10 |
| (A) Continuing to Invest in Building Enrollment Marketing Capacity | |
| (B) Building Coaching Capacity Through MCAN Grant | |
| (C) Leading the Development of a Healthy and Productive Culture | |
| (D) Championing the College’s HR Team and Their Contributions to a Healthy Culture | |
| (4) Facilities | p. 13 |
| (A) Facilities Utilization and Campus Master Plan | |
| (B) Capital Budget Planning and Financing | |
| (5) Educational Services & Quality | p. 14 |
| (A) Innovating New Programs | |
| (B) Creatively Funding New Programs | |

(6) External & Internal Community Relations p. 17

(A) Launching the Office of Possibilities

(B) Partnering to Support Development of the New Blue Economy/
Water Innovation

(C) Effective Interactions with Internal Stakeholders

(D) Active Engagement with MCCA, ACCT, and AFIT

(7) Relations with the Board of Trustees p. 20

(A) Meetings

(B) Reporting

(C) Ensuring the College and Trustees Are Held In the Most
Positive Light

FIVE STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES p. 22

(1) Current State

(2) Key Successes

(3) Looking Ahead to Year #2

SUMMARY/HIGHLIGHTS OF PERFORMANCE p. 26

(1) Three Major College Planning Efforts

(2) Innovation and Revenue Diversification/Growth

(3) Prudent Fiscal Stewardship

(4) Legislative Advocacy to Earn Funding Support

SEVEN CORE COMPETENCIES/KEY LEADERSHIP ACCOUNTABILITIES FROM PRESIDENT’S EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

As mentioned earlier, last year, a new evaluation instrument was developed by the PPCC. The instrument articulates seven core competencies/key leadership accountabilities:

1. Institutional Leadership & Strategic Planning Process
2. Finance & Accountability
3. Human Resources
4. Facilities
5. Educational Services & Quality
6. External & Internal Community Relations
7. Relations with the Board of Trustees

In this section, I share select, specific examples of how my leadership manifested results in these seven areas. They are meant to be illustrative, and are not exhaustive.

(1) Institutional Leadership & Strategic Planning Process

This competency speaks to how the President is mission-driven, values-grounded, and inspires the College towards a vision, focused by a strategic plan and goals. It also speaks to the importance of high standards for ethics, honesty, and integrity in all personal and professional matters. Lastly, it speaks to how the President develops a culture of innovation, demonstrates flexibility, and encourages creativity in responding to priorities and uncertainties.

Benzie Annexation. Beginning with a thorough review of annexation and millage possibilities presented at the winter 2023 Board of Trustees Retreat, I have played a leading role in our pursuit of the Benzie Annexation possibility, initiated by Todd Neibauer. This has included: our Board Retreat; strategy formulation with Chris and Jim MacInnes; multiple learning sessions with Mid Michigan College leadership (seeking to learn from their annexation experience); as well as initial conversation with the Benzie annexation leadership, when in August, Board Chair Laura Oblinger, Trustee Kennard Weaver, Todd Neibauer, and I met with Benzie County leaders who have been meeting/exploring the annexation possibility. The conversation was focused on: 1) ‘getting to know one another’; 2) listening to their vision; and 3) beginning to articulate ‘next steps.’ It was a very productive meeting, with much shared optimism, and resulted in the following way forward/next steps that were agreed:

1. Convening of a gathering of key stakeholders, with the intent of informing them of the desire to move forward, and seeking to gauge their willingness to take on a leadership role.
2. Following the Stakeholder Meeting noted above, a Town Hall, designed to gather 'all sides', to share the intention of annexation, and to gauge both support and resistance.
3. After the Town Hall meeting, a series of 'Listening Sessions' will be conducted with a variety of stakeholder groups, to better understand how NMC can meet their needs (beyond in-district tuition).

I have also initiated planning for a consultant to conduct polling, as well as a consultant to complete an economic impact study – both to support Board/College decision making.

Founding the Freshwater Research and Innovation Center. I have worked to develop personal relationships with all of our Freshwater Research and Innovation Center partners: Michigan Tech, Discovery Center and Pier, 20 Fathoms, and Traverse Connect – from the initial meetings crafting the vision to the more recent operationally-minded work to build a governance structure. This has entailed multi-day trips to/meetings in Houghton, to champion the vision with organizations throughout Traverse City. I've also championed that this isn't 'just' a research center; rather, I've helped our community understand how FRIC can also be a driver of regional economic development (e.g., Traverse City's wading into the new blue economy). From the very start, I have championed not only NMC's 'place at the table', but also NMC's leadership role (as seen by our present role as one of two organizations comprising the new joint venture organization). See:

- [NMC, Partners Confirm Ambitious Freshwater Research Center on Grand Traverse Bay, *The Ticker*](#)
- [Gold in the Water: Local Partners Band Together To Make Traverse City A Global Freshwater Leader, *The Ticker*](#)
- [Editorial: Freshwater Research and Innovation Center could shape future here, *Record Eagle*](#)
- [Traverse City Freshwater Research & Innovation Center Website](#)

I have also invested significantly in relationship building, and in legislative advocacy work to build funding and support. This has entailed numerous meetings in Lansing and Traverse City, as well as attendance at political fundraisers, including many individual meetings with State Senator John Damoose, State Representatives Betsy Coffia and John Roth, and Lieutenant Governor Gilchrist, as well as our U.S. Senators Stabenow and Peters, helping to land our initial \$1.627 million federal earmark, as well as the more recent \$15 million of state support. Now, with initial funding procured, we've turned our attention to governance, given the Board of Trustees direction for us to pursue the development of a joint-venture structure between NMC and Discovery Center & Pier. See:

<https://www.traverseticker.com/news/freshwater-research-innovation-center-scores-16-million-in-federal-funding/> and <https://www.traverseticker.com/news/freshwater-research-innovation-center-receives-15m-in-state-budget/>.

Strengthening the NMC Foundation + College Relationship. I have worked side-by-side with Board Chair Oblinger to advance the work of the NMC Foundation-College MOU Review Process. After a rocky start, a robust process was designed, structured around collaborative work between the Executive Committees of both the Foundation and College's Board of Trustees (BOT). Joint meetings were designed with the intention to begin collaboratively shaping the MOU. It has been 8 years since the MOU was last updated, and given the new Foundation strategic plan, and a bold vision for future growth, it was simply time to be updating, to ensure the Foundation + College are positioned to realize our desired vision of the future. The meetings

have been part relationship/trust building (simply affording the leadership of the Board of Trustees and the Foundation to gather together), part visioning (giving voice to our collective vision for the future), part listening (seeking to better understand the challenges that are keeping us from realizing our shared desired vision), and part problem solving (beginning to reshape the Memorandum of Understanding to better define how we want to work together in support of our shared mission and vision). We are making progress, with both Executive Committees approving. Now, it's on to the BOT's Policy Committee and the Foundation's Development Committee, before final approval from each respective board.

Additionally, the strategic planning process is breathing renewed optimism into the Foundation, its future, and the College-Foundation relationship. The importance of such a new, healthier relationship cannot be overstated. Especially, as our enrollment and financial forecasting suggests, the College will need to rely even more heavily upon Foundation financial support in the future. Thus, developing the Foundation's capacity to grow/support the College's future needs is paramount. See:

<https://www.traverseticker.com/news/what-a-new-strategic-plan-could-mean-for-the-nmc-foundation/>.

I should add that I share a significant amount of my time to support the Foundation's efforts. More than 50 meetings this past year have been Foundation-specific. This has included: numerous donor cultivation and stewarding meetings held in my home; Foundation board and committee meetings, including governance/MOU development meetings; as well as ED search process meetings. I have made myself fully available to the Foundation, and fully embrace the expectation that I am connecting and relationship building with our supporters and the wider community, in support of the Foundation's mission.

(2) Finance & Accountability

This competency speaks to how the President prioritizes the budget to meet the College mission, strategic plan, and goals. It also speaks to how the President ensures accountability measures to ultimately promote student success. Lastly, this competency speaks to the importance of leadership that supports innovation and revenue diversification/growth to support the College's strategic priorities.

Budget. In light of enrollment challenges, we were successful in producing balanced budgets and operating surpluses. Balanced budgets were achieved for FY23 and FY24. And, a general fund surplus of \$1,240,000 was realized in FY22 (excluding unrealized investment losses), with a general fund surplus of \$706,000 realized in FY23 (again, excluding unrealized investment losses).

Contracting With a Third-Party Payroll Administrator (Edustaff). This past year, I initiated signing a contract with a third-party payroll administrator (Edustaff), for the College's adjunct and supplemental employees. This arrangement will allow us to deliver on our value of fiscal stewardship while also affording higher take-home pay for our adjunct and supplemental

employees. Specifically, it's forecasted to create savings for the College, in the range of \$150,000 to \$250,000 annually. Without the third-party payroll administrator, the College is required to contribute 28% of gross wages (\$1.2 million last year) to MPSERS. Additionally, this will afford an upside for the adjuncts and supplemental employees, by minimizing the deductions required by MPSERS (employees are required by MPSERS to contribute 3%-11%), and thus afford higher take-home pay. Simply, this is a 'win-win' that will result in higher pay for adjuncts *and* cost savings for the College (approximately 10% per adjunct/supplemental employee hired through EduStaff). We were also sensitive to offer current adjuncts and supplemental employees the *option* of working with Edustaff. Simply, any *current* adjunct or supplemental employee could select to 'stay the same' - it was their choice if they decided to transition to Edustaff; whereas all *new* adjunct and supplemental employees are now paid through Edustaff.

Addressing GLCI's Decade-Long Growing Deficit. I am very proud of the work that we've done to 'reimagine' GLCI, addressing declining enrollment and unsustainable expenses of the past decade. See: <https://www.nmc.edu/about/nmc-stories/success-stories/gloi-thrives.html>. After a year-long program review, we developed a plan to make the program financially sustainable, by focusing on reducing labor costs and increasing enrollment. This involved significant collaboration with the program staff and faculty, and Faculty Association, to develop a new faculty load for Culinary instructors and a business plan to meet the goal of dramatically reducing the deficit. I can proudly say, thanks especially to the hard work by the GLCI team, by the end of fiscal year 2023, the program deficit was reduced from \$400,000 to \$27,650. And, a plan is now in place to make the program financially sustainable. See: <https://www.traverseticker.com/news/a-new-chapter-in-the-cookbook-nmc-reimagines-the-great-lakes-culinary-institute/>. Additionally, now that we've done this initial work around managing expenses, we've also initiated a review of revenue enhancement opportunities. See: <https://www.traverseticker.com/news/cocktails-master-classes-and-more-nmc-hires-consultant-to-boost-revenue-opportunities-for-lobdells/>. Essentially, the Foundation-funded consultant has been working with us to identify new revenue streams that we could derive within GLCI.

Successful Legislative Advocacy to Earn Funding Support. This past year, I tirelessly engaged our federal (Senators Stabenow and Peters, and Representative Bergman) and state (Senator Damoose, and Representatives Coffia and Roth) legislators, in Lansing and locally, advocating for funding support for NMC. In terms of federal support, we were successful at earning two earmarks from the 117th Congress: 1) \$2.7 million for NMC's approximately \$15 million geothermal/power plant project, and 2) \$1.627 million for NMC and our four partner institutions to develop the Freshwater Research and Innovation Center. As for State support, we were successful earning: 1) an additional \$15 million for the Freshwater Research and Innovation Center, and 2) \$3.75 million for our Aviation Growth Plan (as well as, a \$550,000 pending federal budget earmark). See: <https://www.traverseticker.com/news/nmc-to-receive-375m-for-aviation-expansion/>.

Innovation, and Revenue Diversification/Growth in Support of Financial Sustainability. In addition to initiatives like the Benzie Annexation, the launching of the Freshwater Research and

Innovation Center, and NMC's contracting with a third-party payroll administrator (Edustaff), all described elsewhere, the following offer select examples of how I'm leading the College's active pursuit of innovation, and revenue diversification/growth, in support of financial sustainability.

- **Lease Agreement with Greenspire High School.** This past year, as we've intentionally sought revenue diversification opportunities, the College signed a 7-year lease agreement with Greenspire High School. It will result in \$1.5 million rental income for NMC over the 7-year contract (in support of the College's revenue diversification goal). Overall impact on University Center revenues, will grow from \$249,000 in 2021 (prior to the Greenspire partnership), to \$533,000 revenues forecasted for 2030 (at end of the 7-year contract).
- **Curricular Innovation and Revenue Growth Plan for NMC's Police Academy.** The College's Police Academy program has embraced a major curricular innovation that will allow it to double enrollment within two years, helping to fill a shortage of police and law enforcement officers statewide. The new design of the reimagined Police Academy curriculum, begun this fall, means that instead of turning out one graduating class per academic year, NMC will have one in the fall and one in the spring. Students will receive the same training by attending full time for 16 weeks, instead of part-time as they do now for the nine-month academic year. See: <https://www.traverseticker.com/news/a-new-beginning-for-nmcs-police-academy/>. The success of this was also due to the courageous decision to implement a new, tuition differential strategy.
- **Development of the New Culinary-Maritime Certificate.** The College is also innovating new programs like our Culinary Arts Certificate with a Maritime Emphasis. Having listened to the industry demand and the growing interest among GLCI students, we've developed this one-of-a-kind culinary certificate program to meet the need for cooks who cannot only prepare quality meals, but do so on maritime vessels. It also further defines the unique value proposition of the GLCI, tied to the Great Lakes. See: <https://www.traverseticker.com/news/when-maritime-meet-culinary-inside-nmcs-one-of-a-kind-partnership/>. We have eleven students enrolled in this program for this fall semester.
- **Aviation Growth Plan.** An Aviation Growth Plan has been developed and adopted by the College, with plan implementation underway. The College is listening to workforce and student demands (e.g., the global pilot shortage), and the demand from prospective students (e.g., a two-year waiting list). We have committed to aggressive growth of the program over the next three years, including more instructors, more aircraft, and a bigger hangar. Those expansions will allow the college to realize 25 percent more aviation students per year, which would in turn impact the pilot shortage and grow the College's revenues. See: <https://www.traverseticker.com/news/taking-it-higher-nmc-plots-aviation-program-expansion/>.

- **GLCI Revenue Enhancement Opportunities**. Now that we've done the initial work of 'Reimagining GLCI' focused on managing expenses, we've turned our attention to a review of revenue enhancement opportunities. See: <https://www.traverseticker.com/news/cocktails-master-classes-and-more-nmc-hires-consultant-to-boost-revenue-opportunities-for-lobdells/>. We have engaged with a Foundation-funded consultant who has been working with us to identify new revenue streams that we could derive within GLCI. Later this fall we'll be making decisions about which strategies to pursue.

(3) Human Resources

This competency speaks to how the President ensures College compliance with employment laws. Additionally, this competency speaks to how the President inspires commitment to our mission (beyond mere compliance), through values-grounded leadership; and, the provision of leadership and resources necessary for the professional development of employees to grow to meet the needs of an ever-changing College. Ultimately, the competency speaks to the President's leadership developing a healthy and productive culture – a positive work environment where employees seek ways to continuously improve and shape the future of the college, and support our students' pursuit of their dreams.

Continuing to Invest in Building Enrollment Marketing Capacity. Beginning three years ago, I began intentionally supporting the redesign of the Public Relations, Marketing and Communications (PRMC) office/functions at NMC, especially investing in enrollment marketing. There has been considerable work put into this initiative to ultimately better serve the college. This has included the Board of Trustees' April 2021 decision to use the Fund for Transformation to build the team needed for this critical work. Then, with approval of the FY23 budget in June 2022, the new Marketing and Creative Directors initiated enrollment marketing planning. This year, strategic plan objectives related to enrollment and retention have been fully implemented and have begun to bear fruit.

For fall semester, we're seeing improvements in nearly all funnel metrics, including an overall increase in headcount of 48 students over fall 2022. We also increased our rate of retained students to the highest rate since 2016. Every special program that could bring in higher numbers of new students than last year did. See the chart below.

It's also telling that NMC earned a \$100,000 grant from the prestigious Lumina Foundation, for brand strategy development (with special thanks to Diana Fairbanks and Jennifer Hricik for their initiative and hard work in pursuit of this support for a most-strategic initiative). Like a strategic plan or campus master planning process, brand strategy development will also be a comprehensive, college-wide initiative. This is the second Lumina grant to support the new enrollment marketing work of the College. It says a lot about our college and our team to get this kind of support from an organization like Lumina – and their belief in our marketing investment.

| Program Enrollment Targets | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|------------------------------|
| Program | Fall 2022 New Enrolled# | Fall 2023 New Enrolled# | % Increase from Fall 2022 | Notes |
| Engineering Tech | 20 | 26 | 23% | |
| Aviation* | 30 | 30 | 0% | *Reached new admit limit |
| Marine Tech - BS | 2 | 14 | 86% | |
| Water Quality & Env Technology | 0 | 2 | New | Approved late in cycle |
| GLMA Deck | 35 | 35 | 0% | |
| GLMA Engine | 18 | 19 | 5% | |
| Nursing (ADN)* | 42 | 42 | 0% | Reached new admit limit |
| Culinary-Maritime | 0 | 11* | New | *Includes secondary programs |
| Audio Tech | 17 | 20 | 15% | |
| Law Enforcement Certificate** | 2 | 11 | 82% | |
| Surveying | 1 | 7 | 86% | |
| Visual Communications | 7 | 29 | 76% | |
| CIT | 27 | 41 | 34% | |
| Engineering | 8 | 9 | 11% | |

Building Coaching Capacity Through MCAN Grant. Additionally, I am proud of the College earning an MCAN Sixty by 30 Adult Student Success Grant, for almost \$200,000. This funding will support developing our coaching capacity, impacting our strategies to improve persistence and completion rates among adult students, and ultimately assisting in increasing Michigan’s postsecondary attainment rates.

Leading the Development of a Healthy and Productive Culture. Ultimately, any president’s leadership must prioritize developing a healthy and productive culture – a positive work environment where employees seek ways to continuously improve and shape the future of the

institution. I purposefully work on this every day, intentional that my actions communicate cultural expectations. The following are meant to serve as select, specific examples of how I go about this, engaging with faculty/staff and students. Foremost, is my daily ‘walk about’ throughout our campuses, seeking to connect with students, employees, and visitors – mostly listening to what people are experiencing and seeking to understand ‘what’s working’ and ‘what’s not’. Simply, it allows me every day to ‘take the temperature’ of how the campus climate is feeling.

- **Engaging with Students.** Specifically, regarding engagement with students, this year I attended numerous classes on all four campuses (including time in the air/in a plane, as well as on the water/on a boat (even including an overnight on the *State of Michigan*). Not to mention, a handful of College for Kids classes; as well, I’ve participated in EES classes, as a student. I have hosted opportunities for me to simply spend time and connect with students on campus (e.g., “Pizza with the President” and “Pancakes with the President”). I have engaged with new students during ‘Move In’ and kayaked with them during ‘Welcome Week’. I have snow tubed with students at Timberlee, ice skated with them at the Civic Center, and danced with them at the ‘Gala to Give’. I am most proud this past year of my engagement with our student volunteers at Blair Elementary. The power of this volunteerism cannot be overstated. See: <https://nexus.nmc.edu/articles/setting-a-course-for-college-81657079242>.
- **Engaging with Faculty and Staff.** Similar to my engagement with students, I’m also committed to engaging with faculty and staff, every day, in formal meetings/gatherings (e.g., our 2023 Employee Picnic and Recognition Celebration), and informally (e.g., during my daily ‘walk about’ throughout our campuses). I have made it a regular practice to ‘go for walks on campus’ with community members who ‘have something to share’. I have made it a practice to meet with all retirees for lunch, as a sort of informal ‘exit interview’; as well as hosting ‘New Employee Coffee with the President’. I convene with the whole campus community at our August, October, and January Conferences, as well as many departmental meetings/smaller gatherings, as invited (including my once a year connecting with 1st and 2nd shift custodians and facilities staff). And, this past year, I ‘led the way’ participating in our First Annual ‘Faculty Versus Staff Kickball Game’ (during our Fall PD Day). Simply, I seek to be accessible, role model listening and caring, and I’m mindful that my leadership must prioritize developing a healthy and productive culture – a positive work environment where employees seek ways to continuously improve and shape the future of the institution.
- Additionally, I have attended countless concerts, art openings, even a Pit Spitters baseball game (which brought together 300 of our NMC faculty/staff/students, and alumni), and campus events such as: the Pride Carnival; the Juneteenth Celebration; and, our Native American Student Organization’s Pow Wow honoring our Native American graduates.

Championing the College's HR Team and Their Contributions to a Healthy Culture. Too often the day-to-day work of an organization's HR function gets overlooked. As a former HR executive leader and Human Resources Development faculty, I am acutely aware of the importance of this work – it can either positively reinforce the efforts to shape a healthy and productive culture, or it can breed cynicism and distrust.

NMC's HR team's work spans from talent acquisition (e.g., 236 hires this past year, including: 66 adjuncts, 68 supplementals, 56 students, 4 faculty, 32 staff, and 10 maintenance/custodial) to talent development (e.g., delivering our Fall PD Day – this year focused on 'entrepreneurial mindset'). Our HR team also leads many events meant to positively shape our desired culture, for example: NMC Holiday Party, New Employee Orientation, Rewards and Recognition event (You Made It Possible). And, of course, our HR Team helps care for our NMC family, for example: 1) providing increased support with our EAP in order to better address mental health issues, and 2) successfully negotiating contracts with benefits providers with no increase to medical insurance premium costs for employees in 2023! Lastly, our HR Team has led some major efforts this past year, such as: 1) successful negotiation of two collective bargaining agreement contracts (with the SEIU and MEA) while enhancing mutual respect and trust between the parties; 2) Edustaff implementation, to increase the attractiveness of our overall employment proposition and reduce employment costs; and 3) NeoEd implementation – our new HR talent acquisition, performance management, and employee development software. All of this is being done while also still helping us 'come out of the pandemic' – e.g., meeting the needs of managers/supervisors to assist with coaching and performance management (helping 'quiet quitters' find their way back in or out of NMC).

(4) Facilities

This competency speaks to how the President ensures budgeting/planning, maintenance, and upgrades of all capital assets of the College (e.g., buildings, properties, technology, and equipment), in support of the mission and the priorities of the strategic plan.

Facilities Utilization and Campus Master Plan. In light of the impacts of the pandemic, and that it has been over a decade since the last campus master plan was completed, I have initiated a process for assessing how the pandemic and changes to teaching and learning are impacting facilities use, to ultimately lead to the strategic reimagining of facilities use on campus. With the increased demand for off-campus learning (e.g., increased virtual learning) and the consequence of underutilized facilities, a review and reimagining of campus facilities use is warranted. We must seek to understand what the new demand on campus facilities will be post-pandemic. This facilities utilization plan will be a key input to the more comprehensive campus master planning process which is also warranted post-pandemic. The Building and Site Committee has served as a sounding board for the process, with the Board of Trustees weighing-in regarding the goals/desired outcomes. The process is continuing to progress.

Capital Budget Planning and Financing. I have worked tirelessly with Troy Kierczynski (VP, Finance and Administration) and many others this year conducting a 'Capital Awareness

Campaign’, engaging with lobbyist Kelley Cawthorne to advocate for: 1) Aviation Hangar Expansion; 2) Student Services Hub; 3) Geothermal Project; and, 4) the Freshwater Research and Innovation Center (FRIC). We have promoted these NMC projects by: 1) developing ‘one-pagers’ for each project to share with state and federal legislators and stakeholders; 2) meeting with over a dozen legislators individually in Lansing to promote the projects; and 3) hosting numerous state and federal representatives for multiple campus/Aviation tours, advocating for project funding. In addition to our state-focused funding advocacy strategy, the College submitted two Congressionally Directed Spending requests (e.g., ‘earmarks’) for our Geothermal Project and FRIC. NMC earned the full \$2.7 million spending request towards the College’s Geothermal Project, and we earned a \$1.627 million earmark for the FRIC project. We are still awaiting, but anticipate another federal earmark (\$550,000 to support our Aviation project. State funding yielded: \$3.75 million of support for our Aviation Growth Plan, and \$15 million was awarded to support the FRIC project. We are also ‘still in the running’ for State Capital Outlay funding, to support our Student Services Hub project. Recall, this is a \$6.5 million project (with \$3.25 million of state funding being requested). We got this project in front of the Appropriations Committee, and I spent the day visiting legislators, further advocating for it. Ours was one of just seven capital outlay projects that ‘made the cut’. We’ll know this fall, if it will move forward.

(5) Educational Services & Quality

This competency speaks to how the President demonstrates a commitment to institutional excellence (e.g., programs that support quality and equity throughout the College). In addition to academic programming, it also includes student services, speaking to how the President provides effective leadership in establishing and maintaining accessible, comprehensive student services that promote student success. Ultimately, this competency speaks to the importance of ensuring the overall quality and continuous improvement of instruction and student services, to meet student needs, and community and industry needs.

Innovating New Programs. This past year I’ve doggedly focused my leadership efforts around innovation, enrollment growth, and revenue diversification. In these areas, I’ve sought to inspire and empower the college’s innovative educators, supporting and encouraging them to continue to develop new courses and programs, and find new revenue streams. In short, my work has focused on further developing a culture of innovation, through the exploration and development of new programs and revenue streams.

Some examples of new programs generated this past year include:

- **ADN to BSN.** This partnership with Davenport University will help increase our Nursing enrollment and provide greater opportunities for our graduates to earn their bachelor degree in Nursing. The state of Michigan granted NMC \$2 million that will enable us to increase our student support and research staff by three professionals, provide additional scholarships, and faculty and staff professional development. The program launched with nine students this fall. See:

- [NMC Announces Davenport University As Partner For New Nursing Bachelor's Degree](#), *The Ticker*
- [NMC first to use new grant for nurses](#)
- [Success story: NMC, Davenport University to partner for 3-year nursing program](#).
- **Accelerated Police Academy.** NMC's Police Academy has undertaken a major curricular innovation that will allow it to double enrollment within two years; instead of turning out one graduating class per academic year, NMC will have one in the fall and one in the spring.
- **Water Quality and Environmental Technology AAS.** Based on our work on distinctive programs (Strategic Goal #5), this new degree will focus on training the workforce to monitor and clean up the Great Lakes watershed and improve the quality of our water resources. The new "Wet Tech" degree will be the only one of its kind in Michigan. It will utilize existing core, surveying, and uncrewed aerial systems courses, as well as new courses in environmental site assessment, aquifer sampling, and groundwater monitoring. See: <https://www.traverseticker.com/news/how-nmcs-newest-degree-program-could-help-shape-water-cleanup-projects-in-michigan-and-beyond/>.
- **Culinary + Maritime Certificate.** GLCI and GLMA have collaborated to innovate a new program – a Culinary Arts Certificate with a Maritime emphasis. Having listened to the industry demand and the growing interest among GLCI students, we've developed this one-of-a-kind culinary certificate program to meet the need for cooks who cannot only prepare quality meals, but do so on maritime vessels. It also further defines the unique value proposition of the GLCI, tied to the Great Lakes. See: <https://www.mlive.com/public-interest/2023/02/michigan-college-teaches-students-to-be-chefs-on-ships.html>.
- **Partnership Between NMC and Bay Mills Tribal College.** NMC built a partnership with Bay Mills Tribal College that will have students at the tribal college transferring to NMC's dental assistant program after completing their first year. The partnership will allow students from Bay Mills to take their general education courses there before transferring to NMC, where they can complete the dental assistant program. While this partnership will educate dental assistants, it will also help improve dental health in Native communities (the U.P. does not have a dental assisting program). Also, of the more than 315,000 dental assistants nationwide, less than 1 percent are Native American. This partnership seeks to move the needle on Native American dental health. See: https://www.record-eagle.com/news/local_news/taking-care-of-teeth-dental-assistant-program-expands-with-bay-mills-partnership/article_24f3f630-c1ce-11ed-b46b-9f2b8fc65f92.html.
- **Uncrewed Aerial Systems Degree.** We have repositioned our UAS program as the AAS in Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS) and offering it as a stand-alone program for the next academic year. This will build greater awareness and promotion for one of our distinctive

programs and allow us to be the first community college in the state to highlight this growing field. See:

<https://www.traverseticker.com/news/nmc-adds-standalone-drone-degree/>.

- **Heavy Highway Construction Training Program.** When a Traverse Connect study revealed a skills gap is hindering the region's economic growth, NMC responded. With focused short courses, also called microcredentials. NMC training was created in partnership with Team Elmers to meet the demand for heavy highway construction workers. See:
https://www.record-eagle.com/news/business/highway-construction-program-starting/article_6f10726c-6b47-11ed-945b-dfd2046837c4.html.
- **Business Essentials Course.** NMC partnered with 20Fathoms to create the "Business essentials Course", designed to help launch tech-based businesses. Business Essentials is designed for those who have never launched a business and tackles subjects like how to make money, marketing, viability, local resources, access to funding, customer discovery and other partnerships.
- **Experiential Learning.** While not a new course/program, the College's positioning of the centrality of experiential learning at NMC continued to grow this year. We expanded the use of experiential learning opportunities in our classes, with 2,225 credential-seeking students participating in an experiential learning opportunity.
- **Accelerated Courses.** Also, not a new course/program, but a new delivery modality, we made significant progress in establishing accelerated courses. In fact, this fall, NMC will have thirteen accelerated course pathways, with an enrollment of 352 non-discrete students. Also, entire programs like our Police Academy and Culinary have shifted to accelerated course formats. See:
 - <https://www.nmc.edu/about/nmc-stories/success-stories/microcredentials.html>.
 - <https://www.nmc.edu/about/nmc-stories/success-stories/new-it-esports-certificates.html>
 - <https://www.traverseticker.com/news/nmc-adds-new-it-esports-certificates/>.
- **Credit Where Credit Is Due.** This past year, NMC earned a glowing endorsement from one of the country's most respected foundations, The Lumina Foundation. A special 'hats off' to Jason Slade for his leadership and championing of 'credit where credit is due' (and, for so eloquently describing this strategic initiative of the College, in the article). To describe NMC, Lumina used words like "innovative program" and "nimble", and notes that "programs across the state are taking lessons from [NMC]." Referring to NMC as "in the vanguard". Additionally, they recognize NMC's innovation-mindedness, noting, "The college is one of a few in the state that are breaking with tradition and awarding college credit for industry-recognized credentials that students bring with them when they enroll." Additionally, the article highlights our industry partnering, If you're not familiar,

the concept is simple. It's about giving traditional college credit for certificates that students earn. It helps counter the criticism of certificate programs in general, that too few translate into college credits. NMC is changing that, by awarding academic credits for industry-recognized credentials. See:

<https://www.luminafoundation.org/focus-magazine/spring-2023/michigan-programs-give-college-credit-and-assistance-where-its-due/>. Another great example of this, is the partnering developed by EES and the Northwest Michigan Regional Fire Training Center. NMC launched a new program to help people become firefighters and earn college credits. See:

<https://www.9and10news.com/2023/08/22/new-partnership-in-traverse-city-to-combat-the-firefighter-shortage/>.

Creatively Funding New Programs. We have secured several private philanthropic gifts as well as state funding that will allow us to fund the following academic programming:

- Expanded equipment and program development purchases for Water Studies Institute
- Three-year partial funding for our new Electrical instructor
- Temporary three-year funding for our Survey Program recruiter See: https://www.record-eagle.com/news/local_news/survey-says-new-methods-needed-to-recruit-survey-techs/article_d678a996-b157-11ed-ba4f-174d993c03d2.html?utm_source=record-eagle.com&utm_campaign=%2Fnewsletters%2Flists%2Fheadlines%2F%3F-dc%3D1677155447&utm_medium=email&utm_content=read%20more.
- Temporary five-year funding for our Audio Technology Program coordinator
- New summer bridge program called College Edge, for students to catch up on their English, Mathematics and college-readiness skills. We served 29 students in two separate sessions. Each student received a \$1,000 scholarship for successfully completing the program and enrolling at NMC. See: <https://www.traverseticker.com/news/nmc-eyes-new-state-funded-programs-to-boost-enrollment-drive-student-success/>.
- Michigan's Industry 4.0 Technology Implementation Grant to help with the awareness and integration of the latest manufacturing technology See: https://www.record-eagle.com/news/business/businesses-receive-technology-grants/article_24de20ca-5177-11ed-8fa6-f3c4dfb4de06.html?utm_source=Traverse+Connect+Newsletter&utm_campaign=b6a9d099a9-CONNECTION_2022_1102&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_46e7395b38-b6a9d099a9-58791423.

(6) External & Internal Community Relations

This competency speaks to how the President demonstrates ability to work effectively with community groups, governmental agencies, local schools, employers, and the community at large. It also speaks to promoting and advocating for the College at the local, state, and national level, as well as promoting the College through effective interactions with stakeholders at the

College (e.g., College Unions, College Foundation), and actively participating in College and community activities. Additionally, this competency speaks to effectively working to build and maintain community partnerships that contribute to serving the needs of the community at-large (e.g., promoting the value of the College to the community and its role in meeting regional needs and expectations).

Launching the Office of Possibilities. I have taken on a championing role, for developing the College's entrepreneurial mindset and innovation capacity. This year, entrepreneurship took a giant leap forward. Historically, we have been fortunate to rely on the NMC Foundation for the support of Innovation Grants to improve teaching and learning at the college. But the landscape of higher education is changing, and disruptive innovation has become more critical to ensure NMC's long-term success. We are fortunate to have dedicated faculty and staff here at NMC, who have always been willing to take risks and embrace new ideas. We are also experiencing a growing entrepreneurial ecosystem in Traverse City as more start-ups, incubators and collaborative spaces take root in our region.

With all of this in mind and in partnership with the Foundation, we have launched a more disruptive and exciting innovation framework at the college. The Office of Possibilities (or OOPs) is designed to allow students, faculty, and staff to explore and develop their ideas. Unlike the previous innovation process, it involves mentoring to challenge and flesh out the idea, connecting back to the entrepreneurial community and focusing on a growth-driven mindset to expand innovation at NMC. In short, we're leveraging OOPs to build the College's innovation capability (yes, "OOPs" - encouraging risk taking and learning from failure). We are encouraging entrepreneurial thinking and disruptive innovation at NMC and building out our community's entrepreneurial ecosystem. See:

https://assets.noviams.com/novi-file-uploads/nacce/NACCE_SummerFall_2023_web-2.pdf.

Partnering to Support Development of the New Blue Economy/Water Innovation. I have personally leveraged two previous partnering relationships, to help advance NMC's positioning as a leader in the new blue economy/water innovation in our region.

First, I can proudly share that the College and Canadian non-profit, AquaAction have teamed up to launch the first bi-national AquaHacking Challenge for the Great Lakes. The AquaHacking Challenge is a tech innovation program focused on developing solutions to pressing freshwater issues within the Great Lakes watershed region. The program will culminate with the participants' pitches at this next year's Northern Michigan Startup Week. By hosting this challenge here and the innovation that goes along with it, the hope is they'll want to stay and spin those businesses up in Traverse City. This then becomes the pipeline for the Freshwater Research & Innovation Center. See:

- <https://www.northernexpress.com/news/feature/water-knows-no-borders-aqua-action-aqua-hacking-nmc/>
- https://aquaaction.org/us/blog/aquaaction-and-northwestern-michigan-college-team-up-to-launch-the-first-bi-national-aquahacking-challenge-for-the-great-lakes/?mc_cid=fb24328053&mc_eid=506cb0b275

Second, we developed a similar partnership earlier this year with the Canadian-based nonprofit, Waterlution. Together, we launched the Great Lakes Water Innovation Lab, a capacity building and innovation acceleration initiative involving young water leaders working across the Great Lakes region from both Canada and the US. See: <https://waterlution.org/wil-great-lakes/>. The event brought together entrepreneurs from the US and Canada in support of developing new technologies and innovative solutions to the issues surrounding the Great Lakes ecosystem. This program was a pilot and continues to position NMC as a leader and convener in innovation in the new blue economy.

Third, the College continues to host and lead the LakeBed 2030 annual conference that brings industry professionals together from science, research, policy, government, and industry to: focus on high-resolution mapping data in the Great Lakes; develop strategies to catalog lakebed information for shared use; and, showcase the latest technology advancements. This year, we had almost 200 participants, and it now is connected to the Smart Ships Coalition Workshop. This event is geared toward government, industry, and academic participants with interests in technology, policy, workforce development, and other aspects relevant to maritime transportation.

Effective Interactions with Internal Stakeholders. Every day I do a ‘walk about’ throughout our campuses, seeking to connect with internal stakeholders (e.g., students and employees). These ‘walkabouts’ allow me to simply take time to chat with folks, and better understand ‘what’s going on’ – on campus and in our students/employees lives. It’s a sort of ‘taking the temperature’ to allow me to better understand the climate of the College at any given time.

Specifically, regarding my engagement with students, I have attended this year:

- Numerous classes on all of our campuses. Not to mention, a handful of Extended Ed (EES) and College for Kids classes.
- Countless student club meetings (e.g., SGA, PTK), and many other events. For example:
 - Active involvement with student “Move-In” (e.g., literally helping students move into the dorms at the start of fall semester) and “Welcome Week” activities.
 - Active engagement with our Blair Elementary mentoring Program, in the classroom at Blair, as well as on the NMC campus.
 - Active engagement, reading to students at Traverse Heights Elementary, as part of the NMC Reading Volunteers.
 - Active engagement in campus celebrations like: Earth Day, MLK Day, Pride Carnival, Graduation Pow Wow, Indigenous Peoples Day, etc.

- And, participation in NMC’s first-ever Future Generation Celebration, a seven-hour music festival on campus that featured a lineup of seven different local and Michigan bands. See:
<https://www.traverseticker.com/news/little-lollapalooza-inside-the-nmc-class-t-hats-mounting-a-full-fledged-music-festival/>.

Regarding my engagement with employees, I have actively engaged in:

- The College’s “Opening Conferences” (in August and January)
- New employee coffee chats
- Annual (listen and learn) gathering with custodians/facilities/maintenance staff
- DEIB Training with President’s Council (facilitated by GVSU’s Inclusion and Equity Institute)
- Numerous hospital visits and funerals
- And, I have sent countless birthday/sympathy/congratulations cards (I send a birthday card to each NMC employee), as well as attend funeral services and celebratory events.

Active Engagement with MCCA, ACCT, and AFIT. I continue to actively engage with MCCA: participating as a member of the Board of Directors; attending President’s meetings; serving as a Leadership Academy presenter; a member of the Student Success Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, and Academic Catch-Up Committee. I was also invited to speak at the Summer Conference, sharing NMC’s Aviation Growth Plan.

I also continue to actively engage with ACCT, attending the Annual Leadership Congress. And, this year, in Las Vegas, I have been invited to serve as a presenter, serving on a panel of three other community college presidents addressing innovative use of social media to engage college stakeholders.

Additionally, I have continued to actively participate in AFIT, having led a group of NMC staff and faculty to this year’s annual conference – where NMC was a featured presenter, sharing the launch of our Office of Possibilities (as an innovative way to innovate)!

(7) Relations with the Board of Trustees

This competency speaks to how the President effectively interacts with the members of the Board, committees, and the Board as a whole. At the most basic level, this means effectively carrying out board governance policies and role modeling college values in a conscientious manner. The competency also speaks to keeping the Board informed, and working to ensure that the College and Trustees are held in the most positive light.

Meetings. I have participated in numerous meetings with the Board of Trustees, including: monthly BOT meetings; countless committee meetings; a board retreat and a study session; attendance at MCCA and ACCT meetings; and, events like the Fellows Dinner, Opening Conferences, as well as hosting an annual BOT + Foundation Executive Committee ‘back to school’ gathering. I have monthly meetings with the Chair to ensure most up-to-date two-way

communication, as well as regular meetings with the Executive Committee to also ensure up-to-date communication between the BOT-President.

Reporting. This year, a mid-month written update has been continued to ensure increased frequency of communication, between formal monthly BOT meetings (and, the ‘President’s Update’ on the BOT agenda). Additionally, this year, given the implementation of the strategic plan, every BOT meeting agenda begins with a ‘Strategic Plan Update’ to ensure the BOT is most up-to-date regarding progress on the strategic plan. It also ensures transparency and accountability.

Ensuring the College and Trustees Are Held In the Most Positive Light. Surely, you have come to realize, over these past four years, that I am a ‘man of integrity’ (e.g., I act with the highest degree of ethics, personal responsibility, and match my actions with my words). The value of this to Trustees and the reputation of the College cannot be overstated. Simply, trustees are not required to deal with drama, scandal, ‘bad press’ or anything else that could threaten their reputations. As already noted throughout this document, the media has carried many positive stories of NMC this year, which reflect positively upon the Trustees. Simply, the College and Trustees were held in the most positive light. This past year, NMC had an unprecedented period of seven months with 100% positive or neutral media sentiment in news coverage, with the remaining months also very strong.

I should also add that I had numerous meetings with community members this past year. My accessibility has surely communicated my willingness to listen and engage with the community. In turn, Trustees are not confronted with ‘community complaints’ or negative perceptions of the College. Similarly, my active engagement in the community – e.g., Traverse Connect Board of Directors, Goodwill Northern Michigan Board of Directors, Munson Medical Center Community Healthcare Council, Rotary Club of Traverse City, not to mention ‘showing up’ for countless other organizations/events (e.g., from the Cherry Festival to Rotary’s Kids free Fishing Day) – further communicates my commitment to the community (and, fewer negative concerns expressed to Trustees).

FIVE STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

The following is an accounting overview of strategic plan implementation. Recall, this is our first full year of implementation. During Year #1 we created the necessary framework and structures to implement and monitor the plan. Achievements included:

- Development of an Office of Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (ORPE) developed dashboard (visible to champions and objective leads)
- Development of a front-facing dashboard including metrics located through the employee page
- Standardized updates to the Board of Trustees on a monthly basis
- Planning and development strategies for Year 2 that aligned with the college's planning processes
 - alignment to our A3, Department Goal Setting process
 - cascading of goals from the Strategic Plan to the department level to individual performance plans
 - alignment with our planning and budget prioritization process, for personnel and expenses
 - rollout of Year #2, with the fiscal year change over
- Timely updates to internal and external stakeholders
- Integration into the college culture (referred to at PD days, opening conference, etc.)

Current State. Here, a brief update/reporting of the current state of strategies and objectives is provided:

1. **Strategy 1: Future-Focused Education** (Champion: Stephen Siciliano)
Enhance offerings through flexible academic pathways, innovative instructional delivery models, and relevant, hands-on educational experiences to empower global learners for the future.

Status: 5 objectives are in progress and on track

Key Metrics: Accelerated courses, credentials for prior learning, course delivery, and exponential learning opportunities are all meeting targets.

2. **Strategy 2: Student Engagement and Success** (Champion: Todd Neibauer)
Develop and deliver comprehensive support services, robust engagement opportunities, and a vibrant collegiate experience to foster learner success, goal completion, and employability.

Status: 4 objectives are in progress and on track; 1 objective is behind schedule due to an unstaffed success coach position

Key Metrics / Notes: Student sense of belonging continues to increase. Enrollment numbers are still lagging behind targets but marketing campaigns continue to be expanded. Key programs are targeted for outreach. Recruiting position for Engineering /

Engineering Tech planned for this fall. Surveying / Geospatial recruiter appears to be drawing in students.

3. **Strategy 3: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** (Champion: Marcus Bennett)
Cultivate an inclusive environment that fosters a sense of belonging and delivers equitable opportunities so all are able to thrive and succeed.

Status: 3 objectives are in progress and on track; 2 objectives are complete

4. **Strategy 4: Community Partnerships and Engagement** (Champion: Jason Slade)
Enhance collaborations that advance community engagement, economic and workforce development, and innovative opportunities for lifelong learning.

Status: 4 objectives are in progress and on track

Key Metrics: Workforce development opportunities have increased exponentially. Financial performance of EES continues to improve, but is still behind target. Working with the business office on strategies.

5. **Strategy 5 - Institutional Distinction and Sustainability** (Champion: Troy Kierczynski)
Leverage distinctive programs that strengthen institutional sustainability and expand global connections for our learners and communities.

Status: 4 objectives are in progress and on track; 3 objectives are in progress, minimally behind schedule

Key Metrics / Notes: Aviation exceeded past revenue and headcounts; hangar expansion is pending. Culinary has met its financial objective. Programs behind are working on meeting financial and headcount goals. Freshwater Research and Innovation Center has been integrated into GLWSI objective.

Key Successes. While there have been numerous wins, both big and small, below are some key successes from Year #1. We should be proud of these, as they are the direct result of our focus and execution of the Strategic Plan, as well as the dedication and determination of our objective leads and champions.

1. **Strategy 1 (Future-Focused Education)** - 26 courses have been developed for accelerated delivery for fall 2023. 1,742 (and rising) students had an experiential learning opportunity (ELO) this academic year, well on our way to providing an ELO for every credential-seeking student.
2. **Strategy 2 (Student Success)** - PRMC has developed and implemented program specific campaigns across GLCI, Engineering, Audio Tech, Surveying, CIT and Police Academy. New campaigns are Nursing, Esports Management Certificate, GLWSI (Marine Tech / WET), UAS and Dental. Currently showing an increase in new students registered for Fall 2023.

3. **Strategy 3 (DEIB)** - Appointment of Marcus Bennett to Special Assistant to the President for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging. Development of purpose statements and definitions are complete and website development has begun. Implemented an onboarding DEI module for all new employees to NMC. Kenneth James engaged faculty and staff around belonging during the opening conference.
4. **Strategy 4 (Community Partnerships)** - Extended Education Services and Marine Center have developed and deployed over 103 workforce and professional development trainings to the community. Company specific work is ongoing with Sara Lee. Enrollment practices have been implemented to make the process more seamless for students applying to NMC and ultimately going on to a University Center partner institution.
5. **Strategy 5 (Distinctive Programs)** - A new maritime culinary certificate was developed and the first cohort begins this fall. The Great Lakes Culinary Institute has successfully met their objective and financial metrics! This was an extensive undertaking by GLCI, administration, and others. We also successfully secured \$3.75m from the State of Michigan and have a high probability of receiving \$550,000 from our Federal congressionally directed spending request to support our Aviation Hangar Expansion project. Securing the funding allows us to shift focus towards project execution.

Looking Ahead to Year #2. The development of Year #2 action steps began in November 2022 with preparation of a rough draft of action steps to support the current objectives based on performance metrics. Subsequent feedback sessions occurred as well as integration between the college's A3s and budget processes ensuring alignment across program areas and resources. New and updated actions were finalized with the adoption of the FY24 budget. Year #3 will take a similar approach with a preparation meeting currently scheduled for early November.

A comparison of Year #1 to Year #2 in terms of objectives and action steps is shown below.

| | Year #1 | Year #2 | Comments |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Time Frame | ~ 17 months Feb. 2022 - June 2023 | 12 months July 2023 - June 2024 | Aligns with fiscal year for departmental planning and budgeting |
| Strategies | 5 | 5 | No change |
| Objectives | 24 | 22 | 2 of 5 Strategy 3 objectives are closed |
| Action Steps | 142 | 137 | Majority (>80%) are new |
| Metrics | Beginning | Fully-implemented | Next update is Sept. 2023 to capture fall enrollment data |
| Alignment | Minimal | Aligned to NMC's A3s | |

| | | | |
|--|--|--------------------|--|
| | | and budget process | |
|--|--|--------------------|--|

Finally, as we enter Year #2, the following are goals we embrace to continue to evolve the strategic plan to serve the College, as we view it as a dynamic, living/breathing document, and not static.

- More focused action steps to meet objectives (Year 1 required exploration and inventory)
- Increase the use of metrics to determine performance, adjusting as needed
- Completion of objectives, allowing Year #3 to be keenly focused on the key objectives under each strategy
- More streamlined development of Year #3 objectives
- NMC's Campus Master Plan was not part of the Strategic Plan, but has since become a critical component of the college's future development. The Campus Master Plan and Strategic Plan will support each other moving forward. The results of the Campus Master Plan should line up against some of our existing objectives allowing for integration.
- Begin considering transition for Year 3 and beyond.

SUMMARY/HIGHLIGHTS OF PERFORMANCE

In this summary, I will answer the question, “What were the highlights of the President’s performance in this past year?” This is my opportunity to share what I am most proud of accomplishing through the collective efforts of the College’s faculty, staff, and administration, along with support from so many stakeholders in our wider community; all in support of our mission, *to transform lives and enrich our communities*.

(1) Three Major College Planning Efforts. I am proud of the planning work that we have done, together: 1) we have completed the development of the College’s strategic plan and have moved into the implementation phase; 2) similarly, we have completed the Foundation’s strategic planning process, and likewise have moved into implementation; and lastly, 3) we have initiated a first-time-in-over-a-decade campus master planning process. These are *major* institutional planning initiatives, and we’ve done three of them! I’m also proud of *how* we’ve undertaken these ‘big three’ planning efforts: 1) with *transparency* - e.g., updating the Board of Trustees monthly at BOT Meetings (and, through numerous college communications); 2) creating *alignment* - e.g., from goal setting to budgeting; and 3) being *results-focused* - e.g., using metrics/dashboard to determine performance.

(2) Innovation and Revenue Diversification/Growth. I am proud of the results we’re realizing given my role leading the College’s active pursuit of innovation and revenue diversification/growth, in support of financial sustainability. Obviously, this is a collective effort - the collaborative effort of many internal and external stakeholders - who are doing the work. This has entailed *innovating new programs* (e.g., Culinary-Maritime Certificate and Water Quality & Environmental Technology AAS Degree). As well as *curricular innovation* (e.g., the Police Academy’s curriculum innovation to double enrollment). And, *accelerated courses* and ‘*credit where credit is due*’ strategies. It has also included *revenue diversification* strategies (e.g., Greenspire lease, resulting in \$1.5 million additional rental income), and *revenue growth* strategies (e.g., the Aviation growth plan, to support 25% enrollment/revenue growth). I am most proud of the work we’re undertaking with: 1) the Benzie annexation possibility (which could result in a \$3 million increase in annual revenue, in perpetuity, if successful), and 2) the Freshwater Research and Innovation Center (which has the potential to be a major driver of regional economic development). All of these results are being fueled by an increased leadership focus and my championing role, for developing the College’s entrepreneurial mindset and innovation capacity. Specifically, I am very proud of our launch of the Office of Possibilities. Unlike the College’s previous innovation process, it involves mentoring to challenge and flesh out the idea, connecting back to the wider entrepreneurial community, while focusing on a growth-driven mindset to expand innovation at NMC.

(3) Prudent Fiscal Stewardship. In addition to the revenue diversification and growth initiatives noted above, I also focused on initiating two major cost-saving measures, yielding significant results for the College. One, was the signing a contract with third-party payroll administrator, Edustaff, allowing us to deliver on our value of fiscal stewardship while also affording higher take-home pay for our adjunct and supplemental employees. Specifically, it's forecasted to create savings for the College, in the range of \$150,000 to \$250,000 annually, and at the same time it will afford an upside for the adjuncts and supplemental employees, by minimizing the deductions required by MPSERS and thus afford higher take-home pay. Two, was leading the effort to 'reimagine' GLCI, addressing declining enrollment and unsustainable expenses of the past decade. The results we have achieved are significant - by the end of this past fiscal year, the program deficit was reduced from \$400,000 to \$27,650. And, a plan is now in place to make the program financially sustainable.

(4) Legislative Advocacy to Earn Funding Support. As noted above, this past year, I tirelessly engaged our federal (Senators Stabenow and Peters, and Representative Bergman) and state (Senator Damoose, and Representatives Coffia and Roth) legislators, advocating for funding support for NMC. This was a highly collaborative effort involving many internal and external partners.

- In terms of federal support, we were successful at earning two earmarks from the 117th Congress: 1) \$2.7 million for NMC's approximately \$15 million geothermal/power plant project, and 2) \$1.627 million for NMC and our four partner institutions to develop the Freshwater Research and Innovation Center.
- As for State support, we were successful earning: 1) an additional \$15 million for the Freshwater Research and Innovation Center, and 2) \$3.75 million for our Aviation Growth Plan (as well as, a \$550,000 pending federal budget earmark).