



**Northwestern  
Michigan  
College**

**Board of Trustees**

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October 22, 2024

The NMC Board of Trustees recently completed an evaluation of President Nissley. This year’s evaluation was enhanced to create alignment with the college’s strategic plan. The process included an evaluation from 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 2025.

The Presidential Performance and Compensation Committee will be meeting in the coming months to solidify 2025 goals. These goals and priorities will be presented to the committee by President Nissley.

Sincerely,

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

Your Name	Strat 1	Strat 2	Strat 3	Strat 4	Strat 5				
Ken Warner	3	3	3	5	4				
Kennard Weaver	3	4	4	4	5				
Laura Oblinger	4	3	4	4	4				
Bill Marsh	3	5	4	5	3				
Chris M. Bott	3	4	3	4	5				
Doug Bishop	4	4	3	3	3				
Andy Robitshek	4	4	5	5	5				
Average	3.428571429	3.857142857	3.714285714	4.285714286	4.142857143				
Rounded	<b>3.43</b>	<b>3.86</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>4.29</b>	<b>4.14</b>				
Your Name	Communication	Teamwork	Productivity	Dependability	Quality	Problem Solving	Ethical Behavior	Shared Governanc	Board Communicat
Ken Warner	4	3	4	4	3	3	4	3	4
Kennard Weaver	3	4	5	5	3	3	5	3	2
Laura Oblinger	4	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	4
Bill Marsh	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5
Chris M. Bott	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	3
Doug Bishop	5	4	3	3	3	2	5	3	4
Andy Robitshek	4	4	3	4	4	4	5	4	4
Average	4.142857143	4	4.142857143	4	3.714285714	3.428571429	4.571428571	3.571428571	3.714285714
Rounded	<b>4.14</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.14</b>		<b>3.71</b>	<b>3.43</b>	<b>4.57</b>	<b>3.57</b>	<b>3.71</b>

2024 Presidential Evaluation – Trustee Responses - Average Rankings and Comments

Scale: 1 – Does not meet expectations; 2 - Meets some expectations; 3 – Meets expectations. 4 - Exceeds expectations; 5 - Significantly exceeds expectations; DK - Don't know

STRATEGIC PLAN	AVG:
<p><b>1. Future-Focused Education:</b> Enhance offerings through flexible academic pathways, innovative instructional delivery models and relevant, hands-on educational experiences to empower global learners for the future.</p>	<p><b>3.43</b></p>
<p>Warner: While the College added a few new certificate programs this year, most of the success in this area during the past year reflects implementation of previously announced new programming. Both new and previously announced programming reflect well on the College's commitment to innovation.</p>	
<p>Weaver: NMC gathers future employment information from traditional advisory groups. These are a limited number of people appointed by the administration. A clear, well-advertised path is needed for others with new or different ideas to obtain information or deliver suggestions.</p>	
<p>Oblinger: I have witnessed many enhancements to our academic pathways that have blossomed under Nick's leadership in the past year. Specifically, the enhancements to our culinary curriculum to include Bakery, Maritime Culinary, Sports Performance Nutrition, are key examples of how Nick encourages his team to think big and be innovative. Additionally, we have added Water Quality and Environmental Technology curriculum, Computer Support and more to respond to career needs and student desires. ADN to BSN was a critical move and we did it, culminating with the Nurse Pinning ceremony for the first time ever. This proves that Nick is thinking outward, he is listening to the market needs and being innovative. Most recently as we heard from a strategic plan update - he is empowering his team to respond to the students for delivery methods they desire rather than pursuing what we thought would be the trend - i.e., backing off strategies that pushed for online courses because it is not what our students are requesting. Finally, the effort to bring NMC to an Experiential Learning Institute and providing qualifying certifications for our students that make them even more marketable is a great example of Nick bringing this strategy to fruition.</p>	
<p>Marsh: In light of the major program advancements in GLCI, Experiential Learning, Construction Technology and others highlighted in his report, I see some significant barriers to creating the "possibilitarian" culture of disruption and experimentation Nick has championed, especially in curriculum innovation. The Office of Possibilities, for example, has shifted the majority of their work outside the college to the local startup community which, from the college's perspective, is concerning. I believe that Nick will need to address some difficult, unpopular decisions if we are going to make the systemic changes necessary to create the culture he envisions.</p>	
<p>Bott: Nick is doing what is expected of him</p>	

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<p><b>2. Student Engagement and Success:</b> Develop and deliver comprehensive support services, robust engagement opportunities and a vibrant collegiate experience to foster learner success, goal completion and employability.</p>	<p><b>3.86</b></p>
<p>Warner: As Nick noted in his self-evaluation, things are definitely looking up in terms of student enrollment and success. The changes are relatively marginal (although the shift from declining to increasing enrollment is potentially quite significant; hopefully state coverage of tuition will result in another significant increase). Nick added one full-time success coach, which is clearly a positive, but I suspect that one FTE is not sufficient to build student support to the level likely needed. The brand assessment and strategy planning is a commendable idea. We will begin to learn its value in the coming year.</p>	
<p>Weaver: NMC provides considerable student support. but student success continues to grow incrementally. Metrics on increased student success are still not showing marked improvement.</p>	
<p>Oblinger: If I could offer this rating a 3.5, closer to a 4, I would. The only reason I have come down to a more neutral position is because I'd like to see growth in our student success services and the student completion metrics. This will come with many initiatives in our pipeline related to community building on campus, building enhancements, one-stop shop services and more. I know the eye is on this ball and this is evident in Nick's own self-evaluation along with future strategies in our Master Plan, efforts to support our student success coaches, and more. Nick's most evident success within this strategy has been our continued enrollment increase. We started turning this corner before any other College in the state and our trend continues. Nick has encouraged marketing investments, and this is beginning to show in the most relevant indicator, our enrollment.</p>	
<p>Bott: Would like to see the Osterlin renovation and consolidation of services move along faster.</p>	

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<p><b>3. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI):</b> Cultivate an inclusive environment that fosters a sense of belonging and delivers equitable opportunities so all are able to thrive and succeed.</p>	<p><b>3.71</b></p>
<p>Warner: I admire Nick's commitment to DEIB. As we're all aware, increasing diversity on campus - especially racial/ethnic diversity - is a huge challenge in our region of the state. I give Nick high marks for the "I" and "B" (Inclusion and Belonging). This said, I found the accomplishments listed under this strategy as a whole to be only loosely connected to DEIB. The Neurodiversity Support Center definitely fits this category nicely. International service does too but is nothing new for a college long committed to this dimension of what is one of the best examples of experiential learning for undergrads. Acquisition of off-campus apartments and campus safety and emergency preparedness both relate only very weakly to DEIB.</p>	
<p>Weaver: Nick has been enthusiastic about powwows and Pride groups. Commendable efforts being made, but we have seen little or no objective positive results in terms of either growth in diversity or in success of minority groups. It's a good start, with lots of room to grow.</p>	
<p>Oblinger: Through Nick's leadership and placement of staff to enhance this strategy, the College has seen a safe and vibrant campus. I have been directly involved in student activity and witnessed an all-inclusive campus with an open-arm welcoming environment. It is my opinion that this environment is communicated amongst students to future students and supports parts of our enrollment increase. Additionally, our campus is safe on many levels, and this is credited towards a sense of belonging and inclusive environment. In addition to our campus culture, Nick has built a President's Council that is diverse in many ways that brings a diverse set of views, contributing to a dynamic leadership team. With all of this said, although our job is never done in this area, I believe we can begin to naturally engage in this important strategy without calling it out in our Strategic Plan or through position titles. These steps were critical to ensure we were building a culture of DEIB, I'd like Nick to start thinking about how we sustain this naturally, making room in our Plan for more innovative work.</p>	
<p>Bott: Would like to see more effort to identify the barriers for students to NMC and what we are doing to encourage more students to attend.</p>	

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<b>4. Community Partnerships and Engagement:</b> Enhance collaborations that advance community engagement, economic and workforce development and innovative opportunities for lifelong learning.	<b>4.29</b>
<p>Warner: FRIC is a major accomplishment, potentially (and hopefully) a real game-changer for the College, the region, and even the state and nation (and conceivably beyond the U.S. and Canada). FRIC could prove to be a major source of community engagement, economic and workforce development, and innovative opportunities for lifelong learning. The new relationship with Aqua Action, while much smaller, fits in nicely with the motivations underlying the establishment of FRIC and, more generally, with the College's demonstrable commitment to innovation and entrepreneurship. Nick's extraordinary commitment to the Benzie annexation was a remarkable display of his commitment to developing community partnerships and engagement, even if the effort failed. My hat's off to Nick for his efforts in this domain.</p>	
<p>Weaver: Community engagement is largely through established organizations, with little engagement from individuals in the general public. The growth in lifelong education for older citizens is good, but we need to engage more young people on an individual level.</p>	
<p>Oblinger: I have two primary examples in this Plan area that are critical to proving Nick's success. Freshwater Research and Innovation Center (FRIC) is one of our region's greatest accomplishments and game changers for our economy. With Nick's leadership - NMC was at the helm of this effort and in the governance, allowed us to be one of the leading members. FRIC is one of the most innovative accomplishments that NMC has been a part of in years. His leadership through this process kept us at the head of the table. Additionally, regardless of the outcome of our efforts to Annex Benzie County, Nick led this process with incredible integrity and tenacity. Nick brought NMC into Benzie County and with or without a vote, we have become a part of the fabric in Benzie County. I sat through at least 20 meetings with Nick and I witnessed him single handedly build relationships in Benzie County broader than we have ever had. How Nick led this process was with conviction, integrity, and thoughtful effort. Nick's efforts during this process were outstanding. There are plenty more examples of his efforts in partnerships such as our work with GVSU, MI Tech, AquaHacking Challenge and more.</p>	
<p>Marsh: FRIC is a huge win for NMC, the business community, and the partner organizations who are leveraging this region's burgeoning investment in entrepreneurialism.</p>	
<p>Bott: Getting more involved in the community. This will help build stronger connections</p>	

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<p><b>5. Institutional Distinction and Sustainability:</b> Leverage distinctive programs that strengthen institutional sustainability and expand global connections for our learners and communities.</p>	<p><b>4.14</b></p>
<p>Warner: NMC is truly a source of distinctive programming, ranging from the Aviation program to UAS, from marine technology to GLCI's sports nutrition and maritime certificates. Nick has presided over some significant developments in these and other College programs. The College's strength in global programming and connections is quite impressive for a community college. Innovation in all of these areas highlights our institutional distinction and should serve sustainability in the process. As well, the Campus Master Plan is, in my opinion, very effectively focused on strengthening the institution and its sustainability.</p>	
<p>Weaver: Transformation of the Culinary Institute is a good example of adapting to achieve sustainability. The study abroad programs are an outstanding example of institutional distinction. And of course the aviation school and the GLMA are unique examples of distinction among community colleges. Nick deserves credit for the first of these examples, and for continuing to support the continuation of the other two.</p>	
<p>Oblinger: One of the most distinctive programs that I have seen born from NMC is the Office of Possibilities (OOPS). This program has enhanced our community and our entrepreneurs trying to succeed within it. For our college to be connected to a community "machine" that fosters innovation and opportunity, is not something that has been a historical role for us. Now, it is. By supporting and nurturing the growth of OOPS, Nick is nurturing our community and our own College to have tools to grow beyond the strategic plan and do so with an entrepreneurial mindset. Throughout the year, there have been many examples of distinct changes to our college that has not only allowed us to sustain, but better yet, grow and thrive. This includes our long relationship with Sodexo and our use of Edustaff. Related to our global strategies and connections, how Nick has embraced our International Affairs Forum (IAF) and the team that leads it has created a more vibrant IAF. Nick is an advocate for our unique programming and that includes our curriculum that supports global efforts and helps connect the dots on how this expands the success of our students and community.</p>	
<p>Marsh: Again, despite some impressive wins in leveraging distinctive NMC programs, the lack of on-campus progress in the Office of Possibilities this past year is a big concern. Of the eight OOPS projects from 2023-24, most of which, as incremental improvement initiatives, do not even fit the criteria for disruptive innovation,, the majority have stalled. In my observation, there is an institutional inertia concentrated mostly in "middle management" (faculty and administration) that, in the absence of strong leadership marked by difficult decisions, will impede progress every step of the way. The systems have to change if the culture is going to change.</p>	
<p>Bott: Did an outstanding job with the Benzie annexation.</p>	

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CORE COMPETENCIES	AVG
<b>6. Communications</b> --demonstrates ability to effectively handle routine and non-routine internal and external communication, both oral and written.	<b>4.14</b>
<p>Warner: Nick is a master of communication, and as his self-evaluation demonstrates, he combines his seemingly innate skills in this area with a serious commitment to working with all of the College's constituencies.</p>	
<p>Weaver: A material financial event was initiated in January, 2024 but was not communicated to the Board and was only discovered by the Board during the audit process in late August, 2024. Some policies of interaction among NMC and other institutions with fundamental implications which appear to be policy decisions are not known to the Board as a whole. External communications to the public in the form of marketing NMC education and seeking increased enrollment are ramping up in good order.</p>	
<p>Oblinger: As Chair, I have never felt that I don't have the information I need to represent NMC. Nick has always contacted me with information and happenings that are relevant and timely. Nick incorporates a mid-month update to the Board and along with his update at the Board meeting, we are well-informed of happenings. Throughout these updates, Nick also calls Board members with time sensitive information. In addition to his cadence of communicating, I have recognized that how Nick shares updates is quite productive by providing full background, outcome, and connects dots along the way.</p>	
<p>Bott: needs to communicate to the board the whole picture on significant issues like the ballot language issue with the Benzie annexation</p>	



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<b>7. Teamwork--willingness and ability to work for and with others to achieve a common goal.</b>	<b>4</b>
<p>Warner: This is one area in which I feel inadequately informed to comment knowledgeably. This is a matter of "inside baseball," something that only those on the inside of the teams can evaluate credibly. From what I can observe, Nick seems to be effective at leading and supporting College leadership teams.</p>	
<p>Weaver: Nick has a good rapport with faculty. Reorganization of NMC advancement could have been done in a less disruptive manner, making it easier for changes to be implemented.</p>	
<p>Oblinger: Nick is no doubt a collaborative player. The best way I can describe the efforts of Nick as a team player is that not one initiative that Nick has accomplished could have been as successful as if he went it alone. Nick utilizes his Board, his faculty, staff and I've watched him engage students when it matters. Nick always considers who to engage in any initiative that supports the effort.</p>	
<p>Bott: work well with the advocacy groups regarding the Benzie annexation. Same with FRIC</p>	

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8. <b>Productivity</b> --refers to the amount of acceptable work to be performed as efficiently and cost effectively as possible	4.14
<p>Warner: Nick deserves plaudits in this domain. From the Master Plan to brand assessment, FRIC to Aviation, improvements in program efficiency (e.g., Police Academy), and novel new programming (Esports management and sports nutrition are good examples), Nick is leading in a period of significant productivity. His overseeing balanced budgets and undertaking specific initiatives to marshal cost savings and look forward to generating new revenues indicate progress with efficiency and a focus on cost-effectiveness.</p>	
<p>Weaver: Nick performs a great deal of work in an efficient manner and operations are completed in a cost-effective manner</p>	
<p>Oblinger: Nick manages his time in a way that I have never seen a ball drop. There is an enormous amount that happens in his day-to-day activity, and I find he manages his schedule in a very productive manner. Specifically, during Benzie Annexation process, Nick paid careful attention to his calendar, canceling personal and other meetings that took away from the timing of the Benzie needs. Additionally, I have been able to witness other initiatives that move from discussion to action and to the point above on teamwork, work with his resources to get initiatives accomplished.</p>	
<p>Bott: Had many irons in the fire the last year.</p>	

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<b>9. Dependability--the ability to accept and complete responsibilities</b>	<b>4</b>
Warner: Nick follows through on commitments and other responsibilities.	
Weaver: Nick has the ability to accept and complete responsibilities and can be depended on to accomplish them.	
Oblinger: Nick is dependable, consistently.	
<b>10. Quality--the work provided is accurate thorough and consistent.</b>	<b>3.71</b>
Warner: This is another area in which I feel inadequately informed to offer a confident opinion. I see no negatives here; I'm just not sufficiently knowledgeable to comment intelligently.	
Weaver: Nick's administration has been largely well performed.	
Oblinger: Never has Nick presented me or the Board with inaccurate information.	
<b>11. Problem Solving--ability to define and resolve problems in a timely manner with little to no harm done.</b>	<b>3.43</b>
Warner: My sense is that Nick handles problems generally effectively. There have been a few issues where I'm less certain about this, but overall this is a positive.	
Weaver: The reorganization of NMC advancement, while done with acceptable goals, was done in a manner which makes it difficult for NMC to move forward. There is a need to mend relationships with community members of the Foundation Board and supporters of NMC.	
Oblinger: I will come back to Benzie as an example of Nick's ability to serve our College and his Board with exceptional problem-solving skills. In addition to appropriate recommendations, Nick consistently considers how to do no harm, think beyond the issue at hand and other potential impacts. When the Benzie ballot language presented a problem, Nick handles many parties with thorough, thoughtful, and big picture consideration - getting to resolve in a way that retains the College's years of integrity and honest work ethic.	
Bott: Good at using his team and stakeholder and board input to chart a path to solving problems	
<b>12. Ethical Behavior--ability to apply ethical, open, and honest behavior in interactions.</b>	<b>4.57</b>
Warner: My observations here are positive. In particular, I consider Nick to be highly ethical.	
Weaver: There have been no issues concerning Nick's ethical behavior.	
Oblinger: Nick is one of the most ethical leaders I have experienced working with.	
Bott: as expected	

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<b>13. Shared Governance--the ability to engage the College shared governance process.</b>	<b>3.57</b>
<p>Warner: I think Nick handles this well, but again this is a bit of "inside baseball." It is difficult for me, as a trustee, to decipher how effectively the College leadership practices shared governance.</p>	
<p>Weaver: Shared governance procedures put in place by previous administrations to include faculty and staff have been carried forward with success.</p>	
<p>Oblinger: Nick understands the value of all of the Colleges stakeholders, internally and externally. Nick has worked hard to enhance the relationship with the College's Foundation and its Board. He has implemented processes that have put the language in the Foundation and College MOU in place that encourage collaborative discussion, input before critical decisions, and staffing that creates synergy amongst our strategies. I also consider Nick's role to work with our faculty in this area as part of his ability to have success in shared governance. In the most recent contract negotiations, he achieved a smooth and productive negotiation process.</p>	
<b>14. Board Communications and Relations--build and maintain effective Board-President Relationships</b>	<b>3.71</b>
<p>Warner: I think Nick is quite strong on building and maintaining effective relationships with the Board, both as a collective entity and on an individual basis. His self-evaluation accurately described all of his efforts to keep the Board informed and to work with the Board on important issues ranging from the Campus Master Plan to Benzie.</p>	
<p>Weaver: Nick communicates well with the Board Chair and with a few other Board members, but is not keeping the full Board as well-informed of material matters or strategic decisions.</p>	
<p>Oblinger: Nick has shown tremendous growth in his communications with the Board, making them consistent and broad. He has also incorporated one on one Trustee communications to ensure relationships are strong and aligned. He works with his Chair closely and allows me to lead effectively.</p>	
<p>Marsh: Nick's work habits and leadership competencies, based on my experience with him, have been exemplary. The only reservation I have about Nick when I consider the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in this tumultuous higher education environment is his capacity to make the difficult decisions that will confront him, especially in positioning the college to pursue the type and degree of innovation needed in the delivery of education.</p>	
<p>Bott: can always improve on communication</p>	
<p>Bishop Nick's willingness to keep the board informed in improving significantly</p>	

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**Additional Comment(s)**

Oblinger: With all that Nick has lifted in this past year, the coming year offers opportunity for his leadership to take priority in the following areas. I would specifically like to see impactful contributions to:

1. Efficient and timely execution of the College's **Master Plan**. The priority of implementation should consider solving...
  1. Student housing needs
  2. University Center usage
  3. Movement on a new student hub that contributes to efforts in student success.
  4. Consolidation of President's Council departments to create more collaboration internally
2. **Student Success** - I'd like to see enhanced indicators and strategies that help our students complete and succeed in their education pathway.
3. Within the next year, create formation around the structure of **OOPS** - who "owns" it, structure, etc.
4. **Revenue strategies** that continue NMC to be an affordable entry into education, while offering diversification to its top line.