



Mission | We deliver lifelong learning opportunities to transform lives and enrich our communities.

Meeting Agenda

Monday, December 15, 2025
Timothy J. Nelson Innovation Center
Room 106/107

5:30 p.m. Regular Meeting

GENERAL BUSINESS

- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Pledge of Allegiance
- D. Review of Agenda and Approval of Additions, Deletions, or Rearrangements

STRATEGIC FOCUS

- E. Mission & Values in Action—*Jaron Larson*
- F. NMC Strategic Plan 2026-2029—*Jason Slade, Vice President, Strategic Initiatives*

REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

- G. October Conference 2025
 - *Lori Hodek, Director, Professional Development Institute*
 - *Janet Lively, Director, Center for Instructional Excellence*
- H. Faculty Report: NMC Magazine
 - *Tricia Lincoln, Faculty Literary Advisor*
 - *Caroline Schaefer-Hills, Faculty Design Advisor*

PUBLIC INPUT

Each person wishing to address the Board during public comment must be present and shall provide their name, address, city, phone, and issue to be addressed on a form provided prior to the meeting. The topic addressed should be related to business within the jurisdiction of the Board. Forms will be collected and given to the Board Chair prior to the call for order. Comments will be limited to (3) three minutes in length per speaker. The Board will take public remarks into consideration, but will not comment at the time of input.

UPDATES

- I. President's Update—*Nick Nissley*
- J. Board Chair Update—*Laura Oblinger, Chair*

CONSENT ITEMS (Pursuant to Policy A-105.00 Consent Agenda Items)

These items will be adopted as a group without specific discussion. When approving the meeting agenda, any Board member may request that a consent agenda item be moved to the regular agenda for discussion or questions.

Recommend that the following items be approved:

- K. Minutes of the November 24, 2025, regular meeting and closed sessions
- L. Enrollment Report—*Todd Neibauer, Vice President for Student Services and Technologies*
- M. Public Relations, Marketing, & Communications—*Diana Fairbanks, Associate Vice President, Strategic Communications and Change Initiatives*
- N. Advancement Report—*Katharine Marvin, Vice President of Advancement*
- O. Executive Committee—*Laura Oblinger, Committee Chair*
- P. Minutes of the December 12 Building & Site Committee, regular and closed sessions—*Kennard Weaver, Committee Chair*

ACTION ITEMS

- Q. **Strategic Plan** (Pursuant to Policy A-106.00 Other)
Recommend approval of the 2026-2029 strategies as presented.
- R. **Board Policy** (Pursuant to Policy A-106.00 Other)
Recommend adoption of the following Board policies on a second-reading basis:
 - Policy A-106.03 Policy Amendment and Additions (minor revisions)
 - Policy A-001.00 College Policy Organization (revised)
 - Policy A-101.00 Board of Trustees Responsibilities (minor revisions)
- S. **Closed Session (Pursuant to Policy A-106.00 Other)**
Recommend that the Board convene in closed session as permitted by Section 8(h) of the Open Meetings Act, MCL 15.268(h), to consider one privileged legal memo prepared by the college's outside counsel, Miller Canfield, PLC, which is material exempt from discussion or disclosure under state or federal statute as written attorney-client communications in connection with Section 13(1)(g) of Michigan's Freedom of Information Act 15.243. ***(Required two-thirds majority roll call vote of members elected or appointed and serving)***

T. Reconvene Regular Session (Pursuant to Policy A-106.00 Other)

Recommend the closed session adjourn and the open session of the regular meeting be reconvened. *(Roll call vote)*

REVIEW OF FOLLOW-UP REQUESTS

Confirm requests made by the Board that Require administrative follow-up information to be provided to the Board at a later date.

ADJOURNMENT

Upcoming Board Meeting Dates:

All Board meetings are open to the public.

January 26, 2026 - Timothy J Nelson Innovation Center, Room 106/107

February 23, 2026 - Timothy J Nelson Innovation Center, Room 106/107

March 23, 2026 - NMC Hagerty Center, Room C

April 27, 2026 - Timothy J Nelson Innovation Center, Room 106/107

May 18, 2026 - Timothy J Nelson Innovation Center, Room 106/107 **Third Monday

June 22, 2026 - Timothy J Nelson Innovation Center, Room 106/107



MEMO

Strategic Initiatives

To: NMC Board of Trustees

From: Nick Nissley, Ed.D.
Jason Slade, Vice President, Strategic Initiatives

Date: December 10, 2025

Subject: *Board Approval of Anchor and Edge, NMC's 2026-2029 Strategic Plan*

Recommendation: The Board of Trustees approve the 2026-2029 strategies as presented.

Background: After months of development and feedback from stakeholder groups, including Board of Trustees Study Sessions on November 5, 2025, and November 20, 2025, during which the objectives and preliminary action steps were also reviewed, the NMC community looks forward to the next phase of the strategic planning process, which includes Board approval of the strategies and shifting the focus to implementation.

As part of the Strategic Plan, a set of three strategies were developed, underpinned by four strategic drivers and the need for agility. These strategies serve as goals for the strategic plan implementation. Thank you to the participants in NMC's strategic plan, including the Leadership Council, the steering committee, community residents, advisory boards, students, faculty, staff, board members, and donors. The 2026-2029 steering committee includes:

Marcus Bennett

Hollie DeWalt

Lindsey Dickinson

Brandon Everest

Diana Fairbanks

Dan Goodchild

Joy Goodchild

Terri Gustafson

Mark Keely

Troy Kierczynski

Janet Lively

Katharine Marvin

Lynne Moritz

Kyle Morrison

Todd Neibauer

Nick Nissley

Patrick Quinlan

Becca Richardson

Stephen Siciliano

Jason Slade

Laura Stevens

Lisa vonReichbauer

Patricia Warner

Kelly Yauk

STRATEGIC IMPACT STATEMENT

We deliver education and training that is essential for our region and grow through the distinctive programs that set us apart and help drive northern Michigan's future.

STRATEGIES

Future-Focused Education: Equip learners for a rapidly changing world through purposeful academic pathways, durable skills, and technology literacy.

Enrollment and Student Success: Advance enrollment and student success by removing barriers and ensuring every learner experiences the coordinated support needed to persist and achieve their goals.

Vibrant College Community: Improve the places, systems, and supports that shape life at NMC, making it easier for students and employees to connect, succeed, and take pride in their work and learning.

STRATEGIC DRIVERS

Living Our Brand: Strengthen NMC's distinct identity by focusing investments on what makes the college unique and in demand among students, employees, and the community.

Community Partnerships: Leverage strategic partnerships to deepen community engagement, drive regional prosperity, and expand opportunities for lifelong learning.

Stewardship & Sustainability: Secure NMC's long-term vitality and growth by strategically leveraging smart resource investments, innovative funding models, optimized operations, and forward-thinking partnerships.

People First: Foster an inclusive, supportive, and empowering environment that prioritizes the well-being, success, and continuous development of every student and employee.

OBJECTIVES (as of November 25, 2025)

Future-Focused Education:

- **Objective 1:** Strengthen student outcomes, institutional performance, and workforce readiness by embedding responsible and effective use of AI across teaching, learning, and operations.
- **Objective 2:** Expand and integrate experiential and work-based learning across all programs so every student builds durable skills and real-world experience that lead to regional employment or further education.
- **Objective 3:** Strengthen programs that attract students from beyond northwest Michigan through targeted investment, innovation, and advanced pathways that extend opportunity for students and visibility for NMC.
- **Objective 4:** Proactively identify at-risk students and courses with high D/F/W rates and create a unified, data-driven, and comprehensive approach to supporting students,

instructors, and courses, that expands sustained college preparedness programming (College Edge), and institutionalizes integrated academic and faculty support for all students.

Enrollment and Student Success:

- **Objective 1:** Integrate and strengthen a unified, data-informed enrollment ecosystem that aligns all student services, PRMC, and academic programs around shared priorities to ease the enrollment and success pathways and increase the college attendance rates with key local audiences (high school and adult learners) and select national audiences.
- **Objective 2:** Build a coordinated communication and information system that ensures important details stay accurate, visible, and accessible throughout the student journey. Shared dashboards, portals and consistent messaging will reduce confusion, strengthen follow-through, and improve decision-making across NMC
- **Objective 3:** Create a coordinated advising system that ensures every student chooses a clear path early and stays on track to complete it. Integrated advising touchpoints, career exploration, faculty collaboration, and technology tools will support informed decisions and continuous progress
- **Objective 4:** Expand flexible learning options and clarify stackable pathways so every student, especially adult, rural, and part-time learners, can advance toward employment or further education.

Vibrant College Community:

- **Objective 1:** Deliver near-term master-plan projects, Osterlin Student Hub, and new student housing, as visible commitments to a modern, student-centered campus.
- **Objective 2:** Renew and improve campus spaces, addressing aging facilities in need of renewal, and enhancing landscaping and gathering areas to create a functional, welcoming environment that reflects NMC's quality and community.
- **Objective 3:** Strengthen the student experience outside the classroom by improving connection, community, and support across all campuses, creating consistent opportunities for students to engage with each other and with NMC in ways that enhance satisfaction and persistence.
- **Objective 4:** Strengthen NMC's reputation as an employer of choice by reviewing, prioritizing, and implementing improvements to staffing, workload, and compensation systems to ensure they continue to support a healthy, high-performing organization and a culture of professionalism and pride.
- **Objective 5:** Assess and modernize NMC's core operational systems including budgeting, human resources, information technology, and decision-making workflows to reduce friction, improve coordination, and strengthen efficiency and trust across the college.

Next Steps and Calendar of Events: The development of this strategic plan will be aligned more closely with college processes including budgeting, departmental goals, and individual

performance goals. This “preliminary phase” will lead to Year 1 actions beginning July 1, 2026, and running through June 30, 2027.

Upcoming milestones for the Board of Trustees:

- **February 23, 2026** - Board of Trustees Meeting - Update on process, timing for the upcoming year
- **March 23, 2026** - Board of Trustees Meeting - Strategy 1: Future-Focused Education: measurables, indicators and year 1 focus
- **April 27, 2026** - Board of Trustees Meeting - Strategy 2: Enrollment and Student Success: measurables, indicators and year 1 focus
- **May 18, 2026** - Board of Trustees Meeting - Strategy 3: Vibrant College Community: measurables, indicators and year 1 focus
- **June 22, 2026** - Board of Trustees Meeting - Summary and wrap-up of preliminary phase

NMC October Conference 2025

Reimagining Learning and Work:
The Transformative Impact of AI

 Northwestern Michigan College

October Conference Community Support



HAGERTY



Luxury Presence



 Northwestern Michigan College

NMC October Conference



2025

October Conference By The Numbers

donuts eaten = 19 dozen

lunches served = 260

sessions = 23

presenters: 16 community members

+ 19 NMC folks = 35 presenters & panelists

of community attendees = 25



Schedule

NMC October Conference Schedule

Reimagining Learning and Work: The Transformative Impact of AI
Tuesday, October 14, 2025


8:00 - 8:25 - Coffee, Tea, Donuts - Dennen Museum Sculpture Court

8:30 - 8:45 - Conference Welcome - Milliken Auditorium: Dr. Nick Nissley, President, Janet Lively, Lori Hodek

8:45-9:50 - AI In Action Panel - Overview - Dr. Miloš Topic, GVSU, Dr. Terri Gustafson, NMC Moderator: Community Panel, Danielle Brostrom, TCAPS; Sam Charnes, IAA; Michael Saad, MMC; Ryan Voge, Hagerty, Dr. Miloš Topic, GVSU

9:50-10:00 - Overview of the Day, Closing Remarks

NMC Main Campus Map: All sessions will be held in Health Science (HS), Les Biederman (LB) Osterlin (O) & T.J. Nelson Innovation Center (TJNIC) Buildings. (*indicates computer lab)

	Location: TJNIC106/107	Location: TJNIC104/105	Location: TJNIC123*	Location: HS114	Location: HS116	Location: HS216	Location: LB35/37*	Location: O113*
10:10 - 11:05 Session 1	AI And The Workforce Of The Future Panel Kate Hogan, Jennifer Ewing, Chris Unsell, Leah Melchior, Moderator	Artificial Intelligence, The Learning Cycle, and Durable Skills Brandon Everest, Kristy McDonald	AI Toolkit for Outreach and Communication Sam Charnes	Information Literacy In The Age Of AI Nicco Pandolfi	AI In The People-Centered Creative Process Clyde Sheets	Co-Intelligence Book Discussion Kerney Woughter	Getting Started With AI: Boosting Your Efficiency And Productivity Ken Dirkin, Michigan Virtual	You Can't Spell "Accessibility" Without "AI" Sherry Trier, Mark DeLonge, Ryan Bernstein
11:15 - 12:10 Session 2	Student Perspectives On AI: A Student Panel Kristen Salathiel	The Environmental And Social Ethics Of AI Pat Kawula, Rachel Wilczewski	Less Work, More Fun: Everyday AI Hacks Skylar Berry, Kyle Morrison	Why And How Writing To Learn Still Works Despite The GenAI Context Melissa Sprengle	Trust, Truth, And Technology: Navigating AI Safety Shaun Bertrand		Optimizing Team Workflows with AI: A Manager's Toolkit Ken Dirkin, Michigan Virtual	Integrating AI In Occupational And Technical Education: Empowering Instructors To Teach Prompting With Expertise Carolyn Andrews
12:10 - 1:10 - Lunch buffet	Timothy J. Nelson Innovation Center Lobby Provided by the Center for Instructional Excellence and the Professional Development Institute for all attendees.							
1:20 - 2:15 Session 3	Resilient Humanity: Thriving In The Age Of Super-Intelligence Kenneth Hartman	From Policy To Practice: Strategies For Establishing Team Norms For AI Use Kerney Woughter	Your AI Co-Pilot: An Instructor's Guide To Basic Prompting and Responsible Use Danielle Brostrom	Academic Integrity In The AI Age: Strategies For Assessing Learning Janet Lively	Policy Implications For Colleges At The Crossroads Of Artificial Intelligence And IP Law Ashley Sloat, Malory King	Me, Myself, And AI: Finding Efficiencies With AI In Your Daily Work Lindsey Dickinson, Lisa vonReichbauer	Leveling Up With AI: Smarter Strategies For Knowledge Work Ken Dirkin, Michigan Virtual	Session Summary Guide





Dr. Miloš Topić



Moderator



Terri Gustafson
Northwestern
Michigan College



Danelle Brostrom
Traverse City Area
Public Schools



Sam Charnes
Interlochen
Center for the
Arts



Michael Saad
Munson
Healthcare



Ryan Voge
Hagerty



Miloš Topić
Grand Valley
State University

Panelists





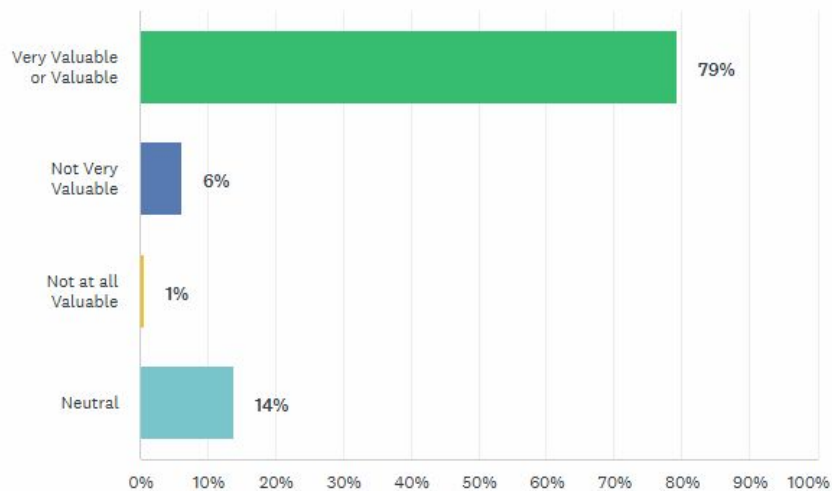
Session 4 - Reflect & Apply Your Learning

2:25 - 3:00	Session 4: Health Science (HS), Osterlin (O), & Innovation Center (TJNIC), Les Biederman (LB)
3:00 - 3:20	Session 4 (Continued): Connect and Share Zoom from your meeting room

Check your October Conference calendar invite to access links to room assignments, slides with questions, and the Zoom meeting.

Overall, how valuable was the October Conference?

Answered: 145 Skipped: 49



Survey Comments

"It's a beautiful thing putting that many great minds together. The collective employee spirit comes alive. Incredible ideas were being exchanged."

"Overall, I felt the conference was a great way to connect with colleagues. I think the morning panel was a great way to start the day."

"Bringing in outside voices was very helpful for folks to hear perspectives from outside our NMC bubble."

I think there is a desire to have more content/department-focused training on how to use AI in our jobs.

What's Next For AI @NMC?

- **Department specific training**
- **Strategic plan - Future Focused Education**
- **AI community of practice**



What's Next For AI @NMC?

- **Strategy 1 - Future Focused Education**

Strengthen student outcomes, institutional performance, and workforce readiness by embedding responsible and effective use of AI across teaching, learning, and operations.





Questions?



Northwestern Michigan College

NMC October Conference



2025



Thank You!



Northwestern Michigan College

NMC October Conference



2025



MEMO
Office of the President

To: NMC Board of Trustees
From: Nick Nissley, President
Subject: December Mid-Month Update
Date: Tuesday, December 9, 2025

Dear Board of Trustees,

Since our November Board meeting the following are key updates.

Development of the Next Strategic Plan

Three strategies focused on (1) Future-Focused Education, (2) Student Success, Retention and Enrollment, and a (3) Vibrant College Community will drive the next strategic plan. Strategies and objectives will be strengthened through the use of four “strategic drivers” consisting of (1) community partnerships, (2) stewardship, (3) brand, and (4) putting people first. The Board Study Session on Nov. 20 provided an opportunity to share preliminary action steps and potential performance indicators with the trustees. Follow-ups during the March - May board meetings will provide more details on each strategy and objective metrics. The Strategic Plan Steering Committee will review the plan on Dec. 10th and the Board will be asked to approve the strategies at the Dec. 15th meeting following the same process used for our last strategic plan, NMC Next (in January 2022).

Freshwater Research and Innovation Center

The Freshwater Research and Innovation Center’s Board of Directors meets on December 9th. Governance, Tenant, and Strategic Communications committees will report on progress to the full board along with a review of strategic goals for the entity over the next three years. The [FRIC website](#) has been launched and construction progress can be monitored via [webcam](#). Fundraising continues to be a priority with \$1.703M still needed to finish the full buildout of the facility, including all lab and public interface spaces.

East Bay Beach District Corridor Improvement Authority

Claire Karner, Director of Planning and Zoning for East Bay Charter Township, is scheduled to attend and present at the January 26 regular monthly meeting of the NMC Board of Trustees. The Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) held their first meeting on Monday, December 1, which included reviewing the draft TIF/Development plan. The CIA will meet again on December 18, but is not expected to take action on the plan until 2026. Once the CIA adopts the plan, they will also establish a Public Hearing, and according to 125.2888 Tax increment financing plan. Sec. 18. (5):

“not more than 60 days after the public hearing on the tax increment financing plan, the governing body in a taxing jurisdiction levying ad valorem property taxes that would otherwise be subject to capture may exempt its taxes from capture by adopting a resolution to that effect and filing a copy with the clerk of the municipality proposing to create the authority. The resolution shall take effect when filed with the clerk and remains effective until a copy of a resolution rescinding that resolution is filed with that clerk.”

Advancement Division

The Advancement team continues to build strong momentum toward both our annual fundraising goals and the broader strategic priorities ahead of us. As of December 4, with 43% of the fiscal year complete, the Foundation has raised nearly 62% of its annual cash goal (\$2.65 million toward \$4.3 million) and more than \$10.46 million in total fundraising activity. Notable gifts secured this month include a \$25,000 endowed scholarship for GLMA students, \$25,000 for the Student Emergency Fund, and \$50,000 to support International Affairs Forum programming over the next decade.

The Foundation Board is scheduled to hold a substantive discussion of the Winkler Group’s feasibility study at its December 10 meeting. The Foundation Board’s February vote will be an important decision point as we determine whether to advance a comprehensive campaign. The early feedback and donor engagement reflected in the study continue to signal strong support for NMC’s direction.

Across campus, preparations for the 75th Anniversary are accelerating. The public-facing website is now live, and radio and digital promotion begins this month. Leadership is reaching out personally to families who played foundational roles in NMC’s history, while Alumni Relations finalizes the Top 75 Alumni list for release in January. Advancement teams are also supporting key division initiatives, including the Dennos Museum Center’s rebranding engagement, IAF’s continued growth (more than 1,900 participants across 15 events this fall), and WNMC’s planned programming to highlight NMC’s history throughout 2026.

Long Night Against Procrastination

On December 3, the NMC Library hosted its end of the semester tradition of the “Long

Night Against Procrastination” where students are invited to finish the semester strong and stress-free while utilizing additional library hours and resources such as research consultation and tutoring. Our NMC family - faculty, staff, and community members/supporters - play a special role at the end of the semester, helping students ‘make it to the finish line. Another example of this, is our Residence Life staff holding the annual end-of-the-semester East Hall Pancake Dinner, to kick-off finals week.

Student Managed Investment Fund

A large number of college and university foundations and endowments have permitted students to invest a portion of foundation assets through their own efforts. This has been done to promote good financial stewardship and learning opportunities among the student population. The assets managed by student-led groups have provided learning opportunities regarded as a significant and necessary life skill concerning financial management. In August of 2024, the NMC Foundation Finance and Audit Committee approved a recommended account structure that would permit a Student Managed Investment Fund (SMIF) sleeve within the existing Foundation investment structure. This account structure was recommended for the NMC Foundation Board’s approval, and was approved in 2024. Steve Rice has stepped forward as a faculty advisor, and work has begun to launch the student group. Student and Foundation goals include:

- Hands-on experience provided to students with respect to money management, fundamental and technical investment analysis, and economics;
- Experiential learning opportunity which may influence career decisions, or job choices;
- Involve students in experiencing and conducting business within a formal meeting structure;
- Learning opportunities surrounding fundamental research on potential investments for purposes of buying, selling or maintaining existing positions within the investment portfolio;
- Actively involve students in the process of writing business research reports, and facilitating discussions and providing recommendations to peers, and ultimately the Foundation’s Finance and Audit Committee.

The mission will be to: Provide an experiential learning platform that empowers students to apply academic and personal knowledge to real-world portfolio management. Through collaboration, research, and responsible decision-making, the committee seeks to strengthen financial literacy, develop future leaders, and contribute to the long-term financial sustainability of the NMC Foundation.

Benchmarking Educational Systems in Finland

In mid-November, five NMC faculty/staff - Carolyn Andrews (Construction Technology Program Coordinator), Dr. Terri Gustafson (Director of Academic Affairs), Dr. Nick Roster (Biology instructor/Assessment Coordinator), Mark DeLonge (Assistant Director of

Instructional Technology), and Ryan Bernstein (Curriculum & Instructional Designer) - embarked on a five-day educational benchmarking tour of Finland. Their journey was facilitated by the Council for Creative Education (CCE) Finland and supported by NMC's Office of Possibilities. It took them through a variety of school settings, from early childhood centers to universities. And, they witnessed firsthand the core principles that make Finnish education a global leader: equity, respect for the learner, professional trust in educators, and a deep commitment to student well-being. They are eager to share their insights and collaborate on implementing changes inspired by this transformative journey. They will specifically seek to integrate their learning into our strategic plan. And, they'll be looking forward to presenting to the Board of Trustees, also.

Points of Pride

- In his November **Enrollment** Report, Todd Neibauer shared that our spring contact hours are up 9.3% (with tuition being up 14.4%). This would be our 8th consecutive semester of enrollment growth.
- Ferris State University provided data tracking students' progress across institutions. A few numbers that stood out to me:
 - the **average FSU GPA of former NMC students is 3.34**, well above the 2.98 GPA of all FSU transfer students
 - the **average graduating FSU GPA of former NMC students is 3.53**, again, above the 3.47 GPA of all transfer students
 - there were **71 NMC students who were incoming transfers to Ferris** for the 24-25 academic year (a significant pipeline of transfer students)

The data points speak to not only a strong partnership, but one that's yielding above-average outcomes. We're surely proud of the partnership, and the work we're doing *together*, to support student success.

- The Jazz Band's "Swingin' for the Season" was a great way to kick off the holiday season on December 6, with festive music from the Lab and Big Bands. It was extra special also getting to hear the guest vocalists, Emily Kuschell and Scott Carter. I always leave shaking my head, in almost disbelief, that this is our community's band, just 'regular folks' who come together, through NMC, to play music together. We are so fortunate to have such amazing music and musicians in our community. Thanks to Josh Wagner, for breathing life into NMC's jazz bands - they offer an amazing sense of vibrancy on campus and throughout the community! Many other **NMC bands and choruses** are performing throughout the holidays. I'd encourage you to come on out and hear them perform. You won't be disappointed!

Trends in Higher Education Articles

As promised, I'm sharing relevant articles (that I and President's Council have been reading) that speak to trends, risks, challenges, and opportunities in community colleges, to help keep us informed and to invite conversation about how NMC is addressing such issues. This month, I'm sharing:

- [How AI Is Changing Higher Education](#) - *The Chronicle of Higher Education*
- [Dual enrollment is among top reasons for sturdy completion rates](#) - *University Business*

Upcoming Dates of Note

- **December 10** - NMC Foundation Board meeting (Hagerty Center)
- **December 12** - NMC Holiday Party (Hagerty Center)
- **December 15** - Regular monthly meeting (TJNIC 106/107)
- **December 24-January 1** - College Closed for Holiday Break
- **January 6, 2026** - Opening Conference (Milliken Auditorium)
- **January 23** - Traverse Connect Northern Michigan Policy Conference & Business Gala (Grand Traverse Resort)
- **January 26, 2026** - Regular monthly meeting (TJNIC 106/107)



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MEMO

To: Northwestern Michigan College Board of Trustees
Cc: Dr. Nick Nissley, Ed.D.
From: Gabe Schneider, Founder/Principal, Northern Strategies 360
Date: December 9, 2025
Re: **State/Federal Legislative Update**

State

Osterlin Student Services Hub

We continue to work with Kelley Cawthorne on a strategy for funding for the Osterlin Student Services Hub. This includes seeking a Legislative Directed Spending Item (A LDSI is an earmark) for the project via Rep. Roth's office and a Capital Outlay Planning Authorization via Senator Damoose's office.

The likelihood of a LDSI in any type of year end supplemental budget bill is diminishing as the number of legislative session days dwindle. We are also hearing that any supplemental bill will not include many LDSI requests.

However there does seem to be some momentum building behind a capital outlay bill. The first component of this was the Senate Appropriations Committee passage of SB 729 which would lift the state building authority's bonding cap, which would ultimately allow for capital outlay projects to be authorized. The next step is for this legislation to make it way through the legislative process and for the House to take up the Senate passed capital outlay bill.

Our advocacy efforts have included hosting Rep. Roth, Rep. Coffia and Sen. Damoose on campus for a roundtable discussion, meeting with all three in Lansing and communicating directly with Senator Damoose on numerous occasions about the importance of the project. We will continue to focus attention on Senator Damoose and our House members in these final weeks of legislative session.

Michigan Reconnect Expansion (Reconnect 21)

We continue to support passage of legislation that would permanently expand the Michigan Reconnect program to age 21. This includes supporting SB 232 and 233 which are currently awaiting action on the Senator floor.

Federal

Department of Education

We continue to monitor and track the transfer of responsibilities from the Department of Education to other agencies. At this point we do not see a significant impact on NMC from this change.

FY26 Budget

Currently funding for the federal government expires at 1/30/26. Prior to that date, Congress must pass the federal appropriations bills including Labor-Education-Health, or pass another continuing resolution.

Workforce Pell

The U.S. Department of Education has released the proposed regulatory [text](#) along with the agenda and negotiators' list for this week's session for the Accountability in Higher Education and Access through Demand-Driven Workforce Pell (AHEAD) Committee. The outcomes of this negotiated rulemaking session will determine how Workforce Pell, as enacted by the H.R. 1, the One Big Beautiful Bill, will be implemented.

With a short time frame to conduct the negotiated rulemaking process, the Department has opted to dedicate the first session, which runs from December 8th to the 12th, of the AHEAD Committee's work to Workforce Pell implementation, while the second session, which goes from January 5th to the 9th, would focus on the accountability provisions of the law.

As a result, negotiators will vote at the end of each session, instead of taking one final vote at the end of both sessions. Critics have [pointed out](#) that this schedule for voting leaves no time between sessions for negotiators to fully consider the implications of how policies would be implemented or discuss the direction of the conversation with their constituencies.



To: NMC Board of Trustees

From: Nick Nissley, President
President's Council

Subject: December 2025 Executive Summary

Notes regarding Key Items on December Agenda

- Following a similar format to when the NMC Next 2022-2025 Strategic Plan was approved by the Board of Trustees in January 2022, the 2026-2029 strategies are presented for Board approval. Measurables, indicators, and focal points for year 1 of the plan will be shared at the March, April, and May regular Board meetings respectively for each of the three strategies.
- Three Board policies are presented to be adopted upon their second reading.

Financial Report—Troy Kierczynski, Vice President of Finance and Administration

- Due to the early meeting this month, no financial report was prepared. Financials through December 31 will be reported at the January regular Board of Trustees meeting, including a 6-month projection of the general operating fund.
- Through November (42% of the year), the general fund shows a surplus of \$5,641,220 compared to \$4,643,724 at the same point last year. Net revenue is holding strong due to increased Fall enrollment and stable expenditures.
- The College's FY27 budget development process successfully kicked off in early December, with the end goal of adopting next year's budget by June 2026. A top priority for the FY27 budget is adequately resourcing the next Strategic Plan.

Enrollment Report—Todd Neibauer, Vice President for Student Services and Technologies

- Currently, contact hours are up 9.3% from the same time in the spring 2025 cycle.
- While there was a decline in the number of applicants, the increase in average contact hours, likely due to the Community College Guarantee, has helped keep enrollment in positive territory.

PRMC—Diana Fairbanks, Associate Vice President of Strategic Communications & Change Initiatives

Paid media dipped slightly after an unusually strong October. Performance is still in line with historic averages for November.

Paid Media- ↓

- Applications: 103
- Accounts: 81

Strategic Plan 2026 - 2029 – Jason Slade, Vice President for Strategic Initiatives

- After months of development and feedback from stakeholder groups, including Board of Trustees Study Sessions on November 5, 2025, and November 20, 2025, during which the objectives and preliminary action steps were also reviewed, the NMC community looks forward to the next phase of the strategic planning process, which includes Board approval of the strategies and shifting the focus to implementation. The three strategies are:
 - Future-Focused Education
 - Enrollment and Student Success
 - Vibrant College Community

These strategic goals will be supported by strategic drivers. Strategic drivers create the framework for objectives that reach across departments and exhibit the characteristics that our stakeholders felt were a MUST in the next plan.

- Living Our Brand
- Community Partnerships
- Stewardship & Sustainability
- People First

The coming months will be used to align the actions to our college processes and provide more depth on each strategy to the Board of Trustees.

**NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES
Monday, November 24, 2025
Timothy J. Nelson Innovation Center
Room 106/107**

CALL TO ORDER—Chair Laura J. Oblinger called the regular meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Trustees present: Laura J. Oblinger, Mark B. Keely, Kennard R. Weaver, Kenneth E. Warner, Pamela T. Horne

Trustees remote: Andrew K. Robitshek, Jody N. Lundquist

Trustees absent: Mark B. Keely

Also present: President Nick Nissley, Lynne Moritz, Troy Kierczynski, Todd Neibauer, Stephen Siciliano, Jason Slade, Katharine Marvin, Kyle Morrison, Kathryn DePauw, Coreene Kreiser, Becca Richardson, Jacob Wheeler, Minnie Bardenhagen, Brandy Johnson, Laura Stevens, Hollie DeWalt, Patrick Quinlan, Jim Patterson

REVIEW OF AGENDA—The agenda was accepted as presented.

STRATEGIC FOCUS

Strategic Initiatives Update—Jason Slade, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, acknowledged a Board Study Session occurred last week on Thursday, November 20. Three strategies and detailed objectives have been shared with the Board since as early as September. At the December 15 meeting, the Board will approve of the strategies while the strategic impact statement, metrics, and other components of the plan continue to be developed. The plan will officially launch in 2026 and focus on three strategic areas: Future-Focused Education, Enrollment & Student Success, and Vibrant College Community. Slade also reviewed the planned update schedule for the first half of 2026.

REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

Greenspire High School—Vice Principal Coreene Kreiser shared how the school has grown since 2021 and elaborated on their unique elements such as curricular focus on environmental preservation and a small school model of 35-50 students per graduating class.

Michigan Community College Association—MCCA, for which Brandy Johnson serves as president, represents all 31 community colleges and 2 tribal colleges within the state. MCCA serves as the unified voice for Michigan's community colleges headquartered in Lansing, for policy and advocacy, student success, and collaboration/member services. Johnson provided an update on the FY26 state budget, student success initiatives, community college 3.0, and the MCCA's leadership academy. Thanking NMC's Diana Fairbanks and team for presenting at the 2025 MCCA Summer Conference on the recent brand strategy and refresh, Johnson noted that the Lumina Foundation has approached MCCA to pursue brand strategy assessments with other colleges and consortiums. NMC will host the MCCA Fall Board of Directors in September 2026.

Faculty Report: White Pine Press—Jacob Wheeler, faculty advisor for the White Pine Press, highlighted that the newspaper is award-winning and student run. As the students apply experiential learning through their journalism, skills that apply to other career paths are developed, such as communication. Student Editor-in-Chief Minnie Bardenhagen shared her story of becoming interested in journalism when she participated in the Career Tech Writers Studio Program. As a dual enrolled student, Bardenhagen earned 16 college credits before graduating high school. Before beginning her first semester at NMC, she switched her major to

journalism, noting she has learned interview and communication skills in her time with White Pine Press and plans to transfer to Central Michigan University next fall.

PUBLIC INPUT—There was no public input offered.

UPDATES

President's Update—President Nick Nissley thanked trustees for their service throughout the year and noted two service-oriented events on campus today: Thanks-for-Giving food distribution and the Mobile Food Pantry. Nissley also highlighted the NMC Foundation's mission of mobilizing generosity, noting its inspiration to volunteers and employees. From the mid-month report, Nissley highlighted the development of the East Bay Beach District Corridor Improvement Authority and anticipated Tax Increment Financing. Last month, the Corridor Improvement Authority Board was created and its members appointed. The CIA Board will convene next month and bring a TIF plan forward which will include a formal public hearing period.

Board Chair Update—Chair Laura Oblinger noted the critical role of the college in the community.

ACCT Leadership Congress—Trustees that recently attended the Leadership Congress in October shared their key takeaways from the conference.

CONSENT ITEMS—On a motion by Kennard Weaver, seconded by Ken Warner, the following items were approved by a unanimous vote as a group without discussion:

- Minutes of the October 20, 2025, regular meeting and closed session
- Minutes of the November 5, 2025, and November 20, 2025 study sessions
- Enrollment—*Todd Neibauer, Vice President for Student Services and Technologies*
- Scholarship and Financial Aid Report for Aid Year 2024-2025—*Jim Patterson, Director of Financial Aid*
- Financial Report—*Troy Kierczynski, Vice President, Finance and Administration*
- Sensitive Information Policy—*Troy Kierczynski, Vice President, Finance and Administration*
- Public Relations, Marketing & Communications—*Diana Fairbanks, Associate Vice President, Strategic Communications and Change Initiatives*
- Advancement Report—*Katharine Marvin, Vice President of Advancement*
- Policy Committee—*Pam Horne, Committee Chair*
- Building and Site Committee—*Kennard Weaver, Committee Chair*

ACTION ITEMS—Note, those trustees participating remotely did not count toward a quorum, nor were they able to be counted in votes toward any of the action items on the agenda.

Resource Guidelines—On a motion by Pam Horne, seconded by Kennard Weaver, the NMC Resource Guidelines for 2025-2026 were approved as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Beverage Management Certificate Level I—Kennard Weaver made a motion, seconded by Ken Warner, the Board unanimously approved Beverage Management Certificate Level 1, effective Fall 2026.

Elevator Upgrades—On a motion by Kennard Weaver, seconded by Pam Horne, authorization was granted for administration to enter into a contract with KONE Inc. in the amount of \$384,588 with a 15% contingency for elevator upgrades. The source of funds is the FY26 Plant Fund. The motion passed unanimously.

Policies—Ken Warner made a motion, seconded by Pam Horne, to adopt the following Board policies on a first-reading basis:

- Policy A-106.03 Policy Amendment and Additions (minor revisions)
- Policy A-001.00 College Policy Organization (revised)
- Policy A-101.00 Board of Trustees Responsibilities (minor revisions)

Closed Session—Pam Horne made a motion, seconded by Kennard Weaver, that the Board adjourn the open session and convene in closed session as permitted by Section 8(1)(c) of the Michigan Open Meetings Act, MCL 15.268, to discuss strategy connected with the negotiation of collective bargaining agreements between the College and SEIU. The motion passed with the following roll call vote: Yes—Ken Warner, Pam Horne, Kennard Weaver, Laura Oblinger; No—none. The regular session adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

Reconvene Regular Session— Kennard Weaver made a motion, seconded by Ken Warner, to adjourn the closed session and the open session was reconvened at 7:28 p.m. with the following roll call vote: Yes—Kennard Weaver, Ken Warner, Pam Horne, Laura Oblinger; No—none.

SEIU Bargaining Agreement—Pam Horne made a motion, seconded by Ken Warner, to authorize for administration to enter into an agreement with Service Employees International Union Local covering 3 years, beginning January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2028. The motion passed unanimously.

Closed Session—Ken Warner made a motion, seconded by Pam Horne, that the Board adjourn the open session and convene in closed session as permitted by Section 8(1)(a) of the Open Meetings Act, MCL 15.268) the annual performance evaluation of the president, per his request for a closed session. The motion passed with the following roll call vote: Yes—Pam Horne, Ken Warner, Kennard Weaver, Laura Oblinger; No—none. The closed session began at 7:30 p.m.

Reconvene Regular Session—On a motion by Kennard Weaver, seconded by Pam Horne, it was recommended the closed session adjourn and the open session of the regular meeting be reconvened. The motion passed with the following roll call vote: Yes—Pam Horne, Kennard Weaver, Ken Warner, Laura Oblinger. The regular session reconvened at 8:12 p.m.

Board Chair Laura Oblinger shared that President Nissley continues to demonstrate exceptional leadership and performance. In their evaluation of President Nissley, trustees highlighted strong results across strategic priorities, including meaningful enrollment growth, continued advances in experiential learning, strengthened student engagement and belonging, and deepened community partnerships.

REVIEW OF FOLLOW-UP REQUESTS—No requests were made by the Board that require administrative follow-up for information to be provided to the Board at a later date.

ADJOURNMENT—The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Recorded by Lynne Moritz, Executive Director of the President’s Office and Board Operations.

SIGNED _____
Laura J. Oblinger, Chair

ATTESTED _____
Pamela T. Horne, Secretary



MEMO

Student Services &
Technologies

To: Dr. Nick Nissley, President
From: Todd Neibauer, VP for Student Services and Technologies
Date: December 10, 2025
Subject: December 2025 Enrollment Report

Spring 2026

Registration for the 2026 spring and summer semesters opened on October 15, 2025 and new student orientations commenced on November 7. Currently, contact hours are up 9.3% from the same time in the spring 2025 cycle.

While there was a decline in the number of applicants, the increase in average contact hours, likely due to the Community College Guarantee, has helped keep enrollment in positive territory. There is one remaining orientation session on January 6, 2026.

	Spring 2023	Spring 2024	Spring 2025	Spring 2026	Δ
Inquiries	1,195	1,347	1,472	1,347	-8.5%
Applicants	1,178	1,316	1,444	1,326	-8.2%
% Applied	98.6%	97.7%	98.1%	98.4%	0.3%
Admits	863	919	1,069	999	-6.6%
% Admitted	73.3%	69.8%	74.0%	75.3%	1.3%
Admits Registered	476	460	572	528	-7.7%
% Admits Registered	55.2%	50.1%	53.5%	52.9%	-0.7%
Prior Admits Registered	0	2	0	8	100.0%
Retained Students	1,820	1,767	1,912	2,023	5.8%
% Retained	58.7%	56.1%	58.7%	58.5%	-0.3%
Return Students	86	82	69	91	31.9%
Average Contact Hours	11.1	11.18	10.85	11.42	5.3%
Total Headcount	2,382	2,311	2,553	2,650	3.8%
Total Contact Hours	26,437	25,830	27,696	30,267	9.3%
Tuition	5,459,106	5,711,877	6,109,698	6,987,448	14.4%

(Resources: Digital Dashboard – Same Date Comparison SP2023-2026)



MEMO

Public Relations, Marketing
& Communications

To: Nick Nissley, President

From: Diana Fairbanks, Associate VP of Strategic Communications and Change Initiatives

Date: 12-5-25

Subject: November 2025 Monthly Report

November was a solid month with especially high earned media coverage. Paid media dipped slightly after an unusually strong October. Performance is still in line with historic averages for November. Earned media performance was unusually strong with more than three times the average media mentions driven primarily by the GLMA Mariner's Memorial for the 50th anniversary of the Edmund Fitzgerald. Earned media sentiment dipped slightly due to the NMC lockdown for the Traverse City shooting. NMC Now highlighted [GLMA's Mariner's Memorial](#) and [Enrollment increases due to Community College Guarantee](#). Shared media followers continue to increase with highest performing posts including Mariner's Memorial, Veteran's Day, mobile food pantry and Aviation Thanksgiving. NMC Public Relations, Marketing and Communication key performance indicators for November 2025 include:

Paid Media- ↓

- Applications: 103
- Accounts: 81

Earned Media- ↑

- Media mentions: 548
- Positive/neutral sentiment: 96.4%
- Publicity value: \$268,500

Owned Media - flat

- *NMC Now:*
 - Subscribers: 1,457
 - Open Rate: 34%

Shared Media ↑

- Facebook followers: +5.5% YOY
- Total followers: 14,707
- Instagram followers: +1% YOY
- Total followers: 4,436



To: NMC Board of Trustees
President Nick Nissley, Ed.D.

From: Katharine Marvin, Vice President of College Advancement

Date: December 15, 2025

Subject: Foundation Update

Update on Philanthropic Activity

As of December 4, 2025, the fiscal year is 43% complete, and we have achieved 61.68% of the budgeted goal of \$4,300,000 in cash/pledge activity, with \$2,652,102 in new gifts and pledges having been recorded.

FY25 Total Dollars Raised Through the NMC Foundation

\$2,545,470	Total cash gifts and pledges received to date (including The Fund for NMC)
\$106,632	Gross event revenue
\$2,652,102	Total raised through donations and event revenue
+ \$7,769,350	New documentation of planned gift intentions
+ <u>\$25,466</u>	In-Kind Gifts
\$10,466,918	Total Fundraising Activity

Of the total raised (cash, pledges, and planned gifts), donors are impacting the following areas of the college as of November 6, 2025:

- Unrestricted gifts to the Fund for NMC - \$102,2925 (1% of total giving)
- Scholarships, both restricted and endowed funds - \$4,623,080 (44.8% of total giving)
- Program support and capital projects at NMC - \$5,589,448 (54.2% of total giving)

Foundation Initiatives

- The Foundation team is on track to have its best year on record. At 43% of the way through the fiscal year, we've raised nearly 62% of our cash goal (\$2.65 million of a \$4.3 million goal). We've secured multiple significant planned gifts this fall, bringing our Total Fundraising Activity (cash/pledge, event, planned gift, and in-kind gift revenue) to \$10.46 million.
- Notable major gifts secured since our last report include: \$25,000 endowed scholarship for GLMA students; \$25,000 to the Student Emergency Fund; and \$50,000 to support International Affairs Forum programming over the next 10 years.
- The Foundation team continues to engage donors and college leadership around the results of the Winkler Group's Campaign Feasibility Study. At its December 10th meeting, the NMC Foundation Board engaged in robust discussion about the study's results. The Foundation Board has a vote planned for its February meeting regarding whether or not to move forward with a comprehensive campaign.
- Planning for the 75th Anniversary Celebration continues, with the public website now available (nmc.edu/75). Radio ads and digital media related to the 75th Anniversary are slated to begin in December and continue into January. College leadership plans to personally reach out to families who were instrumental to NMC's founding, as well as those who were instrumental to its flourishing over the past 75 years, to invite them to participate in the celebrations.
- As part of the 75th Anniversary Celebration, the Alumni Relations team is finalizing its Top 75 Alumni list. The team is busy gathering biographical information and photos for the award winners, and looks forward to publicly announcing the list in January.

Advancement Division Initiatives

- On Sunday, November 30, Dennon leadership hosted an informational session for the public about its upcoming rebrand. The session was well-attended, and part of a larger plan for the Dennon to engage all of its stakeholders around the rebranding process. The rebrand is on the heels of NMC's recent rebrand, and also ahead of the Dennon's 35th and NMC's 75th anniversaries next year. New Dennon branding is intended to reinforce the connection between the college and the museum.
- IAF's 32nd season thus far has demonstrated significant momentum, reaching 1,900+ participants across 15 convenings: (3) IAF speaker events at Milliken Auditorium; (4) NMC student sessions; (2) TCAPS student sessions; (2) Leadership Circle Salons and (1) Leadership Circle Dinner; (2) community partner events at State Theatre; and IAF's inaugural Gala event.
- WNMC will play an integral role in sharing the college's 75th Anniversary Celebration with the community. Station Manager Eric Hines plans to produce the following related to the anniversary: capsule spots (1-5 minute prepared spots on NMC's history); NMC history quiz segments; live broadcasts at select anniversary events; and interviews with our Top 75 Alumni.

NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Executive Committee Minutes
 Thursday, December 4, 2025
 Timothy J. Nelson Innovation Center
 Room 08 (Lower Level)
 1701 E. Front Street, Traverse City, MI 49686

Committee Chair Laura Oblinger called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

Members Present: Laura Oblinger, Kennard Weaver

Via zoom: Mark Keely

Others Present: Nick Nissley, Lynne Moritz, Troy Kierczynski, Diana Fairbanks,
 Katharine Marvin

President's Update—President Nissley shared that the East Bay Beach District Corridor Improvement Authority will present at the January 26, 2026, regular meeting of the Board of Trustees regarding the proposed Tax Increment Financing plan. Nissley also provided an update on fundraising for the Freshwater Research and Innovation Center.

Boardman Lake Campus RFP Process & Update—There was discussion regarding a purchase proposal submitted for the Boardman Lake Campus and how it should be addressed given the RFP that was issued in October. It was noted that while a timely response is critical for purchase proposals, the committee is also dedicated to following existing governance structures, which includes committee and full Board discussion at open meetings. Legal counsel is being consulted regarding considerations for next steps and the proposal will be reviewed by the Building and Site Committee. Executive staff will reply to the proposal to acknowledge receipt and relay interest and next steps.

Review of upcoming meeting agendas—The draft December 15 meeting agenda was reviewed.

Public Input—There was no public comment offered.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:23 p.m.

Recorded by Lynne Moritz, Executive Director of the President's Office and Board Operations

**NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Building & Site Committee Minutes

Friday, December 12, 2025

Timothy J. Nelson Innovation Center

Room 104/105

1701 E. Front Street, Traverse City, MI 49686

Committee Chair Kennard Weaver called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Members Present: Kennard Weaver, Ken Warner, Laura Oblinger

Others Present: Nick Nissley, Lynne Moritz, Troy Kierczynski, Diana Fairbanks, Cari Noga, Scott Eldridge, Bobby Peplinski, Seth Johnson

Boardman Lake Campus RFP Process & Update—The role of Cunningham-Limp in the Request for Proposals (RFP) process was discussed. Bobby Peplinski, Chief Financial Officer and Vice President of Northwest Michigan, Cunningham-Limp, shared a significant and time-bound proposal for the Board to consider.

Closed Session—Laura Oblinger made a motion, seconded by Ken Warner, to adjourn the open session and consider in closed session (pursuant to Section 8(h) of the Open Meetings Act, MCL 15.268(h) one privileged legal memo prepared by the college's outside counsel, Miller Canfield, PLC, which is material exempt from discussion or disclosure under state or federal statute as written attorney-client communications in connection with Section 13(1)(g) of Michigan's Freedom of Information Act 15.243. The motion passed with the following roll-call vote: Yes—Ken Warner, Kennard Weaver, Laura Oblinger; No—none. The closed session began at 10:22 a.m.

Reconvene Regular Session—Ken Warner made a motion, seconded by Laura Oblinger, to adjourn the closed session and reconvene the open session. The motion passed with the following roll-call vote: Yes—Kennard Weaver, Ken Warner, Laura Oblinger; No—none. The regular session convened at 11:47 a.m.

Ken Warner made a motion, seconded by Laura Oblinger, recommending the full Board further consider the offer received by the college from the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians to purchase the property and prepare a response thereto. The committee unanimously approved the motion.

Public Input—There was no public comment offered.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

Recorded by Lynne Moritz, Executive Director of the President's Office and Board Operations

Board Policy A-106.03**Board of Trustees Process**

Policy Amendment and Additions

Board policies may be amended, altered, added, or repealed by the affirmative vote of a majority of the Trustees.

A recommendation to amend, alter, or repeal a policy, or to add a new policy, shall be proposed at a regular or special meeting of the Board of Trustees on a first-reading basis and adopted at a subsequent regular meeting. The proposed amendment, alteration, repeal, or new policy shall be submitted in writing to each Trustee.

If any provision(s) of this policy or set of bylaws conflicts with laws applicable to Northwestern Michigan College, including the Community College Act of 1966, the Freedom of Information Act, or the Open Meetings Act, as each may be amended from time to time, such laws shall control and supersede such provision(s).

Adopted by the Northwestern Michigan College Board of Trustees on April 3, 2006

Reviewed without revision May 18, 2015

Reviewed without revision November 23, 2020

Board Policy A-001.00

Board of Trustees Process

College Policy Organization

1. The NMC Policy Governance Model: A Summary

Board leadership requires, above all, that the Board provide a vision for the college. To do so, the Board must first have an appropriate vision and understanding of its own responsibilities. The NMC policy governance model provides a powerful framework for structuring this task. Following this model, the Board can focus on the business of governance.

The NMC policy governance model is modeled after and explained fully in John Carver's documentary *Boards that Make a Difference* (Jossey-Bass, 1990). In brief, it reduces or eliminates meaningless Board and committee work, trivia, Board involvement in administrative and staff matters, unclear evaluation criteria, and role confusion.

Policy governance emphasizes vision, mission, and values; the empowerment of both Board and staff; and the strategic ability to lead. Because policies permeate and dominate all organizational life, they present the most powerful tool for exercising Board leadership and responsibility. Designed as a total system to encompass all expressions of Board wisdom and guidance, the policy categories include: Board process, Board-president relationship, ends, and parameters.

Board Process

The Board must set policies for its own internal workings:

- How meetings will be conducted.
- What topics will be addressed.
- The role of officers and committees.
- How the Board will discipline itself.

An effective design of Board process ensures that the Board fulfills its three primary responsibilities:

- Maintaining links to the ownership (the citizens of the service area).
- Establishing the four categories of written policies as included in this framework.
- Assuring presidential performance.

These are areas in which the Board, and only the Board, must assume full responsibility. By setting clear Board process policies, the Board develops a plan for how it will operate—compelling it to remain focused on the critical challenges of providing vision and leadership.

Board-President Relationship

The Board must set policies about how it relates to staff—the Board’s approach to delegation of power, its view of the president’s role, and how the Board will assess the president’s performance. The NMC policy governance model envisions the president as the link between the Board and the faculty and staff. In essence, the president is the Board’s sole employee. The only specified duty of the president is to be accountable to the entire Board for the performance of the organization—on how well the Board’s ends are being met and the parameters not violated. This maintains accountability while allowing the president optimal latitude to act and to empower others in the organization to act.

Ends

The Board’s most important job is to devise a vision, mission, and mission-related statements, which clearly establish the desired results—the ends—of the college. The ends statements should address what human needs are to be met, for whom, at what cost, and how the world will be different as a result of the college’s actions. The Board leaves it up to the staff to decide the parameters by which to achieve these ends, and evaluates performance based on how well the results of the organization’s actions match the desired ends.

Parameters

While the Board prescribes the ends it wants to achieve, it only sets limits on the parameters within which the staff operates. These limits are principles of prudence and ethics that form a boundary on staff practices, methods, and procedures. In parameters policies, the Board states clearly what the Board will not allow, but it is otherwise silent regarding staff actions. This empowers the staff to use their full creative powers while at the same time safeguarding against potential abuses, enabling the Board to concentrate its energies on ends issues.

2. **Levels and Types of Policy**

In the NMC policy governance model, there are two levels of policy: Board Policy and Staff Policy.

Board Policy

Board policies for the organization are broad, guiding statements which reflect the Board's philosophy, values, or principles. Board policies can be proposed by staff to the President, by the President to the Board, or by a Board member for consideration for adoption by the Board of Trustees. There are four types of board policy.

1. Board Process Policies (Prefix A) are established by the Board for its own internal workings.
2. Board-President Relationship Policies (Prefix B) are established by the Board to indicate how it delegates authority to the President and monitors presidential (organizational) performance.
3. Ends Policies (Prefix C) of the college are its Vision Statement, Mission Statement, Purposes Statement, Values Statement and the Institutional Effectiveness Criteria Policies. Ends policies deal with the ends or goals for which the college exists. Ends policies state a philosophy or general principle which is intended to provide broad guidance for organizational decisions in a variety of situations. These policies are designed to promote consistency,

continuity, and standards of performance, and reflect the basic needs of the college as well as its faculty, staff, students, and community.

4. Parameters Policies (Prefix D) limit the means staff may use in accomplishing the ends of the college. They are generally in the form of placing boundaries or parameters on prudence, ethics, and methods.

Staff Policy

Staff policies generally affect more than one area of the college and define in more operational terms how the board policies will be interpreted and implemented. In other words, staff policies describe the means which staff will use in accomplishing the ends of the college. Staff policies are recommended to the president by the Policy Council. The president issues final authorization of staff policy.

New staff policies, as well as changes to existing staff policies, are proposed by the Policy Council to the President for approval and may be reported to the Board of Trustees as deemed appropriate.

Staff Procedures

Staff procedures define a manner or process for implementing a board or staff policy. Staff procedures are developed by the area primarily responsible for implementing the policy and approved by the appropriate executive officer or administrator. In order to assure effective and consistent implementation of staff policy, the Policy Council may review office procedures as part of the policy review process.

If any provision(s) of this policy or set of bylaws conflicts with laws applicable to Northwestern Michigan College, including the Community College Act of 1966, the Freedom of Information Act, or the Open Meetings Act, as each may be amended from time to time, such laws shall control and supersede such provision(s).

Board Policy A-101.00

Board of Trustees Process

Board of Trustees Responsibilities

The primary responsibility of the board is to represent the public in determining and demanding appropriate organizational performance. To distinguish the board's own unique responsibilities from the responsibilities of the faculty and staff, the board will concentrate its efforts on the following job "products":

1. Serve as the link between the College and the public.
2. Adopt written governing policies which, at the broadest levels, address:
 - a. Board of Trustees Policies: Specification of how the board conceives, carries out, and monitors its own task.
 - b. Board-President Relationship Policies: How authority is delegated from the board to the president; the president's role authority and accountability; how the president's performance will be monitored.
 - c. Ends: What organizational products, impacts, benefits, and outcomes will be achieved for what recipients at what cost.
 - d. Parameters: Constraints on presidential authority which establish the prudence and ethics boundaries within which all staff activity and decisions must take place.
3. Select, employ, and delegate the appropriate powers and authority to the president of the College.
4. Monitor and assure the president's performance in achieving the College's Ends and Parameters.
5. Participate in appropriate professional development and training to ensure effective and competent service as a community college trustee.

If any provision(s) of this policy or set of bylaws conflicts with laws applicable to Northwestern Michigan College, including the Community College Act of 1966, the Freedom of Information Act, or the Open Meetings Act, as each may be amended from time to time, such laws shall control and supersede such provision(s).

Adopted by the Northwestern Michigan College Board of Trustees October 23, 1995

Reviewed without revision December 21, 2015

Reviewed without revision November 23, 2020