



To: NMC Board of Trustees
From: Nick Nissley, Ed.D.
Jason Slade, Vice President, Strategic Initiatives
Date: May 8, 2026
Subject: *Strategy 3 - Vibrant College Community: Success, Metrics, and Year 1 Focus*

NMC Strategic Plan 2026 - 2029: ANCHOR AND EDGE

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

STRATEGIES

- 1. Future-Focused Education:** Equip learners for a rapidly changing world through purposeful academic pathways, durable skills, and technology literacy.
- 2. 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.
- 3. 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

- 1. 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.
- 2. Community Partnerships:** Leverage strategic partnerships to deepen community engagement, drive regional prosperity, and expand opportunities for lifelong learning.
- 3. 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.
- 4. People First:** Foster an inclusive, supportive, and empowering environment that prioritizes the well-being, success, and continuous development of every student and employee.

STRATEGY 3 - 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.

- **Champion Team:** Troy Kierczynski, Hollie DeWalt, Katharine Marvin, Todd Neibauer
- **Brand Lead (all strategies):** Joan Sodini

OBJECTIVE 1: Deliver near-term master-plan projects, Osterlin student hub, and new student housing, as visible commitments to a modern, student-centered campus.

STRATEGIC DRIVERS: *Living Our Brand, People First, Stewardship & Sustainability*

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- The opening of a new student success hub in a remodeled and reimagined Osterlin Building
- A completed geothermal project resulting in a reduced carbon footprint, modernized energy infrastructure, decreased energy costs, and a learning opportunity for skilled trade students
- Continued branding updates to campus for better wayfinding and vibrancy
- The implementation of an initial housing project (most likely apartments) and a timeline for additional on campus housing options per the NMC Thrive master plan
- Increased awareness of our capital needs to donors and the public, including the identification of additional project funding sources

HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

Objective 1 Key Performance Indicators:

- Completed master plan projects: Geothermal, FRIC, Osterlin, and planning for housing
 - Baseline: 0 Goal: 4+
- Brand updates
 - Baseline: Phase 1 completed Goal: Implementation of branding phases 2 and 3

Secondary Indicators:

- Funding opportunities from legislative advocacy, millage, bonding, and donor support

FOCUS FOR PRELIMINARY STAGE AND INTO YEAR 1:

- Development of a funding plan including continued legislative advocacy, millage, and bonding
- Test donor interest in master plan projects through the Foundation's campaign feasibility study
- Implement the next phase of branding in new buildings and projects
- Internal space planning and preparation for the construction period of Osterlin
- Formulate a financing plan and operating model to ensure a sustainable housing operation
- Execute Boardman Lake Campus sale to help fund Osterlin, Freshwater Research and Innovation Center, and Geothermal projects.

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.

STRATEGIC DRIVERS: *Living Our Brand, People First, Community Partnerships, Stewardship & Sustainability*

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- Prioritization of our campus spaces and facilities needing renewal that result in the biggest impact to campus
- A “People First” relocation plan that aligns and supports departments during both interim and permanent moves
- Revived outdoor spaces with learning opportunities for our students
- A more welcoming environment for students and employees
- Implement the next phase of branding in existing buildings and spaces
- A vibrant, modern college campus as this objective is coupled with objective 1

HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

Objective 2 Key Performance Indicators:

- Completed facilities condition assessment
- Completed projects on campus:
 - Baseline: 0 Goal: TBD
- Brand updates
 - Baseline: Phase 1 completed Goal: Implementation of phases 2 and 3

Secondary Indicators:

- Funding opportunities from legislative advocacy, millage, bonding, and donor support
- Pulse surveys and feedback from Leadership Council on projects and prioritizations

FOCUS FOR PRELIMINARY STAGE AND INTO YEAR 1:

- Conduct facilities condition assessment (FCA)
- Assessment of student extra curricular activities and employee opportunities survey
- Assessment and prioritization of recreational/gathering space/beautification projects
- Implement the next phase of branding in new buildings and projects
- Execute the Denno's brand refresh and outdoor sculptures (grant application submitted)
- Review Association of Physical Plant Administrators (APPA) recommended resources related to facility upkeep
- Explore adding a "Campus Beautification" or dual ask mechanism (gift to a capital project includes a dual ask for upkeep and maintenance) as philanthropic option to the Foundation's final campaign Case for Support

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.

STRATEGIC DRIVERS: *Living Our Brand, Community Partnerships, People First, Stewardship & Sustainability*

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- Our students living the dorms have more opportunities and activities both on campus and in the community
- Our adult and commuter students feel more connected to the campus and have supports and opportunities that draw them to campus
- More student engagement resulting in improved retention
- An increase in student groups providing support towards the personal and professional goals of our learners
- Increased student-centric programming and events across campus

HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

Objective 3 Key Performance Indicators:

- Student belonging, satisfaction, and engagement survey (sliced by student type)
 - Baseline: Belonging at NMC (Spring 2023) 63% Goal: 68% (may refine)
 - Baseline: Satisfaction (2025/2026 avg) 86% Goal: 90%

Secondary Indicators:

- Increased student group participation
- Increased number of student groups/newly established groups

FOCUS FOR PRELIMINARY STAGE AND INTO YEAR 1:

- Assessment of student needs/priorities for extra curricular activities/opportunities (NMC students and students at comparable colleges)
- Develop detailed resourcing plan to address student needs for increased engagement
- Identify connections and supports tied to alumni relations: mentor networks, connections to alumni/retirees, as well as community networks
- Explore how this might connect to [experiential majors maps](#) (plans in MAP) that give students guidance on how to further engage with their major pathway/future career
- Identify ways to connect with Extended Education opportunities such as “Adulting 101” and wellness classes
- Explore an NMC version of "Haalarit" and other takeaways from the Finland visit for improving student connection and belonging, investigate ties to nEXt Endorsement, global endorsement (existing processes/systems)

OBJECTIVE 5: Processes/Systems: 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.

STRATEGIC DRIVERS: *Living Our Brand, People First, Stewardship & Sustainability*

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- The highest priority pinchpoints and frustrations identified by employees have been addressed
- Operational systems have become more efficient via streamlining and technological improvements
- Employees have more time to spend on other aspects of their jobs and less on the backend systems and operations

HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

Objective 5 Key Performance Indicators:

- Process time reduction (tentative)
 - Baseline: TBD Goal: TBD (based on processes improved)
- Accuracy improvement
 - Baseline: TBD Goal: TBD (based on processes improved)

Secondary Indicators:

- Institutional effectiveness survey revamped
- Staff satisfaction after implementation of a process improvement
- Leadership Council confirms positive impact to process

FOCUS FOR PRELIMINARY STAGE AND INTO YEAR 1:

- Identify the least efficient processes for improvement via pulse survey, Leadership Council, focus groups, value stream mapping (visual flowchart documenting process)
- Identify those tasks *where value is added* in quality of work and efficiency through the application of AI or other technologies
- Revise and improve critical processes
- Empower departments to review and optimize their processes
- Evaluate/acquire AI tools and/or workflow software to tie disparate systems together
- Determine short- and long-term budget implications and potential funding sources