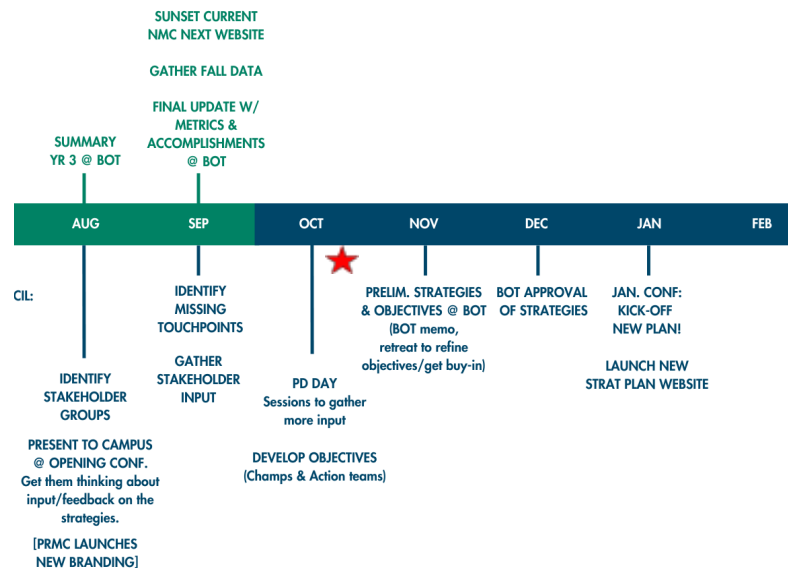




To: Dr. Nick Nissley, President
From: Jason Slade, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives
Date: October 13, 2025
Subject: Strategic Initiatives Update: *October 20, 2025 Board of Trustees Meeting*
Topic: *Board Update on the new NMC Strategic Plan (2026 - 2029)*

The development of the next strategic plan (2026-2029) continues. As shared last month, the college is moving from strategy development (Stage 1) to objective development (Stage 2). Here are the current updates documenting the progress through the strategy development phase of the plan.



Progress is being made drafting a Strategic Impact Statement which is designed to unify NMC’s mission and vision to the strategies in the new plan. It gives us the focus to prioritize what matters most, the discipline to make hard choices, and the direction to rally the entire college and the community around a shared path forward. This will eventually be revised down to a single statement.

Draft Strategic Impact Statement Options (as of October 13, 2025)

Anchor + Edge: NMC’s strategy is to compete and thrive in a changing higher education landscape by focusing where we can lead. We will deliver frictionless enrollment and support pathways that remove barriers and create belonging for every learner, while investing in the programs and partnerships that bring national distinction to Traverse City. By prioritizing boldly, for students, for employees, and for our community, we will secure NMC’s role as both the region’s first choice and a source of excellence recognized far beyond it.

Access + Excellence: NMC’s strategy is to ensure every student and employee can succeed by focusing on what matters most. We will provide frictionless enrollment and support pathways that make education accessible and connected for every learner, while elevating programs and partnerships that bring national distinction to NMC. Through this focus, we will remain Northern Michigan’s first choice for education and opportunity, and strengthen our reputation as a college that makes a lasting difference for our region and beyond.

Over the past two months, feedback on the draft strategies has been gathered from many stakeholder groups, including the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, Leadership Council, Foundation Board, student groups, the five University Partners, Judicial Affairs, and ESIMT. Future focus groups include Faculty Council, Staff Council, the general public, Human Resources, Dennon and IAF staff, as well as many community partner organizations.

Draft Strategies (as of October 13, 2025)
Future-Focused Education: Equip learners for a rapidly changing world through purposeful 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 Campus and Colleagues: Make NMC a vibrant campus and workplace by transforming our facilities and investing in faculty and staff as an employer of choice, building the capacity that sustains NMC's future.

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. Objectives will be developed encompassing some or all of these strategic drivers. Leadership Council has begun this process.

Draft Strategic Drivers (as of October 13, 2025)
Living Our Brand: Embed our brand ethos— innovation, collaboration, and impact—into every aspect of our institution, from student experiences to strategic partnerships.
Community Partnerships: Proactively embed and leverage strategic community partnerships across all college initiatives to advance community engagement, foster economic and workforce development, and create innovative 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.
Human-Centered Excellence: Foster an inclusive, supportive, and empowering environment that prioritizes the holistic well-being, success, and continuous development of every student and employee.

A condensed summary of feedback is noted below:

Structure & Clarity

- Three strategies were seen as clear and manageable.
- Strategic drivers are helpful for focus, but expecting all four to apply to every objective is not realistic. A more flexible approach (at least one driver per objective) was suggested.

Competitive Advantage

- Strategies by themselves do not differentiate NMC; true advantage will come from bold, specific objectives and action steps. Several groups encouraged stronger, more aspirational wording.
- Some suggested reframing advantages in terms of how strategies give *students* a competitive edge. Feedback will be incorporated at the objective level.

Prioritization

- Fewer strategies plus the use of drivers should help prioritize.
- Concerns remain about how priorities will rise to the top and how to filter “good ideas” before they become objectives.
- The plan should remain a “living” document with flexibility to adjust midstream as conditions change.

Avoiding Silos

- Risk of siloed implementation is still high if objectives are assigned too narrowly.