To: NMC Board of Trustees

From: Nick Nissley, Ed.D.
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Subject: *Strategy 1 - Future-Focused Education: 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 1 - FUTURE-FOCUSED EDUCATION: Equip learners for a rapidly changing world through purposeful academic pathways, durable skills, and technology literacy.
- **Champion Team:** Stephen Siciliano and Terri Gustafson

OBJECTIVE 1: Strengthen student outcomes, institutional performance, and workforce readiness by embedding responsible and effective use of AI across teaching, learning, and operations.

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

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?
- Our occupational programs develop industry-informed course outcomes to continue to improve and adapt to meet the needs of employers.
- Our traditional students learn the digital skills necessary for AI proficiency at their 4-year transfer institution.
- Our faculty and staff have the training needed to add ethical and impactful AI enhancements to their courses, programs, and operations.
- Faculty and staff leverage AI and digital literacy creating more time to focus on students, faculty, and staff interactions.

HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

Objective 1 Key Performance Indicators:
- Industry AI Expectations and Student Preparedness:*
    - Baseline: NA   Goal: 20% improvement*
- Transfer Institution AI Expectations:*
    - Baseline: NA   Goal: 20% improvement
        poll industry partners on needs / student preparedness, begin with pilot groups, projected target

Secondary Indicators:
- Increase the number of AI professional-use norming sessions with all areas.
- Increase AI training/professional development attendance and participation for all employee groups.

FOCUS FOR PRELIMINARY STAGE AND INTO YEAR 1:
- Identify department-level AI navigators and liaisons to lead actions and alignment with department goals and program outcomes.
- Identify employer and transfer institution needs and expectations.
- Develop an AI decision-making framework across departments (critical evaluation and assessment of AI integration or nonintegration [ethics, cost, value, impact, tradeoff]).
- Continue and enhance faculty and staff AI and technologies education.
- Collaborate with the Curriculum Committee to identify areas to incorporate AI into program outcomes.

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.

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

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?
- Integrate the nine durable skills into curriculum programming to assure greater employability of our graduates.
- Align the priority durable skills identified by regional employers with the program outcomes in their related fields.
- Expand experiential learning and work-based learning activities to more academic programs and increase enrollment in our experiential learning endorsement (nEXt).
- Be one of the first colleges with a pathway in the Michigan College for Credit Apprenticeship programs, providing opportunities for apprentices statewide.
- Create opportunities and explore additional industry and community partnerships to provide career resources, micro internships, and pathways to apprenticeship credentials.
- Revamp programs and services, beginning with Engineering Technology, resulting in alignment with industry and increased employability.
- Build alumni and career connections for regional employability and future education.

HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

Objective 2 Key Performance Indicators:
- Enrollment of Students nEXt Endorsement:
  - Baseline: 57   Goal: 100 next year
- Industry Durable Skills Expectations, Alignment and Preparedness:
  - Baseline: in development   Goal: 20% improvement*
- Transfer Durable Skills Institution Alignment:
  - Baseline: in development   Goal: 20% improvement*
    - *poll industry partners on needs / student preparedness, begin with pilot groups, projected target*

Secondary Indicators:
- Improvement of program and course learning outcomes as durable skills are added to curriculum
- Additional courses and activities meeting nEXt endorsement criteria
- Number of additional internships and work-based learning opportunities

FOCUS FOR PRELIMINARY STAGE AND INTO YEAR 1:
- Align durable skills feedback with existing outreach surveys.
- Identify programs missing work-based and experiential learning activities aligned to nEXt.
- Add work-based and experiential learning to programs.
- Identify opportunities and funding mechanisms for additional internships and work-based projects.
- Identify employer and transfer institution needs and expectations.
- Roll out durable skills language and attributes to the new faculty-led advising model.

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.

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

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?
- Increased visibility and stature for our distinguished programs: Aviation, Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS), Great Lakes Culinary Institute, Great Lakes Maritime Academy, Great Lakes Water Studies Institute (GLWSI).
- Continued execution of GLWSI's program review, and leveraging of the Freshwater Research and Innovation Center resulting in increased enrollment, better financial improvement, and a return to full staffing.
- Development of advanced certification courses that positions NMC's UAS program as the cornerstone of the State's advanced aerial mobility initiatives.
- Alignment and blending with Strategy 2, Objective 1 (marketing funding)

HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

Objective 3 Key Performance Indicators:
- Program Enrollment and Financial Performance for Each Distinguished Program
  - Baseline: Fall 2025/FY25 data
    Goal: Stability or growth targets for each program (identified individually), includes out-of-region.
- Improvements in Market Perception, Visibility, and Employability Resulting from Our Programs.
  - Baseline: in development*   Goal: 10% improvement
    * *key measurables such as graduate placement, industry recognition, partnerships*

Secondary Indicators:
- Recruitment activity and earned media
- Increase in strategic partnerships
- Employability and placement of graduates and near-graduates

FOCUS FOR PRELIMINARY STAGE AND INTO YEAR 1:
- Development of a comprehensive UAS strategy and curriculum that incorporates emerging fields and outreach strategy for partnership opportunities.
- Alignment of the GLWSI with the Freshwater Research and Innovation Center, ensuring the institute is featured prominently and positioned as the lead for academic and professional training.
- Execution of Year 1 GLWSI Program Enhancement and Sustainability Review goals (recruitment, outreach, enrollment, and financial improvements).
- Develop and test donor interest in distinguished programs and adjacent initiatives such as "Blue Tech," innovation challenges, and partnerships.
- Execution of GLMA's operational changes including the full utilization of the *Robinson Bay.*

OBJECTIVE 4: Proactively identify at-risk students enrolled in courses with high D, F, or withdrawal rates (DFW) and create a unified, data-driven, and comprehensive approach to supporting students, instructors, and courses that expands and sustains college preparedness programming (CollegeEdge) and institutionalizes integrated academic and faculty support for all students.

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

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?
- Coordinated early interventions and ongoing support connecting students to resources and improving course outcomes in high DFW gateway courses while scaling initiatives such as CollegeEdge and normalizing instructor support practices
- At-risk students in courses with high DFW rates that serve as gateway courses are proactively identified and connected with timely, consistent, and integrated supports so that they feel supported and demonstrate improved success (e.g., lower DFW rates)
- Success and retention rates increase for at-risk students identified in courses with high DFW rates

HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

Objective 4 Key Performance Indicators:
- College-level Course Completion Rates (high DFW, gateway courses, highly enrolled)
  - Baseline: 81%   Goal: 91%
- Enrollee Success Rates
  - Baseline: 66%   Goal: 76%
- Fall-to-Fall Retention Rates
  - Baseline: FT 63%   Goal: FT 70%
  - Baseline: PT 50%   Goal: PT 53%

Secondary Indicators:
- Next-course progression
- Instructor participation rate and satisfaction
- Student reported sense of support, belonging, and confidence

FOCUS FOR PRELIMINARY STAGE AND INTO YEAR 1:
- Identify courses with high DFW rates and high enrollment.
- Define the term "at-risk."
- Identify relationships between DFW rates and student, course, and instructional variables.
- Assess embedded tutoring, with the addition of embedded coaching, in high DFW, high-enrollment gateway courses.
- Formalize a workload calculator.
- Formalize an early alert process in Canvas.
- Improve My Success workflows.
- Evaluate recent iterations of CollegeEdge programming (Adult CollegeEdge, Math CollegeEdge, etc.); develop and implement Summer 2026 and academic year programming based on findings.
- Establish a sustainable funding model for CollegeEdge programming.
- Empower faculty with foundational pedagogical methods and how to adapt to different learners.