

President's Report to the NMU Board of Trustees
Dr. Fritz Erickson
Friday, December 13, 2019

Northern has enjoyed a fantastic fall semester. We've certainly enjoyed the first half of our 120th year. Along with our good news about the increase in overall enrollment, here are a few other recent highlights:

NATIONAL RANKING: Recently Northern's RN to BSN degree was ranked No. 1 in the state by nursingprocess.org

- The program allows registered nurses to increase their earnings potential and create pathways to graduate education and employment leadership positions.
- Our nursing faculty and our Global Campus staff worked really hard to get the program 100% online, which makes it convenient for working nurses.

KENNEDY CENTER HONOR: We just learned that Northern's recent production of "What We Leave Behind: Addressing Climate Change Through Dance" has been selected to perform at the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival Region 3 in Madison on January 9.

- The show explores how to change the conversation surrounding climate change.
- It showcases NMU's new dance company, CO/LAB Collective, and our Open Mind music group.
 - And features original choreography by instructor Jill Grundstrom and lecture content by public relations professor Jessica Thompson.
- Bill Digneit, head of the Theater and Dance Department, in describing how huge of an accomplishment the selection is, noted that there are no divisions in Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival
 - Thus, Northern is in the regional same category as large schools such as the University of Michigan and University of Wisconsin.
 - He likened the invitation to our Division I Wildcat hockey team making the NCAA regional tournament, a smaller school facing big schools.
- This selection is Northern's first at this festival since Professor Shelley Russell's original production of "Haywire" in 1995.
 - An earlier musical revue, "Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris," featuring theater professor Paul Truckey when he was a Northern student, also was invited to the Region 3 festival.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION: A few weeks ago, Upper Peninsula law enforcement and prosecutors, along with Northern senior administrators, met on campus to discuss the need for a **U.P. forensic pathologist**.

- They discussed ways to work on getting state approval for such a position.
- The group proposed having the person located on campus since it would complement the forensic anthropology expertise and research facilities Northern has invested in in the past three years.
- This is an important regional conversation that will continue.

NORTHERN CENTER: The **newly opened Wildcat Den** has been well received by the students, faculty, staff and community members.

- Students were showing up in large numbers to eat, play games and hang out prior to finals.
- The university celebrated the 32nd Annual **Lighting Up the Holidays** with hundreds of area children at Northern Center on Dec. 2.
 - Many Northern students, especially student-athletes, volunteered with the event's games, activities, food and Santa photos.
 - Santa and I thought we were the big draw until Wildcat Willy arrived and stole the show.

NATIONAL GIVING: This was the third year Northern participated in **National Day of Giving**, Dec. 3

- NMU asked faculty, staff, alumni, parents and friends to support Northern academic departments and initiatives, for which we received strong support.
 - Brad Canale will be providing final tallies soon.
 - Our efforts also supported the **NMU Food Pantry** with more than 2,000 pounds of food and personal hygiene items

DEDICATION: Since the Board was last on campus, Northern dedicated the **Shimadzu Analytical Core Laboratory for Medicinal Plant Sciences** in West Hall.

- The celebration included an industry panel discussion about the cannabis career field, which was very engaging.
 - Industry representatives here for the panel and dedication were very impressed with the new lab, telling us our students would be entering the profession well prepared after using our state-of-the-art equipment.
- Started medicinal plant chemistry in Fall 2017 and already has 356 majors.

ATHLETICS: Last month, **Greco Roman wrestler Spencer Woods** finished second at the Bill Farrell Memorial in the 77-kilogram category to earn an opportunity to compete in the Olympic Trials on April 4-5.

Northern fall sports teams have wrapped up seasons. Some highlights include:

- **Volleyball** advanced to the GLIAC Tournament semifinals
- **Men's and women's soccer** advanced to the GLIAC Tournament with both bowing out in quarterfinals.
- **Cross country team** advanced to the NCAA Regional meet where it was 11th of 32 teams
- **Football** having eight players selected to the All-GLIAC teams

Winter sports teams are in full action:

Hockey meet the No. 1 team in country, Mankato State, this weekend (Dec. 13-14)

- The team has enjoyed a Top 20 ranking or votes in the national poll for nearly every week of the season, and they are planning to have a strong second half.

Women's and men's basketball teams have had some strong performances already in the early portion of their respective seasons. They travel meet Michigan Tech in Houghton on Sunday (Dec. 15).

- The women's squad was picked to finish second in the North Division and third overall in the GLIAC in the pre-season poll – but Coach Troy Mattson and I have a higher number in mind.

Men's and women's swimming are both ranked No. 11 in NCAA Division II.

Men's and women's Nordic skiing, get started this weekend on Saturday and Sunday (Dec. 14-15) with the NMU Open at Al Quaal Recreation Area in Ishpeming.

- This year – like the 49 years before – the Wildcat ski teams are expected to be among the best Nordic ski programs in the nation.