

**NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Minutes of the Special Formal Session
of
Tuesday, March 24, 2020**

A special formal session of the Board of Trustees of Northern Michigan University was held on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 *via Zoom videoconference*. The meeting was convened at 1:33 p.m. by Chair Steven M. Mitchell.

Trustees present included:

Mr. Steven M. Mitchell, Chair	Ms. Donna L. Murray-Brown
Ms. Lisa I. Fittante	Ms. Tami M. Seavoy, Vice Chair
Ms. Alexis M. Hart	Mr. Stephen E. Young
Mr. James K. Haveman	Dr. Fritz J Erickson, ex officio
Mr. Robert E. Mahaney	

Senior Staff and Counsel present included:

Mr. Brad Canale, Chief Executive Officer – NMU Foundation
Mr. R. Gavin Leach, Vice President for Finance and Administration and Treasurer of the Board of Trustees
Dr. Kerri Schuiling, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dr. Steven VandenAvond, Vice President for Extended Learning and Community Engagement
Ms. Deanna Hemmila, Executive Director – Board/Government Relations
Ms. Cathy A. Andrew, Secretary of the Board of Trustees
Mr. Kurt McCamman, Legal Counsel

ROLL CALL

Secretary Andrew took roll call of the Trustees and noted that a quorum was met with all Trustees being present.

INDOOR AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

Trustee Hart, Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, provided a report of the committee meeting that was held at 1:00 p.m. this afternoon. (Addendum #1)

The following action was taken:

It was moved by Trustee Hart, seconded by Trustee Fittante, to approve the proposed Indoor Agriculture Program.

Discussion followed:

Trustee Seavoy asked Provost and Vice President Kerri Schuiling if the program went through all of the approval processes. Provost Schuiling confirmed that it had.

Being no further discussion, Chair Mitchell called the vote:

The motion was approved by a vote of 8 – 0.

**REAFFIRMATION OF APPROVED DECEMBER 2019 BOARD OF TRUSTEE
INITIATIVES**

The following action was taken:

It was moved by Trustee Mahaney, seconded by Trustee Seavoy, that the Board of Northern Michigan University recognizes that much has changed in higher education since it last met in December when it passed a number of new initiatives to drive enrollment and provide needed services to the Upper Peninsula and Michigan as a whole. Despite the changed world, including the uncertainties surrounding the current corona virus threat, the Board reaffirms the need for these programs and further recommits itself for their immediate implementation. The underlying reasons for these programs remain intact. Accordingly, the Board instructs the President and University leadership to implement each program following the timelines authorized in December, including the necessary investment in human resources.

Discussion followed:

Trustee Seavoy said this is important particularly now when we have this new delivery mode for education. It is important that we support our students in all the different ways they may need. The student success coach measures and student success pieces, rural health, all of these will be very important as we move forward.

Trustee Mahaney said a valid question as to whether these measures should be put on hold has been raised in light of the corona virus and its massive economic impact everywhere, including the U.P. He said he believes that we must move forward now more than ever with these programs. The need for these programs is going to be greater than ever as we come out of the corona virus times we are living in. He said he has personally witnessed since March 11 many small businesses in the community are struggling just to stay alive. He said many of these programs are going to play a key role in rebuilding the U.P. economy and attracting new students to Northern. Trustee Mahaney said that under the leadership of President Erickson and Vice President Leach, Northern is in strong financial shape having solid cash flow reserves and plentiful liquidity. This is a \$5 million investment and we can adjust as we go – if circumstances dictate, we can scale back. He said he strongly believes the university has the leadership team in place that can make this a success despite the challenging times we are in. Both President Erickson and Provost Schuling have a tremendous track record in implementing and bringing about new programs.

Being no further discussion, Chair Mitchell called the vote.

The motion was approved by a vote of 8 – 0.

Chair Mitchell said until the travel regulations change, it will be difficult to bring people on campus to interview for some of the positions that are open. However, it is the Board's hope that the staff will continue to do all steps possible up to the point of bringing people on to campus to interview them in a live way, including using technology such as Zoom. The Board is aware of some of the problems that will be faced but believes there will be an opportunity to put these in place as long as the groundwork is complete prior to bringing individuals in for live interviews.

RESIDENCE HALL CREDIT

The following action was taken:

It was moved by Trustee Young, seconded by Trustee Haveman, that the Board approve an \$820 credit, plus a carryover of any remaining Dining Dollars to the next semester, to students living in the residence halls with a dining plan who decide to check out of their rooms before and up to 5:00 p.m., Friday, April 3, 2020. The amount of the credit may be adjusted to reflect appropriate offsets for those receiving certain institutional aid or having outstanding student account balances. Students can also forgo the credit and opt to remain in the residence halls through the remainder of the semester, which ends May 2, 2020. The administration is authorized to amend or adjust the check-out date and take all steps necessary to comply with any changes in federal or state requirements. A copy of the options are on file with the Secretary of the Board of Trustees.

Discussion followed:

Trustee Young said the Finance Committee discussed this and believes these are extraordinary times and this is an extraordinary measure for the University. After looking at different options, the Committee believes this is the best option to address the concerns and questions the administration is getting, but also an economically feasible way given the uncertainty of the finances and economy. Many other universities are doing this and puts us on par with what others are doing. He said we will continue to keep the campus open and students have the option to stay on campus or leave campus, which is an important point when talking about these credits.

Being no further discussion, Chair Mitchell called the vote:

The motion was approved by a vote of 8 – 0.

INDIVIDUAL REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

There were none.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Chair Mitchell said he is appreciative of the entire administrative team on the steps taken during the COVID-19 situation. He also thanked the faculty for the extraordinary job they have done in going to remote instruction (online learning) almost overnight. He said it is truly amazing and they have really stepped up the plate doing the best job they could as we continue to provide the same quality education for our students as we provided in in-person classes. Northern is blessed with a faculty that cares about their students, instruction, and ensuring the students receive the best possible education. He said the culture at Northern starts at the top and we have had great

leadership from President Erickson since he became president five years ago. Chair Mitchell congratulated everyone from the president, the faculty, the grounds crew and custodial staff, the secretaries, and everybody in the university who have pulled together. He said we are all Yoopers, are tough, and are going to get through this because of the culture we have.

President Erickson provided a COVID-19 update:

- Team is working through a series of “what-ifs” – gratified that team is taking a hands-on approach to answer student and family questions.
- Housing – holding approximately 80% of students living in on-campus apartments; 40% living in residence halls are still here – expect that number to drop over the course of this week based on the Governors Executive Order 2020-21.
- Students are managing well – no concerns expressed by students in a decline in quality of instruction.
- Working through a variety of support mechanisms for students to assist them with online learning (tutoring, advising, etc.) – faculty and staff reaching out to help them be successful.
- Additional grading option provided to students and faculty that can be determined at the end of the semester – incorporating both grades and satisfactory/unsatisfactory options.
- Governor’s EO – very few people working on campus – those who are required to be on campus (dining, residence halls, etc.) are exhibiting appropriate social distancing.

Vice President Leach reported that during the last seven day’s usage of Zoom, we have logged 464,000 meeting minutes.

President Erickson said that what the EAN staff is doing to support everyone (campus and community-based) for both existing and new customers is outstanding. People needed internet access – approximately 6,000 U.P. families – this is an important service that we can provide, especially in light of social distancing.

President Erickson also thanked the Dining staff for their outstanding work with the grab-and-go options and process allowing the university to follow the Governor’s directives for no open restaurants and social distancing.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Chair Mitchell opened the floor to the Trustees for Good of the Order.

Trustee Fittante made the following comments:

- She thanked everyone and said she is appreciative of the wonderful job they are doing during these times.

Trustee Hart touched on the following:

- She thanked everyone for what they are doing during these unprecedented times.
- She said she is appreciative to how everyone is pulling together and how quickly they are continuing to adapt to the changing needs of our students and the rest of the campus.

Trustee Haveman commented on the following:

- He said when it comes to this virus, the communication, transparency, honesty, stability, one voice, integrity, Northern has really stepped up to the plate in a unified way. He said he appreciates the work people have put into this.

Trustee Young made the following comments:

- He said he agrees with the comments made so far and thanked Vice President Leach for his work with the Finance Committee and President Erickson given the financial impacts this may have on the university.

Trustee Seavoy touched on the following:

- She thanked the faculty and said she is impressed with what they are doing. She appreciates the difference in how this type of online learning is delivered compared to face-to-face classes.

Trustee Murray-Brown made the following comments:

- She said as a new board member it has been awe-inspiring to see how hard everyone is working and how much thoughtfulness goes into every decision and moment in making sure everything is going as planned in this situation.
- She said it is amazing that with the social distancing we have been able to be so connected.
- She thanked everyone for all they are doing.

Trustee Mahaney made the following comments:

- He thanked everyone at the university for their work and response to getting the university to the point we are at.
- He said we have handled this crisis as good or better than any other university and should take pride in that.
- He said tourism and hospitality is the largest part of the U.P.'s economy and coming out of this is going to be tough. The University is going to play a big role in that process and we should be asking ourselves how we can help out when it comes.

Trustee Mitchell made the following comments:

- He said our students have been tremendous through this disruption in their lives, especially the seniors in their last semester before graduation. He said there will be a commencement ceremony for the class of 2020.
- The Board has been tremendous throughout this and he is appreciative that President Erickson is keeping the board updated on a daily basis.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 2:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy A. Andrew
Secretary of the Board of Trustees