

**BOT Presentation – Recommendations Regarding Dr. Luther S. West
December 10, 2021
Interim President Kerri Schuiling**

During the Fall 2021, Northern began a comprehensive audit of all of its named facilities and spaces. As a result of the audit, Northern has to consider the ties of Dr. Luther S. West to the eugenics movement. Currently, one of our science buildings bears his name: West Science. When this finding was brought to our attention by the University historian, I convened a work group to review the history; using our university naming of buildings policy. The workgroup had wide representation from across campus. After a thorough review and with the support of three departments, two housed in West Science, recommendations were brought forward to me.

First, I think it is important to note that in the discussion and teaching of eugenics, Northern Michigan University is not without fault. Like many colleges and universities, Northern offered biology courses on or including the topics of eugenics during the period of 1917 into the 1950s. Today, I offer a formal apology to anyone who may have been hurt or felt intimidated by this history, and apologize for whatever role those courses and teachings may have contributed to the eugenics movement.

The review committee identified a large body of evidence to demonstrate that Dr. Luther S. West was highly respected on campus and off, and was considered an outstanding teacher by his students and colleagues.

There is also a significant amount of recognition for the scientific works done by Dr. West on the topics of the housefly and malaria, including the important work performed for the World Health Organization (WHO) on malaria mitigation.

However, also documented are Dr. West's research studies, articles, and presentations that clearly indicate support for "the betterment of the human race," as well as records of his presence at pro-eugenics organizational activities over multiple years. We have not discounted the other facts; likewise, we cannot ignore these facts.

It is felt that University naming honors must reflect the current philosophy and mission of Northern Michigan University, which has inclusion as a core value, equity of systems and processes as a strategic plan focus area, and reimagining inclusion and diversity at NMU as a strategic plan initiative.

For these reasons, we make the following recommendations:

- 1) Northern Michigan University will remove Luther S. West as the namesake of the University's Science Building, effective immediately. The facility will be known as The Science Building (TSB).
- 2) Northern will phase out *Hail Northern* as the University's alma mater. The song was authored by Dr. West for NMU's Golden Jubilee in 1949. The University will begin developing a phase-out plan that results in a new alma mater by Fall 2024 classes – the start of Northern's 125th Anniversary celebration.
- 3) That all documentation of Dr. Luther S. West's academic study and scientific research, including that involving eugenics, be held in the Lydia Olson Library's reserved and special collections where it is accessible to those with an interest to review or study it. Northern strongly believes that scholarly work be retained so that students and the general public can learn, analyze, and make their own decisions regarding the value of the research.

It is the Board of Trustees responsibility to name or rename facilities, so we ask that you consider these recommendations.