

**NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Minutes of the Special Formal Session  
of  
Thursday, September 29, 2022**

A hybrid special formal session of the Board of Trustees of Northern Michigan University was held on Thursday, September 29, 2022, in the Scott L. Holman Executive Conference Room, Northern Center, Northern Michigan University, Marquette, Michigan and via Zoom videoconference. The meeting was convened at 10:01 a.m., by Chair Stephen E. Young.

Trustees present included:

Mr. Stephen E. Young, Chair*	Mr. Jason T. Morgan*
Ms. Lisa I. Fittante*	Ms. Tami M. Seavoy
Ms. Alexis M. Hart, Vice Chair*	Mr. Gregory J. Seppanen
Ms. Melissa A. Holmquist	Dr. Kerri D. Schuiling, ex officio*
Mr. Robert E. Mahaney*	

*\*via Zoom videoconference*

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  
Ms. Deanna Hemmila, Executive Director – Board/Government Relations  
Ms. Cathy A. Andrew, Secretary of The Board of Trustees  
Mr. Kurt McCamman, Legal Counsel\*  
Mr. Carrick Craig, Legal Counsel\*  
Ms. Ashley Higginson, Legal Counsel\*

*The meeting was live-streamed on YouTube at <https://tinyurl.com/NMUAVStreaming>*

**ROLL CALL**

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

**DISCUSSION AND SELECTION OF NMU PRESIDENT**

Trustee Morgan stated that Northern Michigan University, having conducted a diligent search for a new president with broad input from campus stakeholders and constituencies, is prepared to select its next president. It is with great enthusiasm and pride to make the following motion:

**It was moved by Trustee Morgan, seconded by Trustee Seavoy, that the Board appoint Dr. Brock Tessman as the next president of Northern Michigan University with a scheduled start date of February 1, 2023, and to ask Dr. Schuiling to continue to serve until that date.**

Discussion followed:

Trustee Morgan said this is a big day for Northern Michigan University and he is thrilled to move Dr. Tessman's appointment following input and firm support from the NMU community shared with the NMU Board of Trustees via hundreds of comments. As a former professor, academic dean, and most recently the deputy commissioner of higher education for the 45,000 students, 8,000 employees, and 16 campuses that comprise the Montana University System, Dr. Tessman brings leadership experience and exceptional qualifications to our great university. He said it also his understanding that he has been beloved by his students as a professor of political science. He noted he is personally excited by Dr. Tessman's commitment to student/faculty support and engagement and under his leadership Northern Michigan University's brightest days are on the horizon.

Trustee Seavoy said the qualities wanted in NMU's next president were identified at the start of this process. Dr. Tessman has the relative experience as described by Trustee Morgan. The campus forum feedback received shows he has the qualities one must demonstrate – he is student centric, a clear and direct communicator, a visionary, and dynamic leader. She said not only were those common themes in the campus feedback, these observations shone through in his board interview, as well. She said she is very pleased to support this motion.

Trustee Hart said her selection is also Dr. Tessman for the next president of NMU noting we have many opportunities ahead of us. Dr. Tessman was clearly able to articulate those opportunities in addition to providing specific and innovative ideas on how to address them – enrollment with an increased focus on retention, the need to continue to focus on the holistic well-being of our students. He emphasized an opportunity to repair relationships by building trust and providing transparency to unify us as a university, he has shown demonstrated success around DEIB initiatives. She said she had the opportunity to review approximately 100 pages of feedback on all candidates and feels strongly that her conclusion is aligned with the committee. She said this is not an easy choice, but a happy problem because the caliber of the candidates is outstanding. She thanked the Presidential Search Advisory Committee for providing the final slate through their own intensive vetting

Trustee Seppanen thanked the individuals of the search committee noting they did a great job. Their success was evident in providing the board with four superb candidates to interview and choose from. He said of those four excellent candidates, his vote will be for Dr. Tessman. In reading all comments from faculty, staff, students, and the public, he found he agrees with many of their observations related to Dr. Tessman's vision, energy, communication skills, and ability to connect with students, faculty, and staff. He was very impressed with Dr. Tessman's work on diversity in Montana and his success with increasing retention and on-time completion rates for the Native American students within his system. In his opinion, Dr. Tessman's position on sustainability was the best and most complete of all candidates interviewed. As one of the commentators noted in the comments, "he will be a good fit" with Northern Michigan University.

Trustee Fittante thanked the Presidential Search Advisory Committee for the time, hard work, and effort that went into the search. They found four very qualified candidates and she

appreciates all they did. Although she wasn't able to meet with the candidates during their campus visits, she read all candidate bios and CVs and spent Sunday reading all of the comments on the campus feedback the board was provided. Taking all of this into consideration going into the interviews this past Monday, and after interviewing all four candidates, her top choice is Dr. Brock Tessman. Some of what she wrote in her notes were: enthusiasm for Northern and the Marquette and U.P. community; innovation agenda; explore, grow, and push the frontier; great energy, communicator, and listener; team builder; relationship builder; trust builder; honesty and transparency; in touch with diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging; mental health and wellness; and sustainability concerns and needs of the campus and the community. She said this should give an idea of why Dr. Tessman shines above the rest and she is happy to put her support behind Dr. Brock Tessman as the next president of Northern Michigan University.

Trustee Holmquist said she was honored to be part of the Presidential Search Advisory Committee and had the pleasure of participating in this selection process from the very beginning. She was asked to join the committee as an NMU alum and Marquette community member prior to being appointed to the Board. She said the process was meticulous and thoughtful and she valued the many different stakeholder perspectives that were represented on the search committee. She thanked her fellow committee members for their participation. The search was successful because of their hard work and commitment to the process. She said she echoes many of the comments already shared. With that in mind her vote for the next NMU president is also for Dr. Brock Tessman. She noted that although there were four excellent candidates, Dr. Tessman is the best fit and clear choice to take on this role. He is truly committed to student success and brought forward many innovative ideas on how to drive progress and honor the strategic plan. He has the experience, energy, and innovative thinking to truly be a change agent for NMU.

Trustee Mahaney said he concurs with the comments made by his fellow Trustees. He had the good fortune to spend some time with Dr. Tessman during the process. He noted NMU had four excellent candidates to select from which was because of the great work done the Presidential Search Advisory Committee. He had the good fortune of being on the committee, enjoyed it, and appreciated the input and commitment put forth by the 21 members of the committee. Dr. Tessman understands the broad, macroeconomic challenges that face higher education today especially as they relate to a regional comprehensive university like Northern Michigan University. On the other hand, he also clearly recognizes and believes in the opportunity that lies in front of NMU today. He said he is very excited to have him join us as our next president. He also wants to thank President Schuiling for the good work she did to position Northern to be able to have four exceptional candidates and to attract a candidate of Dr. Tessman's stature. He also thanked the entire executive leadership team who have done yeoman's work over this interim period.

Trustee Young said he echoed what Trustee Mahaney said in thanking President Schuiling for the tremendous work done to guide NMU through this transition period. She willingly agreed to all extensions of time and her work is very much appreciated. He also echoed the comments made related to the Presidential Search Advisory Committee and Parker Executive Search who helped guide NMU through the process that culminated in four outstanding candidates. This was not an easy decision. There was a lot of discussion and research that went into this process and

decision. He thanked Dr. Chris Greer for her efforts of chairing the Presidential Search Advisory Committee. He is excited that once we conclude today we can have the new president back on campus to appropriately welcome him and his family back to campus.

Being no further discussion, Chair Young called the question.

**On a roll-call vote, the Board voted as follows:**

Aye

Nay

Lisa I. Fittante  
Alexis M. Hart  
Missie A. Holmquist  
Robert E. Mahaney  
Jason T. Morgan  
Tami M. Seavoy  
Gregory J. Seppanen  
Stephen E. Young

Chair Young congratulated Dr. Tessman, noting the unanimous vote is indicative of the strong support he had through the interview process and speaking to the Board individually. He welcomed him on board. He thanked Trustees for the work that was done individually and collectively through the process.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The following action was taken:

**It was moved by Trustee Seavoy, seconded by Trustee Morgan, and supported by a vote of 8 – 0, to adjourn the meeting.**

Chair Young adjourned the meeting at 10:16 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Cathy A. Andrew  
Secretary of the Board of Trustees