

PRESIDENT'S REPORT for BOT

Dr. Brock Tessman

May 3, 2024

AAUP/AFT MOU AGREEMENT:

- Thank you to everyone involved in moving the AAUP/AFT wage reopener discussions to a successful conclusion.
 - AAUP union president Rick Mengyan and his negotiating team for the respectful, open and productive discussions throughout the process.
 - On the administrative side, Associate Provost Dale Kapla, Budget Director Matt Franti, along with vice presidents Gavin Leach – Finance and Rhea Dever – People, Culture and Wellbeing.
 - And, of course, we are grateful in the collaborative approach taken by all of you, the members of the NMU Board of Trustees.

- When Northern can work this collaboratively on such complicated and important issues it greatly adds to the overall success of the university and certainly the success of our students.

LOOKING ENROLLMENT:

- Our switch to the common app has drastically increased our applications for next year – a lot of fun to watch those numbers for apps and admitted students go up by crazy high percentages BUT
 - Need to be realistic about actual numbers
 - Point in time comparisons aren't good predictors this year due to the transition to the common app
 - But they do indicate new awareness and new interest in NMU through the common app – a very good thing
 - Also, some of the increase still due to ongoing rebound from COVID
 - Those who took gap years are starting to enroll
 - Those who went to community colleges and graduated are making decisions about a bachelor's degree at 4-year schools

- More important to watch the orientation numbers now that students will be having to pay their reservation fee, along with the housing deposits after the May 15 refundable date.
 - Right now, orientation registrations are a healthy increase over last year at this time
 - Housing – looks like we're already pushing capacity; will be watching that closely

- The state's increased support through the Michigan Achievement Scholarship in combination with Northern's Tuition Advantage are helping students financially
 - Also state programs to grow teacher education enrollment is having a positive impact on NMU's enrollment

UPDATE ON FAFSA PROCESSING:

- Happy to report that Northern has started receiving FAFSA files from the U.S. Department of Education after several delays caused by the rollout of the new FAFSA process.

- In fact, NMU's financial aid office has started sending out aid packages to our prospective students – just weeks after we started receiving the FAFSA files.
 - A big thank you to all of the financial aid, admissions, IT, budget staff members and all the other areas who have been helping get aid packages out.
 - They did the work need to be able to have a fast turnaround in processing the files once they arrived.

- Trustees, you may recall we did several things to help prospective students and their families keep moving forward in the enrolling process during the delays such as refundable housing deposits and deferred orientation fees.
- As long as there are no new delays on the transfer of files from the U.S. Department of Education, we expect to be able to keep to our regular aid package distribution for current students.
 - Happens in June, a few weeks after the Winter semester ends and grades are processed, which sometimes impacts aid eligibility
 - Sending in June provides the information before tuition is set

ASNMU REFERENDUM:

- You just heard from Gwen and Dana about the ASNMU referendum that passed in the recent student government elections.
 - Even though this increase in the Student Activity fee impacts the amount we have to work with for tuition regarding the cap, the administration strongly supported this referendum.
 - We want our students to be able to bring high-quality, big-name speakers and performers, such as we did this fall with John Green.
 - But big-name speakers and performers are expensive:
 - Average cost of a well-known speaker, \$35,000 – \$75,000
 - Average cost of a well-known musician or band, \$50,000 – \$100,000
 - That's the average, not the top rate!
 - To keep up with these rising costs, the increase was needed.
 - Campus activities contribute so much to the overall student experience.

STUDENT & FACULTY/STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS:

I know the board has heard about several recent student, faculty and staff achievements as part of yesterday's update from the pillar leaders and the interaction with the Student Leader Fellowship Program.

- And you'll even more at lunch today as we recognize the Board of Trustees Outstanding Student Award recipient.
- Northern's School of Nursing has partnered with Saginaw Valley State to enhance behavioral health care in the Upper Peninsula by expanding educational opportunities for advance practice nurses at a cost savings of nearly 85% through the BRIDGE UP program.
 - SVSU and NMU will offer psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner training to 31 U.P. nurse practitioners annually with the intent of addressing the extreme shortage of professionals in the U.P. who can provide mental health care and addiction treatment, and/or can manage medication for individuals with these health issues.
 - The program is funded with a \$2.6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Another partnership is NMU and Michigan Tech collaborating on an Entrepreneurial Fellows Program, which gives selected students from each school practical experience in identifying customers, strategic partners and suppliers critical to success of early-stage U.P. companies.
 - Corinne Bodeman, management instructor in the College of Business, is NMU's point person on this project.
 - She says a goal of the program is to have entrepreneurs and engineers learn to "speak each other's languages."
 - InvestUP is a sponsor of this program.

- A group of NMU students enrolled in the advanced field marine biology course this semester recently returned from a faculty-led study abroad experience in St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands where they had a chance to study hands-on marine science and ocean organisms. Dr. Jill Leonard pointed out that this was a first for extensive travel and scuba diving for many of the students on the trip and a great example of the immersive learning opportunity that student learning.
- Northern's competitive dance team qualified to compete in the National Dance Alliance college nationals for the first time in the program's history where it finished 8th in pom and 11th in jazz in their division.
- The dance team was one of two NMU club sports teams to qualify for national competition, the other being NMU's women's hockey team.
 - The Wildcats went 2-1 at the American Collegiate Hockey Association Women's Division II National Championships, which was the best showing of any of the qualifying teams from Michigan.
- Our 28th Annual Celebration of Student Scholarship was held on April 18 where we had 20 oral poster and an amazing 150+ poster presentations!
 - There, we recognized Harrison Bouche and Morgan Helme as this year's Student Technology Innovation Award recipients.
 - We honored our 3-Minute Thesis winners: graduate student Megan Wells and McNair Scholar Katelyn Younglove.
 - And gave out individual presentation awards to the following:
 - Undergraduate, lower division -- Grace Robinson: *Effects of Precipitation on Relative Abundance of Northern Raccoons, Striped Skunks, and Virginia Opossums on the East Coast of the United States*
 - Undergraduate, upper division – A'Mariya Peterson: *Capacity for Thermal Selection in Larval Burbot*
 - graduate student – Rylee Jensen: *Interspecific variation in gut microbiome diversity across the Etosha National Park herbivore community*
 - I salute all of the student participants of the Celebration of Student Scholarship, along with the faculty advisors, and the staff involved in putting on the enormous event.

KICKING OFF 125TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION:

Northern turned 125 on its charter anniversary last Sunday, April 28, kicking off our yearlong celebration of this milestone year.

- As part of the celebration, we held our first NMU Giving Day, outside of November's national giving day.
 - Huge success with more than 500 donors making gifts totaling about \$220,000
 - Of those two numbers, it's the donor total that most exciting.
 - To all who made a gift, thank you.
- This past Monday, we began Charter Week activities by randomly selecting three students for scholarships of \$1,250. Congratulations to incoming freshman Sophia Haralson, undergraduate Tay Linder and graduate student TJ Jasinski on being selected for those.
- From now until next May's commencement, there is a plethora of activities that are part of the 125th Anniversary Celebration scheduled, which can be found on the web at nmu.edu/125.

- And to close my report, I want to perform another 125th Anniversary Celebration action – announcing the selection of NMU’s alma mater ...

ANNOUNCING SELECTION OF AN ALMA MATER:

Earlier this year, Northern made a request for submissions for alma mater compositions.

- We had original compositions submitted by current students, alumni, faculty and staff, as well as U.P. community members.
- Our NMU Alma Mater work group made up of students, faculty, staff, and alumni representatives – had a difficult challenge to choose, but they did it.
 - I don’t believe any of the alma mater work group members other than Cindy are here today, but if any are would you please stand and be recognized.
- I’m excited to share the winning submission with you. But first, let me tell you briefly about our first and second runners-up.
 - Our second-place selection was “Golden Shores” composed by NMU alumni Heidi Hummel and William Ragnone.
 - Today, William is a band and choir teacher in the Menominee Area Public Schools and Heidi, who was very active in with the Music Department but majored in outdoor recreation and leadership, is a wilderness guide.
 - Our first-place selection was “NMU, Our Alma Mater” composed by Northern alumni Abigail O’Connell and Benjamin Gronvall.
 - Abigail is now working as a band director in the Whitehall Schools downstate and Ben is a music major graduate who is working as an instrument repair technician in Muskegon.
- Now, for the winning selection ...
 - Our chosen alma mater was written NMU broadcasting professor, Dr. Dwight Brady, who is also an accomplished musician.
- As the work group pointed out in its recommendation Dr. Brady’s composition, titled *Northern Pride*, demonstrates Northern's strong connection to the pristine local environment, indigenous culture and people, and rigorous learning in just 60 words.
- Let’s hear for the first time in public Northern’s alma mater *Northern Pride*.
- *Northern Pride* will officially be debuted at the Homecoming football game.
 - Between now and then, there will be work on arrangements for our various music groups – the marching band, symphonic band, the University choir.
- Again, congratulations and thank you, Dwight, and alma mater work group.

I’ll close my report on that note – pun intended.