

**NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Minutes of the Formal Session
of
Friday, September 19, 2025**

A formal session of the Board of Trustees of Northern Michigan University was held on Friday, September 19, 2025, in Peninsula II Conference Room, Northern Center, Northern Michigan University, Marquette, Michigan. The meeting was convened at 10:01 a.m. by Chair Stephen E. Young.

Trustees present included:

Mr. Stephen E. Young, Chair	Mr. Steven W. Lindberg
Ms. Venus Joy Brown	Mr. Gregory J. Seppanen
Ms. Lisa I. Fittante	Mr. Greg M. Toutant
Ms. Melissa A. Holmquist, Vice Chair	Mr. R. Gavin Leach, ex officio
Ms. Brigitte R. LaPointe-Dunham	

Senior Staff and Counsel present included:

Ms. Cathy A. Andrew, Secretary of the Board of Trustees
Mr. Michael J. Bath, Chief of Police / Safety Director
Ms. Nicole Blemberg, Interim Chief Executive Officer – NMU Foundation
Dr. Shawnrece D. Butler, Assistant Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion
Mr. Richard B. Comley, Athletic Director
Dr. Anne Dahlman, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Success
Ms. Rhea E. Dever, Vice President – People, Culture, and Wellbeing
Ms. Laura J. Glover, Sr. Executive Assistant to the President
Dr. Derek J. Hall, Chief Marketing Officer
Ms. Deanna K. Hemmila, Executive Director – Board/Government Relations
Mr. Jeff Korpi, Associate Vice President – Northern Student Experience
Mr. David M. Nyberg, Executive Director – Business Engagement and Economic Development
Ms. Cindy L. Paavola, Assistant to the President – Strategic Initiatives
Dr. Jessica L. Thompson, Assistant Vice President for Sustainability
Mr. Carrick Craig, Legal Counsel
Ms. Ashley Higginson, Legal Counsel

NOTE: The meeting was live-streamed at:

<https://nmuwildcast.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=b478ce1f-b76d-4080-8a75-b3480159979f>

ROLL CALL

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

MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA

The following action was taken:

It was moved by Trustee Toutant, seconded by Trustee Holmquist, and supported unanimously by a vote of 8 – 0, to approve the agenda as presented.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

The following memorials were read followed by a moment of silence:

- Mr. Jackson Gervasio – a junior from Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, who passed away on July 5, 2025.
- Mr. Joel Wisuri – incoming freshman from Ishpeming, Michigan, who passed away on August 15, 2025.
- Mr. Trevor Forsythe, a senior from Dryden, Michigan, who died on August 21, 2025.
- Mr. Liam O'Day, an NMU buildings and grounds attendant, who passed away on June 30, 2025.

INDIVIDUAL REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

Mr. Landon Gray, President of the NMU Student Veterans of America (SVA) addressed the Board regarding veteran disparities on campus, including proper spaces and services veterans need on campus. He requested moving the space to the old NMU Writing Center as the current space is hidden and does not accommodate the student veterans needs. He provided a letter of support from Ms. Rachel Wood, Director of the Marquette County Department of Veterans Affairs.

Chair Young thanked Mr. Gray for his comments.

CHILDCARE UPDATE

Interim President Leach and Vice President Dever provided an update on childcare with the unexpected closure of Gretchen's House, which NMU partnered with to provide priority placement and lower tuition rates for NMU students, faculty, and staff. This created a significant challenge for NMU and community families who relied on their services. Ms. Dever and Senior Associate Provost Dale Kapla worked together with a group of faculty to identify another option for NMU which resulted in signing a contract with Harbor Light Early Education with no disruption in childcare services.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION – COLD CASE TEAM

Chair Young introduced Professor Chris MacMaster, Program Director, and Mr. Devin Montano, senior criminal justice major, who provided a presentation on NMU's Cold Case Team who helped the Michigan State Police solve a CSC cold case dating back to August 1986.

Chair Young congratulated the team and a photo was taken.

MOMENT IN NMU HISTORY (Addendum #1)

Dr. Russell Magnaghi, NMU historian, provided a report on "*Well Being at NMU*." His report is appended to these minutes.

ASNMU UPDATE (Addendum #2)

Ms. Cassidy Gibson, President – ASNMU, provided a report on the semester accomplishments. Chair Young thanked Ms. Gibson for her participation on the Presidential Search Advisory Committee. Ms. Gibson answered questions from the Trustees. Her report is appended to these minutes.

STAFF REPORT (Addendum #3)

Mr. Kevin Price, President – AFSCME Union, Local 1094, representing the Staff Labor Council, provided an update on university staff. His report is appended to these minutes.

INTERIM PRESIDENT’S REPORT (Addendum #4)

Interim President Leach reported on university accomplishments since the last meeting. His report is appended to these minutes.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Academic Affairs (Addendum #5)

Trustee Lindberg, Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, reported on a meeting held earlier today, September 19, 2025. A copy of the report is appended to these minutes.

Finance Committee (Addendum #6)

Vice Chair Holmquist, Chair of the Finance Committee, reported on a meeting held Thursday, September 18, 2025. A copy of the report is appended to these minutes.

NMU FOUNDATION MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

Chair Young noted that before any discussion regarding this item, he would like to make the following motion:

It was moved by Chair Young, seconded by Trustee Holmquist, that the Board of Trustees designate Trustees Fittante and Toutant as NMU Foundation Liaisons, to meet with the NMU Foundation Board’s designees to discuss the provisions of the December 15, 2023 Memorandum of Understanding between the University and the Foundation on behalf of the University.

Discussion followed:

Chair Young stated the MOU is the operating agreement between the University and the Foundation. There have been some concerns expressed about certain provisions related to the MOU that the Board would like to revisit with the Foundation designees. Through the above motion and in the spirit of goodwill, the Board designates the current Board liaisons to represent the full Board in discussions with the Foundation designees that are selected by the NMU Foundation Board to revisit those provisions and come to a resolution.

Being no further discussion, Chair Young called the question:

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

<u>Aye</u>	<u>Nay</u>
Stephen E. Young	
Venus J. Brown	
Lisa I. Fittante	
Melissa A. Holmquist	
Brigitte R. LaPointe-Dunham	
Steven W. Lindberg	

Gregory J. Seppanen
Greg M. Toutant

Motion carried.

ACTION ON FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS (Addendum #7)

The following action was taken:

It was moved by Trustee Holmquist, seconded by Trustee LaPointe-Dunham, and supported by a vote of 8 – 0, to approve the Formal Recommendations.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF INFORMAL CLOSED SESSIONS TO BE HELD IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE DECEMBER 11 – 12, 2025 SESSIONS OF THE BOARD

Interim President Leach made this announcement for the public record.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

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

Trustee Brown made the following comments:

- Thanked the presenters noting the presentations were informative and well presented;
- Thanked Chair Young for his leadership;
- Looking forward to continuing her role on the Board.

Trustee Fittante touched on the following:

- Enjoyed the Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences Program tour, the work they and their students are doing working with children and older adults is impressive;
- Enjoyed the dedication ceremony of the new science labs located in the Kathleen Shingler Weston Hall;
- Looks forward to hiring a new president;
- Thanked Interim President Leach for the work he is doing, which is very much appreciated;
- Thanked Chair Young for his hard work and dedication to the University, noting the Chair's work isn't easy and Chair Young's evident love for NMU.

Trustee Holmquist touched on the following:

- Appreciates all of the presentations and all the hard work it takes faculty, staff, and students preparing the materials;
- Loves hearing from the students about what they are doing, concerns, etc.;
- Enjoyed serving lunch alongside students at Northern Lights Dining;
- Enjoyed touring the Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences program noting the passion of the student ambassadors in the program;
- Enjoyed the dedication of the new science labs;
- Noted how impressive it is to see the success of NMU's students, which is a result of the dedication of the faculty and staff and their continuing support;
- Loves the chance to interact with colleagues, students, staff, etc. during Homecoming week and the energy and excitement surrounding all the events.

Trustee Toutant said the following:

- Always looks for a theme during the meetings – noting what occurred to him this time is that student experience drives everything;
- Noted the student needs that drives program development – it drives housing, new housing development, the facilities such as the new labs, etc.;
- Takeaway is that NMU is an active listener – everyone shares a part in that – all feedback generates action plans, strategic planning, resource cultivation and development, etc.;
- Student experience – what happens with that and where it goes – how powerful that is;
- Alignment of programming to community need – great reinforcement to see it doesn't just stay on campus (e.g., Cold Case with the Michigan State Police, crime lab development and forensics) – all spill over into different career fields that get nurtured.

Trustee Lindberg made the following comments:

- Noted some items he has seen living within the community – time since Dr. Tessman left and the last Board meeting – interim president appointed – amazed at how smoothly things have gone, Convocation – how well it was attended, amongst many others;
- Expressed how thankful he is for the tremendous job Interim President Leach has done.

Trustee LaPointe-Dunham touched on the following:

- Hopes the success of the Social Work Program with the interns in the grant program will continue as it's very important work within the community;
- Excited for Homecoming and all of the activities associated with it.

Trustee Seppanen said the following:

- Thanked Interim President Leach noting he has moved NMU forward seamlessly which shows he has great leadership;
- Enjoyed serving students lunch at Northern Lights Dining and interacting with the students;
- Impressed with the Cold Case team – really struck him as the epitome of students involved with the community in a serious way;
- Enjoys Dr. Magnaghi's presentations on NMU history during the meetings;
- Impressed with Ms. Cassidy Gibson's presentations – she reminds the Board to stay focused on the students and student experience;
- Staff presentation from Mr. Kevin Price – the Board hears you and will continue to invest in NMU's people – it's one of the things that makes NMU a successful university.

Chair Young made the following comments:

- Campus Engagement – a component that has been added to the Trustees' time on campus – visiting programs and students – have added a layer to the Trustees' experience allowing for a greater understanding of the students, faculty, staff, and campus life;
- Serving lunch at Northern Lights Dining was a great experience – amazed at how many burgers are served a day for lunch;
- Thanked Mr. Landon Gray for his comments regarding the veteran space on campus noting it is something that can be looked at to figure out a way to accommodate the request.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Young adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy A. Andrew
Secretary of the Board of Trustees