

**NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Minutes of the Formal Special Session
of
Wednesday, October 16, 2025**

A special formal session of the Board of Trustees of Northern Michigan University was held on Wednesday, October 16, 2025, via Zoom video conference. The meeting was convened at 3:01 p.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
Ms. Deanna K. Hemmila, Executive Director – Board/Government Relations
Mr. Carrick Craig, Legal Counsel
Ms. Ashley Higginson, Legal Counsel

The meeting was live-streamed at:

<https://nmuwildcast.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=ce01530a-71d7-4c2a-9344-b37600fded1>

ROLL CALL

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

INDIVIDUAL REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE BOARD

There were none.

DISCUSSION AND SELECTION OF NMU PRESIDENT

The following action was taken:

It was moved by Trustee Holmquist, seconded by Trustee Fittante, that the NMU Board of Trustees appoint Dr. Christopher J. Olsen as the next president of Northern Michigan University with a scheduled start date of January 1, 2026 and that Mr. R. Gavin Leach continue to serve as Interim President until that date.

Discussion followed:

Trustee Holmquist thanked the Presidential Search Advisory Committee for bringing forward some excellent candidates and Trustee Emeritus Tami Seavoy who chaired the committee. She noted that Dr. Olsen has an extensive, impressive background in several areas of higher education, leadership, and management and is confident, based on his wide-ranging experience, constant connection to

students, collaboration with campus leaders, the state and region, that he is prepared and is an excellent choice to lead Northern as its next president.

Trustee Fittante said she is in her ninth year on the Board and has worked with four NMU presidents. Having been on the search committee, she noted they were fortunate to have several qualified candidates, which made it difficult to reduce the candidates down to the four excellent candidates who were on campus for interviews. She welcomed Dr. Olsen as NMU's 19th president noting he comes from Indiana State University with over 20 years of higher education experience and is looking forward to working with him and getting to know him and his family. She thanked Trustee Emeritus Tami Seavoy for her leadership on the search committee, and thanked Interim President Leach for his leadership and hard work that he continues to do for NMU.

Trustee Seppanen noted that the Board had several excellent candidates to choose from which made the decision a difficult one, which is a good problem to have. He said Dr. Olsen has his support for several reasons: his loyalty to Indiana State University (ISU) for 20 years; his experience at ISU was very broad working his way from department head to dean, then to provost and vice president of academic affairs; ISU is a similar sized university to Northern, which is an additional plus as Dr. Olsen knows the challenges that universities of this size face; he found Dr. Olsen's communication skills to be excellent as he was able to address all questions with strong answers; Dr. Olsen is also student focused and still teaches a freshman survey class, even as Provost. Overall, Dr. Olsen has the experience, a comprehensive skillset, the care for students, excellent communication skills, and the temperament needed to be NMU's next president.

Trustee Lindberg said he was very impressed with Dr. Olsen's background and the experience he will bring to NMU. He's especially impressed with his commitment to student success and that he wants to provide world class education opportunities to NMU's students along with making sure they are successful. His commitment to student success also includes the financial barriers faced by many of NMU students. He is looking forward to welcoming Dr. Olsen to campus.

Trustee Toutant said he echoes the comments already made. He noted that he was also a member of the search committee and NMU was blessed to have such a rich field of applicants. He said Dr. Olsen was able to rise above the other applicants in terms of the acumen he will bring to the university and his vision for what a campus can and should be – vision for programming and services are very strong, as well as his ability to navigate a culture of change within the landscape of higher education, thoughtful decision-making, creativity, and responsiveness. He believes Dr. Olsen is going to be an excellent fit for the U.P.'s culture and for Northern.

Trustee Brown thanked the search committee for their hard work, dedication, and time. She also thanked the members of the Board, the faculty and students that went to the sessions, all those who had any involvement with the search process. She noted that NMU ended up with four very qualified candidates. She is looking forward to working with Dr. Olsen noting his leadership and broad experience gives NMU a great foundation that is needed to move quickly. She looks forward to serving alongside him in his role as NMU's next president.

Trustee Young thanked Interim President Leach for the work he has put in since being asked to step into the Interim President role, the work he continues to do, and will continue to do going forward. He has done a tremendous job and provided an incredible amount of stability for NMU throughout this process. He also thanked Trustee Emeritus Tami Seavoy for her leadership on the search

committee, as well as the members of the committee noting the tremendous amount of work to take 80+ candidates and whittle that down to four for the Board to consider. Trustee Young said what the Board was looking for in a president was someone who: is student centric; 100% committed to NMU's students and their success; has a vision for NMU and can work with the strategic plan to help realize that vision; open to continuing dialogue with all internal and external stakeholders – students, faculty, unions, staff, administrators, community in general, legislative delegation – that the university has worked so hard over the last few years to open doors of communication with; someone that will work in the area of philanthropy and with the NMU Foundation to continue to develop revenue sources for programming and buildings and other key projects. The Board also wanted a “people person” – someone who is committed to NMU and its people and stakeholders. Dr. Olsen fits that bill. He welcomed Dr. Olsen and his family and is looking forward to moving the ball downfield with Dr. Olsen at the beginning of 2026.

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.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Young adjourned the meeting at 3:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/signed/Cathy A. Andrew
Secretary of the Board of Trustees