

**NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Minutes of the Formal Session  
of  
Friday, May 1, 2026**

A formal session of the Board of Trustees of Northern Michigan University was held on Friday, May 1, 2026, in Peninsula II Conference Room, Northern Center, Northern Michigan University, Marquette, Michigan. The meeting was convened at 10:33 a.m. by Chair Melissa A. Holmquist.

Trustees present included:

Ms. Melissa A. Holmquist, Chair	Mr. Gregory J. Seppanen
Ms. Venus Joy Brown	Mr. Greg M. Toutant
Ms. Brigitte R. LaPointe-Dunham, Vice Chair	Dr. Christopher J. Olsen, ex officio
Mr. Steven W. Lindberg	

Trustee absent included:

Mr. Stephen E. Young

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  
Dr. Shawnrece D. Butler, Assistant Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion  
Ms. Nicole A. Blemberg, Chief Advancement Officer – NMU Foundation  
Dr. Anne P. 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. R. Gavin Leach, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration and Treasurer of the Board of Trustees  
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  
Dr. Angela Stebbins, Assistant Vice President – Wellbeing  
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=4efb8476-e31d-4119-8f22-b42e01044b92>

**ROLL CALL**

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

**MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA**

The following action was taken:

**It was moved by Trustee Toutant, seconded by Trustee LaPointe-Dunham, and supported unanimously by a vote of 7 – 0, to approve the agenda as presented.**

**MOMENTS OF SILENCE**

Mr. Jeff Korpi, Associate Vice President for Northern Student Experience, read a memorial honoring Mr. Trenton Massey, an NMU student who passed away on February 22, 2026. A moment of silence was held in his honor.

Trustee Steve Lindberg read a memorial honoring Trustee Emeritus Stephen F. Adamini who passed away on April 29, 2026. A moment of silence was held in his honor.

**INDIVIDUAL REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE BOARD**

Dr. Kathryn Johnson, professor in the History Department, regarding her approved promotion to Associate Professor and denial of her Continuing Contract Status.

Dr. Diana Lafferty, associate professor in the Biology Department, regarding the importance of academic and research integrity and why accountability for scientific/professional misconduct is critical for maintaining institution integrity and fostering a respectful, inclusive, and innovative learning environment.

Dr. Amy Orf, assistant professor of Spanish, regarding faculty salary compensation.

Ms. Rebecca Estelle, senior instructor in the Deaf Studies Program, regarding the Deaf Studies Program and salary compensation.

Dr. Jon Barch, associate professor in the Psychological Sciences Department, regarding organizational leadership, workplace climate, employee motivation, and human wellness. Dr. Barch provided a handout of his comments to the Trustees.

Chair Holmquist thanked them for their comments.

**INTRODUCTION OF COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER**

President Olsen introduced [Mr. Mark Ruge](#), '80, partner at global law firm K&L Gates, who will be the spring 2026 Commencement Speaker. Mr. Ruge will also receive an honorary Doctorate of Political Science degree.

**INTRODUCTION OF GRADUATING SENIOR SPEAKING AT SPRING COMMENCEMENT**

Associate Vice President Jeff Korpi introduced [Mr. Blake Stenberg](#), Social Studies / Secondary Education major, from Bark River, MI, who will represent the graduating class of spring 2026 at the commencement ceremonies, Saturday, May 2, 2026. On behalf of the Board, Chair Holmquist congratulated Mr. Stenberg and presented him with a plaque. A photo was taken.

**MOMENT IN NMU HISTORY**

Dr. Russell Magnaghi, NMU historian, provided a report on "*Northern's Libraries Over 127 Years.*" (Addendum #s 1a and 1b)

**ASNMU UPDATE**

Ms. Cassidy Gibson, President – ASNMU, and Ms. Mikayla Christenson, ASNMU President-elect, provided a report on the semester accomplishments. (Addendum #2)

Chair Holmquist thanked Ms. Gibson for her work during the past year and presented her with a gift on behalf of the Board of Trustees. A photo was taken.

**STAFF REPORT**

Mr. Tyler Thompson, President – TOP Union, , representing the Staff Labor Council, provided an update on university staff.

**PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

President Olsen reported on university accomplishments since the last meeting and some personal notes regarding his first four months as President. His report is appended to these minutes. (Addendum #3)

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Academic Affairs**

Trustee Lindberg, Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, reported on a meeting held earlier today, May 1, 2026. A copy of the report is appended to these minutes. (Addendum #4)

**Finance Committee**

Vice Chair LaPointe-Dunham, Chair of the Finance Committee, reported on a meeting held Thursday, April 30, 2026. A copy of the report is appended to these minutes. (Addendum #5)

**NMU AND NMU FOUNDATION MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

Chair Holmquist reminded the Trustees that in September of last year, delegates from the NMU Board of Trustees and the NMU Foundation Board of Trustees started a review of the existing MOU between NMU and the Foundation and evaluating the document for potential updates to the MOU. As a result of that review, revisions have been made and approved by the NMU Foundation Board. That revised MOU is now before this Board for discussion and approval.

The following action was taken:

**It was moved by Trustee Toutant and seconded by Trustee Fittante that the NMU Board of Trustees adopt the updated Memorandum of Understanding between Northern Michigan University and the Northern Michigan University Foundation.**

Discussion followed.

Trustee Toutant said it’s important from time-to-time to review some of the primary documents as things change throughout the course of events and how NMU operates within the language. There is a long history with the Foundation going back to the 1960s. He thanked the liaisons from both teams noting the good relationship amongst them. He said the support from both sides helped usher along an atmosphere to dive into operationally how the document could be revised beneficially for everyone. He noted that the MOU now provides greater clarity on language, roles, and responsibilities, and the structure of how both entities work together, which will guide NMU and the Foundation as we go into the future.

Trustee Seppanen noted the new MOU and the working relationship that is being developed with the Foundation Board, is going to go a long way in making efforts for both the Northern staff and Foundation staff more effective in reaching some of the aspirational goals we have and need for the future.

Chair Holmquist echoed Trustee Toutant's comments and said she appreciated the delegates who participated in this process and is excited to move forward.

Being no further discussion, Chair Holmquist called the question:

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

Aye

Nay

**Venus J. Brown**  
**Lisa I. Fittante**  
**Melissa A. Holmquist**  
**Brigitte LaPointe-Dunham**  
**Steven W. Lindberg**  
**Gregory J. Seppanen**  
**Greg M. Toutant**

**ACTION ON FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following action was taken:

**It was moved by Trustee Toutant, seconded by Trustee Brown, and supported by a vote of 7 – 0, to approve the Formal Recommendations. (Addendum #6)**

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF INFORMAL CLOSED SESSIONS TO BE HELD IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE JULY 9 – 10 AND SEPTEMBER 17 – 18, 2026 SESSIONS OF THE BOARD**

President Olsen made this announcement for the public record.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER**

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

Trustee LaPointe-Dunham made the following comments:

- NMU is navigating a rapid advancement in AI and technology; important to remember everything is meant to change – e.g., cultural resources, language, history – they're all grounded in our own human experience;
- Enjoyed the tour of the Communication and Media Studies program;
- Looking forward to Commencement;
- Congratulated the faculty and students;
- Congratulated her nephew who graduated from the lineman program and is receiving his associates in business.

Trustee Fittante touched on the following:

- Enjoyed the presentation and opportunity to connect with the Postvention and RESTORE teams; appreciates the number of individuals that went through the three-day Critical Incident Stress Management training (CISM);
- Enjoyed visiting the CAMS lab, noting the students are so involved and knowledgeable;
- Looking forward to the seeing the graduates at Commencement and celebrating their accomplishments.

Trustee Seppanen touched on the following:

- Touched at the beginning of the meeting honoring our two lost community members – Trenton Massey and Steve Adamini;
- Noted how the community comes together for those that are new to the community and those who were born here;
- Best experience as a Trustee is Commencement; over 1,000 students at spring commencement going out into the world and making a difference.

Trustee Lindberg said the following:

- Applied liberal science information was really good; happy to see students starting to go back to that model;
- Was impressed with the CAMS lab and students;
- Touched on the passing of his good friend, Trustee Emeritus Steve Adamini who loved NMU and enjoyed his time on the Board of Trustees;
- Learns more wonderful thing that are happening on campus with each Board meeting;
- Looking forward to Commencement on Saturday.

Trustee Toutant made the following comments:

- Takeaway from liberal arts presentation – there is uncertainty in higher education funding, reassuring and hopeful that there is value to education and learning how to learn, applying what you learn, which translates to every aspect of life;
- Enjoyed the students who presented and the perspective that there is a person behind every issue, behind every challenge, behind every problem – for students to recognize that we’ve got to look beyond the issue, challenge, and problem and see the person behind it;
- Wonderful to see the commitment to health on campus, both on a student standpoint and a faculty and staff standpoint;
- Great looking at the creativity in the new programs – the two-year aspect, then laddering with options, and the feeder system component;
- Great to see the campus and community coming together in tough times – really is an enriching process.

Trustee Brown touched on the following:

- Just completed first year on the Board, which has been delightful
- Going into second year – has learned so much about Marquette and the Upper Peninsula;
- Walks away from the meetings with a theme – this one is about the future;
- Enjoys hearing from the students – shows the future and opportunities before us;
- Enjoyed the CAMS lab tour – shows the growth and opportunities for the future;
- Thanked the Postvention and RESTORE Teams;
- Commended the university on the different internships.

Chair Holmquist made the following comment:

- Enjoyed the opportunities that provide the Trustees to come together with the students, faculty, and staff; hearing directly from the students and faculty that are doing an amazing job supporting the students;
- Enjoyed the dinner with the students from different colleges going on different paths – whether it's graduate school or out into the workforce
- Amazed at the different ways individuals come to campus or learn about NMU;
- Always looks forward to hearing from ASNMU – to hear what's on the student's mind directly from those student leaders;
- Thanked the Trustees and appreciates that they volunteer their time to be on the Board;
- Congratulated the graduates and looks forward to seeing them cross the stage on Saturday.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Holmquist adjourned the meeting at 11:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Cathy A. Andrew  
Secretary of the Board of Trustees