

NMU Board names new president

Les Wong is Northern Michigan University's 13th president. The NMU Board of Trustees unanimously voted to offer him the position at a special meeting on March 24, and he accepted.

Wong has served as vice president for academic affairs at Valley City State University in North Dakota since 1999. VCSU is the state system's "model" campus for curriculum innovation emphasizing technology. It was also the second university in the nation to implement a 100 percent laptop computer initiative.



Les Wong

of pride in where they live. I was intrigued by their spirit."

Les Wong holds a doctorate in educational psychology from Washington State University, a master's in experimental psychology from Eastern Washington, and a bachelor's in psychology from Gonzaga University in Spokane, Wash. He describes his leadership style as strategic and goal-oriented.

"I really have a deep respect for the inquiry process—listening, questioning, and seeking the opinions of others," he said. "I think a president

The things that really sold us on Northern

were the spirit of the people, the university's student-centered approach,

and its reputation for quality academics.

His previous administrative positions include provost and academic vice president, along with six months as interim president, at the University of Southern Colorado in Pueblo; and academic dean at The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Wash., where he started as a faculty member.

Wong is expected to begin serving as NMU president on or before July 1. He hopes to "exploit technology" to begin some advance preparations before he arrives on campus.

"We are thoroughly excited and look forward to joining Northern Michigan University," said Wong during a telephone interview from his office, with his wife, Phyllis, by his side. "The things that really sold us on Northern were the spirit of the

people, the university's student-centered approach, and its reputation for quality academics. I really want to thank the board, the university, and the community for their confidence in offering me this opportunity. I also hope people appreciate the incredible job that Mike Roy has done as interim president. I look forward to working with him and other members of the team."

Phyllis Wong, who serves as director of online learning at Valley City State University, said she quickly became enamored with the university and surrounding area during their campus visit last month.

"I had a chance to get out in the community and visit with local residents," she said. "They are very friendly and they have a great sense

should help set goals and lead an institution down the desired path but trust in the talents of people to get there. I have never been disappointed in trusting people too much. From what I have gathered, the talent on this campus is exceptional.... A president should be the catalyst for everyone's dreams and remove barriers so people can be creative and think outside the box."

Karl Weber, vice chair of the NMU board, said he and Sam Benedict, fellow trustee and chair of the presidential search advisory committee had an opportunity to visit VCSU and meet with Wong in mid-March.

"I am optimistic that he could be one of Northern's strongest presidents ever," Weber said. "I have that

much confidence in him and his ability to lead this university.”

Benedict added, “We had a marvelous visit there and received very good feedback on Dr. Wong from staff, faculty, alumni, and community members.”

In addition to casting a unanimous roll-call vote in favor of Wong’s appointment, a number of trustees praised the input received from students, employees, and community members after campus visits by four finalists.

“Many people came to the Web site with very thoughtful comments on interactions they had with the candidates or on research they had

done,” said Mary Campbell, chair of the board.

Wong will assume the post previously occupied by Judi Bailey, who left NMU last spring to become president of Western Michigan University. Mike Roy has been serving as interim. He will return to his former position as vice president for finance and administration. Details of Wong’s contract with NMU remain to be finalized.

Editor’s note: The next issue of Horizons will feature an in depth look at Les Wong and his vision for the future of Northern Michigan University.

Leslie E. “Les” Wong

Career at a Glance

- Valley City State University in North Dakota. Vice president for academic affairs, 1999-present.
- University of Southern Colorado, Pueblo. Provost and academic vice president, 1996-99; interim president, Jan. 1 to June 30, 1997.
- The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Wash. Academic dean, 1990-96; faculty member, 1988-1996.
- Pierce College in Tacoma, Wash. Psychology instructor, 1974-1988; women’s varsity tennis coach, 1975-1981.

Education

Ph.D. Educational Psychology, Washington State University, 1986.
M.S. Experimental Psychology, Eastern Washington University, 1974.
B.A. Psychology, Gonzaga University (Spokane, Wash.), 1972.

Personal Information

- Married to Phyllis Wong, director of online learning at Valley City State University and online English/history instructor for Baker Online (Baker College in Flint, Mich.).
- Children: Isaac, 29, a mathematician; Nathan, 25, a professional flutist; and Brian, 22, 2nd Lt. in the U.S. Army.
- Interests: outdoor recreation (running, fly fishing, alpine backpacking, canoeing, baseball); reading ethnic and civil war literature; and collecting antique measuring instruments.

Northern dedicates Whitman Hall



Northern Michigan University dedicated Whitman Hall on Dec. 1, 2003. Willard M. Whitman School first opened its doors in 1954 to accommodate students in kindergarten through 6th grade. NMU purchased the building in 2001, after Marquette Area Public Schools had closed it due to shrinking enrollment. Interior and exterior work was required to convert the 39,000 square-foot building to faculty offices and classrooms, and to provide a 285-space parking lot to serve the facility.

Whitman Hall houses the School of Education, the dean of the College of Professional Studies, the charter schools program, the Centers for Native American and Upper Peninsula Studies, the International Affairs office, and the Modern Languages and Literatures department.

Its namesake, Willard M. Whitman (1884-1955), served 34 years as superintendent of Marquette Public Schools. He played a major role in expanding the district through additional buildings and extensive programming. He is also credited with creating the student health protection program; introducing art, drama, and music into the classroom; and developing the adult education programs. Whitman taught classes at NMU for several summers.

Camerius breaks faculty longevity record

While training for a management position with the Dayton Co. in 1963, College of Business professor **Jim Camerius '61 BS** took a brief reprieve from retailing to visit his former professors at Northern. Little did he know that the trip to his alma mater would evolve into a career-altering experience.

Camerius arrived on campus expecting nothing more than to reminisce and catch up with those who played defining roles in his undergraduate education. He left with an offer to join their ranks by filling a teaching vacancy in the business department.



Jim Camerius

and expanding academic programs.” Camerius has outlasted seven presidents. Not long after he began

students have grasped the material. That makes you feel good.”

Camerius teaches international marketing, services marketing, personal selling, retail, and advertising. His scholarly expertise is in the area of case studies. He has written numerous cases about retailing, strategic management, and business policy involving such corporate giants as Wal-Mart and Kmart, not to mention direct-selling enterprises such as Mary Kay Cosmetics and Longaberger Baskets. His cases have appeared in more than 135 textbooks, many of which fill a bookshelf in his Magers Hall office.

When asked to pinpoint some

I remember we had war surplus furniture

and we were located in Kaye Hall under the stage of the auditorium.

We didn't even have doors on our offices.

Now in his 41st year of full-time service to Northern, Camerius recently set a new record for longevity among faculty members. He surpassed the 40-year mark held by the late chemistry professor Lucian Hunt (1927-1967).

“When I started here, there were only five or six faculty members in the business department—one per discipline,” Camerius said. “I remember we had war surplus furniture and we were located in Kaye Hall under the stage of the auditorium. We didn't even have doors on our offices. But the university was growing so fast in those days, adding 1,000 students a year

teaching in the fall of 1963, the nation was shocked by the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

“That was a sad time,” he recalled, “but it became more turbulent on campus in the late 60s and early 70s.”

Despite all of the changes that have swirled around him over the years, Camerius said the classroom experience has remained consistent.

“Generally students have been well prepared all along. You always have a case or two that make you want to tear your hair out, but those are more the exceptions than the rule. For me, the reward comes after each course, when I realize the stu-

professional highlights during his tenure at Northern, Camerius said two stand out: his appointment as president of the Society for Case Research and a 1995 faculty award from the Michigan Association of Governing Boards.

However, it is premature to mention the end of Camerius' academic career. He has no plans to retire in the near future.

“The university has always been very supportive of my work, so I never had a desire to move on,” he said. “As long as I can make a contribution to the College of Business and to the university, I will still be here.”

—**Kristi Evans**

Mind over matter

Northern Michigan University music professor Rob Engelhart is teaching his students how a better understanding of their bodies can help them improve their musical abilities. The study of how our internal perceptions of our individual physical structure, function, and size govern the way we move—or body mapping—evolved primarily to help musicians achieve their full potential and limit the risk of injury; however, the study has practical applications for anyone interested in exploring the quality and efficiency of movement.

“We move according to how we think we are structured, and this may be different from how we are actually structured,” said Engelhart. “If a person’s internal map is inaccurate, he or she may suffer technical limitations or injury. Through a combination of instruction, self-observation, and physical activity, students can become aware of their body maps, identify the source of inaccurate mapping, and correct inefficient movement. The goal is to improve the interface between the mind and body.”

During a semester of professional development last winter, Engelhart studied body mapping under Barbara Conable, an eminent movement educator from Portland, Ore. He is now sharing what he learned with his students as a part of his pursuit of a teaching certification in the discipline. Engelhart’s training, combined with studies in anatomy and physiology, enabled him to make adjustments in his own body map to improve his singing.

“I have a tendency to open my jaw too wide at times, which caused



Rob Engelhart uses an anatomical model to show how improper body mapping can hinder a musician’s performance.

a chain reaction of little tensions that impede breathing,” he said. “As I’ve gradually ‘remapped’ the function of the jaw, I’ve made progress in freeing my breathing and overall phonation. Some people—the Michael Jordans and Luciano Pavarottis of the world—don’t seem to have any errors in their body maps; they conceive a movement and it takes place smoothly and efficiently. But most of us have a lot of room for improvement.”

Engelhart said that while body mapping does not take the place of technique or natural ability, it is a simple and effective tool for increasing a person’s range, stamina, and musical expressiveness. “It enhances flexibility, endurance, and power during movement and helps lessen the possibility of injury or pain during activity.”

—Kristi Evans

Campus kudos

NMU wins gold award in admissions advertising

Northern received a gold award for “total advertising campaigns” in the 19th annual Admissions Advertising Awards. NMU was the top entry among schools with an enrollment of 5,000-9,999.

The campaign advertisements, developed by The Image Group in Holland, Mich., were featured in recruitment magazines and newspaper inserts, and were broadcast on radio stations. The HMR Publications Group sponsored the awards competition. It is the corporate umbrella for the *Admissions Marketing Report* publication.

Interactive dorm room wins excellence award

A virtual dorm room on the NMU Web site won an Excellence Award at the 2003 University and College Designers Design Show.

The site, www.nmu.edu/myroom, allows prospective students to create their own living space by arranging furniture and adding items typically found in NMU residence hall suites. It is intended as a fun way for students to start preparing for residence hall living before they make the actual move to campus.

The interactive feature was designed by Stamats Communications for NMU.

