

**MINUTES**  
**NORTH CENTRAL MICHIGAN COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**REGULAR MEETING – Library Conference Rooms 1 & 2**  
**Tuesday, November 28, 2023 (4:00 p.m.)**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rasmussen called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

He took a moment to welcome and introduce new Trustee Keith Pretty.

2. ATTENDANCE

PRESENT: Trustees Etienne, Fought, Keiswetter, Kring, Pretty, Rasmussen, and Shirilla

ABSENT: None

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Trustee Fought and supported by Trustee Etienne that the agenda be approved.

AYES: Trustees Etienne, Fought, Keiswetter, Kring, Pretty, Rasmussen, and Shirilla

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Trustee Shirilla and supported by Trustee Kring that the minutes of the October 24, 2023, Regular Meeting be approved as drafted.

AYES: Trustees Etienne, Fought, Keiswetter, Kring, Pretty, Rasmussen, and Shirilla

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

It was moved by Trustee Fought and supported by Trustee Shirilla that the minutes of the November 16, 2023, Special Meeting be approved as drafted.

AYES: Trustees Etienne, Fought, Keiswetter, Kring, Pretty, Rasmussen, and Shirilla

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

5. STUDENT SUCCESS

a. NCMC NJCAA Division II National Championship Cross Country Athletes

Cross Country Coach Rod Anderson thanked the board for their support of the student-athletes. He and three NCMC cross country athletes travelled to the NJCAA Division II National Championship in Huntsville: Alabama. Emma Duncan, Rachel Descamps, and Zach Maendel. Emma and Zach were able to join us today. Rod emphasized how proud he is of these runners and the entire team.

President Finley welcomed Emma and Zach and asked them each to share their experience at the race.

Emma noted the weather was wonderful and the course was beautiful. Her race was good, although warmer than what they are used to up north. It was a huge field of competitors. It was definitely a challenge, and she set a new PR at 20:00 and placed 38<sup>th</sup> out of 300 in the 5K.

Zach shared that his experience was really good and intimidating. There were hundreds of athletes at various levels, and the course was good. He finished 151<sup>st</sup> in the 8K race. Zach noted there was a strong Michigan presence at the National level, and it was a fun experience to be a part of.

## 6. COMMUNICATIONS

- a. NEWSnet Northern Michigan – NCMC Runners at National Championship  
On Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 NEWSnet Northern Michigan featured an interview with those individuals you just met, Coach Rod Anderson and the three cross country runners who competed in Huntsville, Alabama on November 11<sup>th</sup>. It's wonderful to see their accomplishments being recognized at a national level.

*You may view that interview at:*

<https://michigan.newsnetmedia.com/story/50007026/ncmc-runners-at-national-championship>

- b. PNR - NCMC Adds New Programs in Global Studies and Mechatronics  
On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, the Petoskey News Review published an article written by Karly Graham about two new degree offerings at North Central.

*“In the new year, students will be able to pursue an Associate of Arts Concentration in Global Studies and an Associate of Applied Sciences in Mechatronics.*

*Dean of Arts and Sciences Sara Glasgow said in a press release that the college is improving the equity of access to globally-themed education. North Central is the only community college in Northern Michigan offering an associate degree level in Global Studies.*

*Those in the Global Studies program will be able to understand and respond to complex, interconnected world issues, while being prepared to transfer to a bachelor's degree completion program.*

*School officials said students studying in the mechatronics program will be prepared to become technicians in automated manufacturing facilities, especially ones leveraging Industry 4.0 technologies. According to the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center, Industry 4.0's building blocks include things like cyber security, augmented and virtual reality, big data, robotics and automation, simulation, system integration and more.*

President Finley thanked Dean Sara Glasgow and her team, Dean Jim Cousino and his team, and the CRDAP Committee for making these new programs possible.

The full article can be found at:

<https://www.petoskeynews.com/story/news/education/2023/11/03/ncmc-to-introduce-new-global-studies-mechatronics-degree-options/71411889007/>

c. PHSACF Youth Advisory Committee Thank You

The Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation, Youth Advisory Committee sent a very nice thank you to the college. They thank us for hosting their meetings and supporting their efforts. Special thanks go out to Laura Wolgast and her Food and Conference Services team for always doing a wonderful job to make them feel welcome.

7. SCHEDULED PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Rasmussen invited the leadership of both the Association of Faculty & Professional Staff (AFPS) and the Custodial/Maintenance/Office (CMO) Association to provide a report. This will be a new standing item in the scheduled public comment section of the agenda.

- a. AFPS - Chet Jessick, President of AFPS, shared the good news of one of our newest Faculty members, Shae Long-Kish. Shae has had her recent short story "Too Beautiful a Creature" nominated for the Pushcart Prize. The Pushcart Prize has been published every year since 1976, and it is the most honored literary project in America. Congrats to Shae!
- b. CMO – No report at this time.

8. FINANCIAL REPORT

Dr. Tom Zeidel, Vice President for Finance & Facilities, was asked by Trustee Fought to provide a financial report for October 2023. Tom certified that the financials as of October 31, 2023 are within the adopted tentative budget for 2023-24.

It was moved by Trustee Fought and supported by Trustee Kring that the financial report and statement of bills be accepted as submitted.

AYES: Trustees Etienne, Fought, Keiswetter, Kring, Pretty, Rasmussen, and Shirilla

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

9. PRESIDENT'S REPORTS

a. PTK Five Star Advisor

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society recently sent notification that our own Kate Gardner has successfully completed all five levels of the Five Star Advisor Plan. This is a self-guided online curriculum that was developed to better support this vital group, our honor students.

Phi Theta Kappa is a world-wide network that helps increase student success and assists students in reaching their full potential. We appreciate the time Kate has invested in learning how to increase her effectiveness to build a stronger chapter that supports the students on our campus.

b. Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS)

Jen Wixson shared a brief PowerPoint presentation with updates on NCMC's Child Care Initiative. The initiative consists of three phases, and she is currently working on Phase Two. There are two concepts to focus on within this phase: True Cost Fiscal Solutions, and the Early Childhood Education Ecosystem.

Funding is comprised of several sources: a Child Care Access Means Parents In School (CCAMPIS) grant, Petoskey Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation (PHSACF), Leadership Little Traverse (LLT), Emmet County, and NCMC, and the NCMC Foundation is assisting in these fundraising efforts in a big way, having made this a priority.

The core of this initiative is based on the key beliefs: child care is necessary to support the effective functioning and growth of the local economy; A sustainable and viable child care system requires careful and intentional planning; A quality child care system requires engagement of all stakeholders: parents, providers, and employers.

Jen shared that she is working and connecting with many community organizations to make this a successful initiative. More information can be found here: <https://www.ncmich.edu/community-events/child-care-initiative.html>

c. New NCMC Tag Line – Marketing

VP of Marketing and Strategy, Carol Laenen shared a meaningful and fun project, a new tagline for the college. She shared a PowerPoint and video highlighting the new tagline *TOGETHER* with the Timberwolf logo in place of the "O". This concept came about as a result of two things: DEI training on campus that focused on a collective sense of belonging, and previous research from identifying our mascot that highlighted certain characteristics of the Timberwolf mascot - determination, loyalty, openness and passion.

The tagline is a call to action and a description of what sets us apart from other community colleges. *TOGETHER* reflects the positive actions of our Timberwolves in the community and beyond. It describes the strength, resilience, loyalty, inclusivity, intelligence, and pride that exemplify our pack mentality. This tagline also allows for modification within various departments.

The Trustees thanked Carol and her team for their hard work.

## 10. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Finance & Facilities Committee

Trustee Fought reported that the Finance & Facilities Committee met on Tuesday, November 21, 2023 to discuss financial statements and other matters.

b. Personnel Committee

Trustee Shirilla reported that the Personnel Committee met on Thursday, November 16, 2023 to be brought up to date on any grievances and the contract negotiations.

d. Curriculum Committee

Trustee Shirilla reported that the Curriculum Committee met on Thursday, November 16, 2023 to conduct business.

At that time, a proposal dated August 31, 2023 from the Curriculum Review Development of Academic Programs (CRDAP) Committee, along with supporting documentation, was reviewed for consideration of a new Associate of Applied Science (AAS) Degree in Digital Art & Design. VPAA Strom and President Finley also lend their support of this proposal. The Committee reviewed the recommendations and Curriculum plan and recognized that this program benefits the students, faculty, and the college. Trustee Shirilla commended Anne Morningstar on the plan.

It was moved by Trustee Shirilla and supported by Trustee Keiswetter that the Board support the recommendation to establish the new AAS Degree in Digital Art & Design.

AYES: Trustees Etienne, Fought, Keiswetter, Kring, Pretty, Rasmussen, and Shirilla

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

11. OLD BUSINESS.

Chairman Rasmussen shared a Board Statement regarding the Independent Investigation.

1. As you will recall, the Board voted in a Special Board Meeting on July 14, to have an independent investigation conducted regarding an altercation incident that occurred at a luncheon lecture event on June 22, 2023. The Faculty Association requested that an independent investigation occur, and the Board agreed this was appropriate.
2. The Board researched investigators and selected an independent firm with expertise in the topic area to conduct the investigation.
3. There were no limitations as to whom the independent firm contacted or interviewed in its process, nor any suggestions by the College as to what the results of the investigation should be. The direction to the investigators was to conduct an independent investigation and, regardless of the results, report on the findings to the College.
4. The investigation was conducted between late August and November and is now complete.
  - a. All College personnel involved or present for the incident were interviewed.
  - b. Every registered attendee at the event, as well as each of the individuals who had been removed from the event in the incident, was invited to participate in interviews as well.
  - c. Overall, 37 individuals were interviewed, including 10 College employed or volunteer personnel, 24 registered attendees, and 3 of the 5 removed individuals.

- d. The investigation also involved a review of video, audio, and documentary evidence.
5. The findings are contained in an independent report that was provided to the Board last week.
6. The investigation was to review and answer two questions:
  - a. Whether the College's president or any College officials violated College policy in their handling of, or involvement in, the incident; and
  - b. Whether any First Amendment violation occurred in the College's handling of the incident.
7. As to those questions, the investigation concluded that:
  - a. Regarding whether President Finley or other personnel violated College policies in response to the incident:
    - i. College personnel were responding to what they reasonably believed in the moment was a threat to the attendees' safety. Their assessment was shared and supported by a substantial proportion of the attendees interviewed.
    - ii. President Finley's response to the incident was motivated by this concern, was not excessive, and did not violate any College policies.
    - iii. One action by an individual affiliated with the College toward one of the individuals removed was found to exceed reasonable bounds and to constitute a violation, though non-egregious, of the College's handbook. Corrective action was recommended.
    - iv. Other than this one instance, the investigation did not support a finding that any College personnel violated College policies in responding to the event.
    - v. Several of the actions depicted in video that drew the most public and media scrutiny were not actions of College personnel, but of individuals who were unaffiliated with the College who acted on their own volition.
  - b. On the First Amendment question, the investigation concluded there was no violation of First Amendment rights.
    - i. The individuals would have had the right to engage in expressive activity in any number of public common areas of the campus in accordance with published College policies.
    - ii. The individuals did not have a constitutional right to enter and disrupt a closed lecture event being conducted in a reserved space, or to violate the College's reasonable, neutral posted conduct rules for the event.
    - iii. The report suggested that there may have been a lack of awareness on the part of the individuals regarding the nature and limits of First Amendment protections.
8. The report also included recommendations for the College to consider for the future.
  - a. The report included suggestions that may improve public awareness of the College's commitment to expressive activity, and how it can be conducted at the College in a way that is effective, lawful, and in accordance with our policies.
  - b. The report also included suggestions that may help with staff preparedness and safety.

9. President Finley acknowledges that he has learned from the June 22 Luncheon Lecture incident, and he will work hard to ensure that a similar event does not occur again.
10. To make progress, we will be asking College leadership to consider the report recommendations and formulate a plan for the future. We fully support the President and the entire North Central team in these efforts.
11. Our goal as an institution is to help educate around this issue and move forward for the benefit of our students. Thank you.

12. NEW BUSINESS.

None

13. UNSCHEDULED PUBLIC COMMENT.

Joel Kato of Petoskey Michigan is here as a concerned citizen with three concerns, one of which Chairman Rasmussen addressed regarding the Independent Investigation. He noted he hopes the college takes to heart the recommendations in the report regarding what the college can do better moving forward.

Mr. Kato also commented on the progress of the AFPS collective bargaining negotiations, and noted he feels 9 months is a long time. Going into 2024 he encouraged those at the table to approach the process as a collaborative one.

In regard to the Climate Surveys, he noted he has read every word of the last Climate Survey and recommends adding a Climate Survey Committee report as a fourth Committee report. He feels there is something that still needs to be addressed.

Chairman Rasmussen thanked Mr. Kato for his comments.

14. ADJOURNMENT.

There being no further business, Trustee Fought motioned and Trustee Kring supported that the meeting be adjourned at 4:46 p.m.

AYES: Trustees Etienne, Fought, Keiswetter, Kring, Pretty, Rasmussen, and Shirilla

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None



/S/ Daniel D. Rasmussen, Chairman



/S/ Melissa Keiswetter, Secretary