

Northern spared major budget reduction

Northern Michigan University will receive \$80,000 in restored funding under a tentative state spending agreement reached in September by Gov. Jennifer Granholm and legislative leaders. But factoring in the base-budget implications of an executive order enacted last December, the university remains \$724,000 below the state funding level of one year ago.

Northern's fiscal year 2006 budget was developed around the governor's budget recommendation, which called for NMU to receive \$804,000 less than its FY2005 state funding level.

"The restored funding means we won't be faced with having to make additional major reductions on campus this fall beyond the reductions and cost-saving measures already identified in the general fund budget approved by the Board of Trustees," said Gavin Leach, associate vice president for

finance and planning.

Northern will receive slightly more than \$45 million in state funding for FY2006. President Les Wong said the outcome is much better than the 5 to 10 percent cuts for Northern originally proposed by the House and Senate.

"This keeps our budget basically intact, but we still have huge challenges ahead of us as we move into the next legislative process," Wong said. "A per-student funding gap remains, and it's clear some legislators are still very interested in a formula approach to funding higher education. We're relieved the House proposal for this year wasn't adopted. As much as the cuts would have hurt us, the proposed formula would have hurt us even more in the long term."

According to Gongwer News Service, House Speaker Craig DeRoche was pleased that, beginning in July 2006, funding for universities will be allocated in a

method similar to what the House GOP had proposed. Universities that offer certain types of degrees would get more money.

When asked if he was disappointed that NMU and Wayne State are escaping cuts, DeRoche was quoted in Gongwer as saying, "From our perspective, it isn't the dollar amount; it's the formula. The transition (to a formula) is being made, and eventually those that would have otherwise received cuts hopefully by their own initiative in directing programs toward their outcomes will end up with more money."

The state spending agreement does not include the governor's proposed changes to the Merit Award program. She wanted to boost the award from \$2,500 to \$4,000 and make it payable upon completion of two years of college. Overall, it appears higher education and K-12 fared better than other state departments.

Public television to remain on the air at Northern Michigan University



Northern will continue to provide base-budget support of \$200,000 to WNMU-TV, enabling the station to remain on the air. The university's Board of Trustees unanimously approved the measure at its Oct. 6-7 meeting.

Public TV13 and Public Radio 90 were slated for elimination by July 2005 as part of NMU cost-saving rec-

ommendations developed in response to decreased state funding for higher education. The board reconsidered the status of the stations, in part because they demonstrated increased and sustained fundraising potential.

The board had previously voted to provide \$50,000 in continued base-budget funding to Public Radio 90, but withheld a decision on Public TV13 for several months to obtain more information on the station's contribution to academics, as well as costs and benefits associated with the advent of digital transmission.

"What really sold me is the academic tie-in to student programs that we heard about at our last meeting, and the desire to explore new initiatives along that same line," said Chair Karl Weber.

NMU at one time contributed a combined \$1.1 million to radio and television.

NMU projected to reach record enrollment

Fall enrollment at Northern Michigan University has increased 3.6 percent and credit-hour production is up 3.1 percent from a year ago, according to 10th-day figures released by the office of institutional research. Northern's preliminary headcount is 9,379, compared with 9,055 in 2004.

"Based on the 10th-day comparisons with last year, I anticipate that we will at least reach the targeted goal of 9,607 for fall 2005 by the end of the semester," said Paul Duby, associate vice president for Institutional Research. "This figure will surpass our previous high enrollment figure of 9,376 set in fall 1980."

Duby said the number of graduate students has increased 13.3 percent. He attributes this to the leadership of Cynthia Prosen, who was appointed dean of graduate studies earlier this year, as well as a more

focused effort to market the programs. Prosen is a former professor in the NMU Psychology Department.

The freshman class is larger than projected, and the academic credentials of baccalaureate first-time, full-time freshmen continue to increase incrementally.

"The sophomore class is up more than 6 percent," Duby added. "I believe that's due to increased retention from last year's record-high freshman cohort." According to Duby, NMU's third-semester retention rate is at a record 73.3 percent.

Duby added that Northern is holding its own in attracting Michigan students, despite intense competition.

"Northern also has a slightly more diverse student population this year, thanks mainly to a noticeable increase in Native American students."

Social work maintains accreditation

Northern Michigan University's social work program received reaffirmation of accreditation from the Council on Social Work Education in Alexandria, Va.

A CSWE commission voted to reaffirm the bachelor of social work program's accreditation for eight years, ending July 2013. This is the longest time period a program can be unconditionally accredited before the reaffirmation process.

Northern is one of four Michigan universities that have maintained continuing accreditation

in this area since 1974—the first year CSWE began accrediting baccalaureate social work programs.

Social work program director Billy Blodgett said that the 2005 graduating class ranked in the upper 17th percent among more than 400 national programs that participated in the professional social work achievement test.

"Northern students usually rank pretty well—in the top half or third nationwide—but 17 percent is the highest placement we've achieved," Blodgett said.



Northern reaches out to hurricane victims

The Northern Michigan University family extends its heartfelt sympathy to those impacted by Hurricane Katrina.

In early September, members of the NMU community gathered to organize relief and fundraising efforts for the survivors of Katrina. Four groups were formed to help with specific aspects of the relief effort. So far, NMU volunteers have helped the Red Cross assemble comfort kits to supply hurricane survivors with basic necessities and toiletries; held drives for clothing, food, and other needed supplies; and organized fundraisers that include selling bracelets, ribbons, and distributing collection cans. One group has begun the "NMU \$50K" effort with a goal of having each of NMU's 10,000-member community donate \$5.

Recent graduates of Northern's electrical line technician program are working in Louisiana and Mississippi to help restore electrical power.

Deanna Hemmila '88 BS, director of Alumni Relations at NMU said more than 100 alumni families live in areas directly impacted by Katrina. Students working for the NMU Foundation call center are trying to touch base with graduates in affected areas to see how they're doing and express support on behalf of NMU.



Meeting a critical need

NMU, MGH receive \$2 million grant to train nurses

The NMU School of Nursing and Marquette General Hospital have been awarded nearly \$2 million in state grant money to accelerate the education and graduation of registered and practical nurses.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm announced that 13 Michigan universities and community colleges will receive nearly \$17 million in grants made available with Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) funds. The funding is part of the governor’s MI Opportunity Partnership. It will be used to train an anticipated 1,200 health professionals, including registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, clinical nurse faculty, and allied health professionals such as respiratory therapists and pharmacy technicians.

Authored by Kerri Schuiling, associate dean of the NMU School of Nursing, the grant awarded to NMU and MGH is the second largest of those approved.

Northern will partner with Marquette General to educate an

additional 20 licensed practical nurses and 20 registered nurses during the two fiscal years of the grant. Additionally, preceptor training at Marquette General will be provided to 70 registered nurses who will become clinical faculty for the accelerated program. One hundred LPN students are expected to graduate during the funding period.

“There is an acute shortage of nurses and nursing faculty to teach in nursing education programs. The demand for the nursing programs at NMU is at an all-time high,” Schuiling said. “This award enables us to address these shortages by making accelerated training opportunities available.”

An Upper Peninsula Health Care Roundtable survey—of which MGH and NMU are members—revealed that the top three occupational areas in need of solutions are registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants. The grant addresses the need for qualified employees in these critical occupations for the entire U.P.

“These grants will help ensure that we’re training and employing people quickly,” Schuiling said. “The program for registered nurses is for those individuals who already have a degree, have not found work, or have lost their jobs and desire a degree in nursing,” she explained. “Examples are teachers who have been laid off. These people will only have to take nursing course work, which is offered in an accelerated format.”

Karen MacLachlan, MGH assistant administrator who oversees nursing and patient services, said the opportunity to increase the nursing healthcare workforce in the Upper Peninsula bodes well for the future of health care.

“Over the years, Marquette General has enjoyed a tremendous working relationship with the School of Nursing at Northern,” MacLachlan said. “This will allow us to build on that collaboration by offering accelerated training opportunities in nursing.”

The MI Opportunity Partnership specifically targets the health-care industry because of the need for skilled workers and the high number of existing vacancies. According to a recent study released jointly by the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth and the Michigan Department of Community Health, the state will need to fill more than 100,000 professional and technical healthcare jobs in Michigan over the next decade.

Grant funding is expected to have a positive impact on the economy of the Upper Peninsula since health care comprises one of the largest categories of employers.

Editor’s Note: This is an edited version of a news release prepared by the community relations department at MGH.

Bridging cultures

NMU alumna receives Fulbright opportunity

Monique Yoder '05 BA is teaching English and American culture to students in Austria. The opportunity comes courtesy of the Austrian-American Educational Commission, which works in conjunction with the Fulbright Commission and the Austrian Ministry of Education.

Yoder began her service as a foreign language assistant at two business vocational schools on Oct. 3. She will facilitate 12 conversation lessons per week for students ages 16-19, team-teach with their English instructor, and introduce students to various aspects of American culture. She is based in Neusiedl am See, in the eastern part of the country near the borders of Slovakia and Hungary.

Yoder graduated from NMU in May with an English/graduate-bound degree and a minor in German. This will be her second trip to Austria.

"I went to Vienna with two NMU professors and a group of students last year as part of a study-abroad program, and I really liked it there," she said. "It's similar to the Midwest with its rolling fields, but in Austria you have the Alps in the background."

Yoder's heritage inspired her to choose German as her foreign language in high school and as one of her minors in college. Selecting a major did not come so easily.

"I started out as a biochemistry major because I liked science, but I switched to English my junior year because I like writing more. I'm glad I made that decision; it's given me a chance to explore the humanities

more. I have a better understanding of myself and the world around me."

The Austrian students that Yoder is teaching have already taken two or three years of the English language, but she hopes to bring more to the classroom than language skills.

"I think it's important that the students over there have a positive image of the U.S.," she said. "I hope to create an open environment so they'll be comfortable with asking questions about life over here; I want them to know how diverse it really is. I also plan on introducing them to some good music."

But Yoder also understands that even though she's the teacher, the Austrian adventure will be a learning experience for her as well.

"This will be my first time living someplace on my own," she said. "I'm also curious as to how they deal with the same issues that we do, and I want to brush up on my German skills. But most importantly, this experience will prepare me for grad school at Michigan State next year, where I'll be studying how to teach English to foreign speakers. Once I finish that program, I'll be able to teach anywhere in the world."

Yoder is one of 121 teaching assistants hired by the Austrian-American Educational Commission this year to promote communication between the two countries. Her service runs through May. She said her long-term goals are to teach abroad for a few years after graduate school, then return to the states for her doctorate in linguistics.

—Becky Kratz

Camerius receives international honor

The World Association for Case Method Research and Application (WACRA) recently recognized NMU marketing professor James Camerius as Global Case Method Ambassador. The award recognizes Camerius' leadership and extensive contributions to case method research and application.

The case method is a way of teaching that involves problem solving in organizational situations. Camerius is a long-time WACRA member and has served as WACRA case workshop and colloquium director since 1997.

Indieke appointed to Newbery committee

NMU education professor Sandra Indieke has been appointed to the Newbery Award Selection Committee, which is charged with identifying authors of the most distinguished American children's books published in 2005. She previously served on the Caldecott Medal Selection Committee, which honors the top illustrators in the genre.

During her term on the committee, Indieke will receive 200-400 children's books from publishers vying for consideration. In identifying "distinguished writing," committee members will consider interpretation of the theme; presentation elements such as accuracy, clarity, and organization; plot development; delineation of characters and setting; and appropriateness of style.

When her task is completed, she plans to donate the books she reviews to the juvenile collection at NMU's Olson Library.