

**NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Minutes of the Formal Session  
of  
Friday, February 15, 2019**

A formal session of the Board of Trustees of Northern Michigan University was held on Friday, February 15, 2019 in Cohodas Hall of Northern Michigan University, Marquette, Michigan. The meeting was convened at 9:00 a.m. in the Board Room, 602 Cohodas Hall, by Chair Robert E. Mahaney.

Trustees present included:

Mr. Robert E. Mahaney, Chair  
Ms. Lisa I. Fittante  
Ms. Alexis M. Hart  
Mr. James K. Haveman

Mr. Steven M. Mitchell, Vice Chair  
Ms. Tami M. Seavoy  
Mr. Stephen E. Young\*  
Dr. Fritz J Erickson, ex officio

*\*Participated via conference call*

Trustee absent included:

Mr. Travis W. Weber – not present due to his unexpected death on February 11, 2019

Senior Staff and Counsel present included:

Mr. Brad Canale, Chief Executive Officer – NMU Foundation  
Mr. R. Gavin Leach, Vice President for Finance and Administration and Treasurer of the Board of Trustees  
Dr. Kerri Schuiling, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Dr. Steven A. VandenAvond, Vice President for Extended Learning and Community Engagement  
Ms. Deanna Hemmila, Executive Director – Board/Government Relations  
Ms. Cathy A. Niemi, Secretary of the Board of Trustees  
Mr. Kurt McCamman, Legal Counsel

**ROLL CALL**

Secretary Niemi took roll call and noted that all Trustees were present, with the exception of Trustee Weber as noted above.

**MOMENT OF SILENCE**

Vice President Gavin Leach read the following memorial:

- Mr. Ron Genshaw, Building and Grounds Attendant, died December 25, 2018.

Provost and Vice President Schuiling read the following memorial:

- Mr. Guiancarlo “Carlo” Estupigan, a sophomore majoring in Fisheries and Wildlife Management, died January 24, 2019.

Chair Robert Mahaney addressed the recent unexpected death of Trustee Travis Weber (Addendum #1). Chair Mahaney called on Trustee Haveman to say a few words on behalf of the Board.

Trustee Haveman said the following:

“I appreciate what this Board has done and there are many people in the audience who knew Travis and had great respect for him. There are countless people, and I have talked to several of them over the past four days, who have been deeply saddened by the unexpected death of Travis at age 33. They are asking themselves, “what did we miss,” “why didn’t we figure it out or notice something,” “why didn’t he call?” We might never know what happened with Travis; the stigma actually prevailed when he took his own life. Folks gravitated to Travis. They enjoyed his charm, his wit, and his love of his work, we saw that in the times that he was here in December. He wanted to help people through the maze and complexity of state government. He took his job very personal and his relationships with his friends were very personal. He was a gregarious person. You know his career – it was very impressive at age 33. He was a high performer right out of law school. He was competent and confident. We also know he was excited to be appointed to this Board at Northern Michigan University. He attended orientation meetings, the Board meeting in December, and told folks, not only here but also in Lansing, how excited and honored he was to be part of the Northern Michigan University family. When Governor Snyder appointed Beth Clement to be the Supreme Court Justice, Travis was her deputy. They considered no one but Travis for that job to replace her. He was a team player, loyal to the cause, and caretaker of the legal entity of Governor Snyder’s office. When I interacted with him, and my last interaction was in late December, he was very thorough and always gave me an explanation of the issue and a way forward. People gravitated to him and the pain of his loss is felt by his friends, his personal lady friend, his mother, his brother, and us. I have in mind as I’m reading this and talking about Travis, when I would go to the Mackinac Chamber meetings, he would walk in with the most handsome-looking seersucker suit than anybody on the Island. He was the sharpest man at the conference and he loved wild and bold socks. He had a reputation for that and sometimes there were words on his socks to send a message to people. In closing, Travis was calm, fun, and often – interesting enough – was the first to laugh. But he ended his life – he didn’t call or reach out. The stigma prevails. One hundred and twenty-nine (129) people commit suicide every day; 47,000 in 2017; over 1,400,000 people attempt to suicide every year. There is a national suicide prevention line – 1-800-273-TALK – and I encourage people, and people who read this in the minutes, to take the time to make that call before ending their life. With that, we respect Travis Weber.”

Chair Mahaney thanked Trustee Haveman for his words and asked for a moment of silence in memory of Travis Weber.

### **INDIVIDUAL REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE BOARD**

Secretary Niemi said that there were no requests to address the Board.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **Finance**

Trustee Haveman, Chair of the Finance Committee, reported on a meeting held Tuesday, February 12, 2019. A copy of the report is appended to these minutes. (Addendum #2).

#### **Ad hoc Policy Review**

Trustee Hart, Chair of the Ad hoc Policy Review Committee, reported on a meeting held via conference call on January 31, 2019. A copy of the report is appended to these minutes. (Addendums #3)

#### **Executive**

Trustee Mahaney, Chair of the Executive Committee, reported on a meeting held via conference call on Tuesday, February 22, 2019 and a meeting held in person on Thursday, February 14, 2019. A copy of the reports is appended to these minutes. (Addendums #4 and #5)

### **ACTION ON FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following action was taken:

**It was moved by Trustee Seavoy, seconded by Trustee Hart, and supported unanimously (7 – 0) by the full Board, to approve the Formal Recommendations.**  
(Addendum #6)

### **EX OFFICIO APPOINTMENTS TO THE NMU FOUNDATION BOARD FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2019**

Chair Mahaney announced that Mr. Stephen E. Young and Mr. Robert E. Mahaney will serve as ex officio appointments to the NMU Foundation Board of Trustees for calendar year 2019.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT OF INFORMAL CLOSED SESSIONS TO BE HELD IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE THURSDAY – FRIDAY, MAY 2 – 3, 2019 SESSIONS OF THE BOARD**

President Erickson made this announcement for the public record.

### **GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Chair Mahaney opened the floor to the Trustees for Good of the Order comments.

Trustee Seavoy addressed appreciation to the maintenance and grounds crew for their particularly hard work during the past couple of weeks with the excessive amount of snow.

Trustee Fittante remarked on the great discussions and she looks forward to more at future meetings.

Trustee Haveman commented that keeping the room and board increase to less than one percent comes from many things; great staff and those managing room and board. Not only what's available to NMU students, but also choices and options. He thanked Vice President Leach, President Erickson, and the university staff who hold costs down for the students. That's NMU's goal and he believes it has been accomplished.

Trustee Hart agreed with Trustee Haveman. She feels very fortunate – she's been on this Board for two years and there has been such positive momentum. Every time she comes up here, she feels the excitement about the good things going on around campus.

Trustee Mitchell made the following remarks: “Firstly, Travis Weber, whom he did not know very well, was a brilliant, effervescent personality that lit up the room when he came in and would be about the last person you think would commit suicide. You just don't know what's going on in people's lives and if anybody in the room, or if anybody knows anybody who's in that position where they think of ending their life, to reach out – it's so important, as Trustee Haveman so well-articulated in his comments. It's a tragedy to lose somebody at that age with so much to give for the rest of his life. In talking to Dave Nyberg, a close friend of Travis, Travis really looked forward to this responsibility – he was very excited to be on this Board and you could tell that when he was up here at the December meeting during his orientation. It's a real tragedy and those statistics bear out what goes on in this world – reach out to your friends, always try to prop them up and help them. Follow the golden rule – it's very important. Secondly, the reason this university is doing so well, and it is – it's very, very positive – is because of the leadership of President Erickson, because of the people sitting on the side next to the windows – Vice President Leach, Provost Schuiling, Mr. Canale, Vice President VandenAvond, Ms. Hemmila, Mr. McCamman –all are doing an extraordinary job. Everyone, whether Dr. Graves, Dr. Cruz, everyone – whether, you are part of the faculty, staff, the administration does a great job. Everyone's job is very important. Another example of excellent work is Bunny Martin, who does such a good job keeping this place clean. She and everybody cares about Northern Michigan University. It is emblematic when you talk about pushing someone out of the ditches – President Erickson saw this happening while driving home on a snowy night earlier this week. There were three cars stuck in the snow and every one of them was getting helped by somebody else. That's who Northern Michigan University is – that's what Marquette is, and that's what the U.P. is. Every now and then somebody will say, “gee, you don't look like a Yooper – you don't act like a Yooper.” They think they're complimenting me, but I think it's an insult. I am very proud to be a Yooper – I think being a Yooper is a really good thing because the tenacity, the Sisu, the decency and the courtesy – being a Yooper is just terrific and I'm glad to be on this Board in the U.P. – everyone deserves a round of applause.”

Trustee Young thanked everyone for allowing him to participate via conference call for this meeting as there were circumstances beyond his control that didn't allow for him to participate in person. He said he looks forward to being on campus in May.

President Erickson said he appreciates all the good work of the Board of Trustees. We couldn't do what we do without their support, encouragement, and guidance. He added it makes a true difference in the lives of NMU students and the life of the university.

Chair Mahaney commented on the following:

- The loss of individuals that were recognized today
- The strong sense of community about Northern Michigan University
  - it's infectious as was sadly evidenced in the case of Travis Weber who had no prior strong ties to Northern Michigan University, but in a matter of literally weeks and two visits had transformed into a lifelong Wildcat
- The power of this place is stronger and deeper than any other place virtually, if not every place that he has had the honor of being part of
- The financial health of this University
  - The room and board rate increases being kept below one percent
  - The University's balance sheet and the way we've been able to control costs better than any university in the State.
- The Strategic Plan and the progress that has been made from the time it was put together and formally adopted
  - The system of measuring progress – approximately 75% of the items have been completed
- The SRA and how the Strategic Plan assisted in the process
  - Provost Schuiling provided detailed, updated report on some of the transformational initiatives that will take place under the SRA. They are not going to be easy and will require a lot of work, but we're doing it. We are leading change – not many universities can say that.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Mahaney adjourned the meeting at 9:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Cathy A. Niemi  
Secretary of the Board of Trustees