

MINUTES OF THE FORMAL SESSION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY held pursuant to due call in Ballroom B of the Memorial Union Building on the campus of Michigan Technological University in the City of Houghton, Michigan at nine o'clock on the morning of December 15, 2023.

The Board of Trustees of Michigan Technological University met in formal session at the University's campus at Michigan Technological University in the City of Houghton, State of Michigan, at 9:00 a.m., on the 15th day of December, in Ballroom B of the Memorial Union Building. The place, hour, and date are duly established and duly published for the holding of such a meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Chair, J. C. Littmann, and a quorum was declared present. The following members of the Board of Trustees were present:

A.R. Dickson (remote)  
J. E. Jipping  
M. D. Johnson  
J. C. Littmann, Chair  
D. D. Sanders  
S. M. Tomaszewski, Vice Chair  
M. Q. Wells  
R. J. Koubek, ex officio  
S.H. Schulte, Secretary  
N.W. Stevens, Treasurer

Also present during part or all the session were: Laura Bulleit, Andrew Storer, John Lehman, William Kordenbrock, David D. Reed, William Roberts, and Michael Blanco various members of the faculty, administrative staff, student body, press, and public.

Where item numbers are used, they refer to corresponding item numbers in the agenda, in the hands of the Board members.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. ROLL CALL**

**III. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA**

It was moved by D. Sanders, supported by S. Tomaszewski, and passed by voice vote without dissent, that the agenda of the formal session of December 15, 2023, as distributed to the Board of Trustees, be approved.

**IV. OPENING REMARKS**

**A. Chair's Comments**

It is December in Houghton, Michigan, and we have the great privilege of celebrating Midyear Commencement. But first, I must ask: Where is all the snow? It's been some time since we were able to get around this easily in December. While we'll take the reprieve, the snow needs to start falling soon so we can hear the stories from Mont Ripley and see the Winter Carnival sculptures come February and get going on the Nordic trails. I tell people all the time when I'm down south, "we do hear complaints from time to time about the snow, but it's not about too much snow but about the lack of snow." Up here, we like our winters.

Now back to graduation. This class of graduates is remarkable. We have our first five Finlandia teach-out students graduating this semester. We also have a couple of examples of the types of Huskies that will be walking across the stage on Saturday that I feel compelled to highlight.

Aerith Cruz will be giving the undergraduate commencement speech. She came to Michigan Tech as a Leading Scholar and has taken advantage of every opportunity she encountered and her leadership, scholarship, and service accolades are too numerous to list, in full. To name a few, she served as President of the Women in Engineering club and was one of only 10 students nationwide that received its Outstanding Collegiate Member Award. She served as President of the Fencing Club - increasing club membership by 500%, served as an Orientation leader, is involved in FIRST Robotics, served as an ExSEL mentor, and unsurprisingly, won the 2023 President's Award for Leadership. In her spare time, she also enjoys skiing at Ripley, playing Broomball, and chasing the northern lights. Aerith is graduating with a degree in Management Information Systems and will be going to 3M in Houston, Texas as an associate technical project manager.

Nick McKenzie is another example of the caliber of our graduating class. A student-athlete on the cross country and track and field teams, a cadet wing vice commander with Air Force ROTC, and an electrical engineering major with a 3.93 GPA, Nick is an all-around leader and an exceptional young man. As Kristina Owen, his head cross country coach said, *"This is a challenging school even if all you do is study full-time. Michigan Tech is our state's flagship technological university, and we take pride in our reputation for quality. Adding varsity athletics onto that is even more*

*challenging, and our student-athletes are experts in time management. What Nick has done, adding on the extra load of military service in the AFROTC, is at a whole different level.”* Nick will be commissioned this weekend and is heading to the U.S. Space Force.

Congratulations to Aerith, Nick, and all the students graduating this weekend. We look forward to seeing you tomorrow.

### **B. President’s Comments**

Chair, Members of the Board and audience members. I am delighted to join you all today on the eve of another graduation. Let me also say congratulations to our graduates. I am quite positive that their degree from Michigan Tech will serve them well into the future.

To our faculty and staff, thank you for your service to the University. While your efforts are most apparent at graduation, it’s our collective work throughout the year that makes Michigan Tech a premier, nationally recognized university.

Tomorrow, we will celebrate over 500 students at Michigan Tech’s 2023 Winter commencement ceremony. But today I would like to recognize a few individuals for their contributions to the classroom, Michigan Tech’s research enterprise and our community.

Biological Sciences professor Amy Marcarelli received the 2023 Distinguished Teaching Award. She also happened to be Michigan Tech’s 2023 MASU Distinguished Professor of the Year Nominee. In her nomination packet, her department chair noted: *“Amy is not just passionate about educating the next generation of students but is also very kind to her students and creative with her courses.”*

Michigan Tech takes pride in cultivating an educational environment that promotes creativity and learning. Dr. Marcarelli’s approach to teaching epitomizes this and we are grateful to her and the many other faculty members who uphold such high standards in the classroom.

But we know that a university isn’t just about teaching, and service is a significant component of a faculty member’s dossier. It is my pleasure to recognize Dr. Mike Mullins for his service to the university, which was formally recognized in 2023 with the Distinguished Service Award.

Mike is well known on campus as a defender of shared governance and the collective interests of faculty and staff. However, 2022 was exceptional, even by the high standard of faculty service set by Mike, as he postponed his personal and professional plans of sabbatical to step up one last time to serve as University Senate President. But he wasn’t quite done as he once again stepped in to fill the interim chair position in Chemical Engineering.

Thank you, Mike, and the many others for your service to our institution.

Regarding research, this recognition is a bit broader in nature, but is a direct reflection of the tremendous efforts of each and every one of our faculty and scholars.

In 2025, Michigan Tech will earn the designation of R1 status by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions in Higher Education. This represents the highest level for research universities, up from R2. In 2025, there will be four R1 institutions in the State of Michigan, with Michigan Tech joining that class.

This is significant for two reasons, one -- it will help attract more grants, industry funding and top faculty and students to the university and two, it recognizes what we already knew, the value of the Michigan Tech degree and the excellence of our faculty.

Attaining R1 status is quite the accomplishment and is something that I have always believed Michigan Tech was worthy of, but there is one person who I would like to specifically recognize today, Dave Reed.

Dave has held the position of Vice President for Research since 2001. Under his leadership, the University achieved \$100 million in research expenditures last year, the highest ever recorded. There is no doubt that he was instrumental in helping Michigan Tech to achieve this designation and I want to thank him personally for his work in this regard along with the many faculty who contributed to this achievement. We look forward to hearing from Dave later in the agenda today.

Finally, in regard to student achievement, I'd like to recognize Michigan Tech football defensive lineman Samuel Kinne who has been selected as the 2023 recipient of the GLIAC's Jack H. McAvoy Award. This award is presented annually to a GLIAC football player who best combines outstanding character and leadership on the field, in the classroom and the community. Academically, Kinne was a three-time GLIAC Academic Excellence team member and completed his chemical engineering degree last spring, holding a 3.82 GPA. He will complete his MBA this spring.

Sam's character is a testament to the values that we hold in the highest regard at Michigan Tech - Community, scholarship, possibilities, accountability, tenacity and leadership.

We kicked off the August board meeting bidding Wayne Gersie a fond farewell. I am happy to say that we will end the semester by welcoming him back to his position as Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion.

Under Wayne's leadership, Michigan Tech will continue to foster an inclusive environment that supports the full spectrum of diversity at MTU, while acknowledging and supporting the experiences of students, faculty, and staff of all racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, national origins, age, veteran status, religious or political beliefs, sexual orientations, gender identities and expression, and lived experiences.

And while Wayne will take the lead in these efforts, it's incumbent upon us all to include all voices and backgrounds so that we may foster an inclusive and engaged university community that values the spirit of productive academic discourse.

Thank you again for your time today. On behalf of our faculty and staff, congratulations again to our graduates.

## **V. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Frediericke Gast spoke about parking on campus.

Ian Norwood spoke about safety and inclusivity on campus.

Dr. Nancy Langston spoke about the Berlin Wall event and academic freedom on campus.

Dr. David Hemmer spoke about his colleague, Carl Blair.

## **VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **VI-A. Academic Affairs Committee**

The Committee met once since the last Board meeting. The meeting reviewed action items coming before the Board later in the meeting, as well as informational items including the ABET review report, presented by Professor Leonard Bowman.

Next, as part of a periodic agenda item, the graduate programs from Chemical Engineering, Cognitive and Learning Sciences, and Geological and Mining Engineering Sciences were reviewed.

Finally, the Committee received an update on the General and Central Education Program which has moved to full implementation after considerable work from faculty and the administration. The Board is pleased to see this come to fruition.

### **VI-B. Audit and Finance Committee**

The Committee met once since the last Board Meeting. The first item reviewed was the current FY24 budget, in which they compared the actual expenditures to the budget, and is on track for this fiscal year. The Committee has begun discussions on the budget for next fiscal year, which involves a lot of variables and is ongoing. It is early in this time-consuming process and there are headwinds to consider but the Committee is confident that the budget will be in alignment with the strategic plan and objectives.

Finally, the Committee also reviewed the Moody's rating, and they were happy to say that Michigan Tech has received an A1 rating, with a stable outlook, which puts us in a good position compared to many universities across the country.

#### **VI-C. Leadership Committee Report**

The Committee met once since the last Board meeting. The Committee received an update from President Koubek on the Leadership Initiatives as well as an update on the Leadership position searches.

Next, the Committee discussed today's election of Board Chair and Vice-Chair, which will come before the Board later in this meeting.

Finally, 2024 Board Committee assignments were discussed as well as Board succession planning.

#### **VII. CONSENT AGENDA**

It was moved by S. Tomaszewski, supported by M. Johnson, and passed by voice vote without dissent, that the Board of Trustees approve and adopt the items contained in the Consent Agenda.

##### **A. Approval of Minutes**

##### **B. Resignations, Retirements, and Off Payroll**

##### **C. Funding Productivity Report**

#### **VIII. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

##### **VIII-A. Emeritus Rank**

It was moved by S. Tomaszewski, supported by J. Jipping, and passed by voice vote without dissent, that the Board of Trustees approves the following emeritus/emerita appointments:

1. Dr. Theresa Ahlborn, Professor Emerita  
Department of Civil, Environmental, and Geospatial Engineering
2. Dr. Stephen Hackney, Professor Emeritus  
Department of Materials Science & Engineering

##### **VIII-B. Election of Board Chair and Vice Chair**

It was moved by D. Sanders, supported by M. Johnson, and passed by voice vote without dissent, that the Board of Trustees elects Steve Tomaszewski as Board Chair for calendar year 2024.

It was moved by S. Tomaszewski, supported by M. Johnson, and passed by voice vote without dissent, that the Board of Trustees elects Jon Jipping as Board Vice-Chair for calendar year 2024.

**IX. REPORTS (presentations provided in agenda)**

- A. Faculty Presentation: Great Lakes Buoy Network**  
Jamey Anderson, Assistant Director, Marine Operations, Great Lakes Research Center
- B. Faculty Presentation: Wave Energy**  
Gordon Parker, John and Cathi Drake Endowed Chair in Mechanical Engineering
- C. Treasurer's Report**  
Nicholas Stevens, Treasurer
- D. University Research and Sponsored Programs Report**  
David Reed, Vice President for Research
- E. Undergraduate Student Government**  
Mason Krause, President
- F. Graduate Student Government**  
Karlee Westrem, President
- G. University Senate**  
Robert Hutchinson, President

**X. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS (documents provided in agenda)**

- A. Analysis of Investments**
- B. Research & Sponsored Programs**
- C. Advancement & Alumni Relations**
- D. Media Coverage**
- E. Employee Safety Statistics**
- F. Disposal of Surplus property**


**XI. Other Business**

**XII. Date for Next Formal Meeting: February 23, 2024**

**XIII. Adjourn**

It was moved by S. Tomaszewski, supported by M. Johnson, and passed by voice vote without dissent, that the Board of Trustees adjourn the meeting.

  
Secretary to the Board of Trustees

  
Chair, Board of Trustees