

**MINNESOTA STATE  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**BOARD ACTION**

Approval of Mission Statement:  
Northland Community and Technical College

**BACKGROUND**

The revised mission statement of Northland Community and Technical College is being presented for Board approval. The mission and vision meet the criteria identified in Board Policy 3.24 *Institution Type and Mission, and System Mission*, Part 4: Approval of College or University Mission Statements.

Northland community and Technical College has been in existence in one form or other since 1949 when the Minnesota State Board of Education approved an area vocational school in Thief River Falls. The school would later move to its present location and merge with two other institutions of higher learning, first with Thief River Falls State Junior College, and later with the East Grand Forks campus of Northwest Technical College, to form Northland Community and Technical College. Each institution brought a long history of serving the needs of area students and employers, and with the advent of online education, expanded its reach far beyond the Red River Valley and northwestern Minnesota.

Northland is a comprehensive two-year community and technical college offering over 80 program options in high demand fields including Aerospace, Agriculture, Automotive & Transportation, Building Trades, Business & Marketing, Education, Health & Human Services, Information Technology, Law & Public Safety, and Manufacturing. Northland also has a liberal arts transfer program which offers students the first two years of a bachelor's degree.

Northland enrolls 735 students while they are in high school to earn college credit. Approximately 700 students graduate yearly.

Northland prides itself on personalized service and is a leader in Minnesota in competency based education, providing just in time learning in select programs.

**Student Demographic Profile**

- Full time 1,097
- Part Time 1,717
- Male 37%
- Female 63%
- Students of Color 18%

The revised mission and vision statements are designed to meet the criteria identified in Board Policy 3.24 *Institution Type and Mission, and System Mission*, Part 4: Approval of College or University Mission Statements.

### **Current Mission Statement**

Northland is an innovative leader in higher education, preparing all learners with work and life skills that advance personal well-being and regional prosperity.

### **Proposed Mission Statement**

Northland transforms the lives of students and our communities through a welcoming, supportive, and integrated learning environment.

### **Current Vision Statement**

Northland will be highly valued for providing exceptional education that transforms lives and strengthens the communities we serve.

### **Proposed Vision Statement**

Northland will be the premier choice for providing exceptional education that transforms lives and strengthens the communities we serve.

### **Current Values Statement**

Meet students where they are  
Focus on student success  
Provide a high-value learning experience  
Work collaboratively and build relationships  
Advance diversity, equity, and inclusion  
Promote global competency  
Encourage innovation and creativity  
Pursue quality and continuous improvement  
Meet community and workforce needs  
Practice responsible financial stewardship

### **Proposed Values Statement**

#### **Our Values**

##### **Student Focus**

We meet students where they are, focus on student success, and provide a high value learning experience that promotes lifelong learning.

##### **Personalized Service**

We care about the people and communities we serve and work together to provide excellent service.

#### Equity and Inclusion

We embody an inclusive, respectful, and welcoming environment that celebrates differences and provides equal opportunities for all.

#### Creativity

We aspire to operate as a best-in-class college, where ingenuity, innovation, and entrepreneurship are encouraged and incorporated.

#### Continuous Improvement

We aim to do better every day to meet student, employer, and community needs.

#### Economic and Workforce Development

We support economic growth through the development of skills, knowledge, and talent.

#### Stewardship

We strive to be accountable and responsible stewards of resources entrusted to us.

### FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLE

We are united as one college to increase educational access, support student success, strengthen partnerships, and advance equity in the communities we serve.

*The college vision and mission respond to the following elements in system procedure:*

1. The alignment of the proposed mission with the system mission and statewide needs.

Minnesota State Colleges and University System's mission emphasizes access to education, meeting business and community needs through partnerships, and delivering high quality education that is of value to stakeholders. The proposed mission statement emphasizes these priorities by aligning educational opportunities to community needs. The proposed statement further advances the goals of Equity 2030 by ensuring all students are welcome and supported.

2. The extent to which the college or university will meet the expectations of statute and how it relates to other institutions of higher education.

Northland will continue to fulfill the expectations outlined in 135A.011 State Higher Education Objectives and 135A.052 Postsecondary Missions. Specifically, Northland will continue to offer supported and integrated learning in a broad range of technical fields, as well as the arts and sciences. Northland provides services to ensure that students identify and achieve their goals. The proposed mission explicitly reflects the role the college has in transforming the lives of each individual student through education, as well as the collective

transformation of communities by providing skills, knowledge, and talent. The emphasis on a welcoming, supportive, and integrated learning environment ensures that the college is student ready to ensure all Minnesotans benefit from the education and training it provides.

3. The array of awards it offers.

Northland Community and Technical College offers certificates, diplomas, and AAS, AA, and AS degrees (see attached program inventory).

4. The compliance of the college or university mission with statute, policy, and regional accreditation requirements.

The mission and related statements serve as anchors to guide the college's work and ensure it is meeting all relevant requirements. Northland has not changed its core purpose, but the new statements align to reflect the role of the lives of the students and region. Northland is committed to ensuring to provide high quality instruction to prepare students for work or for transfer, according to educational objectives, meeting the expectations outlined in statute and policy. As outlined in accreditation requirements, the mission and related documents will continue to inform how the college prioritizes resources to accomplish our goals.

5. The consultation with faculty, students, employers and other essentials stakeholders.

Northland's planning work was founded on a comprehensive environmental scan that incorporated a combination of primary and secondary research. This included an examination of stakeholder perspectives, best practices of other post-secondary institutions, labor market data, CCSSE data, enrollment trends, and student success metrics. The bulk of the primary research revolved around convening focus groups with industry sectors (Manufacturing, Construction, Transportation, and Ag; Business Services and Information Technology; Public Safety Sector; and Healthcare), K12 Education, and community members. Focus groups were also convened with faculty, administrative staff, and student groups on each campus. Primary research also included tours of three Wisconsin campuses in November of 2021. Northland faculty and administrative staff toured Fox Valley Technical College, North Central Technical College, and Northeast Wisconsin Technical College. These tours provided a strong dose of inspiration, as well as an opportunity to learn what is working well at other institutions. Secondary sources of information included the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, Minnesota State, and RealTime Talent.

Public engagement and stakeholder input were critical elements of the environmental scan. To maximize engagement, Northland provided numerous ways for stakeholders to engage, including online meetings via Zoom and in-person meetings. Stakeholders who were not able to participate in one of the scheduled meetings were invited to provide

input through online, sector-specific surveys. Through providing numerous ways and opportunities for engagement, the perspectives of 127 individuals were incorporated into the planning effort.

Sector groups were asked to provide their perspective on a series of questions about Northland: (1) what needs to stay the same; (2) what needs to change; (3) what trends or needs are emerging; and (4) partnerships the college should explore. Student groups had a slightly different set of questions: (1) why you chose Northland; (2) what you like most about Northland; (3) what you wish was different; and (4) how well-prepared you will be for your career or transfer when you finish your program at Northland.

Following the completion of the environmental scan, the strategic planning team, comprised of faculty and administrative staff, met four times over a two-month period. The team began by reviewing the findings of the scan and coming to consensus on the scan's implications. Findings of the scan were used to conduct a SWOT exercise and gap analysis. The team then turned its attention to a review of the institution's vision, mission, and values statements. Although there was agreement about several aspects of these foundational statements, there was general agreement among the team members that the statements needed to be revised to better align with the essence of the college and its desired future. Revised statements were drafted and refined over the course of two months through a series of surveys.

Draft statements were shared broadly with the college for input and was presented to students for feedback. The President's Executive Team incorporated the feedback. Northland consulted with Noel Hawton, the system office Marketing and Communications Division on May 2, 2022. Noelle provided feedback that Northland consider inserting language to support Equity work by inserting language about welcoming environments, which the President's Executive Team further integrated into the statement.

Based on the SWOT exercise and gap analysis, the team identified four strategic priorities: access, student success, partnerships, and advancing equity. The next step was to identify goals and strategies that would move the needle forward in pursuit of the compelling new vision.

#### **RECOMMENDED COMMITTEE MOTION**

Upon the recommendation of the Chancellor, the Academic and Student Affairs Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approve the proposed mission statement of Northland Community and Technical College.

#### **RECOMMENDED BOARD MOTION**

The Board of Trustees approves the mission statement of Northland Community and Technical College

*Date Presented to the xxx Committee:* **xx/xx/xx**  
*Date Presented to the Board of Trustees:* **xx/xx/xx**  
*Date of Implementation:* **xx/xx/xx**