



Northwestern  
Michigan  
College

Office of Timothy J. Nelson, *President*

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May 1, 2019

The Honorable Representative Larry Inman, Chair  
Joint Capital Outlay Committee  
S-1388 House Office Building  
P.O. Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909

The Honorable Senator Ken Horn, Chair  
Joint Capital Outlay Committee  
201 Townsend Street, Suite 7100  
P.O. Box 30036  
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

Dear Chairman Inman and Chairman Horn:

First off, thank you Chairman Inman for your invitation to appear before this committee. Your support over the years of NMC and all community colleges in this state is to be commended. You are a tireless advocate for public higher education and your leadership, integrity and fortitude is appreciated and recognized. Thank you on behalf of all community colleges for your dedicated leadership and support.

Today, I would like to cover three areas. First, I will provide you with a short update on NMC and our current operations and facilities investment. Secondly, I will walk you through our Student Learning Support Services Renovation Project, which is our FY20 Capital Outlay Request. And finally, as Chair of the Michigan Community College Association Legislative Committee, I would like to highlight the opportunity for investment in all 28 of Michigan's community colleges.

As you know, higher education has changed a lot over the last 20 years. To meet these changes, NMC has made significant investments in learning as it is delivered today and will need to be delivered tomorrow. These include investments in technology, learning spaces, facilities, equipment, financial aid management, and professional development for faculty and staff, just to name a few.

However, we could not make these investments if not for the support of our taxpayers and you the legislature, who last year approved construction authorization for our 21<sup>st</sup> Century Innovation Center capital outlay project. Thank you for your support of this important project.

The Student Learning Support Services project before you will focus on the renovation of 26,000 square feet on the first floor of the 56-year-old Osterlin building, transforming this space into a student services hub. As a result, these consolidated offices will provide a holistic approach to student support services. We know that students have complex needs as it relates to navigating through the completion of a degree or a certificate. We also know that we have lost students due to the complexity of enrollment, financial aid and advising. Having student support departments in one space that can deliver a consistent and clear message will result in increased student success. Specific services offered in this renovated building will include the following:

- Admissions
- Financial Aid
- Registrar
- Advising
- Counseling
- Health Services
- Student testing center
- Veteran Services—including new and expanded veteran lounge

As we look to make the business case for the State investment, I think it is important that you consider that in the 2017-18 academic year, financial aid was offered to 76% of our student population. We know that student success and completion is closely tied to the ease of navigating the complexities of financial aid and support. In addition, our Higher Learning Commission Accreditation requires us to "Meet Student and other Key Stakeholder Needs." Therefore, to support success and completion for our over 4,800 credit students, this project will allow NMC to provide a singular location to help students navigate enrollment, financial aid and advising in one stop. This will give us the ability to deliver more consistent and timely answers and a better customer service experience. This as an essential service that helps attract and retain students.

Key project elements include:

- Replace existing windows with new energy efficient windows
- Replace deteriorating stucco exterior with new insulated metal panels
- Upgrade existing HVAC system
- Upgrade/replace lighting with energy efficient LED lights
- Upgrade IT infrastructure
- New interior finishes
- ADA accessibility upgrades
- Elevator upgrades
- Electrical upgrades

I hope that this committee finds that the Osterlin Student Learning Support Services Renovation project provides value to the state, is being proposed to capitalize on the timing of other colleges' investments, and will have a significant and immediate impact on the learners we serve. We believe that completing this capital project will directly and immediately benefit our learners through centralizing and aggregating services in a customer focused setting creating a "one stop student services center."

As you may know, I also wear the hat of Chair of the Michigan Community College Association Legislative Committee and if I may, I would like to quickly highlight the Association's 2019 legislative priorities, which include maintaining support for Michigan's 28 community colleges, supporting a statewide postsecondary attainment goal and implementing tools such as the Michigan Reconnect and Michigan Opportunity programs to achieve this goal.

Again, I greatly appreciate your continued support for NMC and Michigan's 28 community colleges. Thank you for the consideration of our request and for all that you do in your service to this state and our residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Timothy J. Nelson".

Timothy J. Nelson  
President