

**Lake Superior State University  
Board of Trustees  
Minutes of Meeting  
Kenneth J. Shouldice Library  
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan  
July 18, 2025**

The Board of Trustees of Lake Superior State University met in regular session beginning at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, July 18, 2025, in the Kenneth J. Shouldice Library, Lake Superior State University, Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. The meeting was pursuant to Section 1.01. of the Bylaws of said Board with notice to the Board pursuant to Section 1.04., and public notice pursuant to Section 1.05. of the Bylaws.

The section numbers and headings of these minutes correspond to the agenda. A copy of the proposed agenda was distributed to each Trustee at the public session of July 18, 2025. The proposed agenda had been sent pursuant to Section 1.04. of the Bylaws. Copies of all such material are contained as appendices to these minutes.

At the call to order, there were several members in the audience.

**I. Roll Call**

Mr. Timothy Lukenda, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Chair Lukenda asked Ms. Lauren Pierce, Secretary, to call the roll. The following members responded, "present":

Ms. Patricia Caruso  
Dr. Kevin Cooper  
Ms. Sheri Davie  
Ms. Whitney Gravelle  
Mr. Timothy Lukenda  
Ms. Cynthia Williams  
Dr. David Travis, President

Six Trustees were recorded as present, with Trustee Sheri Davie joining via Zoom, and Trustees Richard Barch and Jon DeRoo recorded as absent. Present for the University were Dr. Philip Espinosa, Associate Vice President of Human Resources & Chief Human Resources Officer; Herb Henderson, Faculty Association President; Julie Hober, Chief Information Officer; Marcus Izzard, Education Support Professionals President; Tory Lindley, Director of Athletics; Dr. Kimberly Muller, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; Scott Smith, Vice President of Advancement, Legislative, & Alumni Affairs; Morrie Walworth, Vice President for Finance and Operations; and Dr. Jamie Zamjahn, Interim Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Success. There was no Student Government representative in attendance.

**II. Approval of the Agenda for July 18, 2025**

Ms. Caruso moved for Board approval of the agenda for July 18, 2025, as presented, supported by Dr. Cooper. The motion carried with unanimous voice vote.

**III. Approval of the Minutes for May 16, 2025**

Dr. Cooper moved for Board approval of the minutes for May 16, 2025, as presented, supported by Ms. Williams. The motion carried with a majority voice vote and an abstention from Trustee Gravelle due to absence from the May 16 meeting.

**IV. Addresses to the Board**

Jennifer Watson, CEO of Limestone Federal Credit Union (LFCU), provided updates on collaborations and partnerships between LFCU and LSSU.

Dr. Chris Smith expressed concern and frustration regarding his office temperatures.

**V. Chair's Remarks**

Mr. Lukenda stated that this would be his last meeting as Chair, and his term would be ending in January. Mr. Lukenda stated that he remains steadfast with the mission of LSSU and continues to support LSSU.

**VI. President's Remarks**

Dr. Travis thanked Chair Lukenda for serving as Chair. Dr. Travis shared several updates and highlights since the last Board meeting:

- The Board toured several housing units on campus.
- FY26 budget remains a top priority, although it will take time to work towards a smaller or ideally, no deficit.
- Work on a new strategic plan will begin in early fall.

**VII. Faculty Association Report**

Faculty Association (FA) President Herb Henderson provided an update on several summer activities in which faculty members participated, including orientations, information sessions, summer camps, K-12 visits, table events, and one-on-one meetings with prospective students and families. Mr. Henderson acknowledged the faculty and staff for their efforts over the summer.

**VIII. Education Support Professionals Report**

Mr. Marcus Izzard, Education Support Professionals (ESP), President, shared the results from the recent ESP elections. Mr. Izzard presented goals to foster pride and community with members, stand for the rights of members, work towards preparing campus for the return of students, and finalize a new contract between ESP and LSSU.

**IX. Student Government Report**

No representative attended to provide a report.

**X. Finance Report**

Mr. Walworth provided the Board with updates on the FY25 financial position, with dashboards and a year-to-date summary. The General Fund currently appears to be performing slightly better than budgeted, although there is quite a bit of year-end work yet to be done. It is expected to end the year near, or better than, its budgeted deficit of \$680,000. Housing is also performing better than budgeted. It is expected to end much better than budgeted, with a \$200,000 surplus rather than the budgeted deficit of \$300,000. Cisler Operations is expected to end FY26 near its budgeted deficit of \$350,000. Athletics is expected to end FY26 near its budgeted deficit of \$1,250,000. Institutional cash is sitting at \$12.5M at the end of May, the lowest amount in the last ten years. Operational fund balances suggest there are sufficient funds for FY25.

Mr. Walworth presented to the Board for approval to continue the rental of a 400-ton chiller for Crawford Hall. The existing chiller failed and LSSU is currently looking at replacement costs. The current rental cost is about \$40,000 per month. A plan for replacement is being developed.

Dr. Cooper moved for Board approval to continue the rental agreement for the chiller for Crawford Hall, as presented; supported by Ms. Williams. The results of the roll call vote were:

Ms. Patricia Caruso	“Yes”
Dr. Kevin Cooper	“Yes”
Ms. Sheri Davie	“Yes”
Ms. Whitney Gravelle	“Yes”
Ms. Cynthia Williams	“Yes”
Mr. Timothy Lukenda	“Yes”

The motion carried with six affirmative votes.

Mr. Walworth presented to the Board for approval of the proposed modification to the FY26 Structure of Rates. Academics is proposing a new graduate degree program for which students may enroll in graduate level courses while at the undergraduate level. In doing so, they would pay the undergraduate rate for the graduate courses and enjoy the benefit of the tuition plateau. No other changes to the Structure of Rates are proposed. The following new language would appear as footnote #4:

*Undergraduate students can take up to 16 credits of graduate level coursework at the undergraduate course rate and within the plateau. Otherwise, graduate tuition will be charged for all credits designated at the graduate level, and credits do not count toward the plateau. Graduate level credits are charged separately from undergraduate credits*

Dr. Cooper moved for Board approval of presented new language for the FY26 Structure of Rates; supported by Ms. Caruso. The results of the roll call vote were:

Ms. Patricia Caruso	“Yes”
Dr. Kevin Cooper	“Yes”
Ms. Sheri Davie	“Yes”
Ms. Whitney Gravelle	“Yes”
Ms. Cynthia Williams	“Yes”
Mr. Timothy Lukenda	“Yes”

The motion carried with six affirmative votes.

Mr. Walworth presented to the Board for approval of a provisional FY26 General Fund Operating Budget. Several key components needed for a final budget are not yet completed. As such, LSSU is requesting this approval to continue operations. Health insurance costs, TIAA savings, scholarship plans, grant-in-aid, and general liability insurance have impacted planning to the extent that the General Fund (GF) is not yet ready for final approval. At this time, the GF budget is showing a deficit of \$1.2M.

Mr. Lukenda asked Mr. Walworth to present the FY26 Auxiliary Fund budget proposal, before discussion of both budgets.

Mr. Walworth stated Auxiliary Units have submitted their FY26 budget requests and have reduced the overall deficit request from FY25 to FY26. The Auxiliary units consist of Housing, Cisler Operations, Athletics, and Other Auxiliaries. Overall, the Auxiliary Units are requesting deficit budgets totaling \$988,482.

Mr. Lukenda stated the Board and administration are waiting for more information from the State. However, the University needs to approve a budget to operate effectively and with guidance, until more information is available to present to the Board at the next meeting. The current proposal is not satisfactory, and not sustainable.

Ms. Gravelle expressed concern for current available cash, and stated more cuts and delayed spending are necessary for this year, in order to turn things around.

Dr. Cooper stated a master plan is needed for facilities. The University needs to prioritize taking care of the facilities to increase revenue through enrollment. Dr. Cooper also stated online education and healthcare services would be additional revenue opportunities.

Dr. Cooper moved for Board approval of the provisional FY26 General Fund budget as presented; supported by Ms. Caruso. The results of the roll call vote were:

Ms. Patricia Caruso	“Yes”
Dr. Kevin Cooper	“Yes”
Ms. Sheri Davie	“Yes”
Ms. Whitney Gravelle	“Yes”
Ms. Cynthia Williams	“Yes”
Mr. Timothy Lukenda	“Yes”

The motion carried with six affirmative votes.

Dr. Cooper moved for Board approval of the provisional FY26 Auxiliary Fund budgets as presented; supported by Ms. Williams. The results of the roll call vote were:

Ms. Patricia Caruso	“Yes”
Dr. Kevin Cooper	“Yes”
Ms. Sheri Davie	“Yes”
Ms. Whitney Gravelle	“Yes”
Ms. Cynthia Williams	“Yes”
Mr. Timothy Lukenda	“Yes”

The motion carried with six affirmative votes.

Ms. Gravelle moved for Board approval to charge the administration to find \$1M in revenue or \$1M in savings to reduce the \$2.8M deficit as presented in the provisional University budgets, and present the final budget to the Board in October for review.

Dr. Cooper stated that a specific number for the goal is hard to predict right now and he is not comfortable supporting the motion.

The motion was supported by Ms. Caruso.

The results of the roll call vote were:

Ms. Patricia Caruso	“Yes”
Dr. Kevin Cooper	“No”
Ms. Sheri Davie	“Yes”
Ms. Whitney Gravelle	“Yes”
Ms. Cynthia Williams	“Yes”
Mr. Timothy Lukenda	“Yes”

The motion carried with five affirmative votes.

## **XI. Academic Affairs Report**

Dr. Cooper moved for Board approval to confer the appropriate degrees upon the list of candidates for spring 2025; supported by Ms. Caruso. The motion carried with unanimous voice vote.

Ms. Caruso moved for Board approval of the promotion of Dr. Steven Johnson to full professor; supported by Dr. Cooper. The motion carried with unanimous voice vote.

Dr. Muller presented to the Board for approval to execute a purchase agreement, not to exceed \$500K, to purchase a coach bus using Charter Schools 3% funds. The request will not incur any costs from the general fund, but will allow the Charter Schools Office and other LSSU departments to support growth and visibility by exposing students to LSSU's campus and programming.

Mr. Lukenda stated that the bus would primarily support K-12 activities, and other departments could use the bus to generate revenue when not used by the Charter Schools Office.

Ms. Williams and Dr. Travis stated the bus would further efforts to bring the community and ISDs to collaborate and increase enrollment.

Dr. Cooper moved for Board approval to execute a purchase agreement with National Bus Sales to purchase a coach bus for the Charter Schools at a cost not to exceed \$500,000. The Board further authorizes the President and/or Provost to execute all documents related to this purchase; supported by Ms. Williams. The results of the roll call vote were:

Ms. Patricia Caruso	“Yes”
Dr. Kevin Cooper	“Yes”
Ms. Sheri Davie	“Yes”
Ms. Whitney Gravelle	“Yes”
Ms. Cynthia Williams	“Yes”
Mr. Timothy Lukenda	“Yes”

The motion carried with six affirmative votes.

Dr. Muller provided the Board with highlights and major initiatives from the area of Academic Affairs: a) April 25, 2025, the 9th Annual Senior Research Symposium was held in the Student Activity Center of Norris Center. A total of 124 LSSU senior students showcased their research accomplishments across a wide range of disciplines. b) All nine graduates from the LSSU Fire Science program achieved a 100% pass rate on the Michigan Firefighter 1 and 2 state exam. c) All of the MCOLES graduates passed their 200 question, 3 hour written exam on their first attempt. d) The Office of Sponsored Programs announced the awarding of four grants in this reporting period, totaling \$197,759, through the US Geological Survey (USGS), US Fish and Wildlife Services (USFW), and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE).

Ms. Becky Clawson, Charter Schools Office, presented to the Board for approval of the appointments of reappointments of Board of Directors.

Dr. Cooper moved for Board approval of the appointments or reappointments of the presented nominees to their respective Board of Directors for the terms listed, supported by Ms. Caruso.

**Ascend Academy:**

Patricia Oldham nominated for an appointment with a term expiring on June 30, 2027.

**Innocademy:**

Emily Goudrealt nominated for an appointment with a term expiring on June 30, 2028

The motion carried with unanimous voice vote.

**XII. Enrollment Management & Student Success Report**

Dr. Zamjahn provided the Board with an Admissions dashboard. Currently, fall 2025 registration is trending ahead of last year at this time. To date, 404 students are registered, representing a 6.5% increase over last year. While the total number of applications and admits continue to trail fall 2024 levels by 12.1% and 11.34%, respectively, the conversion rate from admission to registration is improving. When compared to Fall 2023, admits are up 4.63%, though registered students are down 4.56%. These mixed trends highlight positive momentum in yield efforts while reinforcing the importance of sustained communication, outreach, and final conversion strategies heading into August

Dr. Zamjahn provided the Board with updates in Admissions and Marketing. Admissions hosted five New Student Orientation sessions in June, four for first-time students and one for transfers, serving a total of 261 students. To accommodate students unable to attend in-person, two virtual Orientation sessions are scheduled for July 23 and 24. A final in-person Orientation will be held on August 22. Multiple CRM-based communication campaigns are active to support participation and registration follow-through. Additionally, LSSU hosted six academic summer camps engaging 108 participants, including high school students from key recruitment pipelines. A seventh camp, Aquatic Ecology and Fisheries, is scheduled for early August.

The Financial Aid Office is operating at 50% staffing capacity, including the vacancy of the Assistant Director role. Plans are underway to rebuild the team while ensuring service continuity. A \$500 scholarship incentive is still available to Fall 2025 students who complete Orientation and register for classes. This is supported by a coordinated communication strategy targeting students and parents. In parallel, the Board of Trustees Scholarships are being restructured to shift a minimum of \$300,000 from state-side funds to endowed and memorial sources, including the Smart and Lukenda scholarships, thereby preserving the impact of the awards while strengthening long-term financial sustainability.

Dr. Zamjahn provided an update in Student Affairs. In Housing & Dining: As of July 7, 502 students are confirmed to live on campus this fall. Major renovations are underway in Brady Hall, including converting outdated bathrooms to fully private units with individual changing areas, in direct response to student feedback. In Student Life: Brigitte Ledferd has been hired as Coordinator of

Student Life as part of the division's ongoing rebranding from "Campus Life" to "Student Life." Ms. Ledferd brings a strong background in student engagement, academic support, and inclusive programming, and will play a key role in building belonging and leadership development. Laker Success has submitted a grant application for the 2025 First-Generation College Celebration (FGCC) to launch "You're First. But Not Alone." This initiative will offer peer mentorship, community events, and storytelling campaigns to support first-generation students. If awarded, the grant will advance efforts to foster a sense of belonging, amplify student voices, and promote student retention.

Dr. Zamjahn provided the Board an update in Counseling Services and the Health Care Center. In alignment with student preferences for in-person support, LSSU will not renew its contract with UWill, the third-party virtual therapy provider. The university is actively searching for a Manager of Counseling Services to oversee operations and direct care. Creative approaches are being explored to recruit and retain professionals in this competitive field, ensuring a responsive mental health infrastructure moving into 2025–2026. The Health Care Center continues to serve students, faculty, staff, and community members and accepts most major insurance plans. A comprehensive review of medical billing and cost recovery practices will begin this fall, with a full fiscal and risk analysis scheduled for 2025–2026 to evaluate the long-term structure and sustainability of on-campus health services.

Ms. Williams asked if there has been any improvement in recruiting Canadian students.

Dr. Zamjahn stated that Canadian applications are up 4.5% over last year.

Ms. Williams asked if there has been any outreach to students affected by the closure of Sienna Heights.

Dr. Zamjahn stated articulation agreements are currently underway.

Dr. Cooper asked where should application numbers be at this time.

Dr. Zamjahn stated that applications should be at 5K and are currently at 2.9K.

### **XIII. Human Resources Report**

Dr. Espinosa provided the Board with key updates for Title IX compliance, campus safety and risk management, and human resources operations.

There has been one new Title IX report received and closed since the last Board of Trustee meeting. This report was closed since it did not fall under the jurisdiction of Title IX. Currently, there are no open reports and there are no reports that involve employees.

Public Safety is actively planning for the new academic year, which includes, setting up comprehensive training for staff and student officers and participating

with the Title IX and Housing teams on scenario-based training, covering potential Title IX situations and medical emergencies.

The Human Resources team continues to work on the implementation of Michigan earned sick time, which will primarily affect student employees. The University and ESP are actively negotiating a successor contract. Work continues to review the medical, retirement, and supplemental plans to offer more choice and keep long-term costs in check.

Dr. Espinosa presented the Board with an action item to approve LSSU representation to The Pool as a health benefits partner as part of a broader strategy to control costs for the university, employees, and their families.

The Pool requires a Board Resolution to officially designate an LSSU representative. With this resolution, we are asking for the authorization of Philip Espinosa as primary and Morrie Walworth as alternate representatives on behalf of LSSU with The Western Michigan Health Insurance Pool (The Pool).

Dr. Cooper moved for Board approval the presented resolution naming the current and/or future Associate Vice President of Human Resources & Chief Human Resources Officer, currently Philip Espinosa, as the primary representative and the current and/or future Vice President of Finance, currently Morrie Walworth as the alternate representative on behalf of LSSU with The Western Michigan Health Insurance Pool; supported by Ms. Carsuo. The motion carried with unanimous voice vote.

#### **XIV. Information Technology**

Ms. Hober provided the Board with key strategic initiatives and accomplishments from LSSU's Information Technology division, which now operates at the Cabinet level under the leadership of the Chief Information Officer.

The department supports core academic and operational functions, including enterprise systems, network infrastructure, classroom technology, user support, Institutional Research, and website oversight. Following IT's Cabinet-level elevation in March 2025, LSSU has demonstrated increased visibility across the state by hosting two major events in June: 1) MASU-CIO Meeting (June 19): Brought together CIOs from nine Michigan public universities in person and additional representatives virtually. 2) Merit Network Board Meeting (June 20): Attended by members from all 15 Michigan public universities and Merit leadership.

Cybersecurity remains a top priority. Major efforts include: 1) A full cybersecurity assessment by Michigan State Police Cyber Command. 2) A three-year agreement with Merit's Security Operations Center (SOC) is proposed for board approval. This will provide 24/7 threat detection, real-time monitoring, alerting, and incident response beginning October 2025. 3) Blocking high-volume international cyber threats in real time: over 334,000 attempted hits blocked in the past week alone, with over 8.6 billion blocked to date. 4) Key policy rollouts: multi-factor authentication (MFA), endpoint device management, and third-party

access controls. 5) Improved threat response times—from days to minutes—due to new monitoring tools. Planned next steps include broadening MFA coverage, cybersecurity awareness training, and roadmap development based on state and industry guidance.

Since the website transitioned to IT oversight in February 2025, major upgrades have been delivered to improve security, performance, and user experience. Outdated plugins removed, PHP and WordPress updated, and a staging environment deployed. Faster load times via image optimization, improved SEO, and hundreds of accessibility/UI enhancements. New monitoring tools ensure rapid detection and resolution of website issues. Looking ahead, a site-wide search feature and continued SEO/accessibility enhancements are planned. Ms. Hober presented to the Board for approval of a three-year agreement with Merit Network's Security Operations Center, totaling up to \$300K.

Dr. Cooper moved for Board approval of the three-year Merit SOC agreement as presented. Furthermore, the Board authorizes the President and/or CIO execute any and all documents related to this agenda item; supported by Ms. Williams. The results of the roll call vote were:

Ms. Patricia Caruso	“Yes”
Dr. Kevin Cooper	“Yes”
Ms. Sheri Davie	“Yes”
Ms. Whitney Gravelle	“Yes”
Ms. Cynthia Williams	“Yes”
Mr. Timothy Lukenda	“Yes”

The motion carried with six affirmative votes.

#### **XV. Athletics Report**

Mr. Lindley provided the Board with achievements, activities, and key highlights within the athletics department, including several athletes recognized for their GLIAC all-academic performances for 2024-2025. Mr. Lindley introduced several new members to the department.

Social media impressions data from April 30, 2025 to June 24, 2025, saw a near 50% increase relative to the same time period in 2024. Athletics social media analytics seeing a decrease during summer months is to be expected during this time period due to all programs being in their respective off-seasons.

LSSU has chosen to opt in to the NCAA House case settlement, recognizing it as a pivotal shift in the governance of collegiate athletics. While the settlement formally transfers influence from the NCAA to individual institutions, allowing LSSU to act with greater autonomy, flexibility, and strategic foresight. This decision does not require immediate financial outlay, only a cap of 26 hockey student-athletes starting in 2030, but it positions the university to engage proactively with future changes in athlete compensation, scholarship structures, and Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) opportunities. LSSU remains committed to its mission, values, and competitive goals, embracing this moment as a chance

to lead with intention in building a fair, sustainable, and student-centered future in college athletics.

**XVI. Advancement Report**

Mr. Smith presented, to the Board, a dashboard on year-to-date fundraising compared to the last five years. Fundraising for FY24-25 has been the single highest fundraising year for LSSU at \$3.6M

Major gifts include gifts of cash, IRA distributions, stock, and memorial gifts. Major gifts also include documented pledges and estate gifts. This includes a \$500,000 estate gift from the late Al Haakala, partner of Robert Walker.

In annual fundraising and alumni relations, another successful *LSSU at the Detroit Tigers*, selling all 50 tickets allotted. The Lake State Classic is August 1 at Bay Mills Wild Bluff Golf Course – 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive sold out event.

In legislative affairs, 2025 priorities include: 1) Budget: The House budget varies from both Senate and Governor's budget. Negotiations may take until fall. 2) Capital Outlay is likely. LSSU has not chosen to date. May get IEMS funding instead. President Travis continues to communicate with our State elected officials regarding the budget.

**XVII. Other Business**

Ms. Caruso moved for Board approval of the recommendation for the regular Board meeting calendar for 2025-2026 as follows:

- October 03, 2025
- November 21, 2025
- February 13, 2026
- May 15, 2026
- July 17, 2026

The motion was supported by Dr. Cooper. The motion carried with unanimous voice vote.

Ms. Gravelle moved for Board approval of the recommendation of the 2025-2026 Board Officers as follows:

Ms. Cynthia Williams – Chair  
Ms. Patricia Caruso – 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair  
Dr. Kevin Cooper – 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair  
Mr. Morrie Walworth – Treasurer  
Ms. Lauren Pierce – Secretary  
Dr. Kevin Cooper – Title IX Board Representative

The motion was supported by Dr. Cooper. The motion carried with unanimous voice vote.

Ms. Williams thanked fellow Trustees for their support and shared her commitment and investment to the success of LSSU. Ms. Williams thanked Trustee Lukenda for his dedication of time, patience and generosity.

**XVIII. Adjournment**

Dr. Cooper moved for adjournment at 10:43 a.m.; supported by Ms. Williams. The motion carried with unanimous voice vote.

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Cynthia Williams  
Chair

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David Travis  
President