



Enrollment Management & Student Success Report

February 13, 2026

Agenda Item #1: Admissions & Marketing Updates

Information

Action

Discussion

Purpose:

The purpose of this information is to present an integrated update on student recruitment and pre college programs, admissions conversion and yield efforts, and marketing initiatives that build awareness and move prospects from inquiry to application to enrollment for Fall 2025 and beyond. It summarizes current activities, early results, and next steps across outreach, pre college pipelines, communication and referral strategies, and branded content and media so leadership can monitor progress and align resources.

Background:

Admissions Comparison Overview: Fall 2026

As of February 3, 2026, Fall 2026 undergraduate applications total 1,816, reflecting a 12.4% decrease from the same time last year (2,072). The majority of the decline is among First-Time in College (FTIC) applicants, down from 1,916 in 2025 to 1,686 in 2026. The number of admitted students for Fall 2026 stands at 1,288, which is slightly below the 1,640 admits at this time last year.

Notably:

- Incomplete applications have increased to 505 in 2026, up from 404 in 2025.
- Graduate and non-degree applicants remain minimal, with FTIC and transfer students comprising over 98% of the applicant pool.
- The percentage of admitted students remains strong, particularly among FTIC applicants (73%), though transfer admits have dropped from 55 to 42.

These data reinforce the importance of continued communication, yield strategies, and scholarship incentives to move admits to enrolled students in the coming weeks

Recruiting & Pre-College Programs:

Since the last Board meeting, three full-time recruiters have joined the Admissions team. Amanda Handziak, based on campus, will serve as our Eastern Upper Peninsula (EUP) and Canadian recruiter. A local resident with strong ties across the region and experience supporting students in secondary education, Amanda brings a valuable network and community knowledge to her new role. Ashley Roberson-Smith has been hired to represent the Western Upper Peninsula and is based in Marquette. With roots in Manistique and a wealth of professional connections, Ashley is poised to strengthen our presence across the western U.P. Cory Walters joins LSSU as our Regional Recruiter in Grand Rapids,

which would complete our coverage of the state's most strategic yield regions. Cory brings strong ties to FIRST Robotics and Stryker Robotics.

While the Recruitment team has operated with reduced staffing for part of this cycle, recruitment efforts have remained aggressive. As of January 12, total applications and admits are trending behind 2025 figures by approximately 240 and 370 students, respectively. However, a notable increase in incomplete applications presents an opportunity for continued outreach and conversion. Given earlier staffing challenges, the team is optimistic that current application and admit numbers will remain near prior-year levels. Looking ahead, recent hires are expected to increase coverage, consistency, and conversion to start the next cycle.

Recruiter travel and outreach for our two recruiter team remained strong, with 75 high school visits and 39 college fairs completed in October and November.

Pre-College Programs Update

Spring 2026 Pre-College enrollment includes 145 students as of January 12, not including dual-enrolled students in full-year courses such as CHEM 115 and ENGL 235 at Sault High School. Spring enrollments historically run smaller, and these figures align with anticipated levels.

In December, two Early Middle College (EMC) information and registration sessions were held at Pickford and Sault Area High Schools, contributing to an increase in EMC participation. Additionally, 14 high school visits were conducted across November and December to support advising, registration, and Pre-College promotion. These visits continue to strengthen local partnerships and reinforce Pre-College offerings as part of our broader enrollment strategy.

Admissions & Yield:

The Admissions team continues to strengthen prospective student engagement through a mix of strategic events, personalized campus experiences, and timely communications. Since the last Board meeting, Admissions partnered with the EUP Intermediate School District to host the annual Science & Engineering Fair, welcoming over 300 local students to campus. This collaborative event serves as a key early exposure opportunity for students across the region.

In January, Spring Orientation welcomed 19 newly admitted students to campus, helping to solidify early enrollment decisions and foster a sense of connection to the Laker community.

Between November and January, 29 prospective students participated in individual campus tours, while 86 additional students visited through coordinated group tour experiences.

To maintain recruitment momentum, more than 1,100 Fall 2026 acceptance packets were mailed ahead of the holiday break. This ensured early touchpoints with students and families during a critical phase in the enrollment cycle.

Pipeline development remains an institutional priority, with efforts underway to expand articulation agreements with community college partners and enhance the transfer experience. A search is currently underway for a new Transfer & New International Student Coordinator to provide dedicated support and outreach for these vital enrollment segments.

The spring semester includes a robust slate of yield events designed to convert admits, deepen academic engagement, and position LSSU as a top-choice institution. Events include academic showcases, virtual information sessions, celebration events, and signature experiences like Laker Decision Day. Notable Spring events include:

- January 23 – Canadian Academic Showcase
- January 31 – Basketball Academic Showcase
- February 3 – Winter Welcome & Next Steps (Virtual)
- February 27 – Hockey Academic Showcase
- March 9–11 – Major Confirmation Week
- March 14 – Accepted Student Celebration
- March 20 – EUP Snowman Burning Open House
- April 11 – Laker Decision Day
- May 16 – Spring Open House

University Marketing

University Marketing closed 2025 and launched 2026 with significant momentum, headlined by the global release of the 50th Annual Banished Words List. The campaign captured attention from major media outlets including BBC News, The Washington Post, ABC World News, CBS News, Associated Press, Daily Mail, Times of India, Fox 5 Atlanta, and the Taipei Times, as well as regional and local partners such as MLive, Soo Leader, and Soo Evening News. The Banished Words campaign alone contributed to a staggering **total reach of 3.35 billion** in a five-day period, an increase of 184% compared to the same period last year.

Daily media reach spiked dramatically in the first week of January, with January 1 reaching over 561 million impressions globally. Submissions for the 2027 list are now open, with preparation already underway. Special thanks were extended to the President for participating in interviews over break and to Casey Gates for the seamless midnight website launch.

Between November and January, the University Marketing team supported departments across campus through the completion of:

- 31 graphic design requests
- 9 official press releases
- 10 photo and videography projects
- 5,796 media contacts reached

Other highlights include reestablishing key vendor partnerships for local ad placement (Village Media, Soo Visitors Guide), revising online request forms for improved usability, and collaborating with IT to update multiple webpages related to admissions, visit events, and institutional marketing. Updated handouts were distributed to each academic school and the official Events Calendar was refreshed to reflect all spring enrollment programming.

Marketing's social media performance continues to trend upward, particularly on Instagram:

- 33.7k Instagram reach (Up 54.5% vs. previous period; up 132% YoY)
- 4.3k Instagram profile visits (↑43.3% YoY)
- 235 new Instagram followers
- Facebook saw 589.7k views and 8.6k content interactions. While slightly lower than the previous period due to the winter break, all year-over-year KPIs remain positive.

Top-performing social media content this cycle included posts on the Banished Words List, the Nursing Pinning Ceremony, and the Bookstore Ribbon Cutting.

Suggested Action/Motion:

N/A

President's Recommendation:

N/A



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Agenda Item #2: English Proficiency Standards for International Undergraduate Admission

Information

Action

Discussion

Purpose:

The purpose of this agenda item is to formally update the Duolingo English Test minimum score used to demonstrate Proof of English Proficiency for international undergraduate admission to Lake Superior State University. This change ensures alignment with updated scoring concordance published by Duolingo and preserves parity with the university's existing TOEFL iBT score requirement.

Background:

As part of its international undergraduate admissions process, Lake Superior State University accepts several standardized English proficiency exams, including the TOEFL iBT, IELTS, and Duolingo English Test (DET). These scores help ensure that admitted students possess sufficient English proficiency to succeed academically.

Until now, the minimum DET score for admission has been 85, based on a previous concordance scale that equated this score with a TOEFL iBT score of approximately 61. However, in 2024, Duolingo released a revised scoring scale. According to the updated conversion matrix, a DET score of 85 now corresponds to a TOEFL iBT score of just 47–52, well below the university's accepted TOEFL threshold of 61.

To maintain consistency across exams and preserve academic integrity, LSSU proposes raising the minimum accepted DET score for international undergraduate admission from 85 to 95.

Peer Institution Benchmarking

A review of peer institutions in Michigan and regional public universities reveals consistent alignment between Duolingo and TOEFL iBT scores in current policy:

University	TOEFL iBT	DUOLINGO
Lake Superior State University (Proposed)	61	95
Grand Valley State University	80	105
Ferris State University	61	95
Northern Michigan University	61	95
Saginaw Valley State University	61	95
Central Michigan University	79	100

Suggested Action/Motion:

The President recommends that the Board approve an update to the university's Proof of English Proficiency standards for international admission by increasing the minimum accepted Duolingo English Test score from 85 to 95. This new test score aligns with the current equivalency of the TOEFL iBT score of 61, which Duolingo updated in 2024.

President's Recommendation:

Approval of the presented motion.



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Agenda Item #3: Financial Aid Updates

Information

Action

Discussion

Purpose:

The purpose of this information is to provide an update on financial aid operations, compliance activities, and staffing.

Background:

An external consultant from College Aid Services (CAS) has been engaged to assist with scholarship packaging updates and financial aid award notifications due to the new scholarship model. The project is focused on accelerating workflows for the 2025–2026 cycle, with a target completion date of February 13. This collaboration is being closely monitored to minimize impacts on recruitment and maintain momentum across enrollment communications.

Since the November Board meeting, the Financial Aid Office has managed high-volume processing demands related to spring semester disbursements, including award revisions and student account updates. The team continues to prioritize timely resolutions while maintaining strong service for enrolled students.

The internal Financial Aid Committee has convened three times to review appeals from students who lost eligibility due to Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards. To date, over a dozen appeals have been reviewed, with a majority approved. This demonstrates the university's commitment to student support while upholding compliance with federal and institutional policies.

Suggested Action/Motion:

N/A

President's Recommendation:

N/A



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Agenda Item # 4: Housing Base Rate – FY 2027

Information Action Discussion

Purpose:

The purpose is to establish the base Housing rates for fiscal year 2026.

Background:

Administrators at Lake Superior State University annually propose a base rate for Housing and Food (H&F) for the Board of Trustees to consider and approve. The H&F base rate refers to the standard price that students are charged for their accommodations and meals. This rate covers a year of occupancy in a double occupancy room (or split quadruple) in Brady Hall, a traditional residence hall, and a meal plan that covers regular meals throughout the academic year. It serves as a starting point for calculating the total cost of attendance for students, which can vary based on factors like room type and meal plan choices. Below is the recommended base rate for only Housing for fiscal year 2026. Base food rates will be presented in the next Board of Trustee meeting.

Proposed Housing Base Rate

For fiscal year 2027, the University proposes a Housing Base Rate of \$6,000. This represents a 7.08% increase from the current base rate of \$5,603.50. The proposed adjustment reflects rising operating and maintenance costs while remaining aligned with the value and condition of the housing inventory.

Even with this increase, LSSU continues to maintain a strong price advantage within the Michigan public university market. The proposed \$6,000 annual rate for traditional residence hall housing remains below comparable rates at peer and competitor institutions.

This pricing approach balances fiscal responsibility with student affordability and supports the long-term sustainability of the housing system while reinforcing LSSU's commitment to cost-conscious pricing.

University	Annual Rate	Year	LSSU Savings
Lake Superior State University (Proposed)	\$6,000	2026-2027	—
Grand Valley State University	\$6,094	2025-2026	\$94
Ferris State University	\$6,426	2026-2027	\$426
Northern Michigan University	\$6,850	2025-2026	\$850
Saginaw Valley State University	\$7,550	2025-2026	\$1,550
Michigan Tech	\$10,106	2025-2026	\$4,106
Central Michigan University	\$8,780	2025-2026	\$2,780

This chart demonstrates that the proposed Lake Superior State University housing rate of \$6,000 for the 2026 to 2027 academic year remains below all listed peer and competitor institutions. LSSU continues to offer a clear cost advantage in on-campus housing among Michigan public universities.

Published housing rates at comparable institutions range from \$6,094 to \$10,106. At these levels, LSSU students realize annual savings of \$94 to \$4,106, reinforcing LSSU's position as one of the most affordable on-campus housing options in the state.

The comparison is based on the most recently available published rates. With the exception of Ferris State University, which has released 2026 to 2027 rates, all other institutions reflect 2025 to 2026 academic year pricing. Even if those institutions hold rates flat for 2026 to 2027, the proposed LSSU rate would remain lower than what students at those universities are paying today, preserving LSSU's affordability advantage and competitive position.

Proposed Food Base Rate

At this time, the University is not advancing a proposed Food Base Rate. Lake Superior State University is initiating a formal Request for Proposals for dining services, which may result in changes to meal plan structure, pricing, and available options.

The intent is to complete the RFP process and bring recommended meal plan rates forward for consideration and approval at the May Board of Trustees meeting. This approach allows the University to align meal plan pricing with the outcomes of the dining services review rather than setting rates prematurely.

As a result, only the Housing Base Rate is being presented at this time.

The table below shows the housing costs only, broken out by semester for Fall 2026 and Spring 2027. The total annual housing cost is reflected in the rightmost column.

Semester and annual Base Housing Costs

	Fall 2025	Spring 2026	Total Housing
Housing	\$3,100.00	\$2,900.00	\$6,000.00
Total	\$3,100.00	\$2,900.00	\$6,000.00

Suggested Action/Motion:

The President recommends that the Board approve the Housing Base Rate at \$6,000 for Fiscal Year 2026.

President's Recommendation:

The President recommends that the Board approve the Housing Base Rate for the 2026 to 2027 fiscal year at \$6,000. This represents a 7.08 percent increase from the current Housing Base Rate. No Food Base Rate is being presented at this time and will be brought forward separately following completion of the dining services RFP process.

Approval of the presented motion.



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Agenda Item #5: Student Affairs Updates

Information

Action

Discussion

Purpose:

The purpose of this information is to provide an integrated update on Student Affairs priorities, Housing and Residence Life, Dining Services, Student Life and Engagement, Conduct and Restorative Practices, Laker Success, and recent student engagement highlights. This update demonstrates how these units work together to support belonging, retention, and engagement across the student experience.

Background:

CARE Team and Student Conduct

Fall 2025 marked the first semester of formalized data tracking for both the university's newly restructured CARE Team and its student conduct processes, establishing important baseline metrics for future evaluation.

The CARE Team received 25 referrals from across campus, including faculty, residence life, athletics, and academic advisors. Referrals primarily involved undergraduate students, with 44% in their first year. Top presenting concerns included mental health, physical wellness, interpersonal conflict, and trauma. Most cases were categorized as mild or moderate in risk, and 80% of referred students successfully connected with a CARE Team member. Of those, 60% were referred to Counseling Services, and 20% were referred for additional academic or mandated support services. The CARE Team launched weekly case review meetings and completed professional development with the National Association for Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment (NABITA), including implementation of the NABITA Risk Rubric. Partnerships across campus continue to strengthen, particularly with Counseling, Residence Life, Academic Support, and Disability Services.

In parallel, the Office of Student Conduct managed 21 referrals, with the majority originating from RA staff or student reports. Most involved sophomore and first-year students. Noise complaints, unauthorized pets, and violations of LSSU's Navigator policy represented 62% of cases resulted in warnings, and 38% in restorative measures. No students were placed on probation or removed from campus, consistent with LSSU's focus on student development and early intervention.

Combined, these efforts represent a philosophical and procedural shift toward proactive student support, trauma-informed response, and data-informed planning. Recommendations for Spring 2026 include enhanced outreach to student-athlete populations and residential students, as well as expanded student-facing education on community expectations and available supports.

Student Life

The Office of Student Life coordinated 89 student programs during Fall 2025, a 12.7% increase over the previous year. These events drew 3,516 total participants, with 693 unique students engaged across the semester. Student survey data reflect strong impact: 90% of respondents reported feeling connected to campus, and 84% said they felt comfortable seeking help when needed.

Fall highlights included signature events such as Haunted House, Lakerpalooza, Hockey Night engagement, and the ever-popular Stuff-a-Plush. Student testimonials praised the volume, variety, and inclusiveness of LSSU programming, consistently citing events and peer relationships as key contributors to their sense of belonging.

Laker Success and KCP Grant

The Laker Success program continues to serve as a central retention and persistence strategy, particularly for students from lower-income and first-generation backgrounds. The program received \$102,796 in Michigan KCP 4S grant funding to support staffing, programming, and assessment efforts.

During Fall 2025, Laker Success hosted five core events with a combined attendance of 399 students. Signature events included the “Exam Slam,” which supported over 280 students during finals preparation, as well as resume workshops, financial literacy bingo, and social engagement programs. The peer mentor model remains a cornerstone of the program, with 11 trained mentors providing academic and social support to mentees identified through referrals or outreach.

Laker Success operations are based in the Cisler Student Engagement Center, with consistent weekly programming and collaboration across Academic Support, CARE Team, and the Office of Student Life. Looking ahead, data from Fall 2025 will be used to inform programming strategy and retention planning for the 2026–2027 academic year.

Housing & Residence Life

P3 discussions have begun that will revitalize the west end of campus. Initial plans look at replacing Maloney and Neveu Apartments, as well as Osborn Hall and the Student Village with 500-1,000 apartment style beds.

Suggested Action/Motion:

N/A

President's Recommendation:

N/A



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Agenda Item #6: Counseling Services Updates

Information

Action

Discussion

Purpose:

The purpose of this information is to provide an update on Counseling Services, including leadership introductions and appointment numbers.

Background:

From September 2 through January 12, Counseling Services supported 60 unique student clients across 185 individual appointments. This level of engagement reflects strong ongoing demand for mental health support and underscores the importance of continued investment in student wellness initiatives.

Counseling Services facilitated multiple high-impact wellness programs throughout the fall and early spring terms. These included:

QPR Suicide Prevention Training

- Delivered evidence-based gatekeeper training for:
 - 10 senior Nursing students (9/29/2025)
 - 11 Athletic Department staff (1/6/2026)
 - 24 Nursing students (1/13/2026)
 - Student-Athlete Mental Health Support

Facilitated Emotional Health & Wellness workshops for:

- Women's Volleyball Team (13 student-athletes, 9/5/2025)
- Women's Basketball Team (15 student-athletes, 12/12/2025)

In partnership with the Student Athletic Advising Committee, the office also continued planning for the launch of the Green Bandana Project, a peer-driven mental health campaign that fosters visibility and support across campus.

Student-Facing Workshop Collaborations

- Test Anxiety Workshop with Academic Success Team (10/9/2025)
- Grief Support Workshop for 8 Nursing students (12/1/2025)

Substance Misuse Awareness

- Awarded a \$750 stipend through the SAMHSA Communities Talk campaign to address substance misuse awareness. Partnered with the LSSU Cannabis Club to provide educational materials and resources at the Winter Wellness Wonderland Health Fair (12/2/2025).

These collective efforts demonstrate a comprehensive, trauma-informed, and collaborative approach to student mental health that aligns with national best practices and LSSU's commitment to holistic student success.

Suggested Action/Motion:

N/A

President's Recommendation:

N/A