



Academic Affairs Report

October 9, 2026

Agenda Item #1: Conferral of Summer 2026 Candidates for Degrees

☐ Information

☐ Action

☐ Discussion

☒ Consent Agenda

Purpose:

The purpose of this action is to confer the appropriate degrees upon the list of candidates for Summer 2026 as certified by the Registrar as having completed their graduation requirements.

Background:

The enclosed list of candidates is submitted to the Board of Trustees for the granting of the appropriate degrees. The respective chairs certify these candidates have completed all major departmental requirements and the Registrar certifies these candidates have completed all University requirements. The Registrar's memo and List of Candidates is in Appendix A.

Suggested Action/Motion:

Move to confer the appropriate degrees upon the list of candidates for Summer 2026.

President's Recommendation:

Approval of the motion, as presented.



Academic Affairs Report

October 9, 2026

Agenda Item #2: Academic Affairs Update

☒ Information

☐ Action

☐ Discussion

Purpose:

The purpose of this information is to provide an update on activities in the area of Academic Affairs.

Background:

Academic Affairs Monthly Updates

Monthly updates have been sent to campus and the Board that contain the activities and accomplishments of our students, faculty, and staff in Academic Affairs since the last board meeting. These reports also include upcoming events. For your reference, you can find archived copies of the monthly reports for [July](#), [August](#), and [September](#) by clicking on the links. These reports are full of powerful examples of experiential learning, faculty and students collaborating on important scholarly activities, recruitment and outreach efforts, and ways in which they engage with and contribute to our community.

Ninety-credit Bachelor's Degrees

The School of Natural Resources and the School of Engineering and Technology are exploring the development of reduced-credit bachelor's degree programs as part of ongoing efforts to enhance program flexibility and student completion. These proposals will follow our standard curriculum approval pathway, moving through the Curriculum Committee (and, if needed, the General Education Committee) for faculty review and recommendation, followed by presentation to the Board of Trustees before submission to the Higher Learning Commission for accreditation approval in accordance with their [Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree Guidelines](#). At this stage, I am seeking the Board's initial thoughts and any specific considerations you would like conveyed to the developing schools as they begin this work. Please note that substantive curriculum development remains a faculty-led process; this request is for preliminary feedback to help ensure potential questions or concerns from the Board are considered early in the development phase.

Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Comprehensive Evaluation

LSSU submitted its Assurance Argument and federal compliance reviews to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) on August 31, 2026. Following this submission, the HLC Peer Review Team requested additional information, which was promptly provided. A peer visit was subsequently conducted on September 28–29, 2026. Within one month, LSSU will receive an initial report that allows for correction of any factual errors. The report will then be forwarded to HLC's Institutional Actions Council for final determination. We extend our appreciation to all individuals who contributed to the assurance argument process and participated in the site visit.

Academic Affairs Council

An Academic Affairs Council was established this fall to strengthen communication, collaboration, and shared governance across Academic Affairs. The Council brings together academic deans and directors, academic support leaders, the Registrar, assessment and accreditation leadership, instructional technology, and other key partners to share information, identify emerging issues, and work collaboratively on academic priorities and challenges. By bringing a broader group of academic leaders together, the Council is helping ensure that important information reaches the people who need it and that decisions benefit from a range of perspectives and expertise.

MiLEAP Sixty by 30 Initiative

Through the MiLEAP (Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential) initiative, LSSU participated in a grant sequence aimed at increasing Michigan adults with post-secondary credentials to 60% by 2030. Following a Quickstart Grant focused on needs assessment, including consultant-led focus groups at the Native American Center, the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BSSE) for first-year students, and Gardner Institute surveys, we developed focus areas during a Gardner Institute sense-making workshop. Below are updates on key activities in Academic Affairs related to some of those areas of focus.

Data, Accountability, & Continuous Improvement	This area focused on strengthening processes related to data standards, creating common data sets, and having data more available to campus constituencies. The Provost Office has been working with the Information Technology and Institutional Research departments to expand Argos data access for deans, chairs, and administrators, improve data definition consistency, and enhance transparency reporting in Academic Affairs.
Designing for Student Opportunity & Equitable Attainment	This area focused on identifying areas for co-curricular outcomes and creating more meaningful assessment. It also focused on excellence in online teaching (hybrid, synchronous, asynchronous) and identifying gateway courses. Assessment plans and initial assessments were created for co-curricular programs in the library, Registrar's Office, and Student Life. Expansion of co-curricular assessments are planned for 2027–2028. We applied for, but did not receive, a grant targeting online teaching standards. Additionally, reports were created to assist in identifying gateway courses. In 2026–2027, gateway courses in mathematics were redesigned to follow a corequisite model instead of a development sequence. Those new courses were launched in Fall 2026. Additional work related to online and gateway courses will move forward in 2027.

Organization & Policy	This area focused on conducting policy reviews and updating policy and catalog webpages. It also focused on meeting students' basic needs through services, first-year seminars, and first-year experiences. Policy updates began in 2025 and are ongoing. Examples of improved policies include those related to transfer appeal, academic standing, and English proficiency. Through initiatives in Library and Academic services and in Student Life, with the latter supported by Student Government, LSSU strengthened Seamore's Pantry, Seamore's Closet, and Seamore's Shuttle. Strengthening first-year seminars and experiences were incorporated into a MiLEAP Student Success Grant, with task forces currently underway. National experts in first-year experiences have visited campus to assist with professional development.
Philosophy & Strategic Alignment	This area focused on advising and transfer student support. Strengthening advising is another area that was incorporated into the MiLEAP Student Success Grant, with a task force currently underway. Experts in advising from NACADA, the Global Community for Academic Advising, have been on campus to assist with professional development, review, and planning. A transfer course appeal process was developed in 2024–2025 with implementation in 2025–2026. A new task force for initial transfer evaluation is in development, co-led by Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management and Student Success.

Collective Bargaining Agreement

The current Collective Bargaining Agreement between Lake Superior State University and the LSSU Faculty Association (MEA/NEA) is scheduled to expire on June 30, 2027. In preparation for the upcoming negotiations, representatives from the administration across Academic Affairs, Finance, and Human Resources have commenced preliminary meetings to identify institutional priorities and establish negotiation objectives. The goal is to initiate formal negotiations early in 2027, with the aim of reaching an agreement and presenting it to the board promptly once terms are finalized. This serves as an advance notice to keep the board informed as these discussions develop.

Graduate Survey

The [annual graduate survey report](#) was completed and posted on LSSU's Transparency website. The report covers graduate outcomes across Fall 2024 through Summer 2025 cohorts, capturing data on 494 credentials awarded to 323 unique individuals. With a 57% response rate enhanced by integration of National Student Clearinghouse enrollment verification, the data shows strong post-graduation outcomes: 97.8% of graduates are either employed or continuing their education, with 63.6% working full-time and 45.7% pursuing further studies within six months of graduation. Notably, first-generation students represented 35.3% of survey respondents, higher than the institutional rate of 22.0%, and achieved comparable success metrics. Salary data for graduates employed in-field reported a median of \$57,500 and average of \$56,559. The report also includes school-level breakdowns, rates for students employed in Michigan (75.5%), and self-assessed preparedness ratings. Overall, the data demonstrate LSSU's effectiveness as an access-oriented institution supporting diverse educational and career pathways.

Office of Sponsored Programs

Welcome Mistie Navarro

In August, LSSU welcomed Dr. Mistie Navarro to campus as our new Director of Sponsored Programs. She earned her master’s degree in Educational Psychology and her Ph.D. in Elementary Education from Ball State University. She joined LSSU from Grace College, where she served as Director of General Education, providing leadership for institution-wide initiatives that advanced the institution’s strategic priorities. She has also served as an associate professor and has taught in higher education in a variety of capacities since 2000. Throughout her career, she has developed curricula for both online and face-to-face programs, designed and implemented certificate and degree programs, and worked collaboratively across departments to support academic and institutional initiatives.

Dr. Navarro brings extensive experience in grant development, program implementation, compliance oversight, and stakeholder engagement. Her background in educational psychology and her experience working with diverse learners have also shaped her collaborative approach to supporting faculty and staff. She is committed to meeting people where they are, building strong relationships, and providing individualized support as faculty and staff pursue funding opportunities and develop and implement externally funded projects.

New Grants since July Board Meeting

Michigan Consortium for Higher Education in Prison (MiCHEP) / Michigan College Access Network (MCAN)

External Grant Awards				
Sponsor	Amount	Award Period	Budget Highlights	PI
Michigan Consortium for Higher Education in Prison (MiCHEP) / Michigan College Access Network (MCAN)	\$21,315	09/01/2026–08/31/2027	Salary/Fringe: \$6,000 Indirect Costs: \$1,115	Alex Osetek

The STEP-UP Poetry Anthology project expands humanities opportunities for students participating in prison education by developing a professionally edited anthology of original student work. The project includes poetry workshops, a submission process, juried selection, editing and layout, printing, a public launch, and distribution of the anthology in print and electronic formats. The project is designed to strengthen writing, reflection, communication, and creative expression while creating a lasting publication that can be shared across participating institutions and with the broader public.

Michigan Consortium for Higher Education in Prison (MiCHEP) / Michigan College Access Network (MCAN)

Sponsor	Amount	Award Period	Budget Highlights	PI
Michigan Consortium for Higher Education in Prison (MiCHEP) / Michigan College Access Network (MCAN)	\$23,000	09/01/2026–08/31/2027	Salary/Fringe: \$10,000 Indirect Costs: \$0	Kelsey Emmanuel

The STEP-UP Music Club project expands an existing music club within LSSU's prison education program into a structured, year-long humanities initiative. Students will engage in music composition, discussion, reading, reflection, and performance, supported by guest speakers, workshops, and faculty and community collaborators. The project is intended to deepen students' understanding of music and culture while strengthening communication, creativity, collaboration, and personal expression in the prison education environment.

Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)

Sponsor	Amount	Award Period	Budget Highlights	PI
Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)	\$75,714	09/01/2026–08/31/2028	Cost Share: \$0 Indirect Cost Rate: 56%	Seth McCall

Rooted in Place: Building Teacher Capacity to Use Community Archives for Place-Based Learning will develop and test a replicable archival literacy module embedded in LSSU's pre-service teacher education curriculum. The project will partner with public libraries, historical societies, tribal archives, and cultural centers across Michigan's eastern Upper Peninsula and will pilot the module with an estimated 40–60 teacher candidates across two cohorts. Deliverables include an open-access practitioner guide, a curated repository of archive-based lesson plans aligned to curriculum standards, and a documented partnership model that can be adapted by teacher preparation programs serving rural, regional, and tribal communities.

Suggested Action/Motion:

None

President's Recommendation:

N/A



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Appendix A: Conferral of Summer 2026 Candidates for Degrees

Registrar's Office

TO: Kimberly Muller
FROM: Katie Kelsey
DATE: September 15, 2026
SUBJECT: Candidates for Degrees for the Summer Semester 2026

The attached list of candidates is submitted to the Board of Trustees for the granting of the appropriate degrees. The respective chairs certify these candidates have completed all major departmental requirements, and I, as the Registrar, certify these candidates have completed all University requirements.



Summer Semester 2026 Graduates

Brendan Adams	Master	Business Administration
Luke Antonacci	Bachelor of Science	Business Administration
Lawrence Edward Armstrong	Associate	Small Business Administration
Lawrence Edward Armstrong	Certificate	Business Fundamentals
Lawrence Edward Armstrong	Certificate	Business Entrepreneurship
Joseph Leo Barr	Master	Business Administration
Ryan Beck	Bachelor of Science	Business Adm-Entrepreneurship
Nikita Marie Becks	Master	Business Administration
Victoria Berlin	Bachelor of Arts	Creative Writing
Michael Brown	Bachelor of Science	Business Administration
Brendan Joseph Burpee	Bachelor of Science	Fisheries Wildlife Management
Nicholas James Cassel	Master	Business Administration
Maggie Chism	Bachelor of Arts	Creative Writing
Paolo DeMarco	Master	Business Administration
Collen Dibble	Bachelor of Science	Forensic Chemistry
Randall Durr	Associate	Small Business Administration
Randall Durr	Certificate	Business Fundamentals
Randall Durr	Certificate	Business Entrepreneurship
Alexander Eckman	Bachelor of Science	Cannabis Chemistry
Justin Emery	Associate	Small Business Administration
Justin Emery	Certificate	Business Fundamentals
Justin Emery	Certificate	Business Entrepreneurship
Tyler Engel	Associate	Mechatronics
Tyler Engel	Bachelor of Science	Manufacturing Eng Technology
Jared Fenlon	Bachelor of Science	Criminal Justice
Tristan Greenlee	Bachelor of Science	Mechanical Engineering
	Associate of Applied Science	Paramedic Technology
Katie Marie Gundlock	Bachelor of Science	Business Administration
Blake Humphrey	Associate	Criminal Justice Law Enforce
Samantha Marie Kalis	Bachelor of Science	Criminal Justice
Samantha Marie Kalis	Bachelor of Science	Psychology
Keeli Rene Kennedy	Associate	Natural Resources Technology
Melissa Annabel Lee	Bachelor of Science	Parks and Recreation
Melissa Annabel Lee	Master	Business Administration
Samantha Lee	Associate	General Studies
Brandon Mason		

Brandon Mason	Bachelor of Science	Criminal Justice
Mallory McCoy	Bachelor of Science	Mechanical Engineering
Jameson Pdraig McKnight	Bachelor of Science	Robotics Engineering
Jameson Pdraig McKnight	Bachelor of Science	Mechanical Engineering
Marvin Anthony Montgomery	Associate	Small Business Administration
Marvin Anthony Montgomery	Certificate	Business Fundamentals
Marvin Anthony Montgomery	Certificate	Business Entrepreneurship
Jeffrey Scott Morgan	Associate	Small Business Administration
Jeffrey Scott Morgan	Certificate	Business Entrepreneurship
Jeffrey Scott Morgan	Certificate	Business Fundamentals
London Moses	Associate	Small Business Administration
London Moses	Certificate	Business Entrepreneurship
London Moses	Certificate	Business Fundamentals
Joseph Nolan	Master	Business Administration
Royale Gold Parker	Associate	Small Business Administration
Royale Gold Parker	Certificate	Business Fundamentals
Royale Gold Parker	Certificate	Business Entrepreneurship
Audrey Pearson	Associate	Criminal Jus Homeland Security
Justin Pollard	Master	Business Administration
Joshua Elliot Rodriguez	Bachelor of Science	Computer Engineering
Lawrence Antwone Rogers-Jackson	Associate	Small Business Administration
Lawrence Antwone Rogers-Jackson	Certificate	Business Entrepreneurship
Lawrence Antwone Rogers-Jackson	Certificate	Business Fundamentals
Jaimee Nicole Rybinski	Bachelor of Science	General Studies
Mark Thomas Sanchez	Associate	Small Business Administration
Mark Thomas Sanchez	Certificate	Business Fundamentals
Mark Thomas Sanchez	Certificate	Business Entrepreneurship
Tamara Santana	Master	Business Administration
Molly Grace Schembri	Master	Business Administration
Khairy Simon	Associate	Small Business Administration
Khairy Simon	Certificate	Business Fundamentals
Khairy Simon	Certificate	Business Entrepreneurship
Dandre Smart	Associate	Small Business Administration
Dandre Smart	Certificate	Business Entrepreneurship
Dandre Smart	Certificate	Business Fundamentals
Erica Smith	Bachelor of Science	Business Admin-Intl Business and
Kathleen Spencer	Master	Business Admin-Marketing
Logan Swedberg	Master	Business Administration
Alexander Teleguine	Bachelor of Science	Business Administration
Trumell Turner	Associate	Small Business Administration
Trumell Turner	Certificate	Business Entrepreneurship
Trumell Turner	Certificate	Business Fundamentals

Bailey Ward	Bachelor of Arts	Creative Writing
Brian P Weaver	Associate	Small Business Administration
Brian P Weaver	Certificate	Business Fundamentals
Brian P Weaver	Certificate	Business Entrepreneurship
Jesston Whitley	Master	Business Administration
Averill Lavar Williams	Associate	Small Business Administration
Averill Lavar Williams	Certificate	Business Fundamentals
Averill Lavar Williams	Certificate	Business Entrepreneurship
Benjamin Wolfgang	Associate	Small Business Administration
Benjamin Wolfgang	Certificate	Business Entrepreneurship
Benjamin Wolfgang	Certificate	Business Fundamentals