



# Michigan Tech

## Michigan Technological University Board of Trustees Meeting

August 5, 2021

Prepared by:

**Richard J. Koubek, President**

Chair, Members of the Board and audience members. Thank you for joining us this morning. It is indeed a pleasure to meet in person once again, and especially to welcome the many alumni and friends who are in town to celebrate the Michigan Tech alumni reunion.

Since the onset of the pandemic, we have worked to create a healthy and safe on-campus experience for our students, faculty, and staff, and that we can flex in response to rapidly changing environments. We have also learned that technology, while great, cannot replace the experiential learning that happens in classrooms, labs, residence halls, and beyond. Which is why we are delighted to welcome our largest, and most diverse incoming freshman class to campus for a regular start to the fall semester.

To best ensure the continuity of campus operations, Michigan Tech recommends that all employees and students receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

In this context, Michigan Tech will implement a mandatory mask policy indoors for all faculty, staff, students and visitors for a minimum of five weeks, effective August 15. This is in addition to monitoring the campus's wastewater for the presence of the

COVID-19 virus. Also, we will again offer on-demand COVID-19 testing at least for the duration of the fall semester. Our hope is that Michigan Tech's mask mandate is short-term, as our goal is to return to a mask-optional environment once we have more information regarding any spread of COVID-19 within our campus community.

Pivoting away from the pandemic, I wanted to update you on several university initiatives designed to advance Michigan Tech's role as a leader in the 4th industrial revolution this upcoming year. A few I'd like to highlight here.

1. Dave Reed has agreed to lead an effort to expand the depth and breadth of Michigan Tech's online and continuing education program, particularly in the Traverse City region and downstate.
2. The recruiting team will launch a campaign to expand Michigan Tech's efforts and enter the first of three new areas around the country.
3. This semester we are finalizing the campus master plan and deferred maintenance plan as well as launch a "best place to work" initiative.
4. And, under Dr. Wayne Gersie's leadership, we will complete diversity and inclusion strategic plans for at least one third of the budget units on campus as well as establish articulation agreements with minority serving institutions.

It's certainly exciting to see progress on the horizon, in addition to the successes of last year.

I would also like to introduce our new vice president for student affairs and dean of students, Dr. Wallace Southerland. Welcome

to the team, Wallace! We look forward to helping you realize your vision for the Office of Student Affairs.

Finally, I want to say thank you to Brenda Ryan, who has served as Michigan Tech's board chair for the past three years. Brenda, it has been an honor and pleasure to work alongside you and for you. Your counsel and wisdom have been invaluable and the entire Michigan Tech community owes you a debt of gratitude. Thank you for all you have done for me personally as president and for this institution, as a whole.

And...Jeff, thank you for agreeing to assume the chair role. I am excited to work with you and the entire board to advance Michigan Tech.

