

# The Roundtable on Higher Education Linking North Dakota and Its University System

June 2004 Meeting Highlights

## Taking The Roundtable to the Next Level

Citing the need to reach consensus about how to take the Roundtable on Higher Education to the next level, Sen. Ray Holmberg, roundtable chairman, said the roundtable has reinvigorated North Dakota University System campuses and said roundtable members should challenge themselves to keep the agenda moving forward.

Holmberg's comments were part of the June 15, 2004, Roundtable on Higher Education meeting kick-off.

"We've found new excitement and resolve to move forward on the campuses," he said in describing Interim Higher Education Committee visits to the state's colleges and universities. "Each of the campuses have their own challenges, but each of them is working hard to face those challenges and move forward."

Rather than focusing on past accomplishments, Holmberg emphasized the importance of moving the roundtable forward and maintaining its leadership role.

"As a group, I believe we want to be challenged, particularly by the private sector," he said. "We want you to ask questions, challenge, probe and help determine the next steps."

"The main takeaway from today's session may be potential action

by the legislature, executive branch, higher education and the private sector that could push North Dakota further out front in demonstrating the powerful potential of the public/private higher education partnership," he said.

Holmberg's introductory comments were followed by a panel of private sector representatives, a panel of NDUS presidents and comments by Dennis Jones, president of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.

Roundtable members then broke into six small groups to make recommendations based on the day's discussions. In summing up the group reports, Holmberg commented on the commonality and consensus of the feedback and told roundtable members their input would help drive the interim committee's 2005 legislative agenda.

A summary of these recommendations is provided on Pages 3-4.



Sen. Ray Holmberg, roundtable chair, and Rep. Bob Martinson, co-chair



Members of the Roundtable on Higher Education review materials at the June 15, 2004 meeting.

# An Agenda for the Future of the State

The Roundtable on Higher Education is a public agenda, not focused solely on the future of higher education, but, more accurately, focused broadly on the future of North Dakota, according to Dennis Jones, president of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.

In comments at the June 15, 2004, meeting of the Roundtable on Higher Education, Jones said five years ago North Dakota was the leading state in the nation in terms of linking the power and potential of its higher education system to the state's economic and demographic growth. Now, Jones said, nine other states have the same mindset. He urged roundtable members to look worldwide for examples of success and told the group, "It's time to ramp it up."

In terms of actions needed to do so, Jones said it is important that all University system employees understand the roundtable and that it is woven into campus culture. He encouraged roundtable members to more fully explore the six cornerstones of the Roundtable Report and how to define their success.

Jones emphasized the importance of aligning the state's fiscal policy with investment in the state's public agenda. A key indicator of whether or not the state is ready to "walk the

talk" will be if the Long-Term Finance Plan garners legislative support during the 2005 legislative session, he said.



Dennis Jones, president of NCHEMS

Jones said it is time to reevaluate the University System's accountability measures provided as part of the "flexibility with accountability" legislation. These measures should be used as a feedback loop to gauge how successfully the system is doing business, he said. He also underscored the importance of the NDUS functioning as a true system.

While flexibility has made NDUS institutions more competitive, there also is a need to be more collaborative, Jones said.

In spite of these challenges, Jones said he is optimistic about the potential of linking the University System to the state's public agenda.

"North Dakota has the best chance of pulling this off," he said. "You have all the pieces in place. You just need to keep it moving."

## Listening to Private Sector and University System Voices



Private sector input is integral to the development of new relationships based on mutual trust and the common purpose of creating a brighter future for the citizens and state of North Dakota. June 15, 2004, private sector discussion group members encouraged broader geographic recruitment of students, an academic focus on "soft skills," such as time management and problem solving; more emphasis on career track selection, increased efforts to draw native North Dakotans back to the state, concentration on assisting existing businesses and increased private sector access to the statewide information technology network. Panel members included at left: Tom Shorma, private sector representative; Don Hedger, private sector representative; Don Morton, private sector representative; Randy Eisenhardt, Alien Technology; and Roger Reiersen, private sector member and discussion facilitator.

The impact and benefits of the Roundtable on Higher Education have changed the way North Dakota University System colleges and universities do business. Members of the NDUS discussion group said the roundtable has resulted in increased enrollment, economic growth, shared goals and objectives, and a common vision for the University System. The flexibility provided by the Legislative Assembly has allowed the 11 institutions to be more responsive. The roundtable has resulted in a higher level of trust among all stakeholders, and the state now has a better understanding of higher education. NDUS panel members included at right: Dr. Erik Shaar, Dr. Donna Thigpen, Dr. Joseph Chapman and Roger Reiersen, private sector member and discussion facilitator.



# The Discussion Group Recommendations

It is time to reevaluate the entire set of accountability measures with the idea that less is more.

Our goal is to make internships a “win win” situation – a win for the student and a win for the employer.

The State Board of Higher Education should identify what “soft skills” are and help bring those soft skills to the student population.



Dennis Hill  
private sector representative



Sen. Dave Nething



Jim Roers  
private sector representative

## Group 1

- Conduct an evaluation of the higher education accountability measures to determine usefulness of the measures in developing public policy and making campus-level management decisions
- Continue the roundtable concept by having two meetings per year with a half-day orientation session for new members
- Identify “soft skills” needed by the private sector and incorporate the teaching of those skills into the curriculum for academic programs
- Increase faculty representation on the roundtable by including, at a minimum, the president of the North Dakota University System Council of College Faculties

## Group 2

- Identify “soft skills” needed by the private sector, incorporate the teaching of those skills into the curriculum for academic programs and inform students of the skills they should possess
- Develop a uniform student internship program that benefits both students and the private sector
- Review the higher education accountability measures and make changes as needed
- Review the provision of distance education programs by higher education institutions, including the partnership sharing of revenue generated by distance education programs
- Explain the goals, objectives, benefits and impacts of the roundtable to potential beneficiaries

## Group 3

- Provide funding to the State Board of Higher Education to encourage and reward collaboration between higher education institutions
- Provide incentives to students and faculty related to student internships
- Continue to promote higher education centers of excellence
- Allow Work Force 2000 funding to be utilized by employers for providing “soft skills” training to employees
- Market the benefits of the roundtable to the general public
- Interface with the federal government wherever possible
- Identify “soft skills” needed by the private sector and incorporate the teaching of those skills into the curriculum for academic programs

#### Group 4

- Continue to provide for investments in higher education
- Continue to emphasize the building of trusting relationships
- Review other states' processes for completing legislative requests for information
- Integrate the vision of the roundtable into all levels of the North Dakota University System and the general public
- Review the higher education accountability measures and make changes as necessary



Sen. Tony Grindberg

#### Group 5

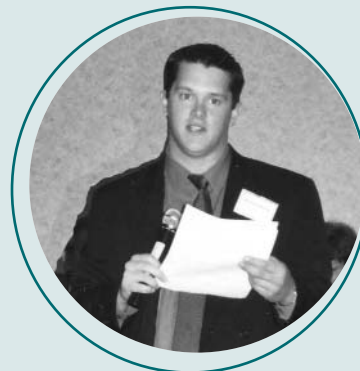
- Provide assistance to the private sector related to access to broadband telecommunications services
- Provide higher education funding equal to 21 percent of the total state budget utilizing the Long-Term Finance Plan adopted by the State Board of Higher Education
- Develop a structured and uniform student internship program through a task force consisting of higher education and private sector members



Rep. Bette Grande

#### Group 6

- Continue the roundtable concept by convening a roundtable meeting before the 2005 legislative session
- Continue the budgetary flexibility granted to the higher education institutions by the Legislative Assembly
- Review the higher education accountability measures and make changes as needed
- Provide funding to the State Board of Higher Education to encourage and reward collaboration between higher education institutions
- Conduct a study of the remedial needs of higher education students
- Allow new or expanding businesses in small communities to access the statewide information technology network for a limited period of time and allow other businesses in small communities to access the network to receive workforce training
- Develop academic programs that respond quickly to the state's needs
- Identify "soft skills" needed by the private sector and incorporate the teaching of those skills into the curriculum for academic programs
- Communicate the results of a survey about job skills needed by employees being conducted by Job Service North Dakota
- Provide higher education funding equal to 21 percent of the total state budget



Nicholas Hacker  
student representative

How do we ensure that the roundtable vision is integrated into all levels of the University System, the public and the state of North Dakota?

Communication is a two-way process between higher education and the private sector.

We encourage the State Board of Higher Education to advance the Long-Term Finance Plan to encourage an increase in funding for higher education.

# Sharing the Vision of the Roundtable on Higher Education



Roundtable members



Roundtable members and guests



Richard Kunkel, SBHE president; and Dr. Pamela Balch, president Mayville State University

There is now, throughout this country, a nationwide awareness of the need to harness the capacities of colleges and universities to move states forward. A lot of people recognize the need, but how many states have had the political will and courage to do what you've done here in North Dakota?

*Dr. Robert Potts  
Incoming Chancellor  
North Dakota University System*



John Q. Paulsen, incoming SBHE member; and Rep. Eugene Nichols



Tom Shorma, private sector representative; and Randy Eisenhardt, Alien Technology



Eddie Dunn, NDUS vice chancellor; and Dr. Robert Potts, incoming NDUS chancellor



Dr. Delore Zimmerman, private sector representative; Sen. Elroy Lindaas; and Rep. Frank Klein



Roundtable members



Rep. Steve Zaiser



Roundtable members and guests

## Get the Facts!

To learn more about the Roundtable on Higher Education, go to:

[www.ndus.nodak.edu](http://www.ndus.nodak.edu)

Click on "Reports and Information" where you will find key documents:

- Report of the Roundtable on Higher Education: Overview and Summary: a quick guide to the key components of the roundtable initiative
- October 2003 Roundtable Meeting Highlights
- Linking North Dakota and Its University System: a publication produced in preparation for the October 2003 roundtable meeting
- A North Dakota University System for the 21st Century: the original Roundtable Report produced in 2000

## Members of the Roundtable on Higher Education

### Legislators

Rep. Ole Aarsvold  
Rep. Thomas Brusegaard  
Sen. Tim Flakoll  
Rep. Bette Grande  
Sen. Tony Grindberg  
Rep. Kathy Hawken  
Sen. Ray Holmberg  
Rep. Nancy Johnson  
Rep. Frank Klein  
Sen. Ed Kringstad  
Sen. Elroy Lindaas  
Rep. Robert Martinson  
Sen. David Nething  
Rep. Eugene Nicholas  
Rep. Darrell Nottestad  
Rep. Steve Zaiser

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Ryn Pitts  
Roger Reierson  
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### SBHE

Sue Andrews  
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Pam Kostelecky  
Dr. Richard Kunkel  
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### State Government, K-12 Education and Labor

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