

Legislative Review

A Look at Higher Education in Week 2: Jan. 12-16, 2009



As students attain their education, they are able to immerse themselves in the unique career opportunities available in North Dakota, and, after they graduate, more bright, young individuals are choosing to stay.

Franklin Michael
NDSU student
and NDSA president

In May, I'll be breaking a lot of family traditions by walking across the stage and getting my degree, but I hope I'll be starting a new family tradition by doing so. ... I've seen what higher education can do for students.

Ken Story
MiSU student

Community colleges give students the tools and knowledge they need to choose their career paths. Education ensures that our young people reach their full potential.

Brad Henke
BSC student

By keeping higher education accessible and affordable, more students will be given the opportunity to give back to this great state.

Tara R. Mertz
UND student

System Overview Presented to Senate Appropriations

High-quality, accessible, affordable higher education and a vibrant state economy were consistent themes in testimony to the Senate Appropriations Committee Jan. 12, 2009.

Testifying in support of the State Board of Higher Education's 2009-11 budget request were SBHE and North Dakota University System officials, a private sector business leader, students and a representative of the Council of College Faculties. Richie Smith, SBHE president, began the testimony by calling attention to some of the dramatic changes that have occurred in recent years.

"I know I speak for board and system officials when I express deep gratitude for the positive relationship that has developed between the Legislature, the private sector and the University System since the Roundtable on Higher Education was convened in 1999," Smith said.

"Through the roundtable process, the University System has been charged with enhancing the economic and social vitality of our state. I stand before you now - 10 years later - confident that the University System is committed to meeting these high expectations and to creating an even brighter future for our students and the people and state of North Dakota."

Bill Goetz, chancellor of the North Dakota University System, also acknowledged the importance of strong private/public sector relationships to the future of the state. He commented on the shared agenda and consensus of objectives among the SBHE, the Interim Higher Education Committee and the 2008 Roundtable on Higher Education.

Goetz told the committee, "I believe all of us will consider the 61st Legislative Session

a success if we focus on responding to this question: *What will be North Dakota's place in the global economy of the future?* And I believe the logical follow-up question to be: *How best can North Dakota invest in higher education to ensure our place in this highly competitive, global economy?"*

Continuation of these strong private/public partnerships are important to the state's future, according to testimony provided by David Farnsworth, power generation and engineering leader for Great River Energy's Coal Creek Station and a member of the Roundtable on Higher Education.

"The North Dakota business community is very pleased that the state Legislature recognizes the strong link between job growth, rising personal income and the need to focus career and technical education and higher education into those areas where opportunity and need are the highest," Farnsworth said.

"A strategic focus, not just a focus on graduating more students, but training and educating them in areas that will best benefit the state of North Dakota, will be the best return on the taxpayers' investment in higher education," he said.

The need to keep higher education affordable and accessible was emphasized by students from four NDUS campuses. The student perspective was presented by Franklin Michael, a North Dakota State University student and president of the North Dakota Student Association; Brad Henke, Bismarck State College; Ken Story, Minot State University; and Tara R. Mertz, the University of North Dakota.

Another underpinning of high-quality education is adequate compensation

for faculty and staff, according to testimony provided by Patti Heisler, assistant professor at Mayville State University and the Council of College Faculties representative on the Committee on Employee Compensation.

“We have an opportunity today to place the North Dakota University System in a more competitive position,” Heisler said. “Compensation plays a critical role in the ability of our institutions to attract and retain expertise. This expertise is what attracts both industry and students. The result is economic growth, a larger tax base and a world-class workforce. There’s no better return on an investment than when all the citizens of our state stand to benefit.”

The University System overview testimony was completed by presentation of the *2008 Accountability Measures Report* and the 2009-11 budget request by NDUS Vice Chancellors Michel Hillman, Ph.D., academic and student affairs; Marsha Krotseng, Ed.D., strategic planning; and Laura Glatt, administrative affairs.

Officials from each of the 11 NDUS colleges and universities presented campus budgets in a series of Senate Appropriations Committee hearings Jan. 12 and 13. The campus presentations also were supported by testimony from students and key private sector partners.

The subcommittee appointed to review SB 2003 includes Sens. Holmberg (chair), Krebsbach and Robinson.

Bills Introduced at the Request of the SBHE

- HB 1079:** Authorizes use of non-state funds, up to an additional 20 percent over legislative authorization to meet unanticipated costs
- HB 1081:** Establishes a P-20 education council
- HB 1119:** Provides reimbursement of actual in-state lodging rate when a state-rate room is not available
- HB 1124:** Authorizes North Dakota’s participation in a multi-state compact for prevention and control of wildfires
- SB 2076:** Increases from \$385,000 to \$750,000 non-state funded projects that can be approved by the SBHE without legislative approval
- SB 2077:** Provides a UND SOMHS loan revolving fund
- SB 2079:** Updates UND SOMHS mission
- SB 2081:** Updates UND SOMHS Advisory Council role
- SB 2082:** Expands definition of resident for tuition purposes to include all veterans
- SB 2083:** Increases state grant maximum from \$1,000 to \$2,000
- SB 2087:** Exempts applicants for the positions of chancellor and president from the open records law during early stages of the search process
- SB 2128:** Adds a representative of the Dakota Transit Association to the UGPTI Advisory Council

Week Three Agenda

- HB 1027 Mon., Jan. 19, 9 a.m., H-APPR:** Gives Budget Section authority to increase the number of legislatively authorized FTE positions
- HB 1230 Mon., Jan.19, 9 a.m., H-EDU:** Provides an appropriation to WSC for construction of a career and technical education virtual center
- HB 1377 Mon., Jan. 19, 9:30 a.m., H-APPR:** Mandates Office of Management and Budget to create a search database of state expenditures
- HB 1013 Tues., Jan. 20, 9 a.m., H-APPEDU:** Provides the Department of Public Instruction appropriation
- SB 2084 Wed., Jan. 21, 9 a.m., S-JUD:** Requires criminal background checks for all student teachers and licensure applicants
- SB 2019 Thurs., Jan. 22, 8:30 a.m., S-APPR:** Provides the Career and Technical Education appropriation
- HB 1121 Thurs., Jan. 22, 9:30 a.m., H-GVA:** Provides a one-time 2 percent increase in retiree benefits