

March 14, 2025

To the Members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee,

On behalf of the Lake Region State College Faculty Senate, we respectfully express our strong opposition to House Bill 1220. While we understand the intent to create accelerated or reduced-credit degree programs to address high-demand occupations, we believe this bill, if passed, would have serious implications for both the quality of higher education and the future success of our graduates.

A key concern is that HB 1220 could jeopardize the accreditation of programs at Lake Region State College and other North Dakota University System (NDUS) institutions. The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) has established comprehensive guidelines for reduced-credit bachelor's programs, which include the requirement to incorporate general education into these programs. Specifically, HLC's Core Component 3.B mandates that institutions demonstrate how they will provide a breadth and depth of student learning, including general education. Removing general education requirements entirely would likely result in non-compliance with these accreditation standards, potentially hindering the ability to offer such programs.

General education is not simply a set of required courses; it plays a foundational role in shaping well-rounded individuals who are adaptable, capable of critical thinking, and equipped with communication and problem-solving skills highly valued by employers. These skills are not only important for academic success but are essential for personal growth, career flexibility, and long-term adaptability in the workforce. Reducing or eliminating general education could limit students' opportunities to develop these crucial competencies, diminishing their readiness to navigate complex work environments, change careers, or participate fully in society. Removing general education courses may not always shorten the time required to complete a CTE degree, as many courses must be taken in sequence. Therefore, keeping general education courses not only helps specialized individuals become more well-rounded but also allows them to maintain full-time college status.

Furthermore, the shortening of degree programs could have negative effects on students' broader educational experience. College is not solely about acquiring specific job-related knowledge but also about personal development, leadership, and learning to collaborate with others. Reduced-degree timelines would limit opportunities for participation in group projects, extracurricular activities, internships, and networking, which are all vital for building interpersonal skills and enhancing future career prospects.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We respectfully ask that you reject HB 1220 to preserve the quality, equity, and integrity of higher education in North Dakota.

Sincerely,



Scott Sandy
Lake Region State College Faculty Senate President
North Dakota General Education Committee Member



April Duchscher
Lake Region State College Faculty Senate Secretary
North Dakota General Education Committee Member