

March 18th, 2025

Subject: Opposition to SB 1220 Regarding Accelerated Degree Options

Chair Wobbema and Members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 1220, which seeks to allow accelerated degree options for programs in high-demand occupations by removing general education requirements. While the intention to expedite workforce entry is understandable, eliminating general education coursework would ultimately be a disservice to students and their future employers.

General education courses provide essential foundational knowledge that supports career-specific education. These courses enhance critical thinking, communication, problem-solving, and ethical reasoning—all of which are indispensable skills in today's workforce. In professions such as nursing, dental hygiene, medical assisting, and other career and technical education programs, a well-rounded education is not just beneficial but necessary for providing competent and holistic care.

Our Faculty Senate firmly believes that general education requirements are an integral component of a student's academic and professional development. These courses cultivate a broader understanding of societal issues, scientific principles, and cultural awareness—all of which contribute to producing well-prepared professionals who can adapt to challenges in their fields.

By removing these requirements, the proposed bill risks producing graduates who may lack essential competencies beyond technical skills. Employers consistently emphasize the importance of communication, critical analysis, and adaptability in their workforce. General education courses are key to fostering these skills, ensuring that graduates are not only technically proficient but also well-rounded professionals prepared for long-term career success.

I urge you to oppose HB 1220 and uphold the integrity of higher education by maintaining general education requirements. North Dakota's students deserve an education that fully prepares them for the complexities of their chosen careers and lifelong learning.

Thank you for considering this critical issue. I appreciate your time and commitment to North Dakota's education system and workforce development.

Sincerely,

Scott A. Johnson
DCB Faculty Senate President