

March 13, 2021

TO: ND House Appropriations – Education & Environment Sub-Division  
FROM: John R. Glover, President/CEO, NDSU Foundation

RE: Written Testimony in Support of SB2030

Dear Chairman Monson and Members of the House Appropriations Education & Environment Sub-Division,

I'm writing to express our support for SB2030, a bill to provide funding of the North Dakota Challenge Grant Program for the 11 public institutions in the North Dakota University System. Thank you for your previous support of this program; it is one our donors, students and faculty have loved from day one, because it brings leverage to truly make a difference in the lives of students.

However, our support at this time comes with the request that you remove the two amendments added onto the bill by the ND Senate; these are additions we strongly oppose.

The North Dakota State University Foundation is the philanthropic arm of NDSU, with a mission of building enduring relationships that maximize advocacy and philanthropy to support the university.

Today, philanthropy and external relationships are a critical part of the university. And I know all 11 of our system institutions, and the students they educate, would be in very different places were it not for alumni and community support for their missions.

In testimony you're hearing from all colleges and universities, everyone talks about the value of partnerships and leveraging each other to do good for our students, communities, work force and livelihoods.

In 2013, this legislative body bought in on the bipartisan idea of funding a program that partners with philanthropists who care deeply about public higher education. You challenged us to leverage \$.50 of the state's money with \$1.00 of a private donor's money to create scholarships and educational impact.

What happened? Donors called us!

In the fundraising business, it doesn't happen this way. Really ... when was the last time you were willing to pick up the phone when a student from your alma mater was calling you, or when the development officer from your favorite charity was on the line?

Our benefactors to all 11 public institutions love the North Dakota Challenge Grant Program, and they are lining up once again, with hopes this legislative body will offer up as many dollars as possible to make a difference for our students.

What impact has this program had through the NDSU Foundation to support NDSU? Nearly 400 households and businesses (many of them from out of state!) have taken advantage of the matching funds, giving more than \$37M to match nearly \$18.65M NDSU has received through the Challenge Grant program since its inception. Every time, we've run out of state money before donor demand.

You challenged us, and we responded. Challenge us once again, and we will do our part. Most importantly, we will do our part to educate our state's next generation of workers, leaders, thinkers and influencers. In fact, I'd challenge you to take the 'cap off' the program! Give us the chance to truly generate as much investment as possible to support our students and strengthen our state's future.

Now, to address the two amendments added to the bill by the ND Senate. First, Sen. Myrdal's amendment has far-reaching, unintended consequences attacking the First Amendment, academic freedom in intellectual pursuits and the pursuit of advancing basic and applied knowledge to make a difference for our communities and state. If this is allowed, where does it stop? Our entire NDUS system offers education, research and outreach to many aspects of our life. In North Dakota, many of us care about agriculture and energy. What if the next legislator has a personal obsession/ideology ax to grind with education and research faculty and students working on genetically-modified seeds to improve yield? Would cancer research or next-generation extraction technologies to pull oil out of the Bakken be around the corner? This is a bad amendment, period. We strongly urge your committee to strike it down.

To the second amendment regarding the addition of two private colleges, University of Jamestown and University of Mary, to be eligible for Challenge Grant Funding. First, they are private institutions, with a free pass to not be interfered with by the public of North Dakota, nor this legislative body. That's the whole point of being a private institution, free of legislative oversight, influence, etc. Should they be allowed to secure funding through this program, they are now subjected to all the system regulations, processes, and laws that govern the 11 NDUS institutions. How do we all wrestle with that? Never mind, perhaps they are working in areas that certain state legislators take issue with, but they don't want to share that because they are 'private'? Second, where does the precedent stop? How about the state's Tribal Colleges? Other private trade school or digital academy programs? Other private schools doing business in the state, such as newly-named Rasmussen University? The last time I checked, they are educating many community citizens and taxpayers of this state. This is a slippery slope for our precious state resources to be playing with.

Thank you for supporting this program in the past as it has originally stood. Please consider removing the two amendments and allow all 11 public institutions to go to work answering the phone calls we will receive when they hear of the good you have done!

Regards,

John R. Glover  
President/CEO  
NDSU Foundation