

Hello members of the legislature, it is an honor to provide testimony today in support of the proposed funding for North Dakota State University. My name is Matthew Friedmann and I am currently a graduate student at NDSU where just last spring I received my bachelor's degree in business. I have the pleasure of serving as the president of the student body and bring with me today the voice of our roughly 13,000 talented and passionate students who I have the honor to representing before you.

I want to share with you today my story as I think it represents the value that NDSU brings to this state and why I urge you to approve our requested funding.

I was born in Saint Paul Minnesota to my two parents who are both graduates of NDSU. I grew up in the public K-12 system in Minnesota and when it came time to pick a college, I toured NDSU and fell in love with the campus and was sold on the quality of education for the relatively affordable price. Compared to other schools in my price range NDSU far and away provided the most quality education and that sentiment has rung true for the last 5 years that I have been a student here.

As an undergraduate student I took full advantage of the opportunities NDSU provided me which led me to an array of community involvement that spanned all across the state. I have also held a wide array of jobs on and off campus that have integrated me into the local economy. Over the last five years I have started to plant roots in this state while gaining a deep appreciation for everything North Dakota has to offer. As I look to the future, I am hopeful for a promising job opportunity in this state.

So, who I am is a student who's received their K-12 education in Minnesota, who was drawn into the state by this exceptional institution of higher education, and who before you today is an educated citizen with potentially a bright future in this state who will be an economic driver for years to come.

One of the reasons for what we are asking is to specifically avoid having to raise tuition to make up for the needed increase in revenue to cover the additional salary expenses. While the affordability of NDSU was not the sole factor in my decision to attend. It is what allowed it to be in consideration when determining what colleges, I would even be able to afford. We as students are already under an incredible financial burden and I want you to know that we feel every increase no matter how nominal it may seem. There are many students, me included, who bore much of the responsibility of funding their education and made it a priority to not be weighed down by loads of student debt once we graduated. I advocate in the plainest terms that any decision by the legislature that will result in the need for an increase in tuition will not go unnoticed and its impacts will be felt by students. An impact that will not only affect the decision of current students on whether they can finish their education, but importantly by prospective students who may, like me, come to call North Dakota their home. So, raising tuition effects what I find to be one of the core values NDSU brings to this state, inviting in people to the state who will contribute to the economy and bring their college level skills to the labor market.

I mentioned earlier about how impressed I have been of the quality of education that I have received from NDSU. This is in large part thanks to the contributions of our hard-working

faculty and staff who are committed to providing a rigorous curriculum that goes beyond the classroom. Over the last 5 years I have been at NDSU I have been taught by roughly 50 different faculty and I can tell you without a doubt, the quality of the instructor is the single most important factor in determining the quality of each class experience. Without the ability to attract high quality faculty, the ability for NDSU to continue to offer its exceptional academic experience will undoubtedly be diminished. While that impact may not be felt right away, overtime the reputation will have a considerable impact on our ability to keep enrollment up. And any decrease in enrollment is a direct impact on the amount of new economic drivers coming into the state. Having high quality faculty is paramount in the continued success of NDSU and the states economy.

So, it was because of the affordable tuition I was able to attend NDSU, it was the quality of my education which allowed me to stay, and the experiences in the state that makes me hopeful that if the right job opportunity presents itself, I may call this state, that I have grown to love, my home. Thank you for this opportunity and it would be my pleasure to answer any questions you may have.