



North Dakota House Education Committee
Chairman Pat Heinert
January 31, 2023

Re: House Bill 1470

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Tena Lawrence, Executive Vice President at the University of Jamestown. I write in support of HB 1470 which would establish a back-to-college grant program. I would like to ask for the committee's support for including all accredited higher education institutions as eligible for selection by the students receiving this grant.

Graduates for Workforce

The University of Jamestown has 1,275 students in 44 majors, 3 masters, and 2 doctoral programs. UJ has approximately 250 employees and an economic impact in excess of \$110m. Our students are an integral part of our communities. Our retention of students in the state after graduation exceeds 70%. When workforce challenges abound, we should be prioritizing every effort to retain prospective students, at any age, in North Dakota's higher education programs.

Scholarships For ND Grads

The decision to include private, North Dakota-based universities in this back-to-college grant program would support residents considering a higher education degree, no matter which institution they pursue.

This grant funding would not be the first public funding to support students at the University of Jamestown. Jimmie students access four of North Dakota's seven scholarship offerings. In fact, a recent data pull from the NDUS office shows that between 2020-2022, a total of \$6.64 million, or 10% of North Dakota's total scholarship funds, are going to students at the University of Jamestown, the University of Mary, and Trinity Bible College. On average, \$1.42 million is disbursed to U Mary students each year, \$718,000 to students at UJ, and \$72,000 to Trinity Bible College students. State dollars are already assisting private college students through our scholarship programs—because they are all North Dakota students.

Suggested Amendment(s):

On page 1, lines 9 and 10, where it reads:

“...an institution under the control of the state board of higher education.”

Replace with:

“...accredited institutions of higher education in this state.”

On page 1, lines 22, where it reads:

“...institutions under the control of the state board of higher education...”

Replace with:

“...accredited institutions of higher education in this state...”

With this change, the back-to-college grant would be available to all North Dakota students.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Tena Lawrence

Executive Vice President
University of Jamestown