



North Dakota House Education Committee
Chairman Pat Heinert
March 7, 2023

Re: Senate Bill 2288

Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Kresha Wiest and I am the Chief Financial Officer for the University of Jamestown. I am here in support of SB 2288 which would establish a challenge grant program designed specifically for nursing students. We are grateful for the inclusion of all of North Dakota's accredited higher education institutions as eligible entities for selection by the state's nursing students.

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%.

Nearly 250 students have graduated from the University of Jamestown with nursing degrees in the last 8 years. As the nursing shortage continues and workforce challenges abound in this critical-care field, we should be prioritizing every effort to retain interested students at in-state higher education nursing programs.

Leveraging Private Donations

The decision to include all accredited North Dakota universities in the nursing challenge grant program would allow our foundation to further leverage contributions from individuals—just as the public institutions do—to further support our nursing students. When a donor desires to give to the University of Jamestown's foundation, those dollars will go even further, thanks to the state's support.

In closing, we support challenge grants as a wonderful tool for higher education in North Dakota and hope you will concur. We would greatly appreciate your consideration in moving this program forward.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kresha Wiest
Chief Financial Officer, University of Jamestown