



North Dakota Senate Workforce Development Committee

Chairman Michael Wobbema

January 26, 2023

**Re: Senate Bill 2288**

Chairman Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee,

My name is Dr. Polly Peterson, President of the University of Jamestown. I write in support of SB 2288 which would establish a challenge grant program specifically for nursing students. I would like to ask for the committee's support for including all of North Dakota's accredited higher education institutions as eligible applicants for this challenge grant program.

**Leveraging Private Donations**

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

**Scholarships For ND Grads**

Nursing challenge 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.

If included, we propose to use the nursing challenge grants exclusively for nursing student scholarships, thereby eliminating any question regarding the eligibility of private university participation in this program.

**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. When workforce challenges abound in this critical-care field, we should be prioritizing every effort to retain North Dakota high school students at relevant in-state higher education programs.

In closing, we support challenge grants as a wonderful tool for higher education in North Dakota. **We thank Senator Roers for her proposal and would greatly appreciate your consideration to include all of North Dakota's accredited higher education institutions in the nursing challenge grant program.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Dr. Polly Peterson  
President University of Jamestown