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## HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING REVIEW COMMITTEE

Wednesday, January 14, 2026  
Harvest Room, State Capitol  
Bismarck, North Dakota

Senator Ronald Sorvaag, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

**Members present:** Senators Ronald Sorvaag, Josh Boschee, Scott Meyer, Jonathan Sickler; Representatives Karla Rose Hanson, Mike Nathe, Steve Swiontek; Citizen Members Bruce A. Bollinger, Erica Buchholz, Rebecca Collins, Keith Johnson, Krista Lambrecht, Karla Mongeon-Stewart

**Members absent:** None

**Others present:** Representative LaurieBeth Hager, Fargo, member of the Legislative Management Marjorie Jenkins, University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences; Brent Sanford, North Dakota University System

See [Appendix A](#) for additional persons present.

**It was moved by Senator Boschee, seconded by Representative Nathe, and carried on a voice vote that the minutes of the November 12, 2025, meeting be approved as distributed.**

Dr. Marjorie Jenkins, Dean, University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences, presented information ([Appendix B](#)) regarding funding for the Doctor of Medicine Program. She noted:

- The School of Medicine and Health Sciences (SMHS) has nearly 1,500 students, including 290 enrolled in the Doctor of Medicine Program.
- SMHS received a General Fund appropriation of \$85.2 million pursuant to the higher education funding formula for the 2025-27 biennium.
- The Legislative Assembly could consider a fixed funding model to continue funding for SMHS at the 2027-29 biennium calculated level, with potential increases or adjustments for future inflation, growth, and new programs.

Ms. Jamie Wilke, Director of Finance, North Dakota University System office, presented information ([Appendix C](#)) regarding a potential higher education funding model that considers student completion and full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment. She noted the formula would:

- Use an FTE student calculation based on completed credits.
- Provide a base funding amount of \$7,500 per FTE student.
- Provide funding for credentials completed at each institution.
- Provide \$5 million each to the University of North Dakota (UND) and North Dakota State University (NDSU) for research.
- Provide additional funding for smaller institutions.

Committee members discussed the proposal and noted:

- The small institution factor does not have a supporting calculation.
- The proposal results in a large increase in funding for Bismarck State College and NDSU, a slight reduction in funding for UND, and a significant decrease in funding for the remaining institutions.
- The research factor does not have a supporting basis.
- The FTE model does not recognize or account for the varying missions of the institutions.

Mr. Brent Sanford, Commissioner, North Dakota University System, commented regarding the higher education funding formula. He noted the development of a new formula is not an easy process and he appreciates the simplicity of the formula proposal presented by Ms. Wilke.

At the request of Chairman Sorvaag, Mr. Alex Cronquist, Senior Fiscal Analyst, Legislative Council, presented information ([Appendix D](#)) regarding a potential higher education funding model that considers student completion, weighted credit-hours, and on-campus enrollment. He noted the formula would:

- Continue to use successfully completed student credits, similar to the current funding formula, for approximately 70 percent of funding.
- Replace the completed credit factor in the current formula with a progressive economic size factor to eliminate the significant changes in funding due to movement from one completed credit factor to another.
- Use on-campus headcount enrollment for approximately 20 percent of funding to incentivize on-campus enrollment.
- Provide funding for credentials completed at each institution.

Committee members discussed the proposal and noted:

- The face-to-face incentive factor could lead campuses to inflate on-campus headcount enrollment through 1-credit courses.
- The face-to-face factor would not provide an incentive to campuses for online enrollment of in-state students located away from the campus.
- The face-to-face factor provides nearly double the funding of the credential completion factor, which may not be an appropriate prioritization of funding.

Committee members discussed the formula proposals and made suggestions for the next committee meeting, including consideration of:

- A separate formula for UND and NDSU from the remaining campuses.
- The potential to incentivize student retention.
- Performance measures to determine impact and success.
- The Utah model, consisting of a 10 percent reduction in the instruction budget for each institution which can be earned back if the institution reallocates funding to prioritize programs aligned with workforce demands, high-impact courses, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields.

Commissioner Sanford presented information ([Appendix E](#)) regarding funding for dual-credit courses. He noted:

- Dual-credit is funded through the higher education funding formula, K-12 integrated formula payments, and tuition and fees charged to the student.
- The cost to the state is largely dependent upon which higher education institution the student is enrolled in for the dual-credit course, with the higher education funding formula's cost per credit-hour ranging from \$79.57 at UND and NDSU to \$215.84 at Dakota College at Bottineau.

Chairman Sorvaag noted the committee should be prepared to further discuss a proposal to combine Tiers II and III of the University System Capital Building Fund at the next meeting. He noted the next meeting likely would be in late March.

No further business appearing, Chairman Sorvaag adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

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Alex J. Cronquist  
Senior Fiscal Analyst

ATTACH:5