



DAKOTA COLLEGE AT BOTTINEAU

HB 1221

House Appropriations Committee, Education and Environment Division

January 31, 2025

Carmen M. Simone, Campus Dean and Chief Executive Officer

carmen.simone@dakotacollege.edu

Chair Nathe and members of the committee:

For the record, my name is Carmen Simone, Campus Dean for Dakota College at Bottineau (DCB). On behalf of our institution, I am providing this written testimony in favor of HB 1221.

Access to additional funding to assist in defraying the expense of program development would be highly beneficial to all the institutions within the North Dakota University System (NDUS). Since my arrival at DCB in August 2022, we have diligently worked to develop and launch Dental Assisting and Dental Hygiene programs in Minot as part of a focused effort to support Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming for the region. The introduction of these programs was expensive, requiring extensive facility and equipment investments, as well as contracts with personnel to provide curricular expertise. It was a very heavy lift, supplemented in part by a federal grant through the City of Minot. The Dental Assisting program is now in its first year, with eight students enrolled. The Dental Hygiene program is on track to open Fall 2025 and it will be heavily marketed once initial program accreditation is granted this spring. There is no doubt that having access to funding through NDUS as seed money would have eased this financial burden for us. In the end, we believe that we could have responded much more quickly to this strong workforce demand had we had access to additional resources.

As we look to the future, there are several additional programs that should be developed for Minot, especially given the Regional Health Sciences Institute concept that is currently under consideration. Based on feedback from regional partners, we know that the workforce need is great, and that the programs being requested will ultimately be successful. Unfortunately, we are still waiting for our most recent endeavor to cash flow due to the time required for program implementation and the intentional, but delayed output from the funding formula. Having access to additional capital to invest in the early stages of program development would create a much more robust response to local demand.

We respectfully ask the committee to give a DO PASS recommendation on this bill. Thank you for your consideration.