



# DICKINSON STATE UNIVERSITY

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**Date: January 30, 2025**

**Re: Testimony to the North Dakota Legislature**

Chairperson and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide insights regarding the critical need for Workforce Innovation funding to support the development of high-impact academic programs at Dickinson State University (DSU) and institutions across North Dakota.

As we seek to address regional and statewide workforce shortages, one of the greatest challenges we face is developing new academic programs under the constraints of the current funding model. The existing funding formula does not account for program innovation or new program development. This requires institutions like DSU to reallocate existing resources to fund emerging workforce needs. This reallocation often comes at a significant cost, potentially disadvantaging existing programs or, in some cases, leading to their closure.

The Workforce Innovation funding initiative provides a strategic solution to this challenge by allowing institutions to invest in new, high-impact programs without disrupting the viability of current offerings. This funding is particularly crucial for Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, which require significant capital investments to launch.

At DSU, we have firsthand experience with the difficulties associated with launching high-demand CTE programs under current funding constraints. Our development of diesel technology and welding programs are a prime example. These programs required extensive capital investments in equipment, facilities, and faculty expertise to become operational. Despite these challenges, DSU recognized the pressing workforce needs in these fields and made the necessary sacrifices to ensure their success. However, without dedicated start-up funding, this approach is not sustainable for future program development.

North Dakota continues to experience critical shortages in technical fields, and institutions must have the necessary resources to address these gaps. Workforce Innovation funding is essential to support the creation of new CTE programs that align with industry needs and economic development goals. With this funding, DSU and other institutions can proactively develop programs that provide students with the skills and training needed for high-demand careers while ensuring that existing academic offerings remain strong.

I urge this committee to support the establishment of Workforce Innovation funding to help North Dakota's higher education institutions drive economic growth and meet workforce demands. Thank you for your time and consideration.