

March 9th, 2025

North Dakota House Appropriations – Education and Environment Division
Re: SB2003

Chairman Nathe and members of the Committee,

On behalf of the North Dakota State University (NDSU) College of Engineering Advisory and Advancement Board, we respectfully offer this testimony in support of Senate Bill 2003.

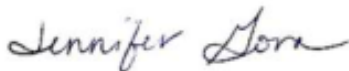
The Board, consisting of NDSU graduates and industry leaders within the state of North Dakota and throughout the United States, works with the College of Engineering in several ways. We support capstone programs and robotics competitions, establish scholarship endowments, and hire students and graduates for internships and permanent positions. We believe the NDSU College of Engineering plays a vital role in contributing to the workforce needs of North Dakota. Students who receive a hands-on education at NDSU are quality, project-ready graduates who provide immediate impact to their employer, many of which are based in North Dakota.

The investment in matching grants, state aid for higher education institutions, and student financial assistance grants provide funding for students seeking higher education. Recently, other higher education institutions and/or state programs are offering financial assistance to entice students to select their institutions for their college experience. This is coming at a time when student numbers that are enrolling in higher education institutions are trending downward and/or reaching a flat line stabilization. Many higher education institutions are competing for the same student pool and finding unique ways of offering financial assistance to increase their enrollment numbers. It is critical that NDSU find opportunities to offer similar and/or create more unique financial assistance programs to increase enrollment to be able to meet workforce needs of the state.

The Board is also highly supportive of the "New Horizon: NDSU 2035" initiative, designed to ensure successful pathways for workforce impact, industry connection and affordability; grow North Dakota's competitive edge through advancement of agriculture, engineering, energy, and manufacturing; and improve North Dakota's quality of life by expanding, modernizing, and meeting workforce demands in nursing, pharmacy, and health science programs. The new academic programs that are proposed as part of this initiative will provide the state with highly-skilled graduates in specialized areas that are experiencing critical workforce shortages. This bold initiative will better position NDSU to meet the state's evolving workforce needs and promote economic development across the region.

For the reasons mentioned above, the NDSU College of Engineering Advisory and Advancement Board (CoEAAB) requests support and approval of Senate Bill 2003 and the "New Horizon: NDSU 2035" initiative. We appreciate your consideration of our request and your service on behalf of the state of North Dakota.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Gora – RS&H
CoEAAB Chair



Jerry Specht – CPKC
CoEAAB Vice Chair

CoEAAB Members

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