

January 21, 2025

Senate Appropriations - Education and Environment Division

Challenge Grant Hearing Testimony

On behalf of the Dakota College at Bottineau Foundation Board of Directors, I wanted to share how truly impactful the North Dakota Challenge Grant has been to the Dakota College at Bottineau community—both for our campus and, most importantly, for our students. Over the past twelve years, the support provided by the Challenge Grant Funds has enabled us to achieve incredible milestones, strengthening our programs and helping them flourish in ways we once only imagined.

Through the ability to raise funds from generous donors and grants, and the incredible opportunity to leverage those resources with matching funds, several of our key programs have expanded and thrived. Notable examples include our Unmanned Aerial Systems program, our Nursing and Ag Management programs, as well as our Biology and Natural Resources labs.

One of the most transformative effects of the Challenge Grant has been its impact on student scholarships. Just a decade ago, the resources we had available to provide scholarships were limited, but now, thanks to the Challenge Grant's support, we have been able to significantly increase the number of scholarships awarded each year. This has had a profound impact on our students' ability to offset the cost of tuition, room, and board. To give you an idea of the scale, our academic scholarship recipients have grown from just 39 students in 2013 to an astounding 137 students in 2024. This dramatic increase has truly been a game-changer for us, and we are profoundly grateful for the opportunities this has opened for our students.

Being in a small, rural community, securing resources and funding can sometimes be a challenge. However, the ND Challenge Grant has been a pivotal tool in bridging that gap. With its support, we've been able to engage alumni, businesses, organizations, and friends in new and exciting ways. When they learn that their contributions will be matched, their enthusiasm to give—and continue giving—only grows stronger. This has helped foster a network of sustained and generous support that we are confident will continue for years to come.

The impact on our campus has been both substantial and inspiring. It's more than just a source of funding; it's become a crucial tool in our efforts to recruit students and forge new relationships with donors. We couldn't be more excited about the future it helps us build.

Thank you for your support of the ND Challenge Grant.

Leslie Stevens, DCB Foundation Director