

SB 2003

Education and Environment Division Senate Appropriations

Friday, January 17, 2025

Lake Region State College

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Chair Wobbema and members of the Senate E & E Division. My name is Doug Darling and I serve as the President of Lake Region State College. I am testifying today in support of SB 2003 on the provisions related to the Challenge Grant.

The Challenge grant program has had an unprecedented impact on campuses and their related foundation's ability to fundraise. At Lake Region State College the foundation has tripled their corpus from \$4.5 million to over \$13.5 million since the program started. We have added over 100 endowments and increased the total dollar amount of scholarships funded each year by about \$200,000.

I'm sure each campus can give similar examples, I had a meeting with a donor about a \$50,000 gift and when we explained the Challenge Grant matching funds, we left with a \$200,000 commitment. It has also had an impact on existing endowment. We are seeing more donors adding to their endowments on a regular basis because of the matching funds. Most of our use of the Challenge Grant matching funds has been for endowments. Endowments are the gifts that keep on giving forever.

The two dollars of private funds for every one dollar of state funds has generated the most significant private investment in ND Higher Education that I have seen in my 36 years in higher education.

I would encourage you to consider increasing the funds appropriated for the Challenge Grant program. Each biennium all the funds have been utilized with some requests left without funding.

Thank you for your time and your support for Challenge Grant funding.