

# NORTH DAKOTA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

## Minutes of the

### HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Wednesday and Thursday, April 21-22, 2004

Williston State College and Williston Research Extension Center, Williston, North Dakota  
Dickinson State University and Dickinson Research Extension Center,  
Dickinson, North Dakota

Senator Ray Holmberg, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, April 21, 2004, at Stevens Hall, Williston State College, Williston.

**Members present:** Senators Ray Holmberg, Ed Kringstad, Elroy N. Lindaas, Dave Nething; Representatives Ole Aarsvold, Bette B. Grande, Nancy Johnson, Frank Klein, Bob Martinson, Eugene Nicholas, Darrell D. Nottestad, Steven L. Zaiser

**Members absent:** Senators Tim Flakoll, Tony S. Grindberg; Representatives Thomas Brusegaard, Kathy Hawken

**Others present:** See Appendix A

**It was moved by Representative Grande, seconded by Representative Aarsvold, and carried on a voice vote that the minutes of the March 4-5, 2004, meeting be approved as distributed.**

#### WILLISTON STATE COLLEGE

Chairman Holmberg welcomed Senator Stanley W. Lyson, Williston, and Representative Earl Rennerfeldt, Williston, to the meeting.

Dr. Joseph McCann, President, Williston State College, welcomed the committee to the campus of Williston State College.

Ms. Brenda Wigness, Director for Administrative Affairs, Williston State College, provided information regarding the status of the 2003-05 biennium budget. She said the college's estimated tuition revenue collections for the 2003-05 biennium are approximately \$250,000 ahead of estimates due to increases in enrollment. She said the additional tuition revenue collections will be used for faculty salaries, capital improvement projects, operating expenses relating to the ConnectND project, and other one-time costs. She said the 2003 Legislative Assembly provided the college capital asset funding of \$88,790 from the general fund for the 2003-05 biennium and the college has used the funding for roof repairs on Stevens Hall.

Ms. Helen Overbo, Dean for Academic Affairs, Williston State College, provided current enrollment information. A copy of the information presented is on file in the Legislative Council office. She said the college's fall 2003 headcount enrollment was 871, an

increase of 101 from the fall 2002 headcount enrollment of 770. She said the college's full-time equivalent enrollment estimate for the 2004-05 school year is 620. She said approximately one out of every three students takes at least one distance education course.

Ms. Wigness provided information regarding average salary adjustments and tuition rates. A copy of the information presented is on file in the Legislative Council office. She said the college provided average salary increases of 2 percent for the 2003-04 fiscal year and the college is planning on providing average salary increases of 2 percent for the 2004-05 fiscal year. She said the college increased tuition rates for the 2003-04 school year by 6 percent and the college is anticipating increasing tuition by 8 percent for the 2004-05 school year. She said the college plans to use the additional tuition revenue for salary increases.

In response to questions from Senator Nething and Representative Grande regarding salaries, Ms. Wigness said the college uses regional and state-wide salary data from Job Service North Dakota to analyze salaries for nonprofessional positions and national salary data to analyze salaries for professional positions.

Mr. Michel Hillman, Interim Chancellor, North Dakota University System, said the North Dakota University System office will provide the committee with a copy of the *Report of the State Board of Higher Education's Committee on Employee Compensation* dated April 2004.

Dr. McCann provided information regarding capital improvements for the 2003-05 biennium and future capital improvement needs. A copy of the information is on file in the Legislative Council office. He said the college recently completed construction of a health science and sports complex authorized by the 1999 Legislative Assembly. He said the college's future capital improvement needs include an addition to the Crighton Building for diesel mechanics and construction of a rural development center. He said a rural development center would be used for several college functions, including entrepreneurship and tourism programs; oil field training; art, music, and theater activities; and a new library facility. Information

regarding the college's land and buildings utilization is attached as Appendix B.

Mr. Ken Quamme, Dean for Technology and Services, Williston State College, provided information regarding the college's Ford Foundation Rural Community College Initiative. A copy of the information is on file in the Legislative Council office. He said goals of the Ford Foundation Rural Community College Initiative are rural development, educational excellence, and civic engagement. He said the college's action process for the initiative includes:

1. Evaluating the present economic, postsecondary educational, and civic status of the region.
2. Receiving input from all sectors of the region.
3. Formulating a vision for the initiative.
4. Developing strategies to reach desired outcomes of the vision.
5. Determining priority action steps to be recommended.

Dr. McCann and Ms. Overbo provided information regarding the college's plans for and accomplishments regarding the recommendations of the Higher Education Roundtable. A copy of the information is on file in the Legislative Council office. The following are examples of actions taken by the college in relation to the recommendations:

#### **Economic Development**

- Support of the Small Business Development Center office for the Williston area.
- Development of an entrepreneurship program and integration of entrepreneurial courses into other program curriculum.
- Member of the Tri-County Economic Developers Council and the Williston Area Development Foundation.

#### **Educational Excellence**

- Development of online programs in the areas of paraeducator, entrepreneurship, and medical transcription.
- Development of a certificate of practical nursing and an associate of arts degree in registered nursing to begin in fall 2004.
- Collaboration with other higher education institutions in the areas of nursing, aerospace flight training, and early childhood education.

#### **Flexible and Responsive System**

- Partnerships with local school districts for various initiatives, including the offering of dual credit courses.
- Use of student focus groups to receive input from students.
- Provision of workforce training service for the northwest region of North Dakota, including the serving of 229 businesses and 1,823 employees for fiscal year 2003.

#### **Accessible System**

- An increase in distance education offerings.

- Implementation of a per credit tuition model beginning in fall 2002.

#### **Funding and Rewards**

- Revision of the college's faculty load, adjunct pay, and overload system.
- An increase in grant writing activity.

Dr. McCann provided information regarding the North Dakota University System's long-term financing plan. A copy of the information is on file in the Legislative Council office. He said advantages of the long-term financing plan for community colleges include comparison to similar colleges rather than other in-state colleges, revision of peer institutions each six years, and recognition of the role of community colleges as points of access for place-bound and nontraditional students.

In response to a question from Representative Grande regarding educational needs of the oil industry, Ms. Overbo said the college is working with the state's oil industry to determine how the college can meet the industry's educational needs.

In response to a question from Senator Holmberg regarding the college's registered nursing program, Ms. Overbo said the Board of Nursing completed the North Dakota Administrative Code rule promulgation in response to the passage of House Bill No. 1245 and the state's community colleges are in the process of finalizing the curriculum for the new associate of arts degree for the registered nursing program.

In response to a question from Representative Nottestad regarding the college's registered nursing program, Ms. Overbo said the college can start enrolling students in the new registered nursing program as soon as the curriculum is finalized.

In response to a question from Representative Johnson regarding the college's collaborative efforts, Ms. Overbo said the college's collaborative efforts have increased significantly since the inception of the Higher Education Roundtable.

In response to a question from Representative Aarsvold regarding tuition rates, Ms. Overbo said students from Canadian provinces and contiguous states, except for Minnesota, pay in-state tuition rates.

In response to a question from Senator Nething regarding workforce training, Ms. Wigness said the college's workforce training revenue sources include state funding and training fees. She said the college is no longer actively pursuing cash donations from the private sector, as the private sector pays for training through fees.

In response to a question from Representative Aarsvold, Dr. McCann said the college has not implemented program fees for high-cost programs.

The committee toured Williston State College facilities, including Stevens Hall, the Crighton Building, and the new health science and sports complex.

In response to a question from Senator Nething, Dr. McCann said the estimated cost for the proposed

addition to the Crighton Building is \$910,000, of which \$500,000 would be from the general fund and \$410,000 would be from special funds.

In response to a question regarding the health science and sports complex, Dr. McCann said the complex was constructed at a cost of \$5.7 million.

The committee recessed for lunch at 12:00 noon and then traveled to the Williston Research Extension Center.

### **WILLISTON RESEARCH EXTENSION CENTER**

The committee reconvened at 1:15 p.m. at the Williston Research Extension Center, Williston. Mr. Jerry Bergman, Director, Williston Research Extension Center, welcomed the committee to the center and reviewed the committee's tour packet contents. A copy of the packet is on file in the Legislative Council office. He said the 2003 Legislative Assembly provided a total appropriation of \$1,643,075 for the 2003-05 biennium, of which \$913,974 was from the general fund and \$729,101 was from special funds. He said a general fund reduction of \$47,269 was implemented by a workforce reduction of one full-time equivalent position, a reduction in operations, and a programmatic reduction of off-station research. He said the center receives inadequate funding for information technology transmission charges. Information regarding the center's land and buildings utilization is attached as Appendix C.

Mr. Bergman said the center has started a MonDak Irrigated Research and Development Project on land in the Nesson Valley in Williams County. He said the center will be requesting funding of approximately \$285,000 for the 2005-07 biennium to fully implement the project. He said benefits of the project include examination of the interaction between irrigation methods and crop rotations in North Dakota, development of alternative cropping systems and a nutrient and pest management plan for all irrigable lands in North Dakota, and development of water and cultural management strategies for optimal production.

In response to a question from Senator Holmberg regarding information technology charges, Mr. Neil Riveland, Research Agronomist and Superintendent, Williston Research Extension Center, said the center's monthly charge for access to the statewide wide area network is \$840 per month.

Chairman Holmberg requested the committee receive information regarding allocation of a \$20,000 general fund appropriation provided to the Main Research Station for distribution to branch research extension centers for offsetting Interactive Video Network costs in remote areas.

In response to a question from Representative Aarsvold regarding the MonDak Irrigated Research and Development Project, Mr. Bergman said the project will utilize both lake water and ground water

sources for irrigation water. He said the current Lake Sakakawea level is too low for water intake.

The committee toured Williston Research Extension Center facilities, including the Ernie French Center, the seed house, and the seed storage shed.

In response to a question regarding the seed house, Mr. Riveland said the estimated cost for reshingling the seed house is approximately \$20,000.

The committee recessed at 2:25 p.m. and traveled to Dickinson.

### **DICKINSON STATE UNIVERSITY**

The committee reconvened at 9:00 a.m. (MDT) on Thursday, April 22, 2004, at the Student Center, Dickinson State University, Dickinson.

Chairman Holmberg welcomed Senator Rich Wardner, Dickinson, to the meeting.

Dr. Lee Vickers, President, Dickinson State University, welcomed the committee to the campus of Dickinson State University and reviewed the contents of the committee's tour packet. A copy of the packet is on file in the Legislative Council office.

Mr. Alvin Binstock, Vice President for Business Affairs, Dickinson State University, provided information regarding budget issues. The information is included in the committee's tour packet. He said the university increased tuition rates for the 2003-04 school year by 16 percent and will increase tuition rates for the 2004-05 school year by 19 percent. He said the tuition increases are needed in support of maintaining quality programs, providing essential enhancements, fostering institutional growth, and positioning the institution should enrollments not materialize as projected. He said the university provided faculty and staff salary increases of approximately 4.06 percent and 2.7 percent, respectively, for fiscal year 2004 and the university anticipates providing an average salary increase of 2 percent for fiscal year 2005.

Mr. Binstock said in regard to capital improvements, the university entered into a 10-year performance contract with Energy Services Group to finance the implementation of select energy-saving improvements. The total amount of the contract was \$2,256,164. He said the university plans to use \$393,962 of funding from the general fund and funding from auxiliary reserves and asbestos settlement funds during the 2003-05 biennium for roof replacements and upgrades, track repair, tuckpointing, energy conservation measures, boiler retubing, and asbestos abatement of Murphy Hall. He said the 2003 Legislative Assembly provided the university funding of \$5,882,047 for the first phase of the renovation and construction of an addition to Murphy Hall. He said the university will be requesting funding of \$4,100,557 of the 2005 Legislative Assembly to complete the second phase of the project. He said the university will also seek reauthorization for the renovation and construction of an

addition to Whitney Stadium at an estimated cost of \$5 million. He said the Whitney Stadium project will be funded with special funds. Information regarding the university's land and buildings utilization is attached as Appendix D.

In response to a question from Senator Holmberg regarding the performance contract, Mr. Binstock said the university entered into a 10-year performance contract with Energy Services Group, a firm based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, for energy-saving improvements.

Dr. Vickers provided information regarding the university's economic development efforts. The information is included in the committee's tour packet. He said the university's fall 2003 headcount was 2,461, an increase of 135 from the fall 2002 headcount of 2,326. He said the projected headcount enrollment for fall 2004 is 2,511. He said the university's retention rate for 2003 was 64.9 percent, a decrease of 6.1 percent from 2002. He said the university emphasizes student retention by requiring freshmen to participate in the university's first-year experience program, providing peer tutoring, and increasing access to information technology.

Ms. Cheryl Lantz, Chair, First-Year Experience Committee, and Dr. Richard Brauhn, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dickinson State University, provided information regarding the educational excellence and flexible and responsive efforts of the university. The information is included in the committee's tour packet. Ms. Lantz said the university has implemented a first-year experience program to help students become independent learners able to articulate and successfully pursue their own educational and personal goals. She said the first-year experience program for students begins before their arrival on campus with the information they receive as part of recruitment and orientation and the program includes orientation programming, the freshmen seminar course, and freshmen learning communities.

Dr. Brauhn said the university has included the higher education accountability measures adopted by the Legislative Assembly in its strategic plan. He said the university's new environmental health program is the only program in the North Dakota University System providing national certification of sanitation officers. He said the university will have received approximately \$500,000 in Title II grant awards for the years 2002 through 2006.

In response to a question from Senator Nething regarding the higher education accountability measures, Dr. Brauhn said in addition to including the higher education accountability measures in the university's strategic plan, the university is submitting information regarding the university's performance in regard to the higher education accountability measures to its accreditation bodies.

In response to a question from Senator Nething regarding Title II grant awards, Dr. Brauhn said the

university had received no Title II grant awards prior to 2002.

Ms. Marty Odermann-Gardner, Director of the Office of Extended Campus, Dickinson State University, provided information regarding accessible efforts of the university. The information is included in the committee's tour packet. She said the university offers completion degree programs in Dickinson, Bismarck, and Williston. She said the university is a member of the Southwest Pipeline of Information for Communities and Education (SPICE) Consortium whose primary goal is to provide distance learning and staff development to member entities. She said the university partners with 17 area schools to provide dual credit courses. The university's dual credit fall 2003 headcount enrollment was 315 and the spring 2004 headcount enrollment was 184.

In response to a question from Representative Aarsvold regarding the university's dual credit program, Ms. Odermann-Gardner said the university utilizes university faculty and local school district instructors to provide dual credit courses.

Mr. Kevin J. Thompson, Director of Development and Alumni Relations, Dickinson State University, provided information regarding funding and rewards efforts of the university. The information is included in the committee's tour packet. He said the office of Development and Alumni Relations provides assistance to the university from three separate entities-- Dickinson State University Foundation, Dickinson State University Alumni Association, and Dickinson State Blue Hawk Boosters. He said the Dickinson State University Foundation provided \$620,000 in scholarship funds for fiscal year 2004.

Ms. Amanda Smith, Student Senate President, Dickinson State University, provided information regarding student experiences at the university. She said student research and internship activities are increasing at the university and students are concerned with the recent tuition rate increases.

## **DICKINSON RESEARCH EXTENSION CENTER**

Dr. Kris Ringwall, Director, Dickinson Research Extension Center, provided information regarding the center's programs, status of the 2003-05 biennium budget, and major needs for the 2005-07 biennium. A copy of the information is on file in the Legislative Council office. He said the center was founded in 1905 and in preparation for the center's second 100 years of existence, the center is embarking on an effort to involve the people of the region to project how the Dickinson Research Extension Center can move forward to opportunely impact the next century. He said the center's spending for the 2003-05 biennium is on track with budgeted expenditures. He said the 2003 Legislative Assembly authorized the construction of Phase 1 of a new headquarters office and multipurpose room building funded from oil

revenues (\$1 million) and local contributions (\$400,000). He said the center is in the process of securing all of the funding for the project and the center anticipates construction of the building to begin in fall 2004. Information regarding the center's land and buildings utilization is attached as Appendix E.

In response to a question regarding the new headquarters office and multipurpose room building, Dr. Ringwall said the State Board of Agricultural Research and Education is considering the possibility of locating the new building on Dickinson State University property for shared use by the center and the university.

The committee recessed for lunch at 12:10 p.m. (MDT). During the luncheon, Mr. Stuart Savelkoul, Ms. Gulnar Zhakupova, Mr. Aundre Bell, and Ms. Lisa Young Bear, students, Dickinson State University, shared information regarding their experiences at Dickinson State University.

### **DICKINSON STATE UNIVERSITY**

After lunch, the committee toured the university's Murphy Hall and the Agro Security Center.

In response to a question regarding asbestos abatement of Murphy Hall, Mr. Binstock said in 2001

the estimated cost of asbestos abatement of Murphy Hall was approximately \$370,000.

In response to a question regarding the first phase of the renovation and construction of an addition to Murphy Hall, Mr. Binstock said the first phase is anticipated to be completed by the middle of December 2004 at which time the programs in the existing Murphy Hall will relocate into the new addition, allowing for asbestos abatement in the existing building.

Upon completion of the tour, the committee adjourned subject to the call of the chair at 2:45 p.m. (MDT).

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Roxanne Woeste  
Senior Fiscal Analyst

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Jim W. Smith  
Legislative Budget Analyst and Auditor

ATTACH:5