

## 2003-04 INTERIM - HIGHER EDUCATION ROUNDTABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Higher Education Roundtable reconvened six task forces that were similar to those formed for the 1999-2000 Higher Education Roundtable--Economic Development Connection, Education Excellence, Flexible and Responsive System, Accessible System, Funding and Rewards, and Sustaining the Vision--to develop meaningful recommendations for enhancing the economy and other appropriate issues concerning higher education in North Dakota. The task forces, chaired by legislative committee members, developed by consensus the following recommendations:

### **Economic Development Connection**

- Continue the strong emphasis on the direct connections and contributions of the North Dakota University System to the economic growth and social vitality of North Dakota.
- Develop a more positive image of the state of North Dakota.
- Continue to assist with business development.

### **Education Excellence**

- Continue to build support for the roundtable, particularly with higher education faculty.
- Recognize the importance of education excellence and that the cornerstones, although numbered 1 through 6, are not priority-ranked.
- Encourage higher education institutions, departments, and programs to establish private sector advisory boards.
- Improve higher education retention and graduation rates through improved college preparation and support for college students.
- Revise the accountability measures relating to education excellence to be more focused.

### **Flexible and Responsive System**

- Anticipate and identify future trends in North Dakota and apply a flexible and proactive approach.
- Facilitate a flexible and responsive system through an internal and external open exchange of information.
- Define a successful North Dakota University System partnership arrangement.

### **Accessible System**

- Enhance the marketing efforts of the North Dakota University System with a focus on the older than average student.
- Develop a seamless preschool through college system, including the review of dual credit courses and affordability.
- Review student financial assistance, including state-funded, needs-based aid, and related student debt.
- Review the impact of increased tuition costs on enrollment.

### **Funding and Rewards**

- Sustain the vision of the roundtable and have the State Board of Higher Education examine how the vision can be carried out through the individual and collective assets of the North Dakota University System.
- Create a culture and provide funding to reward success at the institutional and unit level and to provide incentives as a means of encouraging accomplishment of roundtable objectives, including collaboration. The definition of success needs to be determined at the outset.
- Support the long-term financing plan adopted by the State Board of Higher Education. Any revisions to the plan should be completed in a broader context that examines the balance between state, institutional, and student sources, including the relationship of tuition to needs-based financial aid.

### **Sustaining the Vision**

- Continue the roundtable concept by retaining the structure of the membership and having annual meetings.
- Develop a clear and concise message of the roundtable which explains the goals, objectives, benefits, and impacts of the roundtable.
- Expand communication of the goals, objectives, benefits, and impacts of the roundtable to the:

General public.

Legislative Assembly.

Public and private higher education faculty, staff, and students.

Kindergarten through grade 12 administration and staff.

Business community.

Professional societies.

Trade associations.

The Higher Education Roundtable convened six discussion groups to develop recommendations for action by the Legislative Assembly, North Dakota University System, executive branch, and private sector. The discussion groups, chaired by legislative committee members, developed by consensus the following recommendations:

### **Discussion Group A**

- Continue to provide investments in higher education.
- Continue to emphasize the building of trusting relationships.
- Review other states' processes for completing legislative requests for information.

- Integrate the vision of the roundtable to all levels of the North Dakota University System and the general public.
- Review the higher education accountability measures and make changes as necessary.

#### **Discussion Group B**

- Conduct an evaluation of the higher education accountability measures to determine the usefulness of the measures in developing public policy and making campus-level management decisions.
- Continue the roundtable concept by having two meetings each year with a half-day orientation session for new members.
- Identify necessary "soft skills" needed by the private sector and incorporate the teaching of those skills into the curriculum for academic programs.
- Increase the faculty representation on the roundtable by at least including the president of the North Dakota University System Council of College Faculties.

#### **Discussion Group C**

- Provide funding to the State Board of Higher Education to encourage and reward collaboration between higher education institutions.
- Provide incentives to students and faculty relating to student internships.
- Continue to promote higher education centers of excellence.
- Allow Work Force 2000 funding to be utilized by employers for providing "soft skills" training to employees.
- Market the benefits of the roundtable to the general public.
- Interface with the federal government when possible.
- Identify necessary "soft skills" needed by the private sector and incorporate the teaching of those skills into the curriculum for academic programs.

#### **Discussion Group D**

- Continue the roundtable concept by convening a roundtable meeting before the 2005 legislative session.
- Continue the budgetary flexibility granted to the higher education institutions by the Legislative Assembly.
- Review the higher education accountability measures and make changes as necessary.
- Provide funding to the State Board of Higher Education to encourage and reward

collaboration between higher education institutions.

- Conduct a study of the remedial needs of higher education students.
- Allow new or expanding businesses in small communities to access the statewide information technology network for a limited period of time and allow other businesses in small communities to access the network to receive workforce training.
- Develop academic programs that respond quickly to the state's needs.
- Identify necessary "soft skills" needed by the private sector and incorporate the teaching of those skills into the curriculum for academic programs.
- Communicate the results of a survey being conducted by Job Service North Dakota regarding job skills needed by employees.
- Provide higher education funding equal to 21 percent of the total state budget.

#### **Discussion Group E**

- Provide assistance to the private sector relating to the accessing of broadband telecommunications services.
- Provide higher education funding equal to 21 percent of the total state budget utilizing the long-term financing plan adopted by the State Board of Higher Education.
- Develop a structured and uniform student internship program through a task force consisting of higher education and private sector members.

#### **Discussion Group F**

- Identify necessary "soft skills" needed by the private sector, incorporate the teaching of those skills into the curriculum for academic programs, and inform students of the skills they should possess.
- Develop a uniform student internship program that benefits both students and the private sector.
- Review the higher education accountability measures and make changes as necessary.
- Review the provision of distance education programs by higher education institutions, including the distribution of revenue generated by distance education programs.
- Explain the goals, objectives, benefits, and impacts of the roundtable to potential beneficiaries.