



North Dakota Senate Appropriations Education & Environment Division
Chairman Ron Sorvaag
March 8, 2023

Re: House Bill 1003

Chairman Sorvaag and members of the Senate Appropriations Education & Environment Division,

My name is Tena Lawrence and I am the Executive Vice President of the University of Jamestown. I am speaking today in favor of House Bill 1003, but with one amendment request regarding the North Dakota challenge grant program. I would like to ask for your consideration in adding the foundations of private, North Dakota-based universities as eligible applicants for this program. The reason is simple:

At the University of Jamestown, we serve North Dakota students. They are North Dakota-educated. And they are needed to fill critical workforce needs across the state.

Leveraging Private Donations

The decision to include private, North Dakota-based universities in the challenge grant program would allow our foundation to further leverage contributions from individuals—just as the public institutions do. Even when a donor desires to give to the University of Jamestown’s foundation, ultimately, that same dollar given to a public university foundation is worth more. As we seek to raise funds from a highly overlapping and interconnected donor base, the University of Jamestown finds itself at a distinct disadvantage.

Scholarships for Students

The Matching Grants statute specifically supports “projects dedicated to the advancement of enhanced academics” which include investments in “research, scholarships, technology, endowed chairs, and educational infrastructure,” while excluding scholarships for the benefit of athletics, campus facility repair projects, and new capital construction.

We propose including the University of Jamestown for projects dedicated exclusively to student scholarships, thereby eliminating any question regarding the eligibility of private university participation in this program. We believe funding for higher education in North Dakota should focus on funding students who are residents of North Dakota, and who attend a North Dakota college.

Graduates for Workforce

The University of Jamestown has 1,275 students in 44 majors, 3 masters, and 2 doctoral programs. UJ has approximately 250 employees and an economic impact in excess of \$110m.

Our students are an integral part of our communities. Our retention of students in the state after graduation exceeds 70%.

UJ students are graduating with degrees in nursing, elementary education, business administration, exercise science, secondary education, civil and mechanical engineering, biology, accounting, criminal justice, and computer science, to name a few of our top majors. These graduates are filling jobs in critical-need areas. When workforce challenges abound, we should be prioritizing every effort to retain our high school students at North Dakota institutions of higher ed.

Current Student Support

Matching grant funding would not be the first public funding to support students at the University of Jamestown. Jimmie students access four of North Dakota's seven scholarship offerings. In fact, a recent data pull from the NDUS office shows that between 2020-2022, a total of \$6.64 million, or 10% of North Dakota's total scholarship funds, are going to students at the University of Jamestown, the University of Mary, and Trinity Bible College. On average, \$1.42 million is disbursed to U Mary students each year, \$718,000 to students at UJ, and \$72,000 to Trinity Bible College students. State dollars are already assisting private college students through our scholarship programs—because they are North Dakota students.

A Note of Gratitude

Before I close, I would like to also thank you, the Senate, for already including all accredited institutions of higher education in SB 2288, the nursing challenge grant program you passed earlier this winter. Nearly 250 students have graduated from the University of Jamestown with nursing degrees in the last 8 years, and continue to fill vital health care positions across the state upon graduating. We are hopeful this program will pass the House.

Looking at the current version of HB 1003 before you today, your colleagues in the House have also included the University of Jamestown in both the skilled workforce scholarship program and the pilot program assisting students who are pregnant or single mothers. Again, these programs assist North Dakota students, who ultimately join our workforce, no matter which school they select for their education.

We appreciate each opportunity the legislature has presented to support the state's students and meet our workforce challenges.

Leveraging \$1 Million

HB 1003 now allocates \$36 million to matching grants. We would like to ask for the University of Jamestown to be included in this program moving forward. To be clear, we do not wish to negatively impact any final allocation to the institutions currently included but would ask that any appropriation be included on top of the final appropriation considered.

The University of Jamestown believes it could harness \$1 million in challenge grant funding, to leverage an additional \$2 million in scholarships for its students.

In closing, I thank you for supporting this program over the past decade. Challenge grants are a wonderful tool for higher education in North Dakota. **We would greatly appreciate your consideration to include private institutions in the matching challenge grant program for scholarships for North Dakota students.**

Thank you for your time, and I would stand for any questions.

Tena Lawrence

Executive Vice President
University of Jamestown