



Senate Education Committee  
Chairman Jay Elkin  
January 18, 2023

**Re: Senate Bill 2197**

Chairman Elkin and members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Dr. Polly Peterson, President of the University of Jamestown. I am speaking today in favor of the newly proposed “re-energize North Dakota scholarship,” but with one amendment request. I would like to ask that for your consideration in opening the scholarship to students at any institution of higher education in North Dakota.

Students at the University of Jamestown are North Dakota students. They are North Dakota-educated. And they are needed to fill critical workforce needs across the state, including the oil and gas industry workforce.

**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 during their school term and after graduation. Our retention of students in the state after graduation exceeds 70%.

UJ students are graduating with degrees in nursing, elementary education, business administration, secondary education, civil and mechanical engineering, exercise science, biology, accounting, criminal justice, and computer science, to name a few of our top majors. These graduates are filling jobs in critical-need areas. Graduates from several of these programs directly feed and support our oil and gas industry workforce, as well as those ancillary industries that support the communities most greatly impacted by North Dakota’s energy development. When workforce challenges abound in North Dakota, we should be prioritizing every effort to retain our high school students at North Dakota institutions of higher ed.

**The State Supports All Students**

Currently, Jimmie students access four of North Dakota’s seven scholarship offerings: The ND Academic Scholarship, ND Career and Technical Education Scholarship, ND Scholars Scholarship, and ND Indian Scholarship. We would appreciate the opportunity to include yet a fifth in the form of this new Re-energize North Dakota scholarship.

We believe funding for higher education in North Dakota should focus on students who are residents of North Dakota, and who attend a North Dakota college.

**Suggested Amendment:**

Page 1, lines 19 and 20, currently provide as follows:

“The educational program must be provided at an institution under the control of the state board of higher education.”

We would greatly appreciate the committee’s consideration to replace that language with the following:

“The educational program must be provided at a North Dakota institution of higher learning.”

With this change, the scholarship will be available to all North Dakota students.

In closing, I thank you for your time and consideration.

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