

## HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE - HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY AREAS

This memorandum summarizes the higher education policy areas suggested at the Higher Education Committee meeting on September 26-27, 2007, including information on related issues identified, previous and current initiatives, and potential next steps.

Higher Education Policy Area	Related Issues Identified	Previous and Current Initiatives	Potential Next Steps
Student preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aligning high school curriculums with college entrance requirements</li> <li>• Transforming grade 12</li> <li>• Establishing institutional standards so prospective college students know what is expected of them</li> <li>• Providing counseling services to students in kindergarten through grade 12</li> <li>• Providing remedial education</li> </ul>	<p>In September 2005, the State Board of Public School Education, State Board of Higher Education, Education Standards and Practices Board, and State Board for Career and Technical Education established a steering committee charged with developing a P-16 Education Task Force. The task force consisted of 38 members representing various levels of education, the business community, school boards, associations, state agencies, students, and parents.</p> <p>The task force agreed upon 6 goals and 26 strategies relating to improving education in North Dakota. The following are strategies relating to student preparation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish statewide requirements for high school graduation and college admission of 4 years of language arts/reading, 4 years of math, 3 years of science, 3 years of social/multicultural studies, 1 year of physical education, and 2 years of foreign language, career and technical education, or fine arts.</li> <li>• Develop a statewide data system to ensure all students are proficient through regular assessments and individual assistance.</li> <li>• Create a commission to develop on a continuing basis a common set of standards and expectations at all levels of education in North Dakota.</li> <li>• Increase the number of student-teacher contact days.</li> <li>• Increase the number of academic and career counselors to assist students and parents to set and achieve appropriate career paths and goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive information from representatives of the State Board of Higher Education and the Department of Public Instruction regarding the state's P-16 Initiative, including the status of the strategies identified by the P-16 Education Task Force and future plans</li> <li>• Receive information from representatives of the Department of Public Instruction regarding early testing of students for college readiness and initiatives relating to the transformation of grade 12</li> <li>• Receive information from representatives of the North Dakota University System regarding remedial education, including information as to who is being provided remedial courses--by subject, campus, and high school--and how North Dakota compares with other states</li> <li>• Committee discussion</li> </ul>
Student retention and completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ranking lowest in the region in student retention from the first to second year</li> <li>• Ranking 35<sup>th</sup> in the nation in six-year bachelor's degree graduation rates</li> <li>• Ranking 49<sup>th</sup> in the nation in the migration of college graduates aged 22 to 64</li> </ul>	<p>According to the North Dakota University System's <i>2006 Accountability Measures Report</i>, students who left University System institutions during the fall 2005, spring 2006, and fall 2006 semesters were asked to complete the ACT Evaluation and Survey Service survey. Approximately 390 students completed the survey, of which 39.3 percent were freshmen. Major reasons identified for leaving the institution included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decided to attend a different college - 33.9 percent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive a status report from representatives of the University System regarding the University System's action steps for fiscal year 2008 relating to student retention and completion</li> <li>• Receive information from students regarding the reasons why students are dropping out after the first and second years of college and what the state can do to assist with retention and completion</li> <li>• Committee discussion</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wanted to move to (or transferred to) a new location - 18.1 percent.</li> <li>• Desired major was not offered by this college - 15.8 percent.</li> <li>• Health-related problem (family or personal) - 15.1 percent.</li> <li>• Family responsibilities were too great - 9.2 percent.</li> <li>• Accepted a full-time job - 8.2 percent.</li> <li>• Conflict between demands of job and college - 8.2 percent.</li> <li>• Tuition and fees were more than I could afford - 8.2 percent.</li> <li>• Experienced emotional problems - 7.7 percent.</li> <li>• Dissatisfied with my grades - 7.4 percent.</li> <li>• Wanted to live nearer my parents or loved ones - 7.4 percent.</li> <li>• Academic advising was inadequate - 7.4 percent.</li> </ul> <p>The following are North Dakota University System action steps relating to the State Board of Higher Education's objectives for fiscal year 2008:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan an annual statewide articulation and transfer conference to discuss collaborative and transitional issues to enhance student retention.</li> <li>• Explore articulation and transfer initiatives that would ease the transition for out-of-state students.</li> <li>• Improve information systems to support retention and progression.</li> </ul>	
Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of tuition waiver activity</li> <li>• Likelihood that the lack of adequate financial aid may require students to quit their education or move out of state for higher paying jobs</li> </ul>	<p>According to the North Dakota University System's <i>2006 Accountability Measures Report</i>, tuition and fees at the University of North Dakota, North Dakota State University, and Minot State University were less than their regional counterparts. The average rates at the other University System four-year institutions were about the same as their regional counterparts, and the average two-year college rate was more than the regional average. Tuition and fees at University System institutions for the 2005-06 school year, as a proportion of median household income, were slightly higher than the regional average with the greatest difference occurring at two-year colleges.</p> <p>One of the University System's action steps relating to the State Board of Higher Education's objectives for fiscal year 2008 is to ensure affordability, including working with financial aid officers, the Bank of North Dakota, and others to identify unmet needs and barriers to student financial access to college.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive information from representatives of the University System regarding tuition waiver activity, including the number of tuition waivers granted by institutions, the amount of tuition waived, and the reasons for the tuition waivers</li> <li>• Receive information from representatives of the University System regarding the University System's action step for fiscal year 2008 relating to affordability</li> <li>• Receive information from representatives of the University System regarding North Dakota's financial assistance programs</li> <li>• Receive information from students regarding affordability</li> <li>• Committee discussion</li> </ul>

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Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivering education programs where the needs are</li> </ul>	One of the University System's action steps relating to the State Board of Higher Education's objectives for fiscal year 2008 is to explore costs, benefits, and challenges of higher education centers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive information from representatives of the University System regarding the University System's action step for fiscal year 2008 relating to accessibility</li> <li>Committee discussion</li> </ul>
An appropriate higher education structure for the 21 <sup>st</sup> century	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whether the structure of the University System and the State Board of Higher Education match the needs and expectations of the state</li> <li>Level of bureaucracy within the University System, including the level of funding spent on academic versus administrative costs</li> </ul>	According to the North Dakota University System's 2006 <i>Accountability Measures Report</i> , the University System spent 57 percent of its total combined revenues and state appropriations (excluding auxiliary revenues) on core services (instruction, research, and public service), 15 percent on support services and student aid (academic support and student services), and 16 percent on administration (the president's office, business office, and budget office) and physical plant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive information regarding the structure of higher education systems in other states</li> <li>Receive information from representatives of the University System regarding the level of bureaucracy within the University System, including the level of funding spent on academic versus administrative costs</li> <li>Committee discussion</li> </ul>
A vision for and expectations of the North Dakota University System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proper vehicle for engaging stakeholders</li> </ul>	<p>The Higher Education Committee during the 1999-2000 interim through the use of a Higher Education Roundtable discussed shifts, trends, and realities that impact the state of North Dakota and the University System and developed expectations for the University System, recommendations concerning higher education in North Dakota, and accountability measures and success indicators that correspond with the expectations for the University System.</p> <p>The Higher Education Committee during the 2001-02 interim through the use of a Higher Education Roundtable reviewed plans for and accomplishments relating to the recommendations of the 1999-2000 Higher Education Roundtable, reviewed the state's New Economy Initiative and its linkage to the Higher Education Roundtable cornerstones and recommendations, and developed high-priority action items concerning higher education in North Dakota.</p> <p>The Higher Education Committee during the 2003-04 interim through the use of a Higher Education Roundtable reviewed the status of higher education in North Dakota, reviewed the progress made, current status, and further actions needed to enhance the economic and social vitality of the state and make the state more attractive for new business and business expansion, reviewed the impact of the Higher Education Roundtable on higher education in the state, and developed recommendations for action by the Legislative Assembly, University System, executive branch, and private sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive information from representatives of the University System regarding the current vision for and expectations of the North Dakota University System</li> <li>Convene a Higher Education Roundtable meeting</li> <li>Committee discussion</li> </ul>

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		<p>The Higher Education Committee during the 2005-06 interim through the use of a Higher Education Roundtable received information on Operation: Intern, "soft skills" areas of education and training, and centers of excellence.</p> <p>One of the University System's action steps relating to the State Board of Higher Education's objectives for fiscal year 2008 is to collaborate with the Legislative Assembly and other key stakeholders to enhance the Higher Education Roundtable process.</p>	
Higher education funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding comparisons with other states</li> <li>• Whether the University System long-term financing plan and resource allocation model are appropriate</li> <li>• Appropriate accountability measures</li> </ul>	<p>The Higher Education Committee during the 2005-06 interim studied higher education funding and accountability. The Legislative Council selected and contracted with MGT of America, Inc., to assist with the study. MGT of America, Inc., concluded because of the difficulties implementing the ConnectND system, the University System did not have, at that time, the capability of collecting, retrieving, and using data on student enrollments by course, discipline, and level needed to support a funding formula; therefore, the current method of funding using peer comparisons was the most appropriate base funding methodology.</p> <p>MGT of America, Inc., also evaluated the University System's accountability measures and benchmarks in terms of appropriateness and adequacy and provided the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish benchmarks and goals for each measure.</li> <li>• Include data for each higher education institution in summary fashion in the University System annual performance and accountability report.</li> <li>• Reduce the number of accountability measures.</li> <li>• When the number of accountability measures is reduced, retain those measures for five or six years.</li> <li>• Include a measure of faculty productivity that is appropriate for each institution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive information from representatives of the University System regarding funding comparisons with other states, including the possibility of receiving funding information from <b>nontraditional sources</b></li> <li>• Receive information from representatives of the University System regarding accountability measures, including any suggested changes</li> <li>• Committee discussion</li> </ul>
Effectiveness and efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redesigning courses and transforming curriculum</li> <li>• Maintaining educational quality in a flexible environment</li> </ul>	<p>One of the University System's action steps relating to the State Board of Higher Education's objectives for fiscal year 2008 is to reduce complexity through collaboration, including establishing appropriate user groups to examine issues and make recommendations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive information from representatives of the University System regarding the University System's action step for fiscal year 2008 relating to reducing complexity through collaboration</li> <li>• Receive information from representatives of the University System regarding the level of flexibility that can be provided without jeopardizing institutional accreditation</li> <li>• Receive information regarding the National Center for Academic Transformation model for redesigning courses and transforming curriculum</li> <li>• Committee discussion</li> </ul>