

**A NORTH DAKOTA
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM**
For the 21st Century

**North Dakota University System
Long-Term Communication Plan**

in Support of 2007-08 SBHE Objective Six

**Approved by the SBHE on June 19, 2008,
to be completed by Jan. 1, 2012**



MISSION

The mission of the North Dakota University System is to enhance the quality of life of all those we serve and the economic and social vitality of North Dakota through the discovery, sharing and application of knowledge.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State Board of Higher Education Long-Term Communication Plan was created to guide SBHE and North Dakota University System communication with key constituencies through Dec. 31, 2011.

It includes strategies to enhance awareness of the importance and value of the NDUS and assigns primary responsibility for completion of each action step. Although primary responsibilities are assigned, effective communication is the responsibility of all SBHE and NDUS officials.

To achieve maximum effectiveness, special effort will be made to increase communication with the executive and legislative branches, the private sector, and P-16 and tribal college partners. Additional emphasis will be placed on reaching other key audiences through media coverage and SBHE initiatives such as *Project Vital Link* (targeted at prospective students and parents) as well as improving communication with opinion leaders and the students, faculty and staff who are the lifeblood of the 11 NDUS colleges and universities.

PURPOSE

The State Board of Higher Education Long-Term Communication Plan has been prepared to enhance relationships with key stakeholders and to achieve specific expectations outlined in three key documents:

1. State Board of Higher Education 2007–08 Objectives:

Objective 6: Develop and implement a comprehensive plan to communicate NDUS accomplishments and challenges. The plan should include elements such as building stronger relationships with the executive and legislative branches, the private sector and other stakeholders, further showcasing the University System's contributions to the state and communicating the effectiveness of the roundtable process in connecting higher education with the needs of the state.

2. The Goal of the Roundtable on Higher Education:

To enhance the economic vitality of North Dakota and the quality of life of its citizens through a high-quality, more responsive, equitable, flexible, accessible, entrepreneurial and accountable University System.

3. The Roundtable on Higher Education Cornerstone Six – Sustaining the Vision:

A structure and process which assures the University System for the 21st Century, as described by these cornerstones, remains connected, understood, relevant and accountable to the present and future research, education and public service needs of the state and its citizens – sustaining the vision.

AUDIENCE

The State Board of Higher Education Long-Term Communication Plan will build credibility, trust and confidence among key constituents of higher education in North Dakota, including:

- Executive and legislative branches
- Private/public sector partners
- P-16 and tribal college partners
- NDUS students
- NDUS faculty and staff
- The media
- Prospective students and parents
- Opinion leaders

DESIRED OUTCOMES

The State Board of Higher Education Long-Term Communication Plan will be considered successful if, by Jan. 1, 2012, the following outcomes have occurred:

1. Executive and Legislative Branches:
The SBHE and the NDUS have made recognizable gains in trust and credibility with the executive and legislative branches, thus contributing to the University System's ability to enhance the economic and social vitality of North Dakota.
2. Private Sector Partners:
The SBHE and the NDUS have continued to strengthen relationships with private/public sector partners, and the recognition of shared goals has become a platform for mutual success.
3. P-16 and Tribal College Partners:
Enhanced communication with P - 16 and tribal college partners is helping to increase recognition of shared goals and understanding of the need for better preparation for college and the workforce.
4. NDUS Students:
Students, the SBHE and the NDUS are working together to ensure the high-quality and affordability of college education in North Dakota.
5. NDUS Faculty and Staff:
Awareness of and support for the goals of the NDUS and the Roundtable on Higher Education have increased among faculty and staff.
6. The Media:
A system-wide approach to media strategies has resulted in positive media coverage and opportunities to demonstrate how the NDUS is ensuring a vibrant future of the state and people of North Dakota.
7. Prospective Students and Parents:
Prospective students are aware of the breadth of educational opportunities available to them through the 11 NDUS colleges and universities.
8. Opinion Leaders:
Opinion leaders demonstrate increased awareness of the importance and value of the University System.

KEY MESSAGES

To be successful, the key messages of the State Board of Higher Education Long-Term Communication Plan must be shared by – indeed, enthusiastically endorsed by – North Dakota University System stakeholders.

As stated in the *Roundtable Report*, the key messages need to be “infused into the enterprise” rather than “bolted on” and fully understood by NDUS partners. Consequently, key messages should be woven into written and oral communication as appropriate for the audience.

These key messages will be adapted to address the specific needs of the 2009 and 2011 Legislative Sessions with input from the SBHE Legislative Agenda Task Force. Draft key message “theme lines” follow:

- The NDUS provides high-quality, accessible higher education that prepares students for personal and professional success.
- NDUS colleges and universities are educating the future leaders who will keep North Dakota competitive in today's knowledge-based economy.
- Funding is a responsibility shared by the state, students and the institutions; state funding dedicated to higher education is an investment, not an expenditure.
- All of North Dakota will benefit from partnerships between the private sector and NDUS colleges and universities.
- The NDUS is guided by a common vision and expectations developed by private and public sector members of the Roundtable on Higher Education.
- Collaboration and responsiveness to the broad needs of the state are enhanced by a statewide system of higher education.
- From certificate programs to doctoral research, the NDUS offers a broad array of educational opportunities and is positioned to address the workforce shortages that limit North Dakota's economic growth.

DESIRED OUTCOMES AND ACTION STEPS

The State Board of Higher Education Long-Term Communication Plan includes action steps to accomplish each of the eight desired outcomes listed on Page 3 and the person and/or group primarily responsible for carrying out each step.

DESIRED OUTCOME 1: EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES

The SBHE and the NDUS have made recognizable gains in trust and credibility with the executive and legislative branches, thus contributing to the University System's ability to enhance the economic and social vitality of North Dakota.

Action Steps:

- Provide input to and work actively with Interim Legislative Committees
SBHE, chancellor and staff, CEOs
- Develop a plan for building and strengthening relationships with the governor's office and legislators (including meetings with the chancellor, board members and CEOs; distribution of chancellor's reports to legislators, etc.)
Chancellor, public affairs director
- Develop 2009 and 2011 Legislative Session communication plans in conjunction with the work of the SBHE Legislative Agenda Task Force
Public Affairs Council, public affairs director
- Provide data and encourage dialogue related to responding to North Dakota's demographic challenges
Chancellor, vice chancellors, public affairs director

DESIRED OUTCOME 2: PRIVATE/PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERS

The SBHE and the NDUS have continued to strengthen relationships with private/public sector partners, and the recognition of shared goals has become a platform for mutual success.

Action Steps:

- Promote campus Economic Development Centers of Excellence success stories
Public Affairs Council, CEOs and/or their designees
- Include workforce training client success stories in campus and system publications
Public Affairs Council
- Support and encourage publication of roundtable activities and accomplishments in campus newsletters
Public Affairs Council
- Involve private/public sector roundtable members and other key people such as legislators in campus/community briefings
Chancellor, CEOs and/or their designees
- Use various publications and other forms of communication to keep private/public sector partners informed of actions related to roundtable goals
Public affairs director
- Provide data and encourage dialogue related to responding to North Dakota's demographic challenges
Chancellor, vice chancellors and public affairs director
- Develop 2009 and 2011 Legislative Session communication plans in conjunction with the work of the SBHE Legislative Agenda Task Force
Public Affairs Council, public affairs director

DESIRED OUTCOME 3: P – 16 AND TRIBAL COLLEGE PARTNERS

Enhanced communication with P – 16 and tribal college partners is helping to increase recognition of shared goals and understanding of the need for better preparation for college and the workforce.

Action Steps:

- Continue to support the P–16 Task Force activities
SBHE, chancellor and staff, CEOs
- Continue to support the work of the Joint Boards of Education
SBHE, chancellor and staff, CEOs
- Continue communication with the Tribal College Association
Chancellor, vice chancellor for academic and student affairs
- Establish connections with the Indian Affairs Commission
Chancellor
- Pursue opportunities to meet with tribal college representatives
SBHE, CEOs, chancellor and staff
- Provide data and encourage dialogue related to responding to North Dakota's demographic challenges
Chancellor, vice chancellors and public affairs director
- Develop 2009 and 2011 Legislative Session communication plans in conjunction with the work of the SBHE Legislative Agenda Task Force
Public Affairs Council, public affairs director

DESIRED OUTCOME 4: NDUS STUDENTS

Students, the SBHE and the NDUS are working together to ensure the high-quality and affordability of college education in North Dakota.

Action Steps:

- Maintain strong working relationships with the North Dakota Student Association
 - ♦ Participate in NDSA meetings when invited
Chancellor, vice chancellors
 - ♦ Work to ensure shared 2009 and 2011 Legislative Session agendas
SBHE, chancellor, Legislative Agenda Task Force
 - ♦ Schedule joint SBHE/NDSA meetings prior to the 2009 and 2011 Legislative Sessions
SBHE
- Participate in the NDUS/Student Communication Task Force
 - ♦ Provide pre-SBHE meeting briefings
Chancellor, vice chancellor for academic and student affairs, SBHE member
- Work with student publication reporters
SBHE president, chancellor, vice chancellors, public affairs director
- Develop 2009 and 2011 Legislative Session communication plans in conjunction with the work of the SBHE Legislative Agenda Task Force
Public Affairs Council, public affairs director

DESIRED OUTCOME 5: NDUS FACULTY AND STAFF

Awareness of and support for the goals of the NDUS and the Roundtable on Higher Education have increased among faculty and staff.

Action Steps:

- Maintain strong working relationships with the Council of College Faculties
 - ♦ Schedule periodic meetings between CCF and the SBHE
SBHE
 - ♦ Brief CCF leadership prior to SBHE meetings
Vice chancellor for academic and student affairs
 - ♦ Function as a liaison between the NDUS Office and CCF; attend CCF meetings
Vice chancellor for academic and student affairs
- Partner with CCF and the Human Resources Council on the biennial compensation report
NDUS Office staff members
- Develop and share messages from the chancellor with faculty and staff at key times, such as the beginning and end of each school year
Public Affairs Council
- Inform faculty and staff of the institutions' economic impact and the impact of external funding by sharing campus economic impact statements
Public Affairs Council
- Provide data and encourage dialogue related to responding to North Dakota's demographic challenges
Chancellor, vice chancellors and public affairs director
- Develop 2009 and 2011 Legislative Session communication plans in conjunction with the work of the SBHE Legislative Agenda Task Force
Public Affairs Council, public affairs director

DESIRED OUTCOME 6: THE MEDIA

A system-wide approach to media strategies has resulted in positive media coverage and opportunities to demonstrate how the NDUS is ensuring a vibrant future for the state and people of North Dakota.

Action Steps:

- Function as the SBHE media contact and media spokesperson
SBHE president
- Promote increased media coverage and availability including:
 - ♦ Editorial board visits by the chancellor
Public affairs director
 - ♦ An op-ed series for state newspapers by the chancellor to include topics such as student preparation, the strengths and challenges of the system, etc.
Public affairs director
 - ♦ Increased emphasis on and availability of the chancellor to electronic media
Public affairs director
- Develop story ideas for targeted regional publications
Public Affairs Council
- Continue to promote media coverage of the biennial NDUS economic impact statement
Public Affairs Council
- Provide data and encourage dialogue related to responding to North Dakota's demographic challenges
Chancellor, vice chancellors and public affairs director
- Develop 2009 and 2011 Legislative Session communication plans in conjunction with the work of the SBHE Legislative Agenda Task Force
Public Affairs Council, public affairs director

DESIRED OUTCOME 7: PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Prospective students are aware of the breadth of educational opportunities available to them through the 11 NDUS colleges and universities.

Action Steps:

- Continue working to improve outreach to prospective students through *Project Vital Link*, which includes distribution of publications developed specifically for eighth-graders and sophomore, junior and senior high school students
Public affairs director
- Explore additional methods of outreach to prospective students
Public affairs director

DESIRED OUTCOME 8: OPINION LEADERS

Opinion leaders demonstrate increased awareness of the importance and value of the University System.

Action Steps:

- Identify opinion leaders specific to each campus and host campus briefings
Campus CEOs and/or their designees
- Identify opportunities to present key messages to statewide trade groups and local civic and professional groups
SBHE members, CEOs and/or their designees, chancellor
- Increase knowledge of the NDUS impact by generating positive media coverage
Public Affairs Council, public affairs director
- Monitor public discourse about the NDUS and provide timely updates to the SBHE and chancellor
Public Affairs Council, public affairs director
- Provide data and encourage dialogue related to responding to North Dakota's demographic challenges
Chancellor, vice chancellors and public affairs director
- Develop 2009 and 2011 Legislative Session communication plans in conjunction with the work of the SBHE Legislative Agenda Task Force
Public Affairs Council, public affairs director

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