

North Dakota State Board of Higher Education

Meeting Minutes
February 27, 2025

The State Board of Higher Education met on Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 8:30 a.m. CT via Teams.

Chair Mihalick called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. CT.

Roll Call

SBHE Members

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Tim Mihalick, Chair | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ms. Danita Bye, Vice Chair |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Kevin Black | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Casey Ryan (left at 11:40 a.m.) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Jeffry Volk | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Curtis Biller |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Max Eriksrud | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. DJ Campbell |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Michael Linnell, Staff Advisor | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Lisa Montplaisir, Faculty Advisor |

Institutions

BSC Interim President Sanford, **DCB** Dean Simone, **DSU** Acting President Orton, **LRSC** Mr. Lloyd Halvorson, **MaSU** President Van Horn, Ms. Amber Hill, **MISU** President Shirley, Dr. Laurie Geller, **UND** President Armacost, **VCSU** President LaFave, **WSC** President Hirning (joined at 9:26 a.m.).

System Office/Guests

NDUS Chancellor Hagerott, VC Lisa Johnson, VC David Krebsbach, VC Jerry Rostad, Mr. Mark Gorenflo, Dr. Jen Weber, Ms. Tammy Dolan, Ms. Jane Grinde, Ms. Claire Gunwall, Mr. Chris Pieske, Ms. Bethany Kadrmaz, Ms. Caitlin Magilke, Dr. Billie Jo Lorus, Ms. Jamie Wilke, Mr. Eric Jensen, **CTS** VC Tom Danford, Mr. Dirk Huggett, Mr. Corey Quirk, Ms. Pamela Nielsen, **Assistant Attorney General** Ms. Meredith Larson.

1. **Agenda**

Ryan moved, Biller seconded, to approve the agenda, as presented.
Approved by consensus.

Board Consent

2. January 24, 2025, Special [Meeting Minutes](#)
3. January 30, 2025, [Meeting Minutes](#)
4. January 31, 2025, Special [Meeting Minutes](#)
5. February 5, 2025, Special [Meeting Minutes](#)
6. February 7, 2025, Special [Meeting Minutes](#)

SBHE Budget and Finance Committee

7. [DSU Request to Increase Bonding Authority](#)
8. [NDSU Memorial Union](#)

9. [NDSU BSL-3 Laboratory in Van Es Hall](#)
10. [NDSU University Village Replacement](#)
11. [UND Harrington Hall National Defense Corridor](#)
12. [UND Tech Accelerator Nanofoundry](#)
13. [UND Robin Hall UFORCE](#)
14. [UND Upson Hall I Materials Engineering Lab](#)
15. [UND SMHS Minot Lease Build-Out](#)

16. Reconfirm DSU Acting President

Black moved, Biller seconded to approve consent agenda items 2 – 16.

Campbell, Black, Biller, Volk, Bye, Ryan, Eriksrud, and Mihalick voted yes. Motion passed 8-0.

Board Business

17. Executive Session (8:35 a.m. CT.)

Ryan moved, Bye seconded, to enter executive session to consider (1) Attorney Consultation- to discuss the legal strengths, risks, and weaknesses of any actions taken related to the Department of Education February 14, 2025, Dear Colleague Letter, which, if held in public, would have an adverse fiscal effect on the entity. The executive session shall be limited to members of the SBHE, invited NDUS office staff, and NDUS legal counsel. The legal authority for closing this portion of the meeting is North Dakota Century Code sections NDCC 44-04-19.1(1), 44-04-19.1(2), and 44-04-19.2.

Volk, Campbell, Eriksrud, Ryan, Black, Biller, Bye, and Chair Mihalick voted yes. Motion passed 8 – 0.

Executive session began at 8:37 a.m. CT.

Present:

SBHE Members

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Tim Mihalick, Chair | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ms. Danita Bye, Vice Chair |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Kevin Black | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Casey Ryan |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Jeffry Volk | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Curtis Biller |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Max Eriksrud | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. DJ Campbell |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Michael Linnell, Staff Advisor | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Lisa Montplaisir, Faculty Advisor |

Others:

Chancellor Hagerott, Mr. Chris Pieske, Ms. Bethany Kadrmass, Ms. Merdith Larson.

Executive session adjourned at 9:23 a.m. CT.

Break from 9:23 a.m. CT – 9:30 a.m. CT.

Reconvene at 9:30 a.m. CT.

Chair Mihalick mentioned that the SBHE had reviewed the "Dear Colleague" letter with legal representation and affirmed that the system values diversity of talent, experience, background, and thought. He stated that there was no intention to make any policy

changes at this time and expressed appreciation and support for the contributions of all faculty, staff, and students.

18. [Strategic Goals #1 and #5](#)

VC Rostad presented updates on Strategic Goal #1 (Financials) and Strategic Goal #5 (Research). For Goal #1, the focus was on adjusting the outcome to compare annual tuition and fees with regional and border state averages. For Goal #5, the objectives were revised to track research growth, improve partnering capacity, and enhance pathways for economic development and innovation. Black advocated for measurable metrics to better assess progress.

The SBHE decided to revisit Strategic Goals #1 and #5 with measurable metrics included in future meetings. No action was taken.

19. [Draft RFP Statement of Work](#)

Ryan and Volk briefed the Draft RFP Statement of Work. Ryan emphasized the quality of the document but questioned the timing of its implementation due to upcoming transitions of board members and new presidents within the institutions. Biller suggested tabling the action to allow for further discussion and to allow him to present a plan he has developed at an upcoming meeting.

Biller moved, Ryan seconded, to table the agenda item until further notice.

Eriksrud, Bye, Campbell, Black, Ryan, and Biller voted yes. Volk and Chair Mihalick voted no. Motion passed 6 – 2.

20. University of North Dakota R1 Status, Presidential Salary Adjustment

The board discussed the recent achievement of UND attaining Carnegie Classification R1 status. Chancellor Hagerott emphasized the importance of recognizing this accomplishment and proposed aligning President Armacost's salary with that of President Cook at NDSU, the other NDUS R1 institution. Ryan agreed and highlighted the need for fairness and to acknowledge President Armacost's contributions to this achievement. However, other members, including Black, Campbell, and Volk, suggested waiting for the comprehensive presidential compensation plan review in June before making any salary adjustments.

Ryan moved, Bye seconded, to increase UND President Armacost's salary to \$488,445, and to further review both President Cook and President Armacost's salaries at the June 26, 2025 SBHE meeting.

Bye, Ryan, and Chair Mihalick voted yes. Volk, Eriksrud, Black, Campbell, and Biller voted no. Motion failed 3-5.

SBHE Policy

1st Readings:

VC Johnson reviewed amendments to the following policies, items 21 – 22:

21. [Policy 409](#) Degrees Offered

The board discussed the proposed changes to Policy 409, which would allow NDSCS to offer BAS degrees in a limited capacity. This change follows the board's previous approval of a BAS degree in dental hygiene at NDSCS. The policy amendment aims to formalize this approval and ensure that any future BAS programs at NDSCS will also require SBHE review and approval.

Volk moved, Biller seconded, to approve 1st reading of [Policy 409](#), as presented.

Biller, Ryan, Bye, Volk, Campbell, Eriksrud, Black, and Chair Mihalick voted yes. Motion passed 8 – 0.

22. [Policy 506](#) Immunizations

Biller moved, Ryan seconded, to approve 1st reading of SBHE [Policy 506](#).

Campbell, Biller, Black, Ryan, Volk, Eriksrud, Bye, and Chair Mihalick voted yes. Motion passed 8 – 0.

VC Krebsbach reviewed amendments to the following policies, items 23 – 28:

23. [Policy 611.10](#) Employee Responsibility and Activities: Theft, Fraud, Abuse and Waste

Ryan moved, Biller seconded, to approve 1st reading, waive 2nd reading, and approve for final adoption SBHE [Policy 611.10](#).

Eriksrud, Bye, Campbell, Volk, Black, Ryan, Biller, and Chair Mihalick voted yes. Motion passed 8 – 0.

24. [Policy 611.12](#) Use of State Vehicle

Ryan moved, Biller seconded, to approve 1st reading, waive 2nd reading, and approve for final adoption SBHE [Policy 611.12](#).

Bye, Volk, Eriksrud, Black, Campbell, Biller, Ryan, and Chair Mihalick voted yes. Motion passed 8 – 0.

25. [Policy 802.7](#) Identity Theft Prevention

Biller moved, Ryan seconded, to approve 1st reading, waive 2nd reading, and approve for final adoption SBHE [Policy 802.7](#).

Biller, Ryan, Bye, Volk, Campbell, Eriksrud, Black, and Chair Mihalick voted yes. Motion passed 8 – 0.

26. [Policy 810](#) Deposit of Funds: Investments, Endowment and Gift Funds

Biller moved, Ryan seconded, to approve 1st reading, waive 2nd reading, and approve for final adoption SBHE [Policy 810](#).

Campbell, Biller, Black, Ryan, Volk, Eriksrud, Bye, and Chair Mihalick voted yes. Motion passed 8 – 0.

27. [Policy 916](#) Campus Security

Ryan moved, Eriksrud seconded, to approve 1st reading, waive 2nd reading, and approve for final adoption SBHE [Policy 916](#).

Black, Ryan, Campbell, Volk, Eriksrud, Biller, Bye, and Chair Mihalick voted yes. Motion passed 8 – 0.

28. [HR Policy 5](#) Pay Policy

Ryan moved, Campbell seconded, to approve 1st reading, waive 2nd reading, and approve for final adoption SBHE [HR Policy 5](#).

Campbell, Biller, Black, Volk, Bye, Ryan, Eriksrud, and Chair Mihalick voted yes. Motion passed 8 – 0.

Mr. Chris Pieske reviewed amendments to the following policy, item 29:

29. [Policy 1205.1](#) State Longitudinal Data System

Ryan moved, Black seconded, to approve 1st reading, waive 2nd reading, and approve for final adoption SBHE [Policy 1205.1](#).

Biller, Bye, Eriksrud, Ryan, Black, Volk, Campbell, and Chair Mihalick voted yes. Motion passed 8 – 0.

SBHE Committee Reports/Updates/Discussions

30. SBHE Academic and Student Affairs Committee by Mr. Curtis Biller.

31. SBHE Budget and Finance Committee by Mr. Kevin Black.

32. SBHE Audit Committee by Mr. Jeffry Volk.

33. SBHE Research and Governance Committee by Dr. Casey Ryan and Ms. Danita Bye.

- Update on Post Tenure Report: Institution Reporting Process by VC Johnson.
- Large IT Project Quarterly Report by Ms. Danita Bye.

34. Retirement Plan Oversight Committee by Mr. Jeffry Volk.

35. DSU Presidential Search Committee Update by Ms. Danita Bye.

36. RFP Ad Hoc Committee update included in item 19.

Chancellor Report

37. Legislative Update

Ms. Tammy Dolan provided the legislative update with contributions from VC Johnson and VC Krebsbach.

HB 1064 – Deals with state authorization. Amendments were made to allow exemptions for certain institutions. The bill is moving forward to the Senate.

HB 1161 – Initially created a vacant and new FTE pool at OMB but was amended to keep the pool at the institution level; however, complex reporting requirements were also created. This bill is moving forward to the Senate.

HB 1179 – Originally aimed to provide annual leave to 12-month contracted faculty. It has been changed to a legislative study.

HB 1220 – Allows the SBHE to offer accelerated degrees in high-demand careers, including reduced credit levels. The bill is moving forward to the Senate.

HB 1265 and HB 1448 – Are both part of a statewide AI initiative. Both bills are moving forward to the Senate, though without any appropriated funds recommendation

HB 1437 - Establishes policies on awarding tenure. Amendments were made to include current SBHE policies and procedures. Staff will look to work with the Senate on other changes.

HB 1588 and HB 1365 – Allows for concealed carry of guns and dangerous weapons in public spaces, which would include campus properties. HB 1588 was amended to allow the SBHE to establish relevant weapons policies at their institutions. HB 1365 failed.

SB 2160 – Proposes changes to the state employee health insurance plans, moving from a grandfathered to a non-grandfathered plan, with more coverage options. One set of amendments would have initiated, for the first time, an employee premium of \$25 per month. This provision was eliminated; state will now cover the increased cost.

SB 2242--Proposes a legislative study of the SBHE and institutions, including policies and structure. The bill is scheduled for a hearing on March 5th at 2 pm. No plans to testify.

HB 1609 – Would have created an apprenticeship program allowing individuals to qualify for the bar exam without obtaining a law degree. Failed.

SB 2392 – Aimed to prohibit discriminatory practices in higher education, specifically related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion issues. The bill failed.

HCR 3002– This constitutional resolution proposed to allow sports betting at the college and professional levels. The bill failed.

HCR 3012 and HCR 4023 - Aimed to repeal the statewide mill levy for the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences. The bills failed.

SB 2003 – The appropriations bill for higher education, which includes funding formula adjustments and some of the additional funds approved by the SBHE. The bill is moving forward to the House.

38. SBHE Retreat – June 25, 2025

VC Rostad briefed the upcoming SBHE retreat, scheduled for June 25th, will include discussions on several key topics. These include inviting state leadership such as Governor Armstrong and Senate and House leaders, reviewing legislative outcomes, and examining organizational structure changes, including shared services and program alignment. Emerging technologies, particularly AI, will also be discussed. Additionally, the retreat will cover board governance and an Envision 2035 plan update. SBHE members are encouraged to provide feedback and suggestions for the retreat agenda.

39. [National Artificial Intelligence Plan Input](#)

The group discussed the importance of contributing to the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy's request for input for a nation AI Action Plan mandated by Executive Order. A draft response was shared.

40. Acknowledgement of Representative Josh Christy's Service and Contributions

Chancellor Hagerott acknowledged Rep. Josh Christy's significant impact on North Dakota's AI and technology initiatives. Condolences were expressed, and the Dakota Digital Academy will create a scholarship in his memory.

Other Reports

41. NDSA by Mr. Max Eriksrud.

42. CCF by Dr. Lisa Montplaisir.

43. Staff Senate by Mr. Michael Linnell. Mr. Linnell reported that his successor as Staff Advisor has been elected by the Staff Senate – Anna Kinney of UND. Chancellor Hagerott praised Mr. Linnell for his service and the Staff Senate for their great choice. Ms. Kinney has been leading efforts to integrate AI into teaching and learning.

44. Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Black asked to return to agenda item 20. The SBHE discussed the need to adjust the salaries of certain university presidents to ensure fair compensation.

Break from 11:48 a.m. CT – 12:15 a.m. CT.

Black proposed to raise all presidents' salaries to a minimum of 85% of their respective market medians, as determined by the AGB Peer Comparison Groups in the Presidential Compensation Study commissioned by the SBHE, with an additional increase of ½% per year of service in that comparison category, to be capped at 90%.

Black moved, Bye seconded, to amend the base salary of four presidents per this rubric, effective March 1, 2025. President Cook to \$497,851.62, President Armacost to \$492,096.11, President Van Horn to \$274,677.45, and President LaFave to \$273,125.60.

Black, Eriksrud, Biller, Campbell, Bye, Volk, and Chair Mihalick voted yes. Ryan was absent. Motion passed 7 – 0.

Adjourn

Chair Mihalick adjourned the meeting at 12:25 p.m. CT.

Approved by consensus.