

North Dakota State Board of Higher Education

Academic and Student Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

The State Board of Higher Education Academic and Student Affairs Committee met on March 18, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. CDT.

SBHE Academic and Student Affairs Committee members

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Curtis Biller, Chair | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Max Eriksrud |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Kevin Black | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Lisa Montplaisir, faculty advisor |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. DJ Campbell | |

Institution Presidents/Representatives

BSC Interim President Brent Sanford, Dr. Dan Leingang, **DCB** Dean Carmen Simone, Ms. Kayla O'Toole, Mr. Corey Gorder, **DSU** Dr. Holly Gruhlke, **LRSC** President Doug Darling, Mr. Lloyd Halvorson, Mr. Casey Zehrer, **MaSU** Mr. Corday Goddard, **MISU** President Steve Shirley, Dr. Laurie Geller, **NDSCS** President Rod Flanigan, Dr. Lisa Karch, Ms. Melissa Johnson **NDSU** Dr. David Bertolini, **UND** Dr. Eric Link, **VCSU** Mr. Larry Brooks, Mr. Mark Nelson, **WSC** President Bernell Hirning, Dr. Zahi Atallah, Ms. Megan Kasner

System Office/CTS/Guests

NDUS Chancellor Hagerott, VC. Lisa Johnson, VC. Jerry Rostad, VC. Tom Danford, Dr. Jen Weber, Mr. Mark Gorenflo, Ms. Claire Gunwall, Ms. Katie Fitzsimmons, Mr. Chris Pieske, Dr. Billie Jo Lorius, Mr. Eric Jensen, Ms. Bethany Kadrmias, Ms. Caitlin Magilke, Ms. Sharon Schwartzbauer, Ms. Mindy Sturn, Ms. Jamie Wilke **AG** Ms. Meredith Larson

Call to Order

Committee Chair Biller called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. CDT

1. Agenda
 - a. Black moved, Eriksrud seconded, to approve the agenda, as presented.

Black, Campbell, Eriksrud, and Biller voted yes. Motion passed 4-0.
2. Meeting Minutes
 - a. Eriksrud moved, Campbell seconded, to approve the February 18, 2025, [meeting minutes](#), as presented.
Black, Campbell, Eriksrud, and Biller voted yes. Motion passed 4-0.

Committee Business

3. New Academic Program Request (conclusion at SBHE ASAC)
 - a. [Bismarck State College](#)
 - i. [A.A.S. in Construction Management Technology](#)
 1. Dr. Leingang shared that local industry partners have a need for this program to support the needs of central and western North

Dakota. The program will be offered face-to-face with some online and general education courses.

2. Black moved, Campbell seconded, to approve BSC's new academic program request.

Black, Campbell, Eriksrud, and Biller voted yes. Motion passed 4-0.

b. [North Dakota State University](#)

i. [UG Certificate in Applied AI for All Careers](#)

1. Dr. David Bertolini shared that the certificate was created to serve the entire institution across any discipline to give students the skill sets they need to understand large language models.

ii. [GR Certificate in Advanced Coaching Education](#)

iii. [GR Certificate in Supervision and Management in Physical Education and Coaching](#)

1. Dr. David Bertolini shared that the GR certificates are curations of existing courses that will serve specific programs such as sports education, sports management, exercise science, etc.
2. Eriksrud moved, Campbell seconded, to approve NDSU's new academic program requests.

Black, Campbell, Eriksrud, and Biller voted yes. Motion passed 4-0.

4. Academic Program Termination (conclusion at SBHE ASAC)

a. [University of North Dakota](#)

i. [B.A. and B.S. in Geology](#)

1. VC. Lisa Johnson shared that there have been no students enrolled in the B.A. and B.S. in Geology. UND is not removing Geology entirely from their programs offered; it is offering more targeted and descriptive geology programs.
2. Black moved, Eriksrud seconded, to approve UND's academic program termination.

Black, Campbell, Eriksrud, and Biller voted yes. Motion passed 4-0.

5. [Tenure Recommendations](#)

- a. VC. Johnson shared that the tenure candidates are recent hires at UND who received tenure elsewhere. Dr. Eric Link reported that each candidate joined UND as a result of national searches and bring great experience to UND.
- b. Campbell moved, Black seconded, to approve UND's tenure recommendations

Black, Campbell, Eriksrud, and Biller voted yes. Motion passed 4-0.

SBHE Policy

6. [Policy 308.1](#) Officer and Employee Code of Conduct

- a. Mr. Chris Pieske shared that the title was changed to SBHE Member and Employee Code of Conduct to clarify that the policy does apply to board members as well as employees.
- b. Mr. Pieske shared in sections 1 and 3 there are lists of specific conduct that could violate the policy. Often times when lists are presented, individuals interpret those

- as exclusive rather than illustrative, so the language has been made more general so that campuses have more latitude when applying the policy.
- c. Language has been added to section 3 related to just cause. This would allow institutions to terminate an employee for Just Cause which is conduct related to job duties, performance, job abandonment, or working relationships that are detrimental to discipline, effectiveness or efficiency. Job abandonment is further defined in section 3, a.
 - d. Member Black asked regarding penalties for board members who violate the Code of Conduct. He believes that board members can only be removed through an impeachment process. Mr. Pieske stated that termination would not apply to board members as it is in the Constitution that the only way to remove a board member is through impeachment. The Code of Conduct would still apply but any kind of sanction to that conduct short of termination would have to be decided by the board.
 - e. Member Eriksrud requested further clarification on how the code of conduct relates to academic freedom. Mr. Pieske shared there are sections within Policy 401.1 Academic Freedom that point out the type of conduct that would take an individual outside the realm of academic freedom and what those sanctions could be for that conduct. Member Eriksrud asked in the academic freedom policy where it touches on creating hostile educational environments that violate law or policy, is the policy specific to the Code of Conduct? Mr. Pieske stated that there are federal laws around discrimination based on disability, age, sex, or race, and creating a hostile environment. Additionally, the SBHE has a harassment policy, and all institutions have their own as well.
 - f. Member Campbell expressed that there are individuals who may have great job performance but have significant behavioral issues; is this type of situation covered within the policy? Mr. Pieske shared that he would read that as working relationships which are detrimental to the discipline, effectiveness, or efficiency of the entity.
 - g. Black moved, Campbell seconded, to approve Policy 308.1 as presented.

Black, Campbell, Eriksrud, and Biller voted yes. Motion passed 4-0.

7. [Policy 401.1 Academic Freedom](#)

- a. Mr. Pieske shared that language was added to section 4 stating that creating a hostile educational environment would be in violation of law or policy.
- b. Language was removed from section 5 referencing that each institution is under the control of the SBHE, in consultation with the governing body of its faculty. In the last legislative session, law was passed stating that presidents have control over their policy process.
- c. Dr. Lisa Montplaisir asked for the definition of "disproportionate amount" in section 4. Mr. Pieske stated that "disproportionate amount" is more than substantial, and the overall purpose is to ensure instructors are teaching the subject matter and not spending most of the class time on other subjects.
- d. Member Eriksrud asked if it would be beneficial to add a statement related to just cause. Ms. Meredith Larson stated that it would be a business decision for the board to make. It may not be necessary, but the language could be added if desired.
- e. Eriksrud moved, Campbell seconded, to approve Policy 401.1 as presented.

Black, Campbell, Eriksrud, and Biller voted yes. Motion passed 4-0.

Reports/Updates/Discussions

8. [Policy 409](#) Degrees Offered

- a. VC. Johnson shared that at the last board meeting, Policy 409 was up for first read to include NDSCS as an institution that can award Bachelor of Applied Science degrees. Policy 409 will be up for second read at the March 27th meeting with that edit.
- b. VC. Johnson has added language to section 2. f. ii for reduced credit bachelor's degrees based on HLC guidelines; the proposed language would state that all reduced credit bachelor's degrees would need to be approved by the SBHE.
- c. VC. Johnson presented a [side-by-side comparison](#) of general education requirements for certificates, associate degrees, and baccalaureate degrees.
- d. Committee Chair Biller asked if the 36 general education credits stay and if there is a minimum of 30 hours in the core education area, what credits would be taken away in a reduced credit baccalaureate program. VC. Johnson stated that most institutions would likely eliminate elective courses.
- e. Dr. Dan Leingang shared with committee members what BSC had presented to the Academic Affairs Council and what they have queued up. The reduced bachelor's degrees would be laser focused on the credential or degree the student is seeking. There would still be 32 or more credits that are major required. Generally, at least 30 out of the 32 required credits must be 300 or 400 level courses. With the reduced credit bachelor's degrees, it would not allow for the ability to complete a minor or double major on the side.
- f. Mr. Larry Brooks shared that VCSU has a reduced credit bachelor's degree teed up in Elementary Education. VCSU removed all electives and the required endorsement which reduced the number of credits to 98. Mr. Brooks shared that VCSU held a career and internship expo with a follow-on business roundtable. One of the takeaways from the roundtable was that general education credits are important as they provide students with critical thinking skills, soft skills, etc.; however, they thought that 35 credits was a bit much.
- g. Committee Chair Biller asked Mr. Brooks for his recommendation for the number of required general education credits. Mr. Brooks shared, based on business and industry partners feedback, that 30 credits would be a good number, which would still comprise ¼ of the credits for bachelor's degrees in the University System.
- h. Member Eriksrud shared that, as a student himself, the general education courses are important and there could be the potential to offer program specific general education courses. For example, a business major could take a business writing course that would fulfill both the general education requirements as well as program specific requirements.
- i. Dr. Lisa Montplaisir shared that CCF discussed this at their last meeting, and they are hearing from both students and faculty that general education courses provide more than just content and it allows students to be mobile in their academic and professional careers.
- j. Policy 409 will be at the board for 2nd read but will not include any proposed edits related to reduced credit bachelor's degrees. These proposed edits will be taken to the councils and cabinet and will come back to the committee in April.

Adjourn

Committee Chair Biller adjourned the meeting at 2:02 p.m. CDT.

Approved April 15, 2025.