North Dakota’s higher education system is thought to be one of the five most productive state systems of higher education, relative to its resources, according to the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) and cited in a study now underway by a higher education consultant.

Mary McKeown-Moak, a partner in the consulting firm MGT of America, presented preliminary findings of the firm’s study of North Dakota higher education funding and accountability to the State Board of Higher Education at its Feb. 16, 2006, meeting. McKeown-Moak emphasized the importance of maintaining a viable statewide university system.

On Feb. 14, McKeown-Moak provided a similar report to the interim Higher Education Committee, which commissioned the study. She also provided an overview to the Roundtable on Higher Education Feb. 15.

The “good news” shared by McKeown-Moak included praise for the commitment of faculty and staff to student success and improving the state’s economy, increased outreach to the business community and the commitment of business and industry to working with higher education. She also said the Roundtable on Higher Education is perceived as a “best practice” model for other states.

McKeown-Moak said the state should spend more on higher education, financial aid and deferred maintenance, and it should improve its measurement of equity and performance among the 11 institutions. The University System accountability measures in place since 2001 need to be reduced in number and include campus-specific measures, she said.

The University System’s Long-Term Finance Plan is a primary focus of the MGT study. The firm has been working with each of the campuses on development of new “peer groups” or nationally comparable institutions. Campus peers are used to determine allocation of state general fund dollars to each college or university. A draft list of new peers was included in the report.

### Sustaining the Vision of the Roundtable on Higher Education

Members of the Roundtable on Higher Education who gathered for a Feb. 15, 2006, meeting included (left to right) Jennifer Feist, Valley City Barnes County Development Corp.; Judi Paukert, private sector member from Grand Forks; Gloria Lokken, NDEA President; Rep. Ole Aarsvold; Frank Keogh, private sector member from Williston; Richard McKennett, private sector member from Williston; Ken Quamme, Williston State College; Rep. Mark Owens; and Sen. Nick Hacker. A comprehensive roundtable meeting report soon will be available.

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Richie Smith Wahpeton, N.D.
John Pederson Mayville, N.D.
(Non-voting faculty advisor)
Robert L. Potts Bismarck, N.D.
Chancellor

The Role of the SBHE
The State Board of Higher Education is the governing board of the North Dakota University System.

Our Vision
The North Dakota University System is the vital link to a brighter future.

Our 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.

SBHE Update
The SBHE Update is created to increase awareness of the role of the State Board of Higher Education and the North Dakota University System and to ensure the system remains connected to, understood by and accountable to the citizens and needs of the state of North Dakota.

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BSC President Thigpen Resigns; SBHE Begins Search

The State Board of Higher Education approved an early retirement agreement for Dr. Donna Thigpen, president of Bismarck State College, during the board’s Jan. 19, 2006, conference call meeting.

Citing health reasons, Thigpen will retire June 30, 2006, and return to North Carolina. Robert L. Potts, chancellor of the North Dakota University System, recommended approval of the retirement package, calling her tenure at BSC “an unqualified success.”

During Thigpen’s 11 years as president, the college has increased enrollment significantly, developed or expanded several programs with special emphasis on allied health and energy, and completed construction of a new science building. Plans now are being finalized for a Career and Technology Institute.

At its Feb. 16, 2006, meeting, the SBHE approved appointments to the BSC presidential search committee. Pam Kostelecky, SBHE president, will chair the group, which will include SBHE member Bruce I. Christianson; representatives of BSC students, faculty, staff and administration; representatives of the BSC foundation and alumni; and Bismarck community members.

The committee will forward the names of at least three qualified candidates to the board.

MaSU President Balch Resigns

Pam Kostelecky, president of the State Board of Higher Education, announced the resignation of Dr. Pamela Balch, president of Mayville State University, on June 22, 2006, Board meeting.

Balch is resigning to become president of her alma mater, West Virginia Wesleyan College, in Buckhannon, W.Va. While expressing regret at the loss of Balch, Kostelecky said it is a compliment to the University System when a campus president is recruited and selected as the result of a national search. Balch became president of MaSU July 1, 2003, and will leave the university June 30, 2006.

In 2004, MaSU became the first Tablet PC campus in the nation and began offering bachelor’s degrees in applied psychology and early childhood education. Under Balch’s direction, MaSU experienced record enrollment, several new scholarships were established and the university was recognized as a Princeton Review Best Midwestern College.
SBHE Approves New Centers of Excellence

The State Board of Higher Education recommended approval of six additional economic development centers of excellence built around activities on four North Dakota University System campuses at the Feb. 16, 2006, board meeting at Valley City State University.

The centers were recommended for approval by the Centers of Excellence Commission Jan. 31, 2006, and presented to the board by Mark Nesbit, commission chair and principal manager of Xcel Energy, and Eddie Dunn, NDUS vice chancellor for strategic planning. The centers also must be reviewed and recommended by the North Dakota Economic Development Foundation Board and the state Emergency Commission before going to the Budget Section for final approval.

This is the second round of centers to be recommended for approval by the commission. The Budget Section provided final approval of the first four centers Dec. 15, 2005. The second group of commission and board-recommended centers and funding levels follows:

- The NDSU Center of Excellence for Agbiotechnology: $2 million
- The NDSU Center of Excellence on Surface Protection: $2 million
- The UND Research Foundation Center of Excellence in Life Sciences and Advanced Technologies: $3.5 million
- The UND Center of Excellence for UAV and Simulation Applications: $1 million
- The VCSU Institute for Customized Business Solutions: $1 million
- The WSC Petroleum Safety and Technology Center: $400,000

A total of $1.15 million remains in the centers of excellence funding allocated by the 2005 Legislative Assembly. The Centers of Excellence Commission passed a motion at the Jan. 31 meeting encouraging three colleges and universities to resubmit proposals. Those institutions are Dickinson State University, Minot State University and North Dakota State College of Science.

The commission has not established a timeline for considering proposals for the third round of funding.

P–16 Education Task Force Begins Planning for the Future of Education in North Dakota

A task force created jointly by the governing boards of the state’s leading education agencies met Jan. 11, 2006, in Bismarck. Called the P–16 Education Task Force, the group will examine relationships among state education agencies and institutions and collectively plan for the future of education in North Dakota. Among other proposed objectives, the task force may work to forge P–16 agreements to create seamless transitions to college and work, thus enabling students to function more effectively in a globally competitive economy. Special attention may be given to historically underprepared students.

The task force also may conduct a systematic review of “best practices” in other states to help make better-informed choices for North Dakota. The group will meet monthly with an initial report and recommendations completed no sooner than September 2006.
SBHE Addresses ConnectND Challenges

At the request of the SBHE, the ConnectND Oversight Committee provided a comprehensive project report and an overview of the current status of the project at the February 2006 State Board of Higher Education meeting. The report included campus survey responses outlining what is working, what is not working and campus priorities.

Citing the tireless efforts and uncommon dedication of hundreds of staff members, Pamela Balch, president of Mayville State University and chair of the NDUS Oversight Committee, said the NDUS has implemented a highly complex web-based administrative software system within a short period of time and with limited resources. Although much has been accomplished, these successes have been overshadowed by the business functions that aren’t properly functioning and the related struggles users face in performing day-to-day tasks.

Among the immediate priorities defined by the committee are improvements in the following areas:
- Grants and contracts reporting, especially effort reporting
- Improved reports and queries
- Security access
- Improved portal functionality
- Satisfactory academic progress for financial aid purposes
- Enhancing the understanding of the student finance/general ledger interface

Steps already underway to resolve ConnectND problems include the following:
- HECN staff members are spending more time on the campuses, working directly with their customers.
- The four student system functional user groups (FUGs) are being expanded to include representation from each campus, similar to finance and Human Resources Management System (HRMS) user groups.
- Efforts are being made to improve communication and cross-training between the technical and functional staff within ConnectND.
- The handling of help desk tickets is being reviewed and improved.

It was reported that additional resources beyond those currently available in the ConnectND budget will be needed to cover the additional costs. As a result, the SBHE allocated the remainder of its discretionary funding from the SBHE Initiative Fund (about $1.5 million) to the project after deciding to delay implementation of a systemwide international student recruitment initiative.

Representatives of Oracle, which acquired software vendor PeopleSoft in 2005, appeared before the SBHE and offered to help contribute to resolution of the problems. Oracle reported that details will be outlined in a plan they will submit to the NDUS by March 14, 2006.

North Dakota Selected for WICHE Initiative

North Dakota is one of three states selected in February 2006 to participate in a project sponsored by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and funded by the Ford Foundation.

Titled Escalating Engagement: State Policy to Protect Access to Higher Education, this initiative will examine the connection between higher education and the state’s workforce and economic needs. The North Dakota project will focus on more fully engaging the Roundtable on Higher Education in defining and aggressively pursuing the next level of performance for the University System. Details of the North Dakota project will be developed in cooperation with the roundtable.
SBHE International Student Recruitment Placed on Hold

A system-wide international student recruitment initiative approved at the November 2005 State Board of Higher Education meeting was rescinded by the board at its February 2006 meeting.

Dr. Robert Potts, chancellor of the North Dakota University System, recommended that the board rescind its motion to approve the program based on unanticipated additional costs related to implementation of ConnectND, the comprehensive financial, human and student resource management system. Potts said fixing the software system should become the highest short-term priority of the board and the University System.

While the cost of resolving problems with ConnectND is not yet known, delaying the international student recruitment program will make available up to $1.5 million for the 2005-06 biennium.

SBHE Approves Stage 1 Bismarck State BAS Degree

Bismarck State College’s Stage I proposal for an online bachelor of applied science degree in energy management was approved by the State Board of Higher Education at the Feb. 16, 2006, board meeting. BSC now will move forward with development of a Stage II or final proposal for the program, which will be considered by the SBHE at a later date. In presenting the proposal, BSC President Donna Thigpen cited the college’s niche in energy-related programs. If approved, BSC would be the first community college in the state to offer a bachelor’s level program.

Board Approves Policy Revision

One State Board of Higher Education policy manual revision was approved on introduction and first reading at the January 2006 board meeting. This policy was 805.3 – Application, Course, Program and Other Miscellaneous Fees.

Major Capital Project Requests Approved

Major capital projects approved at the January and February 2006 State Board of Higher Education meetings include the following:

January
• Authorization for UND to proceed with construction of a $3 million National Center for Hydrogen Technology facility financed by $2.5 million in Economic Development Centers of Excellence funding and $500,000 from the city of Grand Forks

February
• Authorization of BSC and the BSC Foundation to proceed with Phase II of the Career and Technology Institute including construction of a $14.2 million building funded by a combination of grants and donations, Economic Development Centers of Excellence funding and legislative appropriations
• Authorization of NDSU to proceed with fundraising for an $8 million Bison Sports Arena addition and renovation and authorization to proceed with construction after funding has been obtained
• Approval of a resolution to issue $40.5 million in UND housing and auxiliary facilities revenue bonds

Discussing a Bachelor of Applied Science Degree

Pictured are Dr. Wayne Boekes, BSC provost and vice president for academic and student affairs; Dr. Donna Thigpen; and Dr. Michel Hillman, NDUS vice chancellor for academic and student affairs.
Bismarck State College

BSC recently was notified that the Clinical Laboratory Technician/Medical Laboratory Technician Program received continuing accreditation from the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences. The continuing accreditation award is based on a review process that included a site visit in April 2005. The program is offered in cooperation with Medcenter One.

Record-breaking attendance was recorded at the 27th annual Energy Generation Conference in Bismarck Jan. 24 – 26. More than 1,400 energy industry employees from several states and 600 vendors gathered for professional development and networking opportunities. BSC’s Corporate & Continuing Education Division coordinates the conference, which was initiated by BSC and energy industry partners.

The Automotive Technology Program at the Missouri River Correctional Center received the 2005 Automotive Industry Planning Council Award for Excellence in December. This is the ninth time the program received the state-level award. The program is offered through BSC and the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

Dickinson State University

DSU reported its 10th consecutive year of record-breaking spring semester enrollment, consistent with the overall growth of the university. Up 2.7 percent compared to the previous spring semester, 2,312 students currently are enrolled. Two areas contributing significantly to enrollment growth are distance learning and international exchange. Twenty-seven Mongolian students arrived at DSU this semester, joining the six who enrolled in Fall 2005. The influx of Mongolian students is just one example of DSU’s dedication to increasing cultural diversity on campus. Currently, 179 international students from 24 countries are enrolled at DSU.

Lake Region State College

LRSC and Northwood Deaconess Health Center have been awarded an $84,775 Dakota Medical Foundation grant to support a proposed nursing distance learning program in Northwood. The grant will assist students with tuition and technology needs and assist the hospital and college with teacher and tutor salaries. The Dakota Nursing Program (LRSC, BSC, WSC and MiSU–B) hopes to begin delivering core nursing courses this fall, pending final approval by the State Board of Nursing.

Mayville State University

Three MaSU business administration students, Chris Reinhart, Rammie Olson and Nicole Schumacher, took fifth place at the Marketplace for Entrepreneurs business plan competition in Fargo Jan. 17. The team received $250 for their plan for “Great Plains Roasting,” a gourmet specialty coffee roasting company.

MaSU hosted the 24th annual Business Activities Day Jan. 26. This competitive event provides local high school students an opportunity to test their business and computer knowledge and skills. More than 200 students from eight area high schools participated. MaSU’s Business and Computer Information Systems Division sponsors the annual event.

MiSU senior Rachelle Veazey, Minot, was elected president of the Nursing Student Association of North Dakota during the organization’s February annual meeting. She succeeds MiSU senior Melissa Fettig, Anamoose, as president. Fettig also earned the state leadership award. Jennifer Wible, Surrey, and Jessica Frickie, Minot, were elected state directors.

A Minot delegation visited the People’s Republic of China Feb. 11 – 19 to pursue educational and business collaborations. The group included President Fuller; Stephanie Witwer, assistant vice president for enrollment management; Yueh-Ting Lee, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; Curt

Celebrating Successes, Page 7
Zimbelman, mayor of Minot; and Jerry Chavez, president of the Minot Area Development Corporation.

**MiSU-Bottineau**

Online enrollment at MiSU-B has increased each semester since the college began offering coursework via this delivery method. Spring 2006 registration for online courses will exceed 400 by the start of the second eight-week session. By Fall 2006, 20 MiSU-B programs will be online.

**North Dakota State College of Science**

The NDSCS volleyball team was named a National Junior College Athletic Association Fall Academic Team of the Year. The Wildcats earned a cumulative 3.21 GPA during Fall 2005.

The NDSCS viewbook earned a bronze Excellence in Writing Award from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) at its annual District VI conference in St. Louis, Mo., in January.

In February, Fargo-based Butler Machinery and Caterpillar Inc. of Peoria, Ill., renewed their support of the Caterpillar Dealer Service Technician Program at NDSCS with contributions of $25,000 from each corporation. The $50,000 will be used for scholarships, faculty development and other program needs.

**North Dakota State University**

NDSU was selected by the federal government to collaborate with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and HP on a $4.5 million research project on nanoscale computer technology. On Feb. 21, Sen. Byron Dorgan announced this collaboration to create “wallpaper computing display” that can be painted, poured or sprayed on surfaces.

Consultant-evaluators from the North Central Association’s Higher Learning Commission visited campus Feb. 13 – 15. President Chapman said the 10-member team was “very impressed with the enthusiasm of NDSU students, faculty and staff for the direction NDSU is headed.” A draft report is expected within 30 days, and a final determination on accreditation is anticipated in the fall.

NDSU received a $100,000 grant to enhance global education opportunities for NDSU students and students from the Ansal Institute of Technology in India. Scholarships up to $2,500 will be available to students from both schools to help fund overseas study. The schools are partners in a “twinning program,” where students complete three years of coursework in India and then travel to NDSU to finish their degrees.

**University of North Dakota**

UND joined 15 universities in signing the Indo-US Inter-University Collaborative Initiative in Higher Education and Research agreement with AMRITA University and the government of India’s Departments of Space and Science and Technology. In November, Tokai University dignitaries signed an agreement to send 120 students to UND for flight training.

UND’s research enterprise had an economic impact of almost $163 million in FY 2005. The research activity funded 1,584 jobs (1,219 in Grand Forks County, 65 elsewhere in North Dakota and 300 outside of the state) and had a $31.5 million impact in terms of taxes: $17.67 million in Grand Forks County, $2.64 million in North Dakota and $11.19 million in the north-central region.

UND recently launched the Journal of Native Aging and Health to publish scholarly articles that address aging, health and related issues for Native Americans. The inaugural issue highlights research on chronic diseases and functional limitations, nutrition-related health concerns for American Indian and Alaska Native elders and the need for dementia screening and assessment in middle-age and elderly Native Americans.

**Valley City State University**

In January, the Centers of Excellence Commission recommended allocation of $1 million for VCSU’s proposed Institute for Customized Business Solutions (ICBS). The ICBS is a public-private partnership that will co-develop new enterprise application consulting jobs. Funds will be used for staffing, building an IT training infrastructure, providing support for qualified trainees, customizing the curriculum and administrative system to meet industry needs, and providing an external project evaluation.

VCSU has received SBHE approval to rename the Division of Education, Psychology and Technology to the School of Education and Graduate Studies. VCSU requested permission to rename the division to reflect its broader mission stemming from addition of a new master of education program. Twenty-eight students were enrolled in the M.Ed. program as of the first day of Spring 2006, up from 19 at the end of Fall 2005.

Dr. Donald and Mrs. Marjorie Meredith of Mankato, Minn., have made a gift that will support the largest single scholarship in VCSU history, one that will provide $3,000 per year for four years to one new student each year. Their most recent gift of $185,000 fully endows the Meredith Scholars Program within the Division of Math and Science.

**Williston State College**

President McCann recently was selected to serve on a national practitioners’ panel of rural community college presidents. The panel is providing direction for formation of a National Institute of Rural Community Colleges (NIRCC). NIRCC was created to advance and expand the work of each of its founding partners.

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**Upcoming SBHE Meetings**

• April 6, 2006  MiSU
• June 15, 2006  WSC
Consent agenda items approved at the January and February 2006 State Board of Higher Education meetings include:

**Academic Consent Agenda**

**January**
- **DSU:** Approve a B.S. in human resource management
- **NDSCS:** Approve an A.A.S. in nanoscience technology
- **NDSU:** Approve a B.S. and a B.A. in management communication
- **NDSU:** Approve a B.S. and a B.A. in journalism, broadcasting and mass communications technologies
- **NDSU:** Approve a B.S. and a B.A. in health communication
- **UND:** Approve a Ph.D. in atmospheric sciences
- **VCSU:** Terminate the secondary reading minor, instructional technology major/minor and corporate training minor

**February**
- **UND:** Approve a B.S. and a B.A. in management communication
- **NDSU:** Approve a B.S. and a B.A. in health communication
- **NDSU:** Approve a B.S. and a B.A. in public relations and advertising
- **NDSU:** Approve a B.S. and a B.A. in agricultural communication
- **UND:** Approve a Ph.D. in atmospheric sciences

**Financial and Facility Consent Agenda**

**January**
- Authorization of **UND** to proceed with renovation of a classroom within the Law School building at an estimated cost of $200,000

**February**
- Approval of a resolution authorizing the issuance of **DSU** Student Union improvement revenue refunding bonds not to exceed $800,000
- Authorization of **NDSCS** to proceed with purchase and installation of a chiller at Nordgaard Hall at an estimated cost of $300,000
- Authorization of **NDSU** to proceed with installation of a sprinkler system in the Thompson Hall residence high rise at an estimated cost of $240,000
- Authorization of **NDSU** to proceed with Stockbridge Hall and University Village-B Court roof replacement projects at an estimated cost of $204,000
- Authorization of **NDSU** to proceed with construction of a storage shed at the Williston Research Extension Center at an estimated cost of $143,775
- Authorization of **NDSU** to proceed with construction of an equipment storage shed at the Williston Research Extension Center-Nesson Valley Site at an estimated cost of $140,000
- Authorization of **UND** to proceed with replacement of a portion of the existing roof on Chester Fritz Auditorium at an estimated cost of $200,000
- Authorization of **UND** to proceed with modifications to a hangar at Grand Forks Air Force Base for accommodation of a NASA DC-8 research aircraft at an estimated cost of $250,000

**Personnel Consent Agenda**

**February**
- Appoint Doyle Lentz and Doyle Johannes to the State Board of Agricultural Research and Education