

## North Dakota State Board of Higher Education June 17, 2025, Research and Governance Committee Meeting Minutes

The State Board of Higher Education Research and Governance Committee met on June 17, 2025, at 3:00 pm. CT, via Teams.

### SBHE Research and Governance Committee members

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Casey Ryan, Co-Chair | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Max Eriksrud                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ms. Danita Bye, Co-Chair            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Lisa Montplaisir, Faculty Advisor |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. DJ Campbell          |   |

Other SBHE Members: Mr. Curtis Biller

### Institution Presidents/Representatives

**BSC** Interim President Dan Leingang, **DCB** Dean Carmen Simone, **LRSC** President Doug Darling, Dr. Brian Huschle, **NDSU** Dr. Colleen Fitzgerald, Dr. Kristen Fellows, **UND** President Andrew Armacost, Dr. Eric Link, Dr. Scott Snyder, Dr. Robert Newman, Dr. Randi Tanglen, Dr. Ryan Adams, Ms. Heather Wages, **VCSU** President LaFave, Dr. David DeMuth, **WSC** President Bernell Hirning.

### System Office/CTS/Guests

**NDUS** Interim Chancellor Sanford, VC. Lisa Johnson, VC. Jerry Rostad, VC. David Krebsbach, Dr. Jen Weber, Mr. Mark Gorenflo, Mr. Chris Pieske, Ms. Jane Grinde, Ms. Jamie Wilke, Mr. Corey Quirk, Dr. Billie Jo Lorius, Ms. Katie Fitzsimmons, Ms. Mindy Sturn, Mr. Eric Jensen, Ms. Kristie Hetzler, Ms. Caitlin Magilke, Ms. Bethany Kadrmias, **AG** Ms. Meredith Larson.

Co-chair Ryan called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. CT.

1. Agenda  
And,
2. [May 20, 2025](#), Meeting Minutes  
Campbell moved, Eriksrud seconded, to approve the agenda and May 20, 2025, meeting minutes, as presented.

Campbell, Eriksrud, and Ryan voted yes. Motion passed 3 – 0.

### **Research Agenda**

3. Interim Chancellor Sanford's Vision on Research  
Interim Chancellor Sanford shared his vision for research, emphasizing the importance of maximizing research efforts and leveraging relationships with Congress and state legislators to support research initiatives. He shared his recent visits to NDSU and UND research facilities, highlighting the incredible work being done in areas like polymer and coating labs and satellite materials testing.

Dr. Snyder noted, given the ongoing challenges in the federal funding landscape, it will be important to continue strategic conversations around how North Dakota's research institutions can adapt and thrive. To that end, there is interest in having a sidebar discussion with members of the committee to share updates on our engagement with the congressional delegation and to gather input on how to strengthen those efforts. Sanford added that, additionally, as we look ahead to the next legislative session, there is a shared interest in exploring how to enhance support for research across the state. This includes identifying opportunities to better communicate the relevance of higher education research to both the legislature and private sector, particularly in emerging areas such as UAS, precision agriculture, and national security.

During the discussion, Member Ryan raised the idea of setting a long-term research funding target for the state. Neighboring states like Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota have surpassed or approached \$1 billion in annual research funding, while North Dakota remains closer to the levels of South Dakota and Montana. The suggestion was made that North Dakota could aspire to reach \$1 billion in research funding over the next 5–10 years, leveraging its strengths in:

- Natural resources
- Defense and aerospace
- Strategic federal relationships
- Emerging technologies

Sanford supported the idea of setting a bold target, noting that a clear goal can help rally support from stakeholders across government, academia, and industry. He emphasized the importance of state-level investment, private sector engagement, and strong communication with the Governor's office and legislature.

#### 4. Highlights of Research initiatives during the current biennium

Dr. Fitzgerald highlighted recent research initiatives, including enhanced collaboration between UND and NDSU, the creation of an informal NDUS research working group, and the prioritization of state investment into research funding. She also noted the support for external collaborations with neighboring states, leading to the formation of an innovation alliance group with 13 institutions across five states.

Dr. Snyder and Dr. Adams provided an update on UND's National Security Initiatives and noted the positive impact because of the state's investment. He highlighted the significant support totaling \$39 million that the North Dakota Legislature has provided to UND in support of its national security initiatives. This investment has enabled UND to build out essential infrastructure.

The committee expressed their disappointment that the Economic Diversification Research Fund did not receive support or appropriations in the last legislative session. The committee confirmed their dedication and commitment in maintaining the state's investment in research.

Dr. DeMuth highlighted the importance of maintaining undergraduate research programs and opportunities for the students and the state. He provided examples of how research impacts and/or promotes undergraduate students throughout the NDUS institutions.

5. Closing Comments by Co-chair Ryan.

Member Ryan reflected on the origins of the NDUS Research Committee, which was established in collaboration with Chancellor Hagerott to elevate the role of research in the state's higher education system. He encouraged members to revisit Policy 302.7, which outlines the structure and purpose of the committee, and acknowledged the long-standing contributions of Dr. David DeMuth since the committee's inception.

### **Governance Agenda**

6. Post-tenure Review [Update](#)

VC Johnson and Member Montplaisir discussed confusion over the timeline for post-tenure review implementation (three-year vs. five-year cycles). Randi Tanglen (UND) requested clear guidance for campus planning. Chancellor Sanford and Campbell emphasized the need to be responsive to legislative expectations to protect tenure. Decision deferred to the next board meeting for finalization.

7. [SBHE Board Self-assessment](#)

a. [Self-assessment Data](#)

Mr. Pieske reported on the board self-evaluation survey. Member Ryan noted a trend of deteriorating trust among board members and recommended for the board to address trust issues and review the data at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:07 p.m. CT.

Approved September 16, 2025.