

North Dakota State Board of Higher Education Retreat

August 14, 2025, Retreat Minutes

The State Board of Higher Education met on August 14, 2025, at 8:30 a.m. CT., at Bismarck State College, Advanced Technology Building, Room 301, 1220 Schafer Street, Bismarck ND, 58501.

Roll Call

SBHE Members

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Kevin Black, Chair | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. DJ Campbell, Vice Chair |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Tim Mihalick | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ms. Danita Bye |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Levi Bachmeier | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Curtis Biller |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Max Eriksrud (via Teams) | <input type="checkbox"/> Mr. Pat Sogard |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Anna Kinney, Staff Advisor | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Lisa Montplaisir, Faculty Advisor |

Institutions

BSC Interim President Leingang, Ms. Rebecca Collins, Ms. Alicia Uhde, **DCB** Dean Gorder, **DSU** President Molander, **LRSC** President Simone, **MaSU** President Van Horn, **MISU** President Shirley, Dr. Geller, Ms. Krista Lambrecht, **NDSCS** President Flanigan, Mr. Keith Johnson, Ms. Melissa Johnson, **NDSU** President Cook, Dr. David Bertolini, Mr. Jace Beehler, **UND** President Armacost, Dr. Eric Link, Ms. Karla Mongeon-Stewart, **VCSU** President LaFave, Mr. Larry Brooks, Ms. Erica Buchholz, **WSC** President Hirling.

System Office/Guests

NDUS Interim Chancellor Sanford, VC Lisa Johnson, VC David Krebsbach, VC Meredith Larson, Mr. Chris Pieske, Dr. Billie Jo Lorus, Dr. Jen Weber, Ms. Jamie Wilke, Ms. Claire Gunwall, Ms. Dina Cashman, Mr. Eric Jensen, Ms. Bethany Kadmas, **CTS** Mr. Corey Quirk, **Sagency** Mike Meagher, Jon McTaggart.

State Board of Higher Education Retreat. No action taken.

Morning Session: Sharpening Strategic Focus

Facilitators Mike Meagher and John McTaggart led the board through exercises and discussion in order to assist the board to clarify who we are becoming as a system, identify what matters most, define how success will be measured, and align on how we will manage system-level tensions — so the SBHE can govern with clarity and confidence.

The facilitators provided a framework for the day, which included:

- Clarifying the system's identity.
- Aligning on the Board's priorities.
- Defining what success looks like.
- Establishing a shared philosophy for managing key tensions.
- Providing guidance and decision-making on urgent issues.

Outcomes and Expectations

The meeting's outcomes and expectations were outlined, focusing on the future of the NDUS over the next three years.

Key points included:

- **Becoming a Pre-eminent System:** The system aims to be a national leader.
- **Unified System:** There's a need to shift from operating as 11 separate institutions to a unified system.
- **Student Focus:** The discussion should focus on students and their needs rather than just operations.
- **Workforce and K-12:** The group recognized the need to address the booming trades and "weak" middle management, as well as the workforce's future and the pipeline of K-12 students.
- **Tough Issues:** The need for clarity and direction on tough issues was emphasized.
- **External Threats:** The group acknowledged the importance of addressing external threats, such as those from neighboring states and federal policy.

The participants also agreed on how they would show up, including an open mind, respect, transparency, and a willingness to challenge the status quo.

Afternoon Session: Applying the Lens

The afternoon session applied the strategic clarity from the morning to urgent system issues, with the goal of providing directional guidance and assigning follow-up to relevant committees.

Specific topics discussed were:

1. **Institutional Guidance for Strategic Positioning**
 - a. The discussion focused on adapting institutional missions, developing new programs, and regional collaboration.
 - b. The conversation highlighted the need for a strategic playbook to inform decisions, not just reactive conversations.
2. **Shared Services Development / Resource Sharing**
 - a. The group acknowledged that budgets are not expected to grow and that institutions must "do more with less."
3. **Tenure: Post-Tenure Review & 2-Year Institution Approach**
 - a. This discussion focused on the future of tenure, especially at two-year institutions.
4. **90-Credit / 3-Year Bachelor's Degrees**
 - a. The conversation centered on the potential to reduce the required credits for a bachelor's degree from 120 to 90.
5. **Expansion of Dual Credit Offerings**
 - a. The discussion highlighted dual credit as a powerful tool for recruiting and retaining North Dakota high school students.

Closing Reflections

The retreat concluded with remarks from the Chancellor and the Board Chair, who reflected on the day's discussions and the path forward.

The retreat concluded at 3:30 p.m. CT.

Approved September 23, 2025.