

North Dakota State Board of Higher Education
Research and Governance Committee Meeting Minutes
October 21, 2025

The State Board of Higher Education Research and Governance Committee met via Teams on October 21, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. CT.

SBHE Research and Governance Committee members

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

Institution Presidents/Representatives

DCB, Interim Dean Gorder, **LRSC**, President Simone, **MaSU**, Dr. Brian Huschle, **NDSU**, Dr. Heidi Grunwald, Mr. Marc Wallman, Ms. Valrey Kettner, Mr. Jace Beehler, **UND**, Dr. Scott Snyder, Mr. Robert Newman, **VCSU**, Mr. David DeMuth, **WSC**, President Hirning.

System Office/CTS/Guests

NDUS, Commissioner Sanford, Ms. Claire Gunwall, Ms. Jamie Wilke, Ms. Christina Pieske, Mr. Chris Pieske, Ms. Jane Grinde, Ms. Mindy Sturn, DC Lisa Johnson, DC Meredith Larson, DC David Krebsbach, Dr. Billie Jo Lorus, Mr. Dustin Walcker, Dr. Jennifer Weber, **CTS**, Mr. Brad Miller.

Call to Order meeting started at 3:00 p.m., CT

1. Agenda
Bye asked that agenda items #5 and #6 will be moved to next month's meeting.

Campbell moved, Eriksrud seconded, to approve the agenda, with adjustments.
Motion passed 3-0.

2. September 16, 2025 [Meeting Minutes](#)
Campbell moved, Eriksrud seconded, to approve the September 16, 2025, meeting minutes, as presented. Approved by consensus.

Research Discussion/Updates/Reports

3. Mountain Plains Innovation Alliance Update
Dr. Snyder explained that the alliance was reconvened in August with in-person and virtual meetings, during which member institutions surveyed their research strengths and identified three main collaborative focus areas: agricultural technology, natural resources (including rare earth minerals), and rural health and healthcare, with artificial intelligence as a cross-cutting theme.

The group plans to meet again in November at the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities annual meeting to refine their focus areas and prepare for a potential

joint congressional request for federal research support, while also exploring existing agency funding streams.

4. Federal Landscape Update

Dr. Grunwald reported that NDSU lost 14 grants totaling \$1.6 million, primarily from agencies such as CDC, USDA, NSF, and EPA, with \$1.3 million previously allocated for vaccine education and related activities; some state funds partially offset CDC losses.

NDSU experienced a decrease of about 100 awards and \$50 million in funding from FY2024 to FY2025, attributed to agency inaction from January through spring and ongoing staff reductions, with similar trends reported by Scott Snyder for UND.

Dr. Grunwald described unexpected tariff bills on imported scientific equipment and ongoing efforts by the purchasing department and export control staff to determine eligibility for tariff waivers and manage future risks.

There is ongoing uncertainty regarding indirect cost reimbursement, with the possibility of a 15% cap being implemented through OMB revisions to uniform guidance.

Bye asked Dr. Snyder what additional comments or perspectives he had to share. He concurred with Dr. Grunwald, stating that UND report would be similar, with different numbers but similar percentages. He reported that UND lost 8 awards for about \$3,000,000.00.

5. UND Research Priorities Update

Moved to next month.

6. NDSU Research Priorities Update

Moved to next month.

7. Economic Diversification Research Fund (EDRF) FY2024-2025 [Report](#)

DC Johnson explained that the EDRF report includes categorized projects and budgets, with approximately \$0.5 million awarded to predominantly undergraduate institutions, and noted that the report will be reviewed by SBHE and shared with the interim legislative committee.

Governance Discussion/Updates/Report

8. SBHE Retreat Priority Items

a. Tenure

Dr. Montplaisir reported that a draft tenure policy, based on HLC criteria, is under review by all institutions, with discussions focusing on the distinction between qualifications for teaching and for tenure-track appointments, and the recognition of special appointments.

b. Institutional Missions

DC Johnson led a detailed discussion on institutional missions and the definitions of baccalaureate degrees (BA, BS, BAS), including current policies, national comparisons, and considerations for reduced-credit degrees with input given by members Eriksrud, Bye and Campbell.

9. **Agency Project/System Alignment Project Update**
DC Larson reported that the project, now titled the System Alignment Project, involves listening sessions in key cities, 50 stakeholder interviews, and surveys, with the goal of completing research and analysis before SBHE's strategic planning retreat in April.

10. **Presidential Evaluations Process Review Update**
DC Larson and Ms. Grinde are reviewing the presidential evaluation process, seeking feedback from presidents and the SBHE to determine the value and utility of current practices, with the aim of streamlining the process and possibly separating institutional and personnel evaluations.

11. **BSC Presidential Search Process Update**
Ms. Grinde explained that the search process includes listening sessions, finalizing the search committee according to policy (with representation from faculty, staff, students, and the community), and targeting finalist interviews for the March 2026 board meeting.

12. **IT Security Briefing**
Mr. Miller informed the committee that the annual Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act compliance briefing, required by law, will be provided in written form and discussed at the next meeting.

Adjourn

Committee Co-Chair Campbell adjourned the meeting at 4:12 p.m. CT.