

North Dakota State Board of Higher Education

January 29, 2026, Meeting Minutes

The State Board of Higher Education met on January 29, 2026, at 8:30 a.m., CT., at Williston State College.

Roll Call

SBHE Members

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

Institutions

BSC: Interim President Leingang, **DCB:** Acting Dean Gorder, **DSU:** President Molander, **LRSC:** President Simone, **MaSU:** President Van Horn, **MiSU:** President Shirley, **NDSCS:** President Flanigan, **NDSU:** Mr. Jace Beehler, Dr. Shari Veil, Ms. Stephanie Wawers, Ms. Karin Hegstad, **UND:** President Armacost, Dr. Eric Link, **VCSU:** Interim President Burgad, **WSC:** Dr. Zahi Atallah, Ms. Jenae Hunter, Ms. Brittany Mayo.

System Office/Guests

NDUS: Commissioner Sanford, Mr. Eric Jensen, Mr. Rick Tonder, Ms. Bethany Kadrmas, Ms. Jamie Wilke, Dr. Billie Jo Lorius, Ms. Sharon Schwartzbauer, Ms. Jane Grinde, Ms. Claire Gunwall, Mr. Dustin Walcker, Ms. Brenda Zastoupil, DC David Krebsbach, DC Meredith Larson, DC Lisa Johnson, Dr. Jennifer Weber, Ms. Christina Pieske, Mr. Chris Pieske, **CTS:** Mr. Corey Quirk, **Assistant Attorney General:** Mr. Shaun McNamara.

Call to Order

1. # Agenda
Mihalick moved, Biller seconded to approve the agenda as presented.
Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

System Spotlight Campaign

1. Spotlight on DSU/WSC Degree Bridge Program - Dr. Lorius and Mr. Jensen
2. Spotlight on Williston State College – Dr. Zahi Atallah

Board Consent (3 – 19)

3. December 4, 2025 [Meeting Minutes](#)
4. December 30, 2025 [Meeting Minutes](#)

SBHE Academic and Student Affairs Committee

5. Tenure
 - a. [North Dakota State University](#)
6. [NDUS Institutional Accreditation Notification](#)

SBHE Budget and Finance Committee

7. UND - [Expand Scope and Spending Authorization for HPCII](#)
8. UND - [Name NCoBPA Real Estate Department & Endowed Chair](#)
9. UND - [Name NCoBPA Endowed Professorship](#)
10. MiSU - [Student Center Renovation](#)
11. NDSU - [Demolition](#)
12. NDSU - [University Village Renovation](#)

SBHA Policy

1st read

13. Policy 331 [Approval of College and University Constitutions by the Board](#)
14. Policy 340.2 [Nonprofit Affiliates](#)
15. Policy 601.2 [Acting Chief Executive Officer](#)
16. Policy 703.3 [Retirement](#)

2nd read

17. Policy 503.1 [Student Free Speech and Expression](#)
18. Policy 503.2 [Student Data Privacy and Security Bill of Rights](#)
19. Policy 514 [Due Process Requirements for Student Conduct That May Result in Suspension or Expulsion](#)

Mihalick moved, Campbell seconded to approve the consent agenda as presented.
Motion passed, 8-0.

Board Business

SBHE Policy

1st read

20. [Policy 409 Degrees Offered and Policy 409.1 Reduced-Credit Bachelor's Degree Programs](#)

DC Johnson outlined that Policy 409 and 409.1 permit institutions to pilot reduced credit bachelor's degrees, specifically Bachelor of Applied Science programs, with clear limitations such as excluding programs leading to licensure and requiring alignment with workforce needs and employer support.

Billier moved to approve, Eriksrud seconded to approve the 1st read and waive the 2nd read of Policy 409 and Policy 409.1.

Motion passed, 8-0.

21. [Wahpeton/NDSCS Land Lease Agreement General Liability Endorsement and Land Lease Survey](#)

- a. [Rec Center Location](#)

President Flanigan discussed the proposed 99-year land lease agreement between NDSCS and the City of Wahpeton for a new recreation center. Commissioner Sanford, DC Larson and members of the board raised concerns about the lack of economic benefit and the need for further review by the BFC.

Mihalick moved, Sogard seconded to refer the lease agreement item back to BFC.

Motion passed, 8-0.

22. [DSU Rodeo Arena Naming](#)

President Molander presented a proposal to name the DSU Rodeo Arena after donor Dale Little Soldier.
Eriksrud moved, Campbell seconded to approve the motion to name the DSU Rodeo Arena after donor Dale Little Soldier.
Motion passed, 8-0.

Representative Reports /Updates/Discussions

23. Staff Senate

Ms. Kinney reported on efforts to review and update bylaws, develop a staff award system, and address issues related to tuition waivers, particularly the disparity between in-person and online course waivers.

24. CCF

Dr. Montplaisir described work to develop a unified definition of tenure eligibility, focusing on degree requirements and program accreditation standards, and discussed ongoing concerns about multi-year contracts and professional development opportunities.

25. NDSA

Mr. Eriksrud reported on recent NDSA resolutions, including opposition to federal research funding cuts, advocacy for a fall break, and calls for increased campus security, with plans to engage system office and legislators.

SBHE Committee Reports/Updates/Discussions

26. SBHE Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Biller summarized recent committee activities, including new program approvals, degree terminations, a presentation on AI in education, and updates on the EPSCoR research initiative and Walden University teach-out.

27. SBHE Budget and Finance Committee

Mihalick reported on recent BFC meetings, covering dual credit tuition, resource sharing, funding formula recommendations, and acceptance of the state auditor's report.

28. SBHE Audit Committee

Mihalick reported that Audit Committee held an Executive Session to consider the State Auditor's Report and reviewed ongoing institutional reconciliation efforts.

29. SBHE Research and Governance Committee - Ms. Danita Bye/Mr. DJ Campbell

Bye reported that the committee received updates on federal research funding and HERD data, highlighting UND and NDSU's strong national rankings and the overall strength of North Dakota's research programs. Mr. Campbell yielded his time to report on the Governance Committee, as all the items are present on the SBHE agenda and have been discussed.

Chair Report

30. Updates from Chair Black

Black outlined the importance of credentialing students, measuring workforce impact, and including research factors in the formula, while seeking board consensus on foundational principles before finalizing any model.

Commissioner Report

31. [Governor's Office/OMB 2027-29 Budget Planning Session](#)

DC Krebsbach reported that the Governor's office is scheduling a meeting with the Commissioner, DC Krebsbach and Jamie Wilke to visit about possible reduced revenue

resources and there may be a need for realignment of resources going forward. This meeting is to take place on February 2, 2026.

32. [Tuition Waiver Report](#)

Ms. Zastoupil presented the annual tuition waiver report, detailing waiver distribution by residency and purpose, with board members and presidents discussing the strategic use of waivers, transparency, and potential policy considerations.

33. ERP Legislative Update

Mr. Quirk described the ongoing legislative study of ERP systems for the state and higher education, including vendor demos, cost analysis, and the importance of the student information system in any future solution.

34. [CTS Annual Report](#)

Mr. Quirk reported on the annual accomplishments of CTS.

35. [CTS Strategic Plan 2026-2028](#)

Mr. Quirk described the development of a new strategic plan, emphasizing collaboration, measurable outcomes, and alignment with board goals.

36. BSC Presidential Search Process Update

Mihalick provided an update on the BSC presidential search process.

37. VCSU Presidential Search Process Update

Campbell updated the board on the ongoing presidential search process for VCSU.

38. NDSU Presidential Search Process Update

Black gave an update on the NDSU presidential search process.

39. DSU Update

DC Larson updated the board on DSU, stating that the investigation covers actions of the former CFO, accounting practices, and capital project management, with CLA conducting the review and significant support provided by financial teams from NDSU, UND, and the system office.

40. Updates from Commissioner Sanford

Commissioner Sanford yielded his time, as the topics that he is working on have already been addressed throughout the meeting.

41. Shared Services

Campbell stated that the shared services project is developing a framework for board review in February.

42. System Alignment Project

DC Larson updated the board on the progress of the system alignment project, noting ongoing data collection, interviews, and that a preliminary report will be provided at the April SBHE Retreat.

43. UND Land Sale Authorization

Ms. Stewart provided an update on the pending land sale between UND and the North Dakota Department of Transportation for the 42nd Street underpass, with negotiations complete and board approval anticipated in February.

44. Higher Education System Proposal

Mr. Biller discussed a proposed restructuring of the NDUS.

Other

45. Public Comments

Dr. Atallah had a comment about the spectrum of the diverse types of attendance (from in person to online) that exist. He requested that legislators be reminded of this spectrum.

President Shirley provided an update on the ongoing search for a campus Dean at DCB, outlining the timeline and process for finalist interviews and selection.

Adjourn

Chair Black adjourned the meeting at 12:21 p.m., CT.