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North Dakota State Board of Higher Education

March 26, 2026, Meeting Minutes

The State Board of Higher Education met on March 26, 2026, at 8:30 a.m., CT., via Teams.

Roll Call

SBHE Members

☒ Mr. Kevin Black, Chair
☒ Mr. DJ Campbell, Vice Chair (left at 11:18 a.m.)
☒ Mr. Max Eriksrud
☒ Mr. Curtis Biller
☒ Ms. Michelle Kommer
☒ Mr. Tim Mihalick
☒ Mr. Pat Sogard
☒ Ms. Danita Bye
☒ Dr. Lisa Montplaisir, Faculty Advisor
☒ Ms. Anna Kinney, Staff Advisor

Institutions

BSC: Interim President Leingang**, DCB:** Dean Gorder**, DSU:** President Molander, **LRSC:** President Simone, **MaSU:** President Van Horn, Ms. Amber Hill, **MiSU:** President Shirley, Dr. Laurie Geller, **DSCS:** President Flanigan**, NDSU:** Interim President Berg, Dr. Shari Veil, Dr. Gregory Lardy, **UND:** President Armacost**, VCSU:** Interim President Burgad, **WSC:** President Hirning, Ms. Deborah Halvorson.

System Office/Guests

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

Call to Order

1. **#** Agenda
   Sogard moved, Campbell seconded to approve the agenda, as presented.
   Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

System Spotlight Campaign

2. Spotlight on North Dakota Student Association
   Mr. Jensen introduced a video presentation that discussed the impact, structure, and recent activities of the North Dakota Student Association, highlighting its advocacy, leadership development, and collaboration with the State Board of Higher Education and the legislature.

Campus Report Out

3. Spotlight on Lake Region State College

President Simone presented a comprehensive history and current overview of Lake Region State College, detailing its mission, leadership transitions, enrollment data, academic and workforce programs, community partnerships, and future infrastructure goals.

 # Board Consent (4 - 21)

Biller moved, Mihalick seconded to approve Board Consent, items 4-21.
Motion passed, 8-0.

4. February 26, 2026 Meeting Minutes

SBHE Budget and Finance Committee

5. WSC Healthcare Building Naming Rights
6. UND - Name NCoBPA Endowed Professorship
7. UND - Name SMHS Endowed Professorship
8. UND - Fox Memorial Bridge Project
9. Annual Tuition, Housing, Food & Fee Report
10. 2025 Fall Affordability Report

SBHE Audit Committee

11. Annual NDUS Executive Survey
12. Annual Compliance Office Executive Survey

SBHE Research and Governance Committee

13. Enterprise Service Management Report

SBHE Policy
1st Read, Waive 2nd Read

14. Policy 404.1 Distance Education Program Approval
15. Policy 420 Accreditation
16. Policy 606.1 Classification - Higher Education Employees
17. Policy 608.2 NDUS Employees - Non-renewal and Dismissals
18. Policy 608.3 Professional Staff Compensation
19. Policy 609 Communication Proficiency
20. Policy 611.1 Employee Responsibility and Activities: Medical Service Plan - UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences
21. Policy 616 Career and Technical Program Instructor Certification Standards

 # Board Business

22. Nominations to State Board of Agricultural Research and Education (SBARE)
    Dr. Gregory Lardy presented four nominations to the State Board of Agricultural Research and Education (SBARE).
    Mihalick moved, Eriksrud seconded to approve the four nominations to the SBARE.
    Motion passed, 8-0.
    a. Mr. John Nordgaard
    b. Mr. Brian McDonald
    c. Ms. Pam Gulleson
    d. Ms. Christie Jaeger

23. Tenure Consideration for President Carmen Simone

DC Larson explained that board policy allows the SBHE to award tenure to a President if they have previously had tenure in a different jurisdiction or their previous institution. DC Larson presented President Simone's qualifications to the board, asking that the board award President Simone tenure.
Mihalick moved, Kommer seconded to award tenure to President Simone.
The motion passed, 8-0.

24. Funding Formula
Black introduced the topic of the Funding Formula and, along with Commissioner Sanford, and board members, engaged in an in-depth discussion on the proposed changes to the higher education funding formula, covering recent legislative committee meetings, the need for board input on key principles, and the process for developing a board resolution, ultimately resulting in no consensus and referral to BFC.
Kommer moved, Mihalick seconded to send the Funding Formula Resolution to BFC, then to the full board. After some discussion, Kommer amended her motion to include concentration on the four objectives discussed, send it to BFC, then have BFC present a resolution for the full board. Mihalick seconded this amended motion.
Motion failed due to lack of majority. Vote was split, 4-4, with Biller, Campbell, Eriksrud and Black voting no and Bye, Kommer, Mihalick, and Sogard voting yes.

Biller moved to amend the Funding Formula Resolution to include a concentration on the four objectives.
Motion died due to lack of a second.

Campbell moved, Biller seconded to approve the Funding Formula Resolution, as written.
Motion failed due to lack of majority, 4-4, with Biller, Campbell, Sogard, and Black voting yes, and Bye, Eriksrud, Kommer and Mihalick voting no.

25. Strategic Planning
DC Larson informed board members of the expiration of the board's strategic plan and the proposal to engage Sagency for phase two of the strategic planning process.
Kommer moved, Campbell seconded to approve the contract to ensure timely alignment with legislative and system needs.
Motion passed, 6-2, with Campbell, Eriksrud, Kommer, Mihalick, Sogard and Black voting yes. Biller and Bye voted no.

 # SBHE Policies

1st Read, Waive 2nd Read

26. Policy 421 [Academic Program Requests]
DC Johnson introduced amendments to Policy 421 to establish a process for approving reduced credit bachelor's degrees, including additional requirements for board and accreditor review.
Biller moved, Bye seconded to approve the amendments to Policy 421, as presented.
Motion passed, 8-0.

27. Policy 502 [Enrollment Integrity and Identity Compromise]
DC Johnson and Mr. Pieske presented Policy 502, elevating procedures on student fraud to a board-level policy, requiring institutions to tag student accounts and hold records in cases of suspected or confirmed fraud.

Bye moved, Sogard seconded to approve Policy 502, as presented.
Motion passed, 8-0.

28. Policy 705.1 Executive Compensation
    Mr. Pieske summarized changes to Policy 705.1, including the development of salary matrices by the Research Governance Committee and the provision of housing allowances for presidents at institutions without provided housing.
    Mihalick moved, Bye seconded to approve the amendments to Policy 705.1, as presented.
    Motion passed, 8-0.

Representative Reports /Updates/Discussions

29. Staff Senate
    Ms. Kinney informed the board of nominations for the Staff Excellence Award. She did not have an update on tuition waiver conversations by staff but hopes to have something to report by next meeting.

30. CCF
    Dr. Montplaisir reported on some of the topics discussed at the last CCF meeting, including the tenure policy.

31. NDSA
    Eriksrud reported that there was discussion at the last NDSA meeting regarding a housing taskforce that was created. He also stated that NDSA is part of USSA and that discussions have been ongoing regarding NDSA's future with USSA.
    a. September, October, November 2025
    b. December 2025
    c. January, February 2026

SBHE Committee Reports/Updates/Discussions

32. SBHE Academic and Student Affairs Committee
    Biller gave an update on the ASAC meeting that happened earlier in the month, noting low enrollment as a topic discussed.

33. SBHE Budget and Finance Committee
    Mihalick reported on the BFC meeting that happened on March 17th. The 2025 Fall Affordability report was discussed during that meeting and Mihalick encouraged others to review it.

34. SBHE Audit Committee
    Mihalick also reported that during the Audit Committee meeting, Mr. Cory Wigdahl was introduced as the new Chief Audit Executive.

35. SBHE Research and Governance Committee
    DC Larson gave her time to Chair Black for his report.

Chair Report

36. Updates from Chair Black

Black revisited the Funding Formula and the importance of the Board to take a position on the direction that the Funding Formula is heading.

Commissioner Report

37. Low Enrollment Programs: DRAFT
    DC Johnson presented raw data on low enrollment programs.

38. Congratulations to Dean Gorder and the U.S. Paralympic Sled Team
    DC Meredith Larson gave congratulations to Dean Gorder for his work with the U.S. Paralympic Sled Team, who won gold.

39. Important Upcoming Board Meetings
    DC Meredith Larson highlighted some of the important Board meetings that are coming up soon.

Other

40. Public Comments
    Biller questioned whether the BSC search committee will be holding a meeting similar to the one that NDSU will have to get input from the search committee. Mihalick, who chairs the search committee, said no. Sogard wondered how it is handled when the board gets letters from the public. DC Larson stated that the Commissioner fields those letters and refers them to the board.

Adjourn

Chair Black adjourned the meeting at 11:50 a.m., CT.