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North Dakota State Board of Higher Education

Academic and Student Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes
September 15, 2026

The State Board of Higher Education Academic and Student Affairs Committee met on September 15, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. CT., via Teams.

SBHE Academic and Student Affairs Committee members

- ☐ Mr. Curtis Biller, Chair
- ☒ Mr. Kevin Black
- ☒ Dr. Josh Deere
- ☒ Mr. Kelby Azure
- ☐ Mr. Tim Mihalick
- ☒ Dr. Crystal Alberts, Faculty Advisor

Institution Presidents/Representatives

BSC: Ms. Alicia Uhde, Dr. Kaylyn Bondy**, DCB:** Dean Gorder, Dr. Kayla O'Toole, **DSU:** President Molander, Dr. Holly Gruhlke**, LRSC:** President Simone, Mr. Casey Zehrer, **MaSU:** Dr. Brian Huschle, Ms. Rhonda Nelson, **MiSU:** Dr. Daniel Ringrose, Mr. Kevin Harmon, **NDSCS:** Mr. Will Fanning, Ms. Melissa Johnson, **NDSU:** Mr. Jeffrey Boyer, Dr. Laura Oster-Aaland**, UND:** Dr. Eric Link, Dr. Art Malloy**, VCSU:** Interim President Burgad, Mr. Thomas Klapp, Mr. Larry Brooks, Dr. Brittany Bell**, WSC:** President Hirning, Dr. Zahi Atallah.

System Office/CTS/Guests

NDUS: Commissioner Sanford, Ms. Bethany Kadrmas, Ms. Christina Pieske, Dr. Billie Jo Lorius, Ms. Sharon Schwartzbauer, Mr. Chris Pieske, Mr. Eric Jensen, Mr. Cory Wigdahl, Mr. Dustin Walcker, Ms. Edynn Glatt, DC Lisa Johnson, Ms. Katie Fitzsimmons, Dr. Jennifer Weber, **CTS**: DC Corey Quirk, **State Attorney's Office:** Mr. Shaun McNamara.

Call to Order

Chair Black informed attendees that Committee Chair Biller was unable to attend and had asked him to lead the meeting.

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

2. **# Meeting Minutes**
   Azure moved, Deere seconded, to approve the August 18, 2026, meeting minutes, as presented.
   Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Guest Speakers

1. VCSU

a. Personalized Learning
President Burgad and Mr. Tom Klapp presented Valley City State University's role in coordinating North Dakota's Personalized Learning Network, including its learner-centered framework, statewide partnerships, engagement opportunities, and 2026–27 expansion plans. Mr. Klapp gave a short Power Point presentation on the work that has been done in the past by Valley City State University and the work that is planned. DC Johnson asked whether personalized learning would extend into college classrooms, Interim President Burgad said he strongly expected it to do so.

 # Committee Business

1. Academic Program Termination
    a. Williston State College
        i. UG Certificate in Business Administration
        ii. UG Certificate in Light/Medium Duty Technician
        iii. UG Certificate in Petroleum Production Technology
        iv. A.A.S. in Petroleum Technology & Automation
        v. A.A.S. in Physical Therapy Assistant

    Dr. Atallah explained that Williston State College's five proposed program terminations reflect enrollment and completion patterns and program restructuring rather than abandonment of regional workforce needs.
    Deere moved, Azure seconded to approve Williston State College's request to terminate the five programs as presented.
    Motion passed, 3-0. Biller and Mihalick were absent.

 # SBHE Policy

5. Policy 413 Mathematics and English Course Placement
    DC Lisa Johnson proposed updates to Policy 413 that establish expiration periods for placement evidence.
    Deere moved, Azure seconded to approve the updates to Policy 413 as presented.
    Motion passed, 3-0. Biller and Mihalick were absent.

6. Policy 470 State Authorization and Procedure 470.1 State Authorization Exemptions, Appeals, and Sanctions
    Mr. Chris Pieske presented amendments to Policy 470 that clarify violations, sanctions, and appeals for authorized private or out-of-state institutions operating in North Dakota.
    Deere moved, Azure seconded to approve the amendments to Policy 470 as presented.
    Motion passed, 3-0. Biller and Mihalick were absent

7. Policy 502 Enrollment Integrity and Identity Compromise
    Mr. Pieske presented an amendment to Policy 502 removing the reporting requirement to the North Dakota Attorney General's Office while retaining federal reporting. After consultation, the Attorney General's Office advised that it does not need the reports on fraudulent attempts to obtain financial aid or the use of "ghost students."
    Deere moved, Azure seconded to approve the amendment to Policy 502 as presented.
    Motion passed, 3-0. Biller and Mihalick were absent.

8. Policy 510 Rights of Students Called to Active Military Service

Mr. Pieske presented amendments to Policy 510 to align the system with federal veterans-education regulations, including tuition protection for students returning from active military duty.
Deere moved, Azure seconded to approve the amendments to Policy 510 as presented.
Motion passed, 3-0. Biller and Mihalick were absent.

Reports/Updates/Discussions

1. Low Completion Programs
    a. Draft 2026 Report
    b. Policy 422 - Review of Low-Completion Programs

DC Johnson explained the first systemwide implementation of SBHE Policy 422, identifying approximately 34 programs that met low-completion criteria across three rolling review periods while emphasizing that inclusion is a starting point for institutional review, not an automatic termination decision. Alberts asked how faculty protections would apply if program termination affected instructors. DC Johnson confirmed that teach-out and applicable policies would govern the process. Mr. Pieske added that Policy 605.3 allows reduced time or notice in certain reorganizations, consolidations, or course cancellations, but faculty consequences would be determined case by case based on the courses actually being taught.

Adjourn

Chair Black adjourned the meeting at 1:57 p.m., C.T.