**Collaboration and Engagement Focus Group**

**Monday, May 16 11:30 am-12:30 pm**

**7 Participants**

1. **Who does UND serve, and do you think it is currently meeting those needs**?
   1. Majority of students UND serves are the in-person North Dakota and Minnesota students. I do wish the online students had some sort of coaching/support, more compatible to what our in-person students get. I think we serve our on-campus students well but feel our online students could use a bit more support
   2. Agree, I feel like our online students would benefit from more opportunities to connect to UND and develop a sense of belonging to UND.
   3. In my program, we have a strong distance program with both synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities. We try to get our students to do at least one on on-campus visit. We hear this from them – that they don’t get the same experiences. We need to do more to make our online students feel they belong here as well.
   4. I think UND serve students, but also alumni. You cannot have one without the other. You have two targeted populations you are trying to serve at the same time.
   5. I’ve always been moved that UND kept in touch with their former faculty. I feel valued when UND keeps reaching out to me. Even though I cannot come as often I was always moved at how you have stay connected with me.
   6. We also serve our state of North Dakota and this region. In terms of research and our students (talent pipeline). Serving our state in these capacities as well.
2. **How do we enhance our campus environment in ways that makes it easier for outside stakeholders to partner, engage and collaborate with us?** 
   1. Internships – our students need this experience and how do we get this message out to employers that we need to connect our students with these experiences?
   2. I was in health care, we have so many open positions, is there a way to partner with UND in more meaningful way to fill this job pipeline faster/easier. How can we have deeper collaboration and get those students into these high demand fields faster?
   3. Riipen is an internship opportunity, but not as widely used as it could be. Would it be possible to have an internship fair where people come and promote internship opportunities? This could be beneficial for students and industry.
   4. Making sure that you have good online tools. Normally when you have a question you go to Google, so you need to have a way for employers to easily identify these students. You must really work your online tools to make sure that employers know where to go.
   5. What about featuring corporate partners on the UND website? Have industry give virtual tours or lead a Q&A session that our students can view. This is a way to have stakeholders involved. This would also help our online students. Love the idea about the internship fair and involving the alumni in this. A virtual fair would also help the online students. A virtual mentorship program with alumni could be easily done. Lots of alumni who would be willing to mentor students as well.
   6. How do we make this an equal opportunity, so it is not just big companies that have exposure to our students? Our students work for small companies as well. Instead of each program doing their own internships how do we get this to be a more prominent part of what UND offers?
3. **How do we create a network of partnerships—within the UND community, the local community, the state, and/or the nation—that contributes in measurable and significant ways to the development and advancement of North Dakota?**
   1. Look at what already exists at UND and utilize areas we are strong in, expand them to make these opportunities more widely available.
   2. Colleges have specific areas that they are working on, and there is some overlap between colleges but not a centralized hub that collects these partnerships/opportunities and helps make these connections.
   3. Research opportunities is a way that we connect the state.
   4. There should be a concentrated effort by each college to reach people. In fundraising you must find a focus (internship focus, etc.) and show how it benefits the state. Find a way to have a relationship with the state that is beneficial to both parties. This leads to better outcomes and exposure for UND and North Dakota. You also need to find ways that you are letting the state and region know what you are doing. Higher education always looking for ways to show they are a leader. UND is well positioned to move forward. Some UND alumni are dedicated to what is happening in their college- so this can be an asset to helping spread the word. Just need that focus.
   5. Awareness- NDSU has extension service. UND has partnerships as well, but people in some parts of the state are not as aware of them. We need to let people know about these things.
   6. How do we let people know what we are doing in a more grassroot level? This is a networking thing that takes time to build but it can be done.
   7. Every college has something to offer so how do you do this in a way that shows the unique offerings we have?
   8. Midwesterners are humble, but we need to look at what we are good at and letting people know what we do and how it benefits them. Don’t be afraid to say what is going on. Social media and other marketing efforts are great ways to do this.
   9. Sharing the story of UND overall- connect it back to our history. Why we are here and how we got here. Had a few tough years but how do we capitalize on the recent work and the shift of change in leadership.
   10. “Alumni Ambassador” program where we can have people in those communities further away from Grand Forks that can help let UND know about opportunities for the university to be involved. Start small and when people know that the community is willing to partner with UND it can snowball.
4. **How do we grow relationships with business, industry, and governmental partners to generate experiential learning and research opportunities for our students?**
   1. Getting faculty members to adopt changes to their curriculum and incorporate experiential learning into their courses has proven difficult at UND. Riipen is experiential learning- broadening this to different programs has been difficult. Some faculty don’t find the exact match for their course. How do we present these faculty with the opportunities that are out there? Perhaps this is a better connection with Alumni…
   2. I am working on this with some high schools where they plan on projects and then we come in and we ‘judge’ them or give feedback on this.
   3. When I think about the research opportunities for students we need to think about undergraduates as well. How do we encourage programs/departments to send their students to showcase the undergraduate opportunities across different colleges?
   4. So much that can happen when we engage with industry. We can do some neat things when they are interdisciplinary research opportunities.
   5. Don’t know where our colleges are in the engagement piece. I don’t know that all faculty know what outreach is happening in different areas. We are too siloed- we need to have better collaboration and engagement between colleges; combine this information so people can see a list of these opportunities.
   6. Need to know where we are so we can build on what we have so we can build on these strengths. How do we get the information first (on collaboration and engagement opportunities) currently happening?
   7. One thing that I have seen work well is to partner with alumni during a social. You see some of these partnership/engagement opportunities start in these settings. Building these partnerships are so important. Really like experiential learning and we would love to have students who want to come and learn more. We are so hungry for this in the industry we are so wanting to make these opportunities work.
   8. University Ambassador program: meet with city leaders of small towns- whole cross section of people and you bring them together and see what they need it is helpful to see what the university can do to help these surrounding communities.
5. **What would be your vision for UND’s future? Do you have any ‘big dreams’ for the institution?**
   1. Most of the schools are accredited that raises UND consideration level for more people to come to UND. Make sure those accreditations are valid, meaningful, and competitive as compared to other schools. The aviation school and the hockey program both give national recognizing. This is how people hear about us. We have the tools to support the levels of education that people are looking for.
   2. Be agile- meet learners where they are at. Having several options and avenues to higher education (degree, certificate, etc.). Need to meet people where they want to meet us.
   3. Continue to keep our programs strong. Have expectations of our students but also meet our students needs. We need to meet the state of ND and the region’s needs. We need to be competitive and keep our education accessible and affordable
   4. The university becomes a truly ranked competitor for our region. We have some wonderful things to offer to students, so having that recognition as a competitor and the brand recognition in a 10-state region would be wonderful.
   5. Maintain academic freedom and debate will help us grown.
   6. When looking at recruiting we need to stay competitive with other colleges for candidates. We need to pay our people competitive wages to keep them here.