**UND Strategic Planning**

**Focus Group- Student Government Leaders**

**April 28, 2022**

**Student Focus Group:**

1. **Why did you choose to attend UND?**
   1. Biggest reason I chose UND was affordability, from North Dakota. Stay in state plus scholarship offers. Knew people and recruitment from current people in UND.
   2. Family lives in Texas, expensive choices in state. Decided to come to UND, knew a few people at UND. Price range was a huge bonus.
   3. Scholarship and affordability; aerospace centric culture; liked friends who came to UND better than NDSU
   4. Mission – leaders in action focus; wanted to be a leader regardless of field.
   5. Opportunity as an in-state resident at medical or law school.
   6. Chose UND for nursing school specifically; UND hockey, grew up as family fan of UND hockey.
2. **How do you describe UND to your family, friends, and neighbors?**
   1. Small, inviting; strong community; inclusive; lot more opportunities to be involved
   2. Cold
   3. Very well rounded and diverse in population; students from across the country; international students
   4. Lot of people involved in student government, nearly every student has an opportunity to participate in student governance
   5. Informed student population about opportunities
3. **Who does UND serve, and do you believe we are currently meeting these needs?**
   1. Lot of online students, people from all over the country; students at smaller schools in ND who don’t have as many options and therefore take supplementary courses from UND
   2. UND serves students, faculty, staff who work here; people who live here in the Grand Forks community, addressing sporting and entertainment needs, via UND hockey games, Feast of Nations etc
   3. Put students into the work force, coops, internships; technology sector but other programs as well; economic driver; great talent pool to pull from
   4. Grand Forks is a completely different area during summer; when border closed it changed the feel of Grand Forks, even out shopping; university has a large impact on the community of Grand Forks.
   5. The Big Event
4. **Who do you believe it should be serving and what do you think needs to change for this to happen?**
   1. Haven’t talked enough about engaging alumni, really an opportunity for growth – especially with younger alumni; develop pride and loyalty for UND regardless of time away.
   2. Impact of covid, there has been an increased need for doctors and lawyers. It will be good to broaden the application process for professional schools (law, med); open the process for more international student applicants.
   3. After the past couple weeks in conversations, transgender community feel unsafe and not welcome
      1. Don’t have specific suggestions or ideas; SDI has provided education and promoted events; communicate barriers to that community of students
   4. Big thing from recent campaign, mental health resources; especially low-income students who can’t afford any provider
   5. American Indian students feel unsupported in RAIN program; don’t really have a safe space for that population of students; while there are great things from Student Diversity and Inclusion, but not specifically for American Indian students.
   6. Admissions, written bond about taking on jobs or working at UND or in North Dakota; have requirement about residency to prevent students from getting education and then just leaving UND; create a way to sign bonds or commitments to UND or state. This will retain/ bond students who have special admission to UND to serve in the ND state hospitals/ law for a minimum number of years as a way of retaining the students who are admitted and trained on special case basis
5. **What has the university done to benefit you or your student organization most?**
   1. UND gives students organizations autonomy, which may create confusion but also helps provide beneficial skill sets
   2. UND does a good job with events that happen on campus; great support from UND for student organizations based on events
   3. For students who aren’t in orgs, departments provide a lot of opportunities for internships and other leadership opportunities
6. **What might the university do better to help you, or your student organization succeed?**
   1. Last semester, in BSA (Black Student Association), something went on with advisor and president and got shut down. There were conversations with President Armacost and Stacey Borboa-Peterson; still hasn’t been resolved; people got angry because a student didn’t go through the protocol; student leaders need more information about starting and running student organizations
   2. Most notable thing is education about access to funding, for example used to be on esports team and when Travis Isbel was brought in a whole group or team dropped out and took the concern all the way to provost but no answer or response.
   3. Take classes at graduate school and medical school, not much awareness about funding, not as invested at times in organizations; there are students who are in limbo between schools, and it would be helpful to have better funding awareness.
   4. Since covid, many are trying to get back on their feet; UND should have more ways to connect with other organizations and students broadly; ways to spread the message about their groups;
   5. There are some organizations that have sufficient exposure and attention, Greek students aren’t hurting for support or awareness; instead, UND must try to target groups who may need additional help or need broader awareness
   6. So many organizations that it is hard to get attention; many organizations that have fewer members makes it harder to spread awareness; others aren’t as known as some bigger organizations which have more attention
   7. Going to college Greek life is what you see on movies, there is a formal process with recruitment; there isn’t as much structure and opportunity for other student organizations
7. **What have been your best experiences at UND?**
   1. Greek life, joining Greek life; Nursing school, lot of support from other nursing students; having that network in their program
   2. Tailgates – bring community together especially Greek Life
   3. With staff and faculty at UND; specifically with political science faculty have been fantastic; faculty and staff have been very supportive of student leaders
   4. Depends on perspective
   5. Hockey has kept me at UND, didn’t have many friends as a freshman; seeing how much the community loved UND hockey, I loved it and still love it.
   6. Size of UND plays to its advantage; come from India with a large university, coming from that setting UND is much more accommodating; UND administration entertains the question or request and may turn it down but at least listens; also finds a way to accommodate requests
   7. Opportunities – every door you open there is a new opportunity; come from a smaller school where certain opportunities didn’t exist and those exist here at UND
   8. In College of Arts and Sciences, was really cool to see at an event the incoming students who were looking at UND; eye opening to see the diverse group looking at UND
8. **Would you recommend UND to your family and friends, why or why not?**
   1. Yes. Get the same experience as I had, being able to connect with the people.
   2. Yes. Fairly safe as a family perspective, as a student we have lots of opportunity – not a small fish in a big pond.
   3. Can’t imagine starting at University of Minnesota where there is 60000 students; now I can, but not as an incoming student; great programs
   4. Yes. Family is all in Texas right now, other universities are so large may not be accepted, can have more involvement at UND;
   5. Totally recommend UND to family and friends; as a student who is a freshman, if I emailed anyone I either got an answer or sent to someone who could answer the question; don’t feel like a number here; get to know faculty, staff here; It is a university, has a smaller school feel
   6. Would recommend UND in the summer! Experience at UND has been positive, rarely had negative experiences
   7. UND provides a great college experience with funding, scholarship, community, involvement
   8. There is a lot of flexibility, pandemic has provided an opportunity to create more flexible opportunities; able to open up schedule to do other things like student government or others are able to have free time to have a work schedule; internship last spring was helpful with online, so I was able to work during the day
9. **Can you see yourself returning to UND as an alumnus?**
   1. Political science professors have been engaging, no connections with business school faculty.
   2. Depends on what capacity; to attend events or athletics, yes
   3. More as a support role
   4. Maybe not continuing education, but visiting UND
   5. With nursing school, maybe furthering education; but for sure come back for hockey; it is sentimental
   6. For sure come back and give back to the community
   7. Goal to become faculty, one of the greatest points to bring me back to UND; UND has one of the highest grant funding for biomedical sciences and this really blew me away; if not in faculty, I will connect back to UND via research
10. **As a student, what concerns you most about UND? What do you think needs improvement?**
    1. Safety: UND campus must continue to be always safe in order to keep me as well as many students here.
    2. For other students and I it is affordability, engagement with community and on campus, if not active
    3. Resources that nursing building has, sometimes we don’t have all we need to learn as a nurse; keep Greek life on campus, don’t want to see legacy go down
    4. Cost of schooling at UND, past years it has been increasing if it keeps increasing students won’t come here; mental health resources have been declining, won’t come if that keeps declining
    5. One thing that is very important if we want to keep students living on campus, keep areas that students are living in nice condition; heater had to be fixed like 3 or 4 times; very old heaters in university housing must be replaced; mental health resources must be well advertised on campus
    6. Family moved here first, then came here – wasn’t aware of scholarships, realized the gaps in scholarship central. Lot of scholarships, but lots of restrictions as well; restricted from federal aid and filling out FAFSA; went to honors lounge and national scholarships, but didn’t qualify for any of those scholarships; UND has done a good job for scholarships but this has barely reached to international students. Open more scholarships for international students
    7. Finding faculty/staff/admin who’ll stay long enough; not being so tied down to legislative funding; parking has been a huge issue, nothing but small changes; nothing has been done in like 30 years
    8. Financial aid system at UND needs to be looked at, talked about with faculty – big gap between mission of equity and how financial aid system is administered; if it is meant to be competitive scholarship that is one thing, but if the goal is to have UND to be affordable, I got scholarships due to couple high school scores and I have friends who can’t eat if they don’t go to the food pantry; Stugov students are very engaged, but many students don’’ find a community and have no attachment to UND; if they don’t have a primary purpose there isn’t a way for them to figure it out while staying at UND; nothing keeping them at UND, find more ways to reach students who don’t have a clear idea of major or who aren’t involved on campus
    9. **As a student, what can you say about your academic experience since most of you will be graduating soon?** 
       1. Faculty have given great support and such good advice; have a great relationship and support system
       2. There are a lot of courses that have opportunity for reinvention, innovation; lots of course that are still very traditional straight lecture; experiences I remember are the high impact practices; courses that have a tangible takeaway are more memorable; classes that were more engaging were the ones that are valuable; shift away from just giving me information that I can google myself or find a book;
       3. Have classes that are engaging; lots of opportunity with technology; have a really good connection with faculty members for possible research collaborations in the future
11. **What would be your vision for UND’s future?**
    1. Really nice to have tunnels connecting all the science buildings
    2. Finding more ways to give students experiential learning opportunities, some programs put it all on the student; more resources to place students in those opportunities, require it in more areas.
    3. More improvement with pipeline career programs
12. Do you have any ‘big dreams’ for the institution?
    1. Space studies is restricted to graduate students, find a way to involve more undergrads – then they may reconsider grad school