The University of North Dakota’s history, heritage, and people have uniquely shaped its identity since its founding in 1883. This draft strategic plan, **UND Leads**, honors this tradition by engaging the many rich and diverse voices of our campus and greater community to create a path forward which builds on our unique strengths and sets a course for continued excellence. Just like UND’s Eternal Flame, **UND Leads** will help light the direction of the institution. It will be a guiding document that is meant to bend to the winds of change but never surrender to them.

**UND’s Mission** is to **provide exceptional educational experiences that enrich the lives of North Dakotans and the global community through excellent teaching, innovative research, and meaningful engagement.**

Our **Vision** is to **inspire a sense of wonder, a love of discovery, and a commitment to serve.**

A **sense of wonder** reflects our belief that critical thinking and dynamic educational experiences are cornerstones to cultivating engaged citizens who will be lifelong learners; by fostering a **love of discovery** we see creativity, research, and innovation as ways to find impactful solutions to some of our greatest challenges; and by affirming our **commitment to serve** we aspire to help make our communities better. None of this would be possible without a deep commitment to our students, employees, alumni, and greater community, by ensuring the University of North Dakota is a place that **fosters inclusive excellence and equity** and where everyone knows they **belong.**

UND’s Vision will serve as our North Star. This is where we will spend our time and energy moving forward, and as such has formed the foundations of the **UND Leads** plan. Our work along the way will be guided by our deep belief in UND’s Shared Values of **Learning, Equity, Accountability, Discovery, and Service.**

The University of North Dakota was founded by people who wanted to make a difference; to better their lives and the lives of others. **UND Leads** seeks to build on this legacy and reflects the wisdom and dreams of our entire UND community. It represents our history and guides our future. A future where people are empowered to make a difference and where the torch of knowledge, reflected in the symbol of our Eternal Flame, can be passed on to those who want to make a difference.
Shared Values: UND “LEADS”

A leader is defined by the characteristics we embody and the unique perspectives we share with the world, not necessarily by the roles we occupy. We all have the capacity to meet the call to lead through curious engagement, a sense of responsibility, a willingness to listen—and most importantly through the ability to see, value, and lift up the unique skills of others.

We believe that these characteristics are inherent within the following shared values from which we can all develop our own unique leadership identities to serve our community and meet our collective potential.

**Learning.** We are committed to providing the strong liberal arts foundation and dynamic educational experiences that are essential for living intellectually curious, personally fulfilling, and socially responsible lives. Learning and discovery occur not only in the classroom and the laboratory—both physical and virtual—but also through professional development opportunities, engagement in our university community and experiences beyond our physical campus. We value all those involved in supporting the learning process—no matter their job title—for it is our people who create that sense of belonging and purpose which allows UND to promote lifelong learning, inquiry, and advancement of knowledge and practice.

**Equity.** We value diverse peoples, perspectives, and ideas and support actions that are inclusive of all members of the UND community. We are committed to promoting fair and equitable living, learning, and working environments by removing barriers to inclusion—environments characterized by mutual respect and equal access to resources and opportunities. We view inclusivity and equity as more than mere words: we seek to use these values to empower all members of the UND community.

**Accountability.** Guided by our commitment to excellence and integrity, we aspire to the highest standards both for ourselves and others as we strive for truth, honesty, and transparency. We take responsibility and are accountable for our words and actions, including those which promote sustainable practices critical to the long-term health, well-being, and success of the university community.

**Discovery.** We advance research, creative activity, and scholarship through our spirit of inquiry and our desire to better understand the world around us. Rooted in the liberal arts traditions of critical thinking, problem-solving, and intellectual risk-taking, our commitments to the principles of innovation and creativity are reflected in our research, our partnerships, our creative work, and our teaching. Even as we focus upon the existing Grand Challenges and seek to expand them, we embrace the ways that scholarship, in every possible field, adds to humanity's body of knowledge.

**Service.** The people of UND strive to serve, using our talents and resources to make our campus and broader communities better. We are committed to embracing the strengths of others, building on what we share and valuing differences as opportunities to grow and learn. The ties that unite us, and foster a sense of belonging, enable our communities to rise together and serve the needs of the state of North Dakota, the United States, and the broader global community.
Sense of Wonder

*UND leads by providing dynamic educational experiences essential for living intellectually curious, personally fulfilling, and socially responsible lives.*

The UND student profile has been changing. A growing online population and a greater number of part-time students means a student body with a more diverse set of experiences and needs. We aim to support all our students by being responsive to their unique goals and aspirations, and by providing dynamic, flexible educational experiences that are high quality and student-centered. Among these are experiential and applied learning opportunities that serve our students’ educational needs while also deepening our partnerships in the community, state, and beyond. A UND education prepares students to understand their skills as essential for career readiness and for being successful, engaged global citizens.

**UND will lead by:**

*Providing Engaging Learning Environments:* We are committed to providing intentional curricular, co-curricular, and experiential learning opportunities that allow students to practice and refine essential skills needed for successful and engaged lives. Creating a nurturing and positive learning environment that supports students’ efforts and aspirations includes providing proactive support, unambiguous communication, and intentional outreach.

- Provide supportive programs and experiences that serve the whole student, provide foundational learning opportunities that enhance the student experience, and support growth in all facets of student wellbeing.
- Monitor and remove barriers that students and partners may experience in accessing off-campus experiential learning opportunities, and reward intentional collaborations between academic departments/programs, student success programs, and services related to applied learning experiences of students.
- Promote inclusive and diverse pedagogy to position students to engage with diverse perspectives, inclusive worldviews, and creative interdisciplinary problem-solving.
- Identify faculty and staff development needs, invest in educators’ development and success tools, and reward educational practices that are reviewed and assessed through equity-based assessment models.
- Foster a global perspective to prepare students for engagement and leadership by promoting meaningful and connected global experiences that are integrated into the curriculum, and which connect to essential skill building.
- Bridge UND’s excellence in teaching, research, and creative activity with partners across the region and the world, by placing our student-scholars in experiential-learning projects with real-world applications.
- Increase opportunities and access for all students seeking credit and non-credit learning, including those at a distance and in rural communities, through innovative online programming and community outreach.

*Showcasing Skills and Benchmarking Growth:* It is essential that students make connections between what they learn in the classroom and how that learning relates to skills employers look for as well as the
needs of their communities. This includes ensuring our students are prepared to interact with a rapidly diversifying world.

- Expand individualized advising and mentoring, which not only leads to a culture of trust and increased student success and retention, but also gives students opportunities to think about how skills are transferrable across their courses and extra-curriculars as well as to their goals and values.
- Reinforce expectations related to the necessity for students to develop the core competencies of social and emotional learning. Support students as they learn to set and achieve positive goals, demonstrate the ability to work on a team and show empathy for others, and make responsible choices.
- Conduct a full review of the core required curriculum to propose and include competency-based, project-aimed, and diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility (DEIA) infused educational goals and activities. Such a review would also propose ways of enhancing the core curriculum’s goals of fostering creative expression and critical inquiry.
- Foster opportunities for students to document their learning, showcase their work, and disseminate their research/ideas.
- Recognize and guide flexible pathways to certificate or degree attainment for students who have personal and professional reasons for seeking postsecondary education, as well as opportunities to discover new knowledge, learn new skills, and grow personally and professionally.

Love of Discovery

*UND* leads by encouraging the love of discovery in all of our scholarship.*

As a nationally recognized public research institution the University of North Dakota cultivates excellence in creativity, research, and innovation. As the flagship comprehensive and research university in North Dakota, with nine colleges and schools - as well as several centers and institutes - it is our responsibility to both serve and lead the region in our distinctive areas of expertise and excellence. It is our goal to propel North Dakota and the world toward new horizons—all while building and nourishing our community at home. We embrace our responsibility to develop the next generation of curiosity seekers by instilling our passion for discovery and knowledge in our students, employees, alumni, and community. We seek to break down barriers between disciplines and communities as we engage in substantive public discourse, intentional research, and actions aimed at finding fresh solutions and building a more inclusive world that values academic freedom, free speech, creative expression, critical inquiry, and innovative thinking.

**UND will lead by:**

**Fostering a Culture of Creativity, Research, and Innovation:** We seek to cultivate an inclusive environment where creative expression, intellectual risk-taking (including a willingness to fail and to learn from failure), critical inquiry, research excellence, and a spirit of wonder flourish. We embrace the values of a liberal arts education, and we celebrate and champion freedom of expression and inquiry in our engagement across the region and world. Just as importantly, we dedicate ourselves to sustaining and developing the programs and infrastructure that make this work possible.
• Cultivate, enhance, and sustain programs to ensure excellence in creative expression, critical inquiry, and research activity, while encouraging discovery through process-based and experiential learning across all disciplines and units.

• Foster innovative teaching, applied learning, and research opportunities that embrace processes, tools, and practices of discovery, as exemplified by experimenting, researching, drafting, writing, prototyping, rehearsing, etc.

• Build comprehensive curricular and co-curricular activities that infuse creative expression, critical inquiry, and innovation in research across the students’ learning journey.

• Empower departments and units to establish transparent, fair, appropriate, and measurable outcomes for creative activity and research specific to their professional discipline as part of the annual evaluation process and faculty tenure and promotion standards.

• Strengthen service units that support creativity, research, and innovation in all stages—from program development to application and translation, to promotion, and beyond.

**Inspiring Collaboration and Cross-Disciplinary Work:** We embrace our responsibility to nourish the spirit of our community through creative activity, to provide for the public good through our research initiatives and push the boundaries of human knowledge through basic research. This requires collaboration across disciplines and fields, which invites new perspectives, promotes risk-taking and critical inquiry, and will place UND at the forefront of new innovations in research methods and creative expression.

• Craft mechanisms and programs that infuse cross-disciplinary work into the teaching, research and service missions of UND by encouraging each unit to identify strategic initiatives that facilitate and incentivize collaboration with internal and external partners.

• Recognize and reward in promotion, tenure, and evaluation processes initiatives that encourage faculty, staff, and student collaboration and cross-disciplinary work.

• Utilize and expand the Grand Challenges to promote, foster, and sustain cross-disciplinary teams dedicated to identifying solutions to pressing challenges.

• Foster new knowledge and transferable skills such as adaptability, critical thinking, curiosity, persistence, and resilience through mentorship, fellowships, internships, and exchange and co-op programs that enable students, faculty, alumni, staff, and community to bridge disciplines and enhance cross-disciplinary creative and research activity.

• Train faculty, students, and staff in teaching, mentoring, and work practices that infuse diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom, research spaces, offices, and beyond.

**Uniting UND with Partners:** Our diverse range of world class expertise and disciplinary excellence enhances UND’s ability to forge partnerships that generate knowledge communities across traditional and digital platforms; partnerships that lead the way in developing responsible solutions to the pressing challenges of today and tomorrow. UND’s spirit of inquiry and excellence not only sustains our teaching, creative activity, scholarship, and research, but seeks to inspire future innovation and discovery by fostering lifelong learning.

• Maintain and expand the Grand Challenges as a dynamic and living framework—one that allows UND’s leadership to respond to the challenges of the present, anticipate the needs of the future, and apply UND’s distinct strengths in creativity, research, and innovation for the good of our community, region, and world.

• Encourage the enhancement of UND’s Grand Challenges to include not only our newest challenge in the field of National Security and Space but faculty, students, staff and the broader
UND community will be encouraged to develop new Grand Challenges in the fields of Arts and Humanities and Pedagogy.

- Recruit, retain, and celebrate partners who contribute their expertise and support to drive UND’s activity to develop novel, responsible approaches to the vital needs identified in our expanded Grand Challenges.
- Facilitate processes which allow partners to connect with UND more easily, by establishing a ‘front door’ where new and existing partners can engage, and where internal efforts to foster partnerships and collaborative work can be better supported and enhanced.
- Strengthen and develop on-campus initiatives, institutes, and centers that link UND with external networks and foster sustainable partnerships in all sectors—industry, government, the arts, non-profits, public schools, tribal colleges and nations, and beyond.

**Commitment to Serve**

**UND leads by fostering collaborations that serve the evolving needs of our people, the state of North Dakota, and our global community.**

UND students, staff, faculty, alumni, and community members serve others. Through our world-class faculty and staff experts who bring knowledge, original research, artistic endeavors, and a passion to serve our communities, UND supports cultural, economic, and educational collaborations that provide opportunities for a better future.

**UND will lead by:**

**Service to our State:** UND will prepare students for a rapidly changing workforce; expand economic opportunities that retain talent in the state; and contribute to the cultural and educational vibrancy that make our communities strong. We embrace collaboration and cross-disciplinary work to meet the unique needs of the people and communities across the entire state of North Dakota.

- Advance research and educational collaborations to address the health, educational, safety, cultural, economic, and workforce needs of our community, state, and region.
- Expand partnerships that meet the unique needs of our state and highlight North Dakota’s national and global leadership in areas such as Rural Health, Autonomous Systems, Energy Sustainability, Space Studies, and National Security.
- Expand educational opportunities and programs in the arts, humanities, and public humanities which contribute to the cultural vibrancy of the state and help attract and retain talent in our communities.
- Expand our ecosystem in innovation and entrepreneurship to facilitate the creation of new jobs and economic opportunities.
- Support youth and lifelong learning opportunities that appeal to community members and capitalize on the expertise of UND faculty, staff, alumni, and community at large. Encourage ways that UND members give back to the community by providing time, incentives, and recognition for the work.

**Service to our Students:** UND is committed to providing all our students with a strong liberal arts foundation and dynamic educational experiences essential for living intellectually curious, personally fulfilling, and socially responsible lives. We will enhance the excellence of our teaching, research, and
service by placing our student-scholars in experiential-learning projects with real-world applications that benefit our students and deepen our partnerships in the community, state, and beyond.

• Ensure students have core competencies in career and self-development, communication, critical thinking, equity and inclusion, leadership, professionalism, teamwork, and technology.
• Cultivate self-advocacy and student accountability by reinforcing expectations for students to develop core competencies of social and emotional learning. Support the unique needs of our online student community, ensuring they have equal access to the various student services and opportunities of traditional UND students including access to experiential learning projects.
• Expand and frame educational programming foundational to DEIA learning, preparing a varied population and workforce to learn, adapt, and develop skills for an increasingly complex world.
• Serve those who have dedicated themselves to the service of our nation by enhancing educational pathways and support for our military affiliated students and their families.
• Engage UND’s strong alumni network as community ambassadors, guest lecturers, presenters, thought leaders, and recruitment specialists.

Inclusive Excellence and Equity

_UND leads by including all voices in cultivating a culture that respects all people._

Excellence in inclusion is not a win-lose proposition: creating a more just and equitable environment will allow all people to realize their potential – one of the great goals of any public university. Non-traditional students, rural students, military-affiliated students, first generation students, members of historically marginalized communities, those who are differently abled, online students – and the list goes on and on – deserve the same access and opportunities as everyone else. And everyone deserves the unquestioned right to have their voices heard, for free speech has been, and continues to be, the cornerstone of discourse on our campus.

UND will lead by:

**Building an Inclusive Culture and Climate.** UND will consciously strive to create fair and equitable living, learning, and working environments for all our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members. A culture and climate strong in diversity, inclusion, and belonging starts with our people and a commitment to ensuring that mutual respect, civility towards all, and equal access to resources and opportunities are defining characteristics of this institution.

• Intentionally demonstrate and communicate UND’s commitment to overcoming all forms of bias. Establish an active program of anti-bias training for UND employees.
• Promote individual and collaborative engagement in DEIA work and establish strong cooperative relationships with the surrounding communities and Indigenous nations, seeking their guidance in embracing restorative justice that empowers all communities through a collaborative process.
• Ensure equity in our online learning environment. Increase instructional design and staff support assistance for online, hybrid and blended learning.
• Using a rich definition of diversity, invest in DEIA spaces and employees by providing structure, funding, and support.
• Embed DEIA in UND’s administrative structure, ensuring accountability and transparency in policy and initiatives.

Fostering Global Perspectives. Provide a learning environment in which all students can learn and succeed at equitable rates and thrive in a global environment. The role of faculty and staff in understanding DEIA principles and implementing them in their immediate settings and practices is crucial. By coupling curricular efforts with professional development opportunities for the entire UND community, a sense of belonging and understanding will be at the heart of all university activities.

• Promote inclusive and diverse pedagogy and high impact practices to position students to engage with diverse perspectives, inclusive worldviews, and interdisciplinary problem-solving. Invest in training, resources, technology, and time to support the redesign of courses and pedagogical approaches to DEIA.
• Frame Essential Studies and the Liberal Arts as foundational to DEIA learning, enabling us to value and appreciate both our collective identity as humans and the tremendous variation within our humanity. Encourage all disciplines to be explicit in how they prepare a varied population and workforce to learn, adapt, and develop essential skills for an increasingly diverse world.
• Invest in diverse area studies and assist faculty and departments in creating undergraduate and academic programs and supporting extracurricular engagement.
• Set a specific ten-year goal to become a premier institution for Indigenous Studies.
• Provide professional development that fosters a sense of belonging, establishes equity-minded practices, and facilitates understanding of diverse populations with the purpose of meeting the ever-changing needs of our students and communities and convey a commitment to inclusion.

Promoting Workplace Equality. UND values differences between people and understands the positive benefits for the University of recruiting diverse students, staff, and faculty and employing a diverse range of talented people. UND will establish strong programs that not only seek to recruit a diverse student body and employee group but offer innovative mentorship and support programs to ensure that they will be successful at UND.

• Establish and implement clear strategies and policies for recruiting and retaining members of the campus community of diverse and intersecting identities. Promote belonging and provide equitable resources and opportunities for success and advancement.
• Create and implement flexible working and learning options that offer employment security and access to UND programs to a broader, more diverse population.
• Set DEIA goals as part of the employee review processes for retention and advancement.

A Culture of Belonging

UND leads by ensuring our people are at the center of all we do.

UND will promote an environment in which our students, employees, alumni, and UND community will be supported, valued, and know they belong. We commit ourselves to building a culture that welcomes all members of our community, uplifts their voices, and sustains the values that UND represents to the Great Plains and the world—an unmatched work ethic, persistence, resilience, adaptability, and curiosity.
UND will lead by:

**People: True Drivers of Excellence.** It is the UND people- our students, employees, and alumni- who make this university great. When our people are successful and thriving, our students, employees, local communities, and state benefit. By attending to student and employee well-being, development, and support, UND demonstrates their important contributions to helping achieve our Mission.

- Recruit and retain a robust work force and develop pathways to succession planning and promotion. Acknowledge and reward the great work done by UND employees.
- Provide a meaningful and informative orientation to campus and the greater Grand Forks community for students, faculty, and staff.
- Foster a culture where the needs, advice and expertise of employees is valued in planning and decision-making. Address and correct policies and practices that do not allow flexibility and encourage positive risk taking as an important cultural element to move UND forward.
- Streamline ways for people and partners to engage with UND and remove barriers or processes that hinder collaboration.
- Strengthen student support services for the specific needs of non-traditional students and establish programs that support the recruitment, mentorship, and advancement of historically underserved and marginalized students and employees.
- Foster a strong First Year Experience to ensure our new students create a positive sense of belonging at the university.
- Support a culture of trust with frequent and transparent communication to nurture a shared vision of our goals and purpose.

**Environments: Promote Belonging.** The campus environment influences behavior, impacts success, and helps build traditions. UND will be a leader in creating an accessible and welcoming environment for our students, employees, alumni, and community members. We are committed to cultivating a campus environment that meets students’ changing needs and fosters a meaningful sense of belonging for students, employees, alumni, and community members. We recognize it is important to respect and honor existing traditions, while also finding ways to embrace new ideas and change.

- Ensure that creating a campus environment that is accessible, welcoming, and inclusive for students, employees, and community members is a core aim of the UND Master Plan. Design facilities, parking, and programming that intentionally invites engagement.
- Provide a safe and healthy environment for UND’s students, employees, and visitors. This includes providing the university community with the most secure technology possible to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of critical information and resources.
- Support and strengthen our longstanding tradition of athletic excellence by enhancing our athletic facilities and supporting our student athletes.
- Globalize our campus community by increasing recruitment and retention efforts and support for international students studying at UND and for domestic students who participate in study abroad. Embrace environments where unique cultures feel a sense of belonging.
- Strengthen a military-friendly environment where we recruit and retain students and families to the campus and the community.