

Task Force on the Future of
Education at UND
Final Report
October 2021

Office of the President

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Dear Members of the Campus Community,

One year ago, Professors John Shabb and Jeff VanLooy took on the ambitious task of launching our Task Force on the Future of Education at UND. They built an amazing team of scholars from around the campus to explore our future.

The team was assembled in Fall 2020, and the work of the committee took place over a five-month period at the beginning of 2021. During this span, working groups were formed, guest lectures hosted, and readings of cutting-edge and provocative materials were sponsored. Each member made extraordinary contributions to this effort, and we are grateful for their dedication and insights.

The result of their work is the following report, which, along with the work of the earlier Task Force on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, will serve as a foundation for the re-write of our UND strategic plan.

We ask each of you to read this important report, reflect upon what the team suggests, and take a few minutes to offer your thoughts, observations, criticisms, and endorsements. What you suggest will impact our next steps, as we craft the future of our university. Feedback received through the Public Comment Survey will be collected and will be added to the report as an appendix.

Let us, again, offer our appreciation to the entire team for their hard work and insights.

With gratitude,



Andy Armacost
President



Eric Link
Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost

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Prologue

The Task Force on the Future of Education was commissioned in the Fall of 2020 by President Andy Armacost and Interim Provost Debbie Storrs. Our charge was to:

- 1) Create a framework for developing short and long-term strategies to shape an academically and fiscally robust environment that satisfies the educational needs of the next generation of UND students; and
- 2) Educate the University community about big issues facing higher education today and what the future might hold for education at UND.

The appointed co-chairs, Jeff VanLooy and John Shabb, assembled a diverse team of twenty-four Task Force members selected from a University-wide nomination process (Appendix A). Most held tenured, tenure-track, or non-tenure track faculty positions. Two were staff, and one was a student. We met twice weekly throughout the Spring 2021 semester to investigate the nature of the challenges we face and to deliberate on strategies to meet our charge.

Development of Recommended Solutions and Strategies

The work of the Task Force was initially organized around eight looming challenges (Table 1) distilled from a white paper prepared by Interim Provost Storrs (Appendix B). Later, through analysis of comments solicited in the nomination survey (Appendix C) an additional theme, Partnerships, was added.

Table 1.	Looming Challenges
C1	Attracting new and underserved student populations.
C2	Aligning UND's academic offerings with emerging societal needs.
C3	Designing flexibility into educational credentialing and experience.
C4	Shaping instructional design and technology to enhance learning.
C5	Designing more flexibility into general education requirements.
C6	Credentialing prior learning and work experience of new student populations.
C7	Rethinking institutional fiscal and academic structure to improve student learning.
C8	Empowering faculty to actualize educational change
C9	Inter- and intra-institutional partnerships

The narrative that follows begins with an overview of our proposed, integrated solutions, which leads into a more detailed listing of strategies, or actions, to achieve these solutions. Finally, we return to a more complete account of the process we followed and of the background information that motivated our thinking.

Introduction

UND's primary mission is to provide an excellent education to our students and help equip them with the knowledges and skills that will facilitate their success in whatever path they pursue in life. The challenges we face as an institution of higher learning are well-known: changing demographics, declining enrollment, and reduced state funding for higher education. Meanwhile, rapidly evolving technologies are causing disruptions to traditional careers, shifts in workforce needs, and concerns about obsolescence of various skills and knowledge. The Task Force sought pedagogically and financially viable strategies that would be robust enough to address these challenges and uncertainties, while proposing solutions that foreground and focus on our students' education and their success regardless of what the future holds. We cannot create new students, but we can create innovative, compelling programs, expand recruitment to attract the greatest range of potential students, and provide the support they need to be successful.

Our solutions and strategies represent a network of interdependent actions, recognizing that solving one problem necessarily depends on solving other problems. There is not a simple fix. For example, innovative approaches to pedagogy that would lead to better outcomes for students and attract a wider and more diverse applicant pool will require a well-integrated combination of approaches. These include re-centering the liberal arts as the foundation for "future-proofing" student preparation for an evolving work force, incentivizing interdisciplinary coursework to reveal the interconnectedness of knowledges and their applications, creating flexible degree programs and approaches to credentialing, and providing a range of institutional supports to enable and maintain these changes. Although we propose what appears to be a long list of strategies, viewed as a whole, several common themes emerged, including those just mentioned. They are highlighted in Figure 1. These broad solutions and the specific strategies may not all be achieved at the same rate, but this should not be seen as a list of independent, individual options if we hope to attain the greatest benefit for our students. They are elements of an integrated educational system, where each element builds on and supports other elements to enhance recruiting and retention, provide innovative and high-quality education, and maximize student success. When our students are successful, the entire university and wider community benefit, because our students are the core of a highly-educated workforce, and their success, in turn, increases our attractiveness to future potential students.

To achieve UND's Mission, in the face of the challenges we are experiencing and foresee, the Task Force recommends an integrated suite of strategies to achieve the following mutually supportive solutions (with specific strategies to follow). They are aimed at the cornerstones of higher education: student recruitment and success; programs, curricula and courses; and institutional policies, practices, and supports.

- **Broad Recruitment, high Retention, and greater Diversity in our student population, faculty, and staff.** Greater human diversity means more ways of thinking, a wider range of ideas and perspectives, as well as a greater chance of finding better solutions to any problem. Moreover, fairness and justice are core values that can only be achieved by their active and intentional pursuit, making this goal a moral imperative. We envision intentionally cultivating a broad pool for potential recruitment, including students from underrepresented and/or under-resourced backgrounds and/or non-traditional aged students. The most conspicuous of these populations are the Indigenous peoples of North Dakota and the region. Broader recruiting alone is not

sufficient; we also need to provide necessary and multiple forms of supports to improve retention of all students (and faculty and staff), with special attention to specific needs of underrepresented, under-resourced, and non-traditional students.

- Recognizing and promoting the **Liberal Arts** as central to a strong, future-proof education. A Liberal Arts education prepares the mind to learn and adapt, enhancing learning and skills development in all areas. Students are better positioned to benefit from diverse perspectives and effectively engage in creative, interdisciplinary problem-solving.
- In a complex world facing complex problems, no single academic discipline can provide a complete set of knowledges, skills, or even ways of seeing problems. Although we anticipate that traditional disciplines and associated majors will continue to offer considerable value, it has become increasingly apparent that **Interdisciplinary Education** will better prepare students to integrate or weave knowledges from a variety of areas to enhance problem-solving skills, work more effectively in diverse teams, and make students more flexible and marketable as they seek employment after graduation.
- Creating **Flexible Degree Programs** will give students more options to achieve their educational goals and ways to integrate post-secondary education into their lives. Because they provide a mechanism to enable interdisciplinary education, flexible degree programs can also be tailored to our students' career goals, possibly with elements of their individualized curricula packaged into certificates or other forms of credentialing. Such programs will also help to facilitate integration of higher education into lives that may not allow continuous enrollment as full-time students (the traditional model), including offering opportunities for life-long learning.
- With ongoing changes in technology and modes of delivery of educational experiences, we need to incentivize creative and **Innovative approaches** to teaching and learning.
- Institutional policies and practices should support faculty and staff in pursuing innovative approaches to pedagogy and achieving **Excellence in Teaching and Service**. We already recognize the importance of both areas, but they need to be viewed and supported as the highest priority efforts of the university.
- Employ **Inclusive and Diverse Pedagogies** to expose students to a range of viewpoints and experiences that broaden their perspectives on knowledges, their university education, and the relationships between knowledges and practical applications in our community and the workforce.
- **Building Institutional Capacity** requires a review of how we make decisions, create policies, and establish practices that will enhance recruiting and educational outcomes, including critical administrative functions of governance, budgeting, and assessment. Adaptive management implies ongoing institutional research to assess effectiveness of actions, to adjust when necessary, and to respond promptly to changing circumstances.

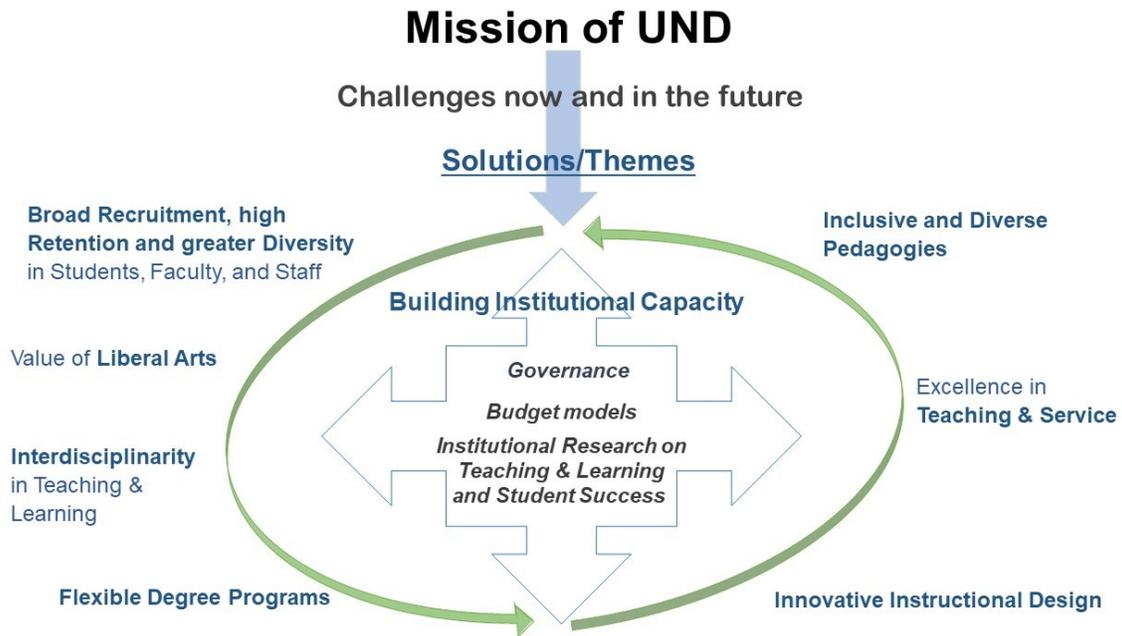


Figure 1. Concept map describing the main elements of an academically and fiscally robust environment that satisfies the educational needs of the next generation of UND students.

Specific Strategies to achieve Solutions

The solutions summarized above are interconnected facets of an integrated plan that address different dimensions of the challenges we face. Taking action on any of them requires specific, concrete strategies that will need additional refinement prior to implementation. We recommend a suite of strategies (Chapter 1) that each focus on different building blocks of one or more solutions. These solutions are the result of proposals presented by Task Force working groups, which are preserved in this final report as individual chapters in their own voices. We elaborate on each block of strategies in Chapter 3 that provide additional rationale and supporting documentation. Taken together, they capture many of the thoughts of the Task Force members. We want to emphasize, again, that the Task Force recommendations are not stand-alone strategies; they should be components of coordinated actions. For example, we cannot talk about recruiting without talking about retention, which requires a variety of supports for student success. Nor can we separate student success from the structure of educational programming and the connection to student interests and needs for the future. Consequently, while composed separately, when synthesized, nearly all these strategies received broad support of Task Force members (Appendix D).

We do not expect all recommendations to be taken up simultaneously or have comparable time courses to achieve visible results. Although a few of the strategies may require new hires, many involve a change in practices, but not new costs. University leaders will now need to play the role of conductor, coordinating the various efforts and ensuring that each section of the orchestra—faculty, student support services, all other UND employees, and students—has the necessary people and resources to make our vision a reality.

Chapter 1: Solutions and Strategies

Solution 1: Attract and retain new and underserved student populations.

Solution 1.1: Increase diversity and retention among students, faculty, and staff.

- a) Evaluate UND's Enrollment Management strategy and adjust it if it is having a disparate impact on students from underrepresented and/or under-resourced backgrounds or non-traditional aged students. (C1)
- b) Identify and lessen barriers throughout a non-traditional student's higher education experience, from admissions to credentialing. (C3, C6)
- c) Assess the experiences of transfer students, student veterans, student parents, and non-traditional student populations in order to ensure that their introduction to the University is educationally valuable, and they feel part of UND's broader academic community. (C5)
- d) Expand efforts to recruit, support, and retain faculty and staff across campus who are more representative of North Dakota's future given national demographic trends. (C4, C7, C8)

Solution 1.2: Enhance student support services to better promote a sense of belonging to our community and academic success.

- a) Reassemble and grow the programs and support services at UND that are critical to the success of underrepresented and/or under-resourced student populations. (C1)
- b) Create or strengthen student support services for the specific needs of non-traditional students, New Americans, student parents, student veterans, and/or others who do not fit the model of a recent high school graduate. (C1)
- c) Offer students more individualized advising during their first-year experience that will help them find more personally meaningful course choices. (C5)
- d) Provide all students quality individualized mentoring by faculty throughout their academic career. (C8)
- e) Ensure that UND's online student body has equitable access to student success and support services. (C1)
- f) Carefully consider what "student success" and "retention" mean for different student populations and enact differentiated policies and practices accordingly. (C2)
- g) Develop and offer a free online, asynchronous course for the parents, family, and/or student-identified community of each UND student to strengthen their support network, while also inviting their support network into the UND community. (C1, C5)

Solution 1.3: Restore strong and collaborative relationships with Indigenous Nations in what is now known as North Dakota and the region, including tribal colleges and universities (TCUs).

- a) Survey UND's Indigenous faculty, staff, students, and alumni, as well as Indigenous partners to determine the ways in which we can better serve regional Indigenous communities. (C1)
- b) Partner with TCUs and Indigenous communities to create inter-institutional programs that will help increase local capacity based on Indigenous communities' stated high priorities. (C1, C9)

- c) Rebuild and expand American Indian Studies (AIS) with strategic faculty/staff hires, prioritizing hiring Indigenous faculty members in a variety of disciplines. (C1)
- d) Reestablish the American Indian Center as a dedicated space for UND's Indigenous community and fund onsite, dedicated student support services. (C1)
- e) Expand student services and create microsites at partner institutions according to local needs to address the challenges many Indigenous students face with family/community commitments (e.g., transportation, internet access, cohort building, childcare, support services). (C1, C9)

Solution 2: Support liberal arts education and recognize its value in the workforce.

- a) Commission an Essential Studies task force--led by full-time faculty--to review program requirements and learning goals, as well as explore ways to encourage integrated course work, experiential learning, and other high impact practices across the Essential Studies program. (C5)
- b) More clearly articulate and align the language of a liberal arts education and Essential Studies with what employers and students are looking for. (C2, C5)
 - i) Acknowledge and support Essential Studies as the campus program through which we are best positioned to strengthen access to a liberal arts education for all.
- c) Create an undergraduate academic experience that fully integrates the liberal arts ethos across the entire university curriculum. (C5)

Solution 3: Embrace and encourage collaboration in teaching and learning.

- a) Create a culture that encourages interdisciplinary collaboration, as well as courses and curriculum that prepare students for the rapidly changing needs of the workforce. (C7,8)
 - i) Formulate an undergraduate interdisciplinary program with offerings that encompass Essential Studies requirements. (C5, C7, C8)
 - ii) Construct interdisciplinary course offerings that use high-impact practices, making clear the connections between college and life after university. (C5)
- b) Encourage a more integrative Essential Studies education, in which faculty from across campus could work together to more intentionally provide interdisciplinary courses for students. (C5)
 - i) Create Essential Studies courses that are right sized for student learning and implementation of best practices. (C5)
 - ii) Create opportunities through Essential Studies courses to productively explore new disciplines, topics, and ways of thinking. (C5)
- c) Incentivize departments to collaborate rather than compete in developing innovative educational and credentialing opportunities. (C3, C6)
- d) Rethink administrative practices like the contractual distribution of effort and tenure/promotion policies to better promote and encourage interdisciplinary efforts across colleges to develop courses and programming to meet societal needs and encourage multidisciplinary thinking about issues. (C2)

Solution 4: Enhance innovative and instructional design and delivery.

- a) Identify and work with faculty willing to experiment with and incorporate innovative pedagogical approaches in their courses across all modes of delivery. (C4)
- b) Increase faculty training in online pedagogies and methods to ensure that distance learners--including those in asynchronous, blended or hybrid courses--have quality, successful educational experiences and feel connected to the campus, as well as other online students. (C4)
- c) Collaborate with UIT to update and regularly upgrade classroom technology based on faculty pedagogical needs.
- d) Provide faculty with increased professional development opportunities and ongoing support related to course delivery approaches and the use of various educational technology. (C4)

Solution 5: Provide flexible degree programs through an incremental credentialing framework and multiple entry and exit points.

- a) Form inter-institutional partnerships in the state, the region, and beyond to create new flexible postsecondary education experiences and pathways to a degree/credit attainment to meet the needs of the partners. (C9)
 - i) Initiate/invite partnerships with K-12 school districts, tribal colleges and universities, community colleges, regional industries and local businesses, government agencies, international organizations and universities, to name a few. (C9)
 - ii) Create micro-sites to engage and collaborate with these partners to provide on-site education, student support, incremental credentials, dual-enrollment, and/or shortened paths to a degree-attainment, and convenience, flexibility, and reciprocity. (C1, C2, C3, C6, C9)
 - iii) Develop joint educational programs with tribal colleges and universities, as well as community colleges and other universities, such as 2+2s (or 2+2+1s leading to a non-thesis M.S.), and programs that provide a bridge and pathway from high school to college and possibly to graduate or medical school. (C1, C9)
- b) Build inter-college and inter-departmental partnerships to create innovative and flexible degrees, micro-credentials or certificates that deliver the quality of learning to the partners. (C9)
 - i) Create flexible degree programs and credentialing to provide unique and customizable opportunities to students who may have specific career or educational goals that do not conform to existing, traditional disciplinary majors. (C1)
 - ii) Design flexibility into curriculum and programs to normalize incremental credentialing of degree completion and allow customization of degrees. (C7, C8)
 - iii) Provide a faculty-approved framework or template for allowing students to combine core elements of divergent degrees to create a customized hybrid degree which appeals to their specific interests and career goals. (C3, C6, C7, C8)
 - iv) Expand part-term course offerings to allow students to build a semester schedule that allows them to focus on one or two courses at a time. (C7, C8)

- v) Limit prerequisites. Where prerequisites are needed, establish uniform, alternative options for students to demonstrate readiness to enroll in next level courses. (C7, C8)
- c) Encourage revision of restrictive four-year plans to allow for expanded student choice in ES course selection. (C5)
- d) Provide flexible, individualized pathways within accreditation limits for students to bypass or validate course or other requirements based on their prior training or life experiences. (C3, C6)

Solution 6: Value and reward excellence in teaching, mentorship, and service.

- a) Incentivize and credit faculty for innovation in course creation, design, instruction, and assessment. (C7, C8)
 - i) Ensure contracts and comprehensive evaluations accurately document faculty work and reward those who demonstrate contributions to increased learning, recruitment, and retention. (C7, C8)
 - ii) Train faculty, chairs, and deans in teaching-evaluation best practices and the interpretation of student evaluations. (C7, C8)
 - iii) Incentivize the use and documentation of scholarly teaching practices as part of the formal evaluation of teaching. (C7, C8)
 - iv) Establish improvement strategies with clear expectations and rewards for those with teaching challenges (for example, high DFW rate courses). (C7, C8)
- b) Provide greater employment stability and reward mechanisms for non-tenure-track faculty to recognize their contributions to student learning and retention. (C7, C8)
- c) Recognize and reward service at the department, college, and university levels which leads to improvement in instruction, student recruitment and student success. (C7, C8)

Solution 7: Support inclusive and diverse educational experiences, HIP participation, and pedagogies.

- a) Support faculty and student exchanges with TCUs to promote impactful professional development and culturally educational opportunities for UND faculty, students and TCU partners. (C1)
- b) Systemically implement pedagogical methods that create an inclusive learning environment and discuss fields and disciplines from multiple, intersectional perspectives. (C1)
- c) Facilitate first-year experiences that promote academic engagement, intellectual exploration, and community building. (C5)
 - i) Assess students' first-year educational experiences at UND in order to ensure that their introduction to the University is educationally valuable, and they feel part of a larger academic community. (C5)
 - ii) Encourage the teaching of the mission and history of public higher education institutions in order to help students better understand the value of a broad, liberal arts education. (C5)
- d) Increase student access to high impact educational practices and engagement with experiential learning.

- i) Strategically embed an integrated series of high impact learning experiences across the curriculum and throughout students' time at UND – upon entry and up to graduation. (C2)
- ii) Partner with local and regional employers to increase applied learning experiences and internship opportunities for students to help align university training with post-degree employment. (C2)
- iii) Provide “real world” educational experiences that focus on pressing social needs and issues that ask students to apply their knowledge and exercise meaningful skills, which can also be included on a resume. (C2)
- iv) Shift the responsibility for finding and accessing experiential learning from student to the institution through individualized advising and mentoring, in addition to improved marketing. (C2, C5, C8)

Solution 8: Build Institutional Capacity to support the educational mission of UND.

Solution 8.1: Improve the role of faculty in governance.

- a) Ensure adequate representation of instructional perspectives on search committees. (C7, C8)
- b) Create greater transparency, trust and participation in fiscal decision-making through better communication and more meaningful engagement with faculty at the university and college levels. (C7, C8)
- c) Restore funding to Standing Senate Committees on Faculty Instructional Development and Scholarly Activities and, with them, faculty voice in internal funding decisions surrounding institutional investments in research related to improving teaching at the university. (C7, C8)
- d) Create a dedicated office for Essential Studies, directed by a faculty member with tenure-track or tenured status, to engage faculty from across the UND academic community, helping the whole campus feel a shared commitment to the program. (C5)

Solution 8.2: Adjust the current budget model to better promote instructional effectiveness and innovation.

- a) Provide fiscal support to instruction-related activities appropriate to the primacy of teaching to UND's mission. (C7, C8)
- b) Optimize instruction-related budget “levers” to better incentivize intercollege collaboration in order to develop more effective courses and programs to meet societal needs and promote interdisciplinary thinking. (C2, C3, C6, C7, C8)
- c) Allow for flexibility in faculty contracts to reflect the time and effort associated with teaching innovation and excellence (Step 1: remove the standard 10% per course. Permit departments to negotiate percentages based on effort and outcome). (C7, C8)
- d) Change UND's mission statement to explicitly acknowledge the pursuit of excellence in teaching. (C7, C8)

Solution 8.3: Improve institutional research on teaching and learning and student success.

- a) Establish a research arm of the Teaching Transformation and Development Academy dedicated to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). (C4)

- i) Evaluate student and instructor needs and provide recommendations on how to meet those needs. (C4)
 - ii) Test contemporary education technologies to determine pedagogical efficacy and use findings to inform inclusion in UND classrooms and equipment purchases. (C4)
 - iii) Study effectiveness of alternate course delivery models, and instruction designs on student learning, engagement, and satisfaction. (C4)
 - iv) Explore student success in variable time-based delivery of courses, (e.g., full semester courses, 7-week courses, J-term courses, self-paced enroll anytime courses). (C4)
 - v) Research impact of course changes, as well as implementation of micro-credentialing, and use results to revise and improve UND's curricular structure, offerings, onboarding and off-boarding practices, and overall student educational experiences. (C4)
- b) Measure the effectiveness of course and program requirements to achieve stated competencies or outcomes and apply those measures to assess and validate comparable prior learning. (C3, C6)
 - c) Systematically assess high impact practices to best serve the range of students served by UND and to maintain relevance vis-a-vis emerging issues. (C2)
 - d) Develop nimbler, faculty and pedagogically driven institutional assessment procedures to regularly check in on how students (as well as faculty and staff) are doing and what their needs are. (C2)

Chapter 2: Process and Background

Development of Recommended Solutions and Strategies

The work of the appointed co-chairs, Jeff VanLooy and John Shabb, along with the assembled team of twenty-four Task Force members selected from a University-wide nomination process (Appendix A), was organized around eight looming challenges distilled from a white paper prepared by Interim Provost Storrs (Appendix B) with Partnerships added later (Table 1).

Table 1.	Looming Challenges
C1	Attracting new and underserved student populations.
C2	Aligning UND's academic offerings with emerging societal needs.
C3	Designing flexibility into educational credentialing and experience.
C4	Shaping instructional design and technology to enhance learning.
C5	Designing more flexibility into general education requirements.
C6	Credentialing prior learning and work experience of new student populations.
C7	Rethinking institutional fiscal and academic structure to improve student learning.
C8	Empowering faculty to actualize educational change
C9	Inter- and intra-institutional partnerships

The Task Force convened twice in December 2020. An orientation to “the state of the sector” was led by EAB consultant Rachel Tanner. A series of high-level “state of the sector” videos prepared especially for UND (Appendix E) are available on the Task Force web site. The second meeting laid out the general goals. Each Task Force member was invited to share a vision of one element of the future of higher education at UND in a short narrative in their own voice (Appendix F).

Educating the University community on issues in higher education

One of the Task Force’s main charges was to “educate the University community about big issues facing higher education today and.” In response, the Task Force hosted a series of five public webinars in February and March (Appendix E). Featured guests included the NDUS Chancellor, the five Tribal College presidents in what is now known as North Dakota, two state legislators, as well as UND administrators, faculty, and students. UND’s College of Arts and Sciences sponsored a public [“Eye of the Hawk” lecture with higher education expert, Dr. Tressie McMillan Cottom](#). All other public webinars can be accessed on the Task Force web page. In other sessions, the Task Force followed up with selected public speakers, met with the Director of University Analytics and Planning (UAP) and the Director of Resource Planning and Allocation, as well as heard compelling testimony from a student panel. The Task Force was also fortunate to have a dedicated session with McMillan Cottom.

Required Task Force reading included *Robot Proof* by Joseph E. Aoun, *Land Grant Universities of the Future*, by Steven Gavazzi and E. Gordon Gee, *The Agile College*, by Nathan D. Grawe, and *Lower Ed: The Troubling Rise of For-Profit Colleges in the New Economy* by Tressie McMillan Cottom. Many additional articles, webinars, reports and datasets were identified and shared by UND administrators, as well as Task Force members. A complete bibliography can be found in Appendix G.

Strategies and Solutions for the future of education at UND

President Armacost and Interim Provost Storrs asked the Task Force to “create a framework for developing short and long-term strategies to shape an academically and fiscally robust environment that satisfies the educational needs of the next generation of UND students.” Based on the expertise and experiences of our members, as well as the information gathered during the general public educational sessions, the Task Force began developing recommendations in earnest in March 2021. Using the initial list of 70 ideas generated by individual Task Force members as a starting point, working groups coalesced around the looming challenges. These groups met independently to refine and formalize those most relevant to their respective challenges. We tried to align our recommendations with UND’s mission and values, as well as the University’s current strategic plan. However, our primary focus was to propose actionable solutions or strategies with clearly stated educational goals. We also attempted to identify unmet or emerging needs for prospective learners, highlight distinctive characteristics of the institution, articulate a vision of UND in which the goals will be achieved, while remaining within the realm of fiscal possibility.

Group reports were presented to the Task Force as a whole for comment and suggestions. Our discussions helped each group evaluate how their recommendations meshed with the others and to identify gaps and redundancies. Each group’s recommendations are preserved in this final report as an individual chapter in their own voices. Taken together, they capture many of the thoughts of the Task Force members. Yet, the original, seemingly independent, looming challenges that initially guided the writing of these reports no longer seemed sufficient as an organizing scheme, as groups repeatedly pointed to the same issues and ideas.

A new way of conceptualizing the organization of the Task Force recommendations was developed to better capture their inherent interrelatedness (Figure 1). Qualitative analysis revealed new themes around which the original recommendations could be organized. These themes, or solutions, represent eight broad areas of UND’s educational efforts that, when achieved, will “shape an academically and fiscally robust environment that satisfies the educational needs of the next generation of UND students.” Seven solutions directly address the learning success of future UND students. They are arranged in a circle to indicate that they are part of a whole, integrated plan, such that any one solution cannot be adequately addressed independently of others. The eighth solution – building institutional capacity – is located in the center because it enables the achievement of all other solutions through enhancements of incentives and creating supportive infrastructure.

The recommendations developed by the Task Force groups were subsequently reorganized to better align with the overarching solutions represented in Figure 1 and then consolidated and edited, transforming them into strategies for achieving the eight overarching solutions (Chapter 1). Each of the strategies was then cross-referenced to one or more of the group reports which provide more detail and context (Chapter 1). The reader is encouraged to follow these connections to understand how the fabric of this report is woven.

An Overview: quantitative and qualitative context for strategies and solutions

Recent demographic models based on historical census data project a significant decline in the population of traditional-aged college going students beginning as early as 2025, or 18 years after the

devastating economic effects of the 2008 Great Recession. The trend projects a 10% nationwide decline in traditional-aged students by 2030 (Grawe, 2021). The effects are expected to be unevenly felt with two-year colleges being most vulnerable to decline, followed by less-selective public four-year colleges. The Upper Midwest is projected to mirror national trends. North Dakota is an outlier (WICHE 2021) for a few reasons, including the buffering effect of the Bakken oil boom while it lasted. This does not mean that UND will be immune to enrollment decline since the competition for students in its traditional recruiting area will intensify. Tuition is a major revenue source for UND, and as such, the best way to preserve this part of its budget is to stabilize enrollment and improve retention. Most of the Task Force solutions propose strategies that directly address these challenges.

Even as the traditional college-age population is projected to decline, its diversification will continue at an accelerated pace (Grawe, 2021). Such conclusions are drawn in part from US Census Bureau statistics. The standard for measuring racial and ethnic diversity on college campuses is The National Center for Education Statistics Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Limitations in the way that IPEDS data are collected can lead to underreporting of some racial groups. Falkenstern and Rochat (2021) recently described how this data quality gap may impact policy decisions, specifically for American Indian and Alaska Native students. Access to better UND race and ethnicity enrollment data will be central to measuring the success of future diversity and inclusion efforts. Regardless of the numbers, we must ask if UND is being sufficiently proactive in nurturing an inclusive learning environment for all students who are historically underrepresented ethnic and racial minorities. Strengthening academic programs and support services that cultivate inclusion will not only better enfranchise non-white students, but also provide a richer learning environment for the white majority. Most of the Task Force solutions propose strategies that address this challenge, either directly or indirectly.

In addition to enrollment challenges, according to a 2013 study from Oxford University, “nearly half of U.S. jobs are at risk of automation within the next twenty years” (Aoun xiii). Meanwhile, a “2015 McKinsey report found that solely by using existing technologies, 45 percent of the work that human beings are paid to do could be automated” (Aoun xiii). As Aoun notes, when surveyed, time and again, employers state that they need employees who can write effectively, problem-solve, and analyze things in a broader cultural context. According to Aoun, “[w]e need a new model of learning that enables learners to understand the highly technical world around them and that simultaneously allows them to transcend it by nurturing the mental and intellectual qualities that are unique to humans-- namely their capacity for creativity and mental flexibility” (56). One way that we can enable our students to become “robot-proof” is to give them a strong foundation in the liberal arts, teaching them to think holistically and systemically, as well as to instill a desire to become life-long learners. All of our solutions are focused on improving and supporting our students’ education directly or indirectly. Strategies include re-imagining the first-year experience, integrating robot-proof skills into the fabric of every student’s program plan, and breaking down barriers to more interdisciplinary approaches to teaching.

Historically, North Dakota has funded public higher education at a higher rate than most other states. In recent years, however, there has been growing pressure to reduce appropriations as a percent of state budget. This is in part due to the volatility of an extractive and agriculture-based economy and in part due to political pressures to pare down an expensive part of the state budget. These trends place stress on UND’s budget. Improving UND’s role as a “servant university” (see Gavazzi and Gee) will reinforce its central role in improving the lives of North Dakota citizens and maintaining confidence in UND as a

worthy state investment. This includes recognizing how UND can help citizens navigate a society in which people—young and old—are faced with less career permanence and help replenish their educational toolkit to stay competitive once they (re-)enter the marketplace. Most Task Force solutions address this challenge in a variety of ways. External strategies include repairing and strengthening partnerships with government and private entities across the region, as well as connecting more directly and visibly with employers and citizens of the state. Internal strategies include lowering barriers to credentialing, creating microsites on and off campus for easier access to instruction, and increase flexibility to degree attainment to better fit the needs of non-traditional students.

The University of North Dakota's response to the COVID-19 pandemic illustrates its resilience in effectively serving the educational needs of its students when traditional instructional strategies are not possible. It particularly highlights the importance of technology in overcoming such obstacles. The experience has also reinforced the value of a residential campus as a place for students to gather and learn in a shared experience. Several Task Force solutions consider teaching in a post-COVID world, including how to improve online, hybrid, or HyFlex student educational experiences. Additional strategies include proactively investing in research that supports teaching and learning and the use of instructional technology as the best way to prepare for future stresses. Concurrently, instructors must be provided with resources and professional development opportunities to more effectively adopt best teaching practices. This includes offering ongoing faculty/staff training to remain literate in the most up-to-date technology to better prepare students for the world of the future.

Each and every group speaks to the fact that structural changes will be needed in order to implement our strategies and solutions. Our solution related to building institutional capacity starts to address these issues. Major subthemes include 1) strengthening the role of faculty in governance, 2) re-evaluating the incentive-based budget model to better strengthen UND's education mission, 3) shifting the culture of the faculty reward system to better acknowledge the value of teaching and service excellence, and 4) recalibrating student support systems to better meet the needs of a rapidly diversifying student population. Most of the strategies outlined in Chapter 1 are elaborated upon in the individual group reports.

The Task Force solutions and strategies for the future of education at UND should not be unexpected. In fact, many of our recommendations are already underway on campus in some way; however, what we are proposing is a more holistic, systemic, cooperative approach. Moreover, upon completing some of the reviews we suggest, we believe that most of the strategies proposed here will come at little to no additional cost, just a shifting of effort and strategic investments. If executed well, they will have long-term positive effects: our students will be able to "draw all the threads together," much like this Task Force has attempted to do in our attempt to strengthen UND as we proactively address what the future holds.

Chapter 3: Group Reports

C1: Attracting new and underserved student populations

Focus is on institutional, college, program initiatives.

Team Members:

Crystal Alberts, Andrew Williams, Robert Newman

Overview

UND's Mission is to provide transformative learning, discovery and community engagement opportunities for developing tomorrow's leaders. To accomplish this mission, we must serve all students and communities in the state. Notably, our Core Values emphasize

- Community - A spirit of collaboration and connectedness across the University and beyond.
- Diversity - An understanding and appreciation of diverse people, experiences, and ideas.
- Inclusivity - A welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environment for all.

These critical elements are the specific focus of Goal 5 of the Strategic Plan, which emphasizes the value of a diverse student body and the need to “encourage/ensure students from underrepresented groups fully participate in enrollment growth, retention, and graduation....” Not just equal, but *equitable* access to education and the opportunity to succeed lie at the heart of the university's mission.

Achieving this Goal will require targeted outreach to currently underserved and under-resourced prospective students, as well as the dedication of resources into facilities, programming, and staff to ensure their success. The most conspicuous underserved populations in North Dakota are the Indigenous peoples of the region. Additionally, there is a growing population of Asian and Pacific Islanders and other individuals collectively labeled BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color). There are also New Americans, who have arrived in the area from outside the United States, among other potential students who are often older than those traditionally thought of as “college applicants” and who may have quite varied life and work experiences, including those who may be student parents. A number of these students may already have earned college credits and needed to “stop out” for one reason or another; others may already have college degrees. Each of these groups will have different motives for seeking higher education and support needs in order to be successful in reaching their goals.

Recommendation 1

Restore strong and collaborative relationships with the Indigenous Nations in what is now known as North Dakota and the region, including the Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and rebuild and grow the programs and support services at UND that are critical to success of Indigenous students. Our recommendations are in line with recent recommendations from the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force ([DEI Task Force report](#), Priority 1.10, p. 11).

Elements specific to this investment should include:

- Hiring a dedicated liaison with the cultural knowledge and established community relationships to assist with recruitment, communication, and retention (DEI Task Force report, Recommendation 23, p. 20).
- Building ongoing relationships to define community needs and potential for collaborations to benefit both students currently enrolled at TCUs and those who may be inspired to transition to UND (see below for specific possibilities).
- Rebuilding and expanding American Indian Studies (AIS) with strategic faculty / staff hires, preferably hiring Indigenous faculty members in a variety of disciplines. The AIS program and Indigenous Ways of Knowing do not fit a “Western” framework, which should be seen as a strength and potential benefit to the campus-wide Essential Studies program and other interdisciplinary efforts.
- Re-establishing and funding the American Indian Student Services (AISS) program that was a national model and restoring the American Indian Center to its original purpose ([See M. Kozel, 2008](#)).
- Expanding student services and creating microsites at partner institutions according to local needs to address the challenges many Native students face with family commitments (e.g., transportation, internet access, cohort building, support services).
- Developing, as identified, joint educational programs such as 2+2s (or 2+2+1s leading to a non-thesis M.S.), and programs that provide a bridge and pathway from high school to college and possibly to graduate or medical school (e.g., [INMED](#), [Indigenous Health Program](#)).
- Supporting faculty and student exchanges with TCUs, which will be impactful professional development / culturally educational opportunities for UND faculty and students and for TCU partners.

Further rationale

UND is justifiably proud of its historically strong AIS program, but the program and funding for it has diminished in recent years. Restoring and expanding the program would be a powerful signal to Indigenous communities that we consider the program valuable and our relationship with Indigenous peoples vital to our mission. UND crafted a Land Acknowledgement statement a year ago, and it is time to move from words to action to benefit Indigenous students and nations. Our recommendations parallel those of the Diversity Task Force and acting on them will demonstrate our commitment to our Core Values. They are concrete steps that will increase opportunities for Indigenous students, capacity in Indigenous communities, and cultural awareness and intelligence in all UND students. In practical terms, we can target programs seen by tribes as high priorities for their needs (e.g., Social Work, Nursing and Engineering programs at Tribal Colleges prepare students to transfer to B.S. programs elsewhere) or that will create a path to existing programs (Indigenous Health, INMED, [INPSYDE](#), [RAIN](#)). Investing in AIS will also enhance our capacity to train or credential teachers in the state to provide education on Native American history that is [now required for grades K-12 \(21-SB2304\)](#) with the curriculum requirements being developed by a group led by Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College’s education department (<https://indiancountrytoday.com/news/required-north-dakota-passes-native-education-bill>).

Recommendation 2.1

Evaluate UND’s Enrollment Management strategy and adjust it if it is having a disparate impact on students from underrepresented and/or under-resourced backgrounds or non-traditional aged students.

Like most higher education institutions, UND has an Enrollment Management team and strategy based on a complex algorithm that is designed to generate interest in UND, increase the pool of applicants, and persuade accepted students to register at UND. While we do not have the space to explain the details here (we also do not know the complete inner workings), we do know that UND's plan works to balance many admissions factors, including academic qualifications, diversity, and financial need, particularly as UND does rely on tuition revenue to operate. However, while many of us are familiar with enrollment management in some way, it was actually the students who participated in the Task Force—whether as members or as part of the panel—that really drove this point home. Based on their experiences, they explained how some current practices result in qualified students without financial need receiving scholarships and waivers well beyond the full cost of tuition, student fees, room and board (one stated that they make more money in scholarships that go straight into their bank account than they would at a job), while comparably qualified students with financial need end up being food and housing insecure, sometimes relying on these friends who have received more scholarships/waivers to cover the cost of food.

Moreover, some of enrollment management practices create scholarship/waiver opportunities that are not available to non-traditional students at all or that place underrepresented and under-resourced students at a significant disadvantage, because, among the usual issues with standardized tests PSATs require fees or the knowledge/ability to obtain a fee waiver. To give one example, we know that UND works very hard to attract a diverse and “academically-qualified” student, which has been a headline for press releases for nearly every year since [2016](#) (see also [2018](#) and [2019](#)); our student body snapshot now states that the 2020-2021 freshman are [the “most diverse and most academically-prepared freshman class in UND’s 137-year history.”](#) It is our understanding that one of the measures to determine “academically-prepared” is GPA; however, another includes scores on standardized tests, such as the ACT and the PSAT. In fact, in recent years, UND has begun purchasing names of high school sophomores who have taken the PSAT to get a jump start on the process. Taken in a student’s sophomore or junior year, the PSAT is also known as the “National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test;” any National Merit Scholar Finalist or Semi-Finalist from ND or MN who selects UND as their first choice on their National Merit application will “receive a UND scholarship equivalent to full tuition and mandatory student fees (renewable for up to 3 additional years if criteria are met). This scholarship is in addition to other UND scholarships and waivers you're eligible to receive (up to the full cost of attendance)” (<https://und.edu/one-stop/financial-aid/scholarships.html#d33e420-1>). Based on reports from the College Board, which administers the PSAT, in 2018-19, [1,609 out of 26,781 ND students](#) took the test, while [23,813 out of 282,467](#) students took it on the MN-side. The 2019-2020 numbers are similar in both states. Any non-traditional aged student applying to UND will not be eligible for this opportunity, because they cannot take a test offered only to sophomores and juniors. It is a select group for many reasons.

Recommendation 2.2

Create or strengthen student support services for the specific needs of non-traditional students, student parents, New Americans, and others that do not fit the model of a recent high school graduate. Recruiting from this broad and diverse population is only the first step in increasing enrollment. To succeed, they may need assistance in a range of needs that should be met in a holistic manner, as well as a space that helps to build community and connection to campus.

The model currently being used in [Grand Forks Public schools \(https://www.gfschools.org /Page/9332\)](https://www.gfschools.org/Page/9332), which also appears at some college campuses across the country, is a highly effective one. We recommend taking a similar approach and creating a mentor center dedicated to serving non-traditional students that is a one-stop spot to find support services and encourage community/cohort-building. Services provided may include:

- Support for transitions to academic life, regardless of what that cultural transition might be.
- Assistance with access to childcare, health care, housing, food, financial aid, etc.
- ELL/ESL support services
- Disability Support Services
- Dedicated space and staffing
- Tutoring
- Dedicated advisors highly trained in issues related to non-traditional students, transfer issues, and exiting/reentering higher education.
- Educational programs and support services for *formerly* incarcerated people (e.g., Justice Fellows programs, transition plans), in support of Group T4: Creating Partnerships between Departments, Colleges, Institutions, Industry, Government’s Recommendation #1.
- Working with relevant stakeholders to develop educational programs and support services for *currently* incarcerated people (e.g., certificate programs, planning for educational transitions), in support of Group C9: Creating Partnerships between Departments, Colleges, Institutions, Industry, Government’s Recommendation #1.

Ideally, this would be a space located close to the UND Veteran & Military Services Office, since there will be overlap in these student groups. However, we are suggesting a separate space.

Because non-traditional aged students may have children, we propose an area be reserved for a play space for kids or an otherwise kid-friendly space be created, so that their parents may study or meet with advisors without having to worry about childcare or disrupting other students. We also implementing the recommendations of Generation Hope, [outlined in their higher education toolkit](https://www.generationhope.org/research), based on their [National Student Parent Survey Results and Recommendations](https://www.generationhope.org/research) (https://www.generationhope.org/research).

Recommendation 2.3:

Develop and offer a free online, asynchronous variation of the course described in Solution 7.c.ii for the parents, family, and/or student-identified community of each UND student to strengthen their support network, while also inviting their support network into the UND community.

UND often has a relatively high number of first-generation college students. In collaboration with TRIO and other entities on campus, in-person orientation was revised to help make the parents, guardians, or other members of a first-generation college student’s support network feel more comfortable on campus. However, this program was restricted to in-person orientation and did not extend beyond that one-day event, although regular emails are sent out to families by UND’s Office of Student Involvement and Parent Programs. While these may explain what is going on around campus, they don’t necessarily shed light on what is happening inside the classrooms. This divide can result in first-generation students feeling like they don’t exactly belong in either place, and leave even the most supportive parents finding that they can’t help as much as they would like. However, we think that a free, asynchronous, online

class designed for all parents, friends, and members of a student's support group will be beneficial to all. Broken down into 16 modules primarily with an academic focus, the support network can get a sense of many of the most frequently required classes on campus (e.g., Composition, Communication, pre-Health Courses, the Math Mall), while also learning how to use Blackboard, Campus Connection, and other essential software tools on campus. In short, we can give a students' support network a sense of what their student is experiencing, thereby inviting them into the UND classroom, not just extracurricular activities, and our community, while also enabling them to better understand and assist their students as they transition into college life again or for the first time.

Recommendation 3:

Create flexible degree programs and credentialing to provide unique and customizable opportunities to students who may have specific career or educational goals that do not conform to existing, traditional disciplinary majors (see also Recommendations C3&C6, C7(4)).

Students in the future may seek a four-year degree but may also value smaller units of credentialing. They may not value a lengthy and comprehensive immersion in a single discipline, but rather a modular program that allows them to develop skills and knowledge from a variety of disciplines. The interdisciplinary structure will be tailored to the student's career goals. The kernels of such a program can be seen in the Essential Studies program, but that is too limited in its current formulation.

Recommendation 4:

All instructors in all classes should embrace pedagogical methods that create an inclusive learning environment that includes discussing their respective fields from multiple, intersectional perspectives.

- We recommend that UND's entire curriculum be reviewed and revised so that diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) are "infused throughout the curriculum" rather than just having "diversity classes" that are a "requirement" of Essential Studies (see also DEI Task Force report, Priority 1.6, p. 11), although those classes will remain a part of ES.
- While STEM and data science has long argued that it is objective and DEIJ issues are not a part of the course content and that these discussions should not be included in these classes, there are numerous studies that suggest the exact opposite (e.g., [Racialized science/biology is often used to perpetuate the idea that races are essentially "different \[see A. Saini\]."](#) [Modern medicine has deep ties to experimentation on enslaved peoples \[see H.A. Washington\].](#) [Algorithms and AI have been demonstrated to be fundamentally biased \[see C. O'Neil\].](#)). Resources are available that teach STEM and data science content from diverse perspectives. (e.g., *Indigenous Statistics*, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, *Who's Asking?*) that could easily be incorporated into existing courses across campus.

We recommend that each classroom be a space where all students can gain new ways of seeing and knowing the world. However, this education should not mean centering one group at the expense of another: in particular, the experiences of the students who are outside of the dominant culture should not be used to teach the students who are in the dominant culture. As Nikki Giovanni famously notes in her essay "Campus Racism 101" filled with advice for Black students: "Your job is not to educate white people; it is to obtain an education" (111). This is in

line with recent recommendations from the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force. (DEI Task Force report, Recommendation 29, p. 21)

- We recommend that UND invest in instructors and support staff so that they have the resources (financial, time, training, and/or technology) to design and redesign their courses and update their pedagogical approaches as needed (see "empowering faculty to actualize educational change" recommendation and elsewhere).

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C2 & C5: Aligning UND's academic offerings with emerging societal needs; Designing more flexibility into general education requirements

Team members:

Dawson Dutchak, Daphne Pederson, Lori Robison, Christopher Felege, Heather Terrell

C2 – Aligning UND's academic offerings with emerging societal needs.

1. ***BUILDING OUTSIDE (and inside!) PARTNERSHIPS. Develop closer working relationships with area and regional employers to increase applied learning experiences and internship opportunities for students, and to help inform program availability, alignment of university training to post-degree employment, and marketing.***
 - a. Currently, student internships are available but the burden of finding and arranging applied learning experiences often lies with the student themselves or to individual faculty members. More assistance in proactively creating openings and helping match students to those roles would be beneficial, as well as helping students articulate the gains in skills and knowledge resulting from such pairings.
 - i. Creating strong partnerships and effectively matching students requires investment in on-campus coordinators and faculty mentors.
 - ii. Evaluation of the quality of the opportunities should be considered as options are explored.
 - iii. Care should be taken to ensure that opportunities are not exploitative.
 - b. Institutional opportunities for experiential learning should also be further explored (e.g. computer science majors working with UIT).
 - c. Conduct a needs assessment with large regional employers, government, non-profits and other agencies to identify needed curricular and programmatic offerings or training that UND does not currently offer.
 - d. More clearly articulate and align the language of a liberal arts education and Essential Studies with what employers and students are looking for. If we can better frame and market the skills base of these programs, this will help our stakeholders see its value and elevate our liberal arts mission. This can build into the 'leaders in action' branding of UND and elevate how UND provides students with skills needed to meet emerging societal needs.
 - e. Specific disciplines may also benefit from an understanding of what employers believe students should be able to know and do *outside* of their major or discipline. This clear articulation would also help students more carefully select ES courses and understand their value, helping to minimize the "check box" mentality.
2. ***BUDGET MODELING AND OTHER UNIVERSITY PRACTICES THAT SUPPORT AND PROMOTE INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION. Rethink the levers in MIRA and other formal practices (Page 2s, department and college TRP policies, etc.) to better promote and encourage***

interdisciplinary efforts (across colleges) to develop courses and programming to meet societal needs and encourage multidisciplinary thinking about issues.

- a. The best strategies to educate our students are those that foster critical and creative thinking about societal issues using multidisciplinary tools and perspectives. The inadvertent outcome of the MIRA budget model is a restriction of cross-department and cross-college collaboration in undergraduate and graduate programming. Although it has been suggested that the budget model itself does not restrict collaboration, in practice there are several examples of creative collaboration across colleges that were abruptly ended due to concerns about SCH generation, tuition revenue, and cost to the “external” colleges. The unintended consequences of an incentivized resource allocation model have created an unhealthy situation that needs to be examined and resolved. Furthermore, other university processes and practices (e.g., Page 2s, the policy that a team-taught course ‘counts’ for 5%, college and department TRP policies) need to be examined to ensure that they do not restrict collaborative efforts.

3. INCREASE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND ASSESS ITS IMPACT. To help students grow and learn, and graduate ready to enter the workforce and address emerging societal needs, UND must strategically embed an integrated series of high impact learning experiences across the curriculum and throughout students’ time at UND – upon entry and up to graduation. Experiences that focus on pressing social needs and issues, and that require students to apply knowledge and exercise meaningful skills, result in memorable learning opportunities that *can be included on a resume*. The burden of finding and accessing these opportunities should not fall to students, but the institution. As well, a critical and systematic assessment of high impact practices should be put in place to best serve the range of students served by UND and to maintain relevance vis-a-vis emerging issues.

- a. First-year experiences and learning communities should be prioritized; at the same time, we should consider the variety of needs that both traditional and non-traditional students have as a means of increasing retention.
- b. Given the Task Force's emphasis on the recruitment and retention of non-traditional students, HIPs tied to emerging societal needs are worth prioritizing because they have been shown to provide the largest benefit to students who are from at-risk populations. Furthermore, surveys of employers have consistently shown a need for collaborative/teamwork skills, writing skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving. These align with several HIPs.
- c. Many instructors are already using HIPs or could easily cross the threshold to be recognized with HIPs with minimal guidance or additional resources; Other HIPs would require an investment in resources and reduced class sizes. Taxonomies for assessment have already been developed but we urge institutional follow-through.
- d. HIPs are just one way to enhance student engagement. Other options should be explored, but these options should be accompanied by more nimble institutional assessment procedures to check in on how students (as well as faculty and staff) are doing and what their needs are.
- e. We should carefully consider what “student success” means for different student populations, as well as what “retention” means for different students. Retention of non-

traditional students and online students should be assessed differently than retention for traditional, college-aged, full-time, on-campus students.

C5: Essential Studies

1. **RECASTING ESSENTIAL STUDIES AS LIBERAL ARTS.** The Essential Studies program should be understood as providing *THE* foundation for the strong liberal arts education students receive at UND.
 - Essential Studies is the program through which we are best positioned to strengthen—and create access to—a strong liberal arts education for all undergraduate students. The ES program must be recast in this light – requiring a cultural shift in how the institution thinks about, strategizes, communicates, and implements ES programming. There is a clear and explicit connection between the ES program and Goal 1 of the university strategic plan that remains obscured in campus discussions.
2. **OVERSIGHT.** Essential Studies, as a major academic program that engages all undergraduate students, needs a dedicated office and a tenured or tenure-track faculty director.
 - ES should have strong academic leadership. Though the largest SCH generating program on campus, and one that engages all undergraduate students enrolled at UND, ES currently has no one who is fully contracted to oversee it. A dedicated office and director for ES was a recommendation of the original Task Force that created ES, and a return to this arrangement will result in greater potential to rebuild relationships with faculty and students—thus leading to more successful programmatic outcomes. The ES director should have a contract that is roughly 75% administrative and 25% teaching to remain engaged in the classroom and with students. The ES office should engage faculty from across the UND academic community, helping the whole campus feel a shared commitment to the program.
3. **FACULTY CONTROL AND INVOLVEMENT.** Faculty across campus implement and deliver the Essential Studies program. Thus, faculty should control any review and revision efforts, including plans for assessment. The ES Committee is necessary but not sufficient, particularly in the absence of a dedicated office and director of ES.
 - The ES Program is now seven years beyond its last program review and thus a new ES Task Force or Review Team should be established. The ES Committee, already charged with the time-consuming work of current program oversight, should not act alone in the important work of reviewing and revising the program, its requirements, and learning goals. For campus-wide buy-in, the new task force or review team should be composed of a range of faculty members who teach in and have experience with the program. These review efforts should find ways to encourage integrated course work, experiential learning, and other high- impact practices across the ES program, helping students better understand the value of a broad, liberal arts education.

4. *RESOURCING FOR INNOVATION AND RETENTION.* The most effective general education programs utilize a series of high impact practices and meaningfully engage students in interdisciplinary experiences with faculty who know them by name. These experiences support student learning and growth, as well as a long-term commitment to UND and support for public institutions of higher education.

- Budget challenges have resulted in deep cuts to instructional staffing, to larger enrollment caps, and to fewer professional growth opportunities in pedagogical development and instructional design. Currently, many ES courses – especially those taken by freshmen and sophomores – are large enrollment sections in which HIPs and experiential learning are difficult to meaningfully implement.
- UND’s ES courses are not generally developed with the ES program in mind. Rather, most are discipline-specific courses that fulfill other programmatic goals and secondarily address ES learning goals. A more effective approach is to devote resources to the creation of ES courses that are right-sized for student learning and implementation of best practices, developed solely with ES goals in mind.
- The current budget model discourages cross-college collaboration, but we must find ways to encourage a more integrative ES education, in which faculty from across campus could work together to more intentionally provide interdisciplinary courses for students. To this end, ES courses that are not housed within a single discipline should not be treated as ‘overload’ teaching; instead, they should be resourced and recognized as being part of a faculty member’s regular contractual time.
- Innovative approaches to ES can help foster greater understanding of the importance of the liberal arts and build greater capacity for alumni support and advocacy.
- Educating students about the mission, history, and value of public higher education institutions could help secure, in the long term, a greater advocacy for higher education and a stronger future for the University and public education in general.

5. *PRIORITIZE REVIEW OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE.* Review students' first-year educational experiences at UND in order to ensure that their introduction to the University is educationally valuable, and they feel part of a larger academic community. Attention to the educational quality of the first year may well be rewarded through greater student retention. Review should also be done to assess the experiences of transfer students and non-traditional student populations.

- While a true "first-year experience" course can be costly, there are other forms of intellectually supportive programming (e.g., reading groups, lecture series) that can be tied to existent ES course offerings, like, for example, the first-year writing and public speaking courses.
- Working to improve and integrate ES course offerings will also improve the student experience in the first year. At the same time, we should consider how to provide students with better, more individualized advising from the start that will help them find more personally meaningful course choices.

- We need to fund, and to help students find, classes with high-impact practices in which someone knows their names. If the typical first-year student is not enrolled in classes in which they have strong interactions with real instructors—if they are only enrolled in large lecture courses and in courses that are heavily reliant on technology for instruction like the math lab or ALEKS—students might feel as if their education is not our top priority.
- From the start, students should have an opportunity to explore new disciplines, topics, and new ways of thinking through their ES courses. Thus, we should encourage a revision of restrictive four-year plans that imply little student choice in ES course selection—and thus may be limiting student understanding of the value of a liberal arts education. We should find ways to name productive academic "exploration" as a value of the ES program.

C3 & C6: Designing flexibility into educational credentialing and experience; Credentialing prior learning and work experience of new student populations

Team members:

Tammy Oltz, Cindy Flom-Meland, Nick Wilson

There are demographic changes on the horizon which have and will affect higher education. The quotes below represent example data points for contextualizing the recommendations provided herein. The cited quotations are not to imply causality on any one population or group, but to review as a whole for potential implications to UND and higher education more broadly. The recommendations within C3 and C6 stand in the face of any favorable or unfavorable enrollment impacts to UND, yet the impetus for such recommendations is stronger in the face of potential shifts and serve to improve access to education across our served populations.

"In total, during the decade following the Great Recession, lower fertility rates account for 5.7 million 'foregone births'" (Grawe, 2021, p.207).

"Between 2018-2019 and 2033-2034, the numbers of students from the Midwest and Northeast are expected to fall by about 10% at two-year and regional four-year schools. Most of this loss is expected in the years following 2025 as the consequences of lower births 18 years prior play out" (Grawe, 2021, p.33-34).

"While the total population of young people in America is expected to contract over the next 15 years, some notable subgroups are nevertheless expected to grow: those in the Pacific West and South Atlantic, those claiming Asian descent, and those who have at least one parent who holds a college degree" (Grawe, 2021, p.30).

Within the context of the C3 and C6 sub-goals, what can UND do with this information?

C3: Designing flexibility into educational credentialing and experience

Emerging Needs Addressed

Rapid changes in technology, work environments, and the structure of many professions indicates that today's students must have the life-long capacity to identify when they need new skills and to develop methods for attaining them. Today's students are likely to engage in multiple professions throughout their lifetimes, both through their own choices and through the extinction of some jobs and the emergence of new ones. Thus, students need experience in self-directed learning, transferring knowledge between disciplines, identifying gaps in their skills, and identifying ways to fill those gaps. They also need to learn how to distinguish themselves from competition from both other people and machines. Finally, they need the structural capacity to enter or re-enter higher education in a convenient and financially feasible way as many times as necessary throughout their lives.

Recommendation 1: Provide opportunities for student-driven innovations in credentialing and degree attainment.

The University should facilitate students' ability to take active ownership in their learning by involving students in the development of their personal educational goals and the pathways to attain them. While faculty should provide the framework for identifying core competencies, students must have abundant opportunities to find and/or create educational opportunities to meet those competencies in both traditional and new ways. Such opportunities might include: increased freedom in course selection, the ability to earn course credit via a variety of work and volunteer experience (not just traditional internships), and the ability to create personalized, University-recognized credentials based on combinations of in-class and out-of-class activity. For example, a student might create and earn a certificate or badge in "civic engagement" based on a combination of course work, participating in extracurricular activities, and/or paid or volunteer work.

UND Core Values: Discovery, Diversity, and Liberal Arts

Recommendation 2: Evaluate how UND's current budgetary model is implemented to ensure departments are incentivized to collaborate rather than compete in developing innovative educational and credentialing opportunities.

The implementation of Recommendation 1 inherently requires the ability of faculty and staff in various university departments to collaborate as many students can be expected to have interests and educational needs that cross disciplines. Currently, however, there is a widespread perception that MIRA operates to silo departments and provide preferential treatment to some while undervaluing the contributions of others. Under such circumstances, some faculty and staff are disincentivized from collaborating with other departments or increasing curricular flexibility for fear of losing faculty slots or other financial support. Thus, to facilitate the kind of cross-school/departmental collaboration that both faculty and students need to create innovative, personalized learning opportunities, the University must use a budget model that rewards such cooperation.

UND Core Values: Community and Discovery

C6: Credentialing prior learning and work experience of new student populations

Emerging Needs Addressed

Students who seek to enter higher education with significant prior work or life experiences often have unique challenges. Such students may be older than average, may have significant outside responsibilities such as full-time jobs or family responsibilities, and may have a strong need to obtain their credentials in an expedited fashion. Non-traditional students who are entering a University for the first time or returning after not finishing a degree may also have substantially different feelings on higher education than traditional students depending on their reasons for delaying or pausing their higher education and their reasons for resuming it later in life. To attract and retain such students, the University must lessen barriers for such students that occur throughout their higher education

experiences, from admissions to credentialing, as well as show respect for the diversity of experiences of such students.

Recommendation 1: Develop partnerships with local businesses for on-site education that would provide credentials and/or a shortened path to degree-attainment.

UND is fortunate to be located near several thriving businesses in a variety of industries from health care to manufacturing to technology. Creating educational partnerships with such institutions has the ability to benefit current and future students, as well as the companies and their employees. Beyond traditional internships, the University should explore possibilities for providing classes and credentialing opportunities on-site at the companies, open to both current students and current employees. Such opportunities could be provided by University faculty, company personnel, or a combination of both. Students would gain more opportunities for hands-on learning and employees who are not current students would gain access to education that they might not otherwise have the time or financial resources to obtain. Employees who enjoy their experiences and earn credits might also be incentivized to continue their education at UND.

UND Core Values: Community and Lifelong Learning

Recommendation 2: Provide flexible, individualized pathways for students to bypass (or validate) course or other requirements based on their prior training or life experiences.

Students entering or returning to higher education after obtaining significant work or life experience should have those prior experiences “counted” toward credentials and degrees in a way that accounts for their individual circumstances. Some prior learning lends itself to “testing out” of coursework, as the University already recognizes in certain areas. UND should explore whether there are additional areas in which students might “test out” of requirements, but it should also explore how prior life experiences that don’t lend themselves to quantification or testing might be evaluated to allow for bypassing certain requirements. To accomplish this, the University and departments must evaluate the reasoning behind various course and other requirements to determine the expected competency that is being taught and how that competency might be accurately measured in alternate ways.

UND Core Value: Diversity, Inclusivity, and Lifelong Learning

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C4 Group Report: Shaping instructional design and technology to enhance learning

Team members:

Bailey Bubach, Dana Michael Harsell, Kizito Mukuni, and Rhoda Owens

Overview

The American Council of Education (ACE) 2021 Survey of University Presidents reveals that 59 percent of higher education instruction took place predominantly online in Fall 2020 and 57 percent in Spring 2021 in response to the COVID-19 public health crisis. While many institutions increased their technical capacities for online delivery, much of the transition from campus-based to online or hybrid instruction was completed without the full range of resources available to develop online courses or to ensure student success. The COVID-19 public health crisis represents an exogenous shock to how UND delivers content, but also offers opportunities to improve instruction going forward.

The group recommends establishing a research arm of TTaDA to increase collaboration and connectedness between faculty, administration, students, TTaDA, University Analytics and Planning, the Educational Research lab staff, and other UND departments while providing needed resources to all. Refinement of instructional design and delivery would support diverse student and faculty needs while providing a more supportive, inclusive, and welcoming on campus and off campus environment. Additionally, these actions would instill in students a passion for lifelong learning. Values of Community, Discovery, Diversity, Inclusivity, Liberal Arts, and Lifelong Learning:

Recommendations

Group C4 proposes that UND establishes a research arm dedicated to the scholarship of teaching and learning, with the following charges:

Recommendation	Outcome(s)	Direct/Indirect Measures for the Outcomes
The lab would serve as the educational research arm of Teaching Transformation and Development Academy (TTaDA) to collaborate with Academic Technologies and other departments to provide training opportunities to students on the use of various educational technology used in their courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved student learning outcomes.• Improved interdepartmental innovation performance.• Improved student satisfaction with use of educational technology.• Provide research, support, and evaluation for Taskforce recommendations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre and posttests• Student surveys

<p>Identify and work with faculty willing to incorporate (experiment with) different pedagogical approaches in their courses such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporating themes (i.e., adult learner preferences or work friendly options) into the curricula to support non-traditional and working students. • Gearing delivery modules for traditional learners. • Exploration of ways to optimize engagement of online students (i.e., achieve equal utilization and availability of campus support services). • Establish rotating faculty fellowships or ambassadors (with representation from each college) to engage in educational research. Ambassadors engage in conversations with colleges about educational technologies (modeled after School of Graduate Study’s “Gradvocates”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty ownership in research and learning, through development of external collaborative grant funding. • Improved student learning across various student demographics (traditional and non-traditional students). • Improved student retention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty interviews/surveys • SELFI scores • Data from University Analytics and Planning
<p>Identify needed resources for distance learners to help them feel connected to the campus and online students, and while keeping their nontraditional schedules.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved student learning. • Improved student retention. • Improved student satisfaction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student surveys • Data from University Analytics and Planning
<p>Collaborate with various departments to provide faculty professional development and support on use of various educational technology and course delivery approaches.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved faculty technical skills. • Improved faculty knowledge and competencies with use of various course delivery approaches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre and post interviews/surveys

<p>Research student and instructor needs (resources, support, e.tc) and provide recommendations on how instructors and UND can meet the needs to ensure student academic success.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved student learning outcomes. • Improved student retention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SELFI scores • Data from University Analytics and Planning
<p>Research and test contemporary educational technologies for inclusion in teaching and learning and disseminate knowledge to UND and other institutions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up-to-date technical skills for faculty and students. • University remains relevant to current needs. • Provide recommendations to NDUS for technology needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre and post interviews/surveys
<p>Research effectiveness of alternate course delivery models, and instruction designs on student learning, engagement, and satisfaction.</p> <p>Explore the efficacy of longer-term changes to time-based delivery of course, (e.g., full semester courses, 7-week courses, J-term courses, self-paced enroll anytime courses).</p> <p>Research ways that course changes and micro credentialing break academic silos, create value for students and improve student onboarding and offboarding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate knowledge to UND and other institutions. • Decrease barriers for student learning / increase access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data from University Analytics and Planning

Resources required:

- Dedicated personnel (e.g., lab manager/director, graduate research assistants, data analyst)
- Physical and virtual space
- Up-to-date educational technology

Fit with Strategic Plan:

This proposal crosscuts with several pillars of the One UND 2017-2022 Strategic Plan.

Goal 1: While the proposal serves all areas of academic affairs, the proposal may also augment Goal 1: “Provide a strong undergraduate liberal arts foundation” through an augmentation of ES and core liberal arts courses.

Goal 2: changes to delivery modes must consider how to increase persistence to graduation.

Goal 3: targeted enrollment and additional online offerings could promote enrollment in underserved areas, create additional flexibility for non-traditional or working students, etc.

Goal 5: Refinement of instructional design and delivery should dovetail into UND's stated DEI outcome goals.

Goal 6: Flexibility in delivery and design could help recruit and retain active-duty military students (see Goals 2 & 3)

Goal 7: Flexibility in delivery and design offers opportunities for alumni/stakeholders to help with instruction, post-graduation placement, as well as offer opportunities for alumni to seek post-graduate credentialing or Continuing Education Credits (CEUs) for their profession/occupation.

Works Cited

American Council of Education. (2021). College and university presidents respond to Covid-19: 2021 spring term survey. Retrieved from <https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/Presidents-Respond-COVID19-Spring2021.pdf>

C7 & C8: Rethinking institutional fiscal and academic structure to improve student learning; empowering faculty to actualize educational change.

Team members:

Anne Kelsch, Shannon Sporbert Webber, Jeff VanLooy, Kay Powell

C7 Rethinking institutional fiscal and academic structure to improve student learning.

“Our mission is to provide transformative learning, discovery and community engagement opportunities for developing tomorrow's leaders.”

In order to fulfill our mission of providing transformative learning for today's students and tomorrow's leaders, we must ensure the fiscal viability of our institution by investing in teaching innovation and excellence. UND, like other institutions, is faced with a diminishing pool of traditional students. To sustain and increase enrollment, UND needs to both recruit more non-traditional students and retain current students. As an institution we need to position ourselves to attract and serve these students. As institutions of higher education compete for students, we need to be prepared to meet students where they are, providing the help they need to achieve the education they deserve and to attain the professional goals they seek.

In a world where customized products and on-demand services allow individuals to control their experiences, the business of education at UND is much the same as it's always been. In order to educate today's students, UND must reorganize around our students' experience and needs. In order to educate tomorrow's leaders, UND must adopt an organizational structure that can more easily adapt to the rapidly changing world we live in. (Gavazzi & Gee, 2018 and Amoruso & Grawe, 2021)

Recommendation One

Establish intentionality and investment in teaching excellence as UND's central mission. Student learning is central in UND's mission statement. As the primary path to increasing student learning, the scholarly pursuit of teaching excellence should be directly articulated as central to that mission as well. UND's mission statement should state that we foster a campus culture of teaching excellence, UND communications (both internal and external) should emphasize teaching and UND administration should significantly increase investment in pedagogical and curriculum development.

- A. Provide fiscal support appropriate to the primacy of teaching in revenue generation (tuition dollars). Adjust the “levers” of the MIRA model to better support teaching and student learning. Possible actions include shifting the 60/40 split of tuition revenues (in which the college of record receives 40% and the college offering the course receives 60%) to a higher percentage allocated to those responsible for both teaching undergraduate and graduate courses. Adjust the allotment of discretionary funding to the Grand Challenges and other administrative priorities to support instructional development, more HIPs, smaller class sizes and data gathering on student learning in courses. Much like the major push to make “research first” over the last five years, investments need to demonstrate that teaching is a primary mission of the

university. For example, institutional practice that places representation from the division of research on search committees should be paralleled with teaching.

- B. Make resources available to support evidence-based teaching and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). Faculty conducting research to improve student learning and success should have access to institutional funding. Restore grants for faculty to undertake professional development around pedagogy--including travel to pedagogical conferences and expenses associated with teaching-related research- and provide support for innovative course and curriculum design. Provide training for faculty to analyze data on student learning and direct UAP to be responsive to requests for data needed to enhance learning in classrooms and programs. (connection to LC4)

Recommendation Two

Create greater transparency, trust and participation in fiscal decision-making to ensure that the institutional primacy of teaching and improving student learning is reflected in the budget.

Under the “Powers and Functions” description (section II. The University Legislature), the UND Constitution clearly states that the University Senate shall act “...as a consultant to the President in matters pertaining to: planning; organization or reorganization of the schools, colleges, and departments; disputes arising between or among schools and/or colleges; matters of budget apportionment; and decisions regarding physical resources”. Furthermore, the purpose of the University Senate Budget Committee is “To provide guidance and oversight to the administration in regard to the creation and implementation of budget in furtherance of the University’s strategic plan...”. Recently, it has been the experience of the faculty and the budget committee that budget decisions have come forward from the administration with little consultation with faculty. Often these decisions have been made by the time they are shared with the Budget Committee, leaving that committee with little opportunity to act or provide guidance or oversight. Given the impact budget decisions have on academic conditions and student learning, it is recommended that:

- A. Create greater transparency between the administration and the faculty through the Senate Budget Committee. Budget matters which directly and indirectly affect academics and student learning should be passed through the university budget committee in the early stages of development so that members can provide necessary guidance and oversight.
- B. Individual colleges should create budget committees (if one does not exist) which will act in parallel to the University Senate budget Committee in that they will provide guidance and oversight to the Dean.
- C. Broader two-way communication should be improved between administration and faculty related to budget decisions. The committee should be assigned adequate administrative support to provide for communications and transparency. A University Senate Budget Committee website can allow for information on budget matters to be dispersed. Feedback from the university community can be obtained through a “suggestion box” on the website and questions can be taken and responded to.

Recommendation Three

Create a culture that encourages interdisciplinary collaboration, as well as courses and curriculum that prepare students for the rapidly changing needs of the workforce.

Establish a task force to remove systemic barriers to interdisciplinary and cross college collaboration, explore redundancies and silos, and create structures that are student friendly and student facing (Grawe, 2021). Bring this systems-thinking approach and flexibility to credentialing and modular curriculum (Aoun, 2017).

- A. Revisit MIRA funding to allow for different dispersals of tuition dollars to reduce the hyper competition between colleges. The current structure is a barrier to collaboration. For example, courses taught for another college receive 60% of tuition dollars while courses taught for one's own college receive 100%.
- B. Formulate an undergraduate interdisciplinary program with offerings that match Essential Studies requirements. Construct interdisciplinary course offerings that use high-impact practices, making clear the connections between college and life after university. This interdisciplinary curriculum should also address cultural agility, entrepreneurship, agile and systems thinking, as well as human dynamics (Aoun, 2017). A genuinely interdisciplinary program will require dedicated funds, combined with course releases for instruction, under a central course prefix. Its director should have authority parallel with the Deans.
- C. Incentivize and reward innovation in course creation, design, instruction, and assessment.

Recommendation Four

Design flexibility into curriculum and programs to both normalize “chunking” of degree completion and customization of degrees.

Flexible curriculum and programs allow UND to better serve both traditional and non-traditional students who may have more significant personal and professional responsibilities in addition to their educational pursuits. Flexible curriculum helps UND address changing workforce needs and helps retain students experiencing academic or personal struggles.

- A. Expand part-term course offerings to allow students to build a semester schedule while only needing to focus on one or two courses at a time. (Grawe, 2021)
- B. Allow for credentialing along the way to earning a degree rather than adding minors and certificates on top of a degree. (Aoun, 2017, and example of UND Graduate Special Education, and Amoruso & Grawe, 2021 and EDUCAUSE Horizon Report)
- C. Provide a faculty approved framework or template for allowing students to combine core elements of divergent degrees to create a customized hybrid degree which appeals to their specific interests and career goals. (Aoun, 2017)
- D. Limit prerequisites. Where prerequisites are needed, establish uniform, alternative options for students to demonstrate readiness to enroll in next level courses. (Musoba & Nicholas, 2020)

C8 Empowering faculty to actualize educational change.

The challenges facing higher education demand that UND adjust its business model to be more student focused. To better compete, we must look to how we can both attract and retain the students of the future (nontraditional, under-served, etc. as well as traditional). Faculty are central to that effort. UND needs to address the ways in which the current institutional emphasis on research has denigrated the valuing of service and teaching in faculty contracts. Balancing the institutional culture so that it values student-focused work, such as teaching and service, in the same ways that it values research relates to policies, contracts, resources, and communication. These issues are central to Goal #3: Enrollment in the UND Strategic Plan.

Recommendation One

Foster and support university stewardship that is focused on teaching, learning and service.

- A. Support and reward faculty who prioritize teaching and student-centeredness (including those who invest in recruitment, retention, mentoring, etc.) and prevent this investment in students from hindering their career progress and compensation. Ensure contracts and evaluations accurately document faculty work and reward those who demonstrate contributions to increased learning, recruitment and retention. (Gavazzi & Gee, 2018). Under current guidelines that valuing may exist rhetorically but in terms of compensation, merit pay and promotion the primacy of research *de facto* devalues the contributions of teaching (and service, addressed more fully below). This culture shift requires strong administrative support.
 - a) Provide flexibility in faculty contracts to reflect the time and effort associated with teaching innovation and excellence (Step 1: remove the standard 10% per course. Allow departments to negotiate percentages based on effort and outcome).
 - b) Provide faculty, chair and dean training in the evaluation of teaching and the interpretation of student evaluations. Genuine assessment of student learning should be required as a means of evaluating teaching.
 - c) Provide greater stability for non-tenure track faculty (i.e., longer contracts, the opportunity for promotion and advancement, access to professional development funds, fair merit increases and a more equitable reward structure) and a greater valuing of their contribution in terms of learning and retention.
 - d) Require scholarly, evidence-based approaches for those who have a teaching emphasis in their contracts and provide the time in contract, funding and resources for them to research and improve their teaching.
 - e) Establish improvement strategies with clear expectations and rewards for those with teaching challenges (for example, high DFW rate courses).

Recommendation Two

Recognize the value of service which leads to increases in enrollment and retention of students.

Faculty put in significant amounts of time and effort in service work, which in turn impacts student enrollment and retention. This service can range from organized committee work to scheduled advising to informal mentoring. While service work is part of contractual efforts, it is consistently underestimated in percentages and seen as a burden largely due to the amount of effort needed to conduct high quality service. Additionally, there is a lack of recognition for this work in faculty evaluations toward tenure and promotion and merit. As this work is critical, if the university is making an honest effort to improve educational quality (in turn improving student enrollment and retention), it must recognize the value of this service. In doing so, it is necessary to develop effective and meaningful ways to document and evaluate service work and align it with measurable goals (Gavazzi & Gee, 2018), as well as have it be recognized as significant in merit and tenure and promotion evaluations.

- A. Nearly half of the 23 standing committees of the University Senate relate to academic matters, many of which focus on the curricular structure of the university (Essential Studies Committee, Online and Distance Education Committee, and University Assessment Committee for example).
 - a. Each committee should evaluate the effort needed by members to produce high quality output which has a positive effect on the University. Members should determine the effort percentage the committee work requires and there should not be a capped maximum. This should be done for other aspects of service work (i.e. beyond those related to curriculum).
 - b. Greater accountability for committee work should be established. To encourage improvement of the quality of committee work, peer evaluations should be conducted for each committee member.
 - c. Percentage of effort for committee chairs should be greater than that of the committee members.
- B. Service which impacts student enrollment and retention occurs in other settings in addition to University Senate Committees. For example, meaningful mentoring of students (beyond advising) leads to a culture of trust, respect, and appreciation which research demonstrates to increase student success and retention. Meaningful mentoring involves faculty taking time to talk with students, understand their questions and concerns, and involves a passion for helping students improve their futures. Colleges should identify faculty interested in greater mentoring roles, offer specific training and assign cohorts of students interested in working with a mentor. This type of service work should be considered as a percentage of effort on the faculty contract and can potentially be quantified by retention rates.

Recommendation Three

Restore faculty voice in internal funding decisions around institutional investments (ie for pedagogical development, research, course design, etc). This reinforces LC7 Recommendation Two.

A dramatic change in funding and organizational structure (ca 2017-18) resulted in the Faculty Instructional Development Committee (FIDC) and the Senate Scholarly Activity Committee (SSAC) losing their funding and most of their responsibilities without consultation with those committees or the Senate. Such internal funding decisions as structured in MIRA are no longer entrusted to faculty. Under the previous model, faculty-driven funding around teaching excellence and research innovation fostered

a campus wide culture of awareness, collaboration and collegial support. Empowering faculty agency and voice around innovation is also an important part of advancing a culture of shared governance.

C9 Group Report: Creating Partnerships between Departments, Colleges, Institutions, Industry, Government

Team Members:

Zarrina Azizova, Simona Barbu, Radha Panini, Jared Schlenker

Overview

The members of the Task Force for the Future of Education at UND appreciate insights from the series of learning sessions that involved our current students, higher education presidents and leaders, university members, scholars, and state legislators. All spoke with passion and sense of urgency about the future of UND, addressing the challenges and calling for solutions to deal with the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the immense undertaking for racial healing and inclusion, and the projections for the postsecondary education and workforce needs in the state. Echoing a higher education scholar William Tierney's comment (2020) "A crisis is a terrible thing to waste," the collective voice of all speakers galvanized our minds to propose actionable solutions and opened our imagination to see new possibilities at UND.

Specifically, several themes emerged from these sessions that this sub-group wants to highlight: (1) the role and responsibility of UND as a public "servant university" in the state/region/nation; (2) the opportunities for UND to rely on its core strength and value of liberal arts education and to invest in the quality of human capital development and mastery of knowledge (or new knowledge) for a rapidly changing workforce in the era of AI and robots; and, (3) the possibilities for supporting and advancing postsecondary education attainment among new and underrepresented populations in the state/region/nation. These themes build on the additional knowledge and research about the transformative power of postsecondary education to contribute to a more just and sustainable future for the global society. These themes inform us that this transformative power is a collective and collaborative force and lead us to our three recommendations for the sustainable partnerships. We anticipate that the implementation of these recommendations will occur in tandem with all other recommendations of the Task Force.

Context

UND has a century-long history and established institutional identity of a flagship liberal arts university. Due to its liberal arts mission and traditions, the university employs a breadth of expertise that potentially allows for a multitude of interdisciplinary configurations to meet the needs of the current and emerging knowledge economies, mastery of knowledge, and human capital formation. However, this institutional strength requires a re-assessment of the alignment with the external environments and new populations. Paraphrasing Dr. McMillan Cottom, we observe that, to achieve that new alignment, UND needs new partners. Moreover, the state policies (the 400 Academic Affairs series) provide support for partnerships and incremental credentialing frameworks within the mission and values of liberal arts education, citing specifically (a) a documented student and employer demand for a new degree/credential, (b) collaborations with other institutions, and (c) institutional strengths to be best positioned to offer a new degree/credential.

The state of North Dakota demonstrates higher educational opportunity rates compared to the national average. For example, North Dakota is above the pace of most states for high school graduation rates coming in at 89 percent for the 2019-20 school year compared to the U.S. national average of 88 percent. The state's schools are also producing a workforce-ready population as it ranks 8th in the nation for 25-64 year-old adults with incomes at or above the national median (usatoday.com). In addition, the state ranks 10th out of 49 states in school finance in terms of spending and equity. However, the state is falling behind in closing K-12 student achievement gaps: "In 2019, 52.0 percent of White North Dakota 3rd graders met or exceeded the 3rd grade English Language Art (ELA) standards, while the Native American population experienced a 26.0 percent achievement rate, the Black population 34.0 percent and the Hispanic population 37.0 percent." (ndcompass.org) North Dakota is also failing in closing the gap of graduation rates among its Native American high school students, as only 72 percent of Native American students are completing the 12th grade compared to 93 percent of White (non-Hispanic) groups, yet the increase of 13 percent between 2015 and 2020 is noteworthy. These data points signal opportunities and necessities for partnerships with school districts and community colleges to create a robust K-20 ecosystem in the state. The National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) provides resources and support for the universities where dual-enrollment participation is one of the ways to form inter-institutional partnerships. Dual-enrollment has positive relationships with a range of college outcomes, such as more attempted credits, higher likelihood of entering college without delay, likelihood of obtaining a baccalaureate degree among community-college students, summer enrollment, second year retention, stronger academic performance, and even labor market success (Lin, Borden, & Chen, 2020; Phelps & Chan, 2016; Wang et al., 2015).

Job Service North Dakota's Labor Market Information Center (2021) has released 2019-2029 projections for careers and skill clusters for occupations. North Dakota shows a projected increase by 4.4 percent in low skill, 2.9 percent in some skill, 3.5 percent in medium skill, 9.0 percent in high skill, and 8.5 percent in advanced skill. Medium skill, high skill and advanced skill require from some postsecondary education to a four-year baccalaureate degree in addition to a work-related experience and on-job training. Partnering with industries through micro-sites is the way to combine a university-level mastery of knowledge and skill development closely related to the on-job training with industry/ies. This partnership model does not only meet the needs of traditional age students but may also address the needs of new student populations, such as adult learners who are changing occupations or upgrading their skills and knowledge, where university-level education occurs in their workplaces.

Other new populations may include incarcerated groups. "A New Future" (Mangan, 2020) is possible for this population through the partnerships between UND and the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The total DOCR adult population is about 1400 per the latest fact sheet (2020, DOCR Fact Sheet). The growing bipartisan support and national policies, such as opening Pell Grants for a college education and Second Chance programs to people in prisons, provide an extraordinary opportunity and platform for UND to make real difference in vulnerable populations and community at large. Launching a micro-site initiative of the rigorous university-level curricular with these partners will require a thoughtful process of building trust, establishing a lasting commitment, and inviting formerly incarcerated people (e.g., Justice Fellows model) to the partnership to help UND know how to build for student success.

Recommendation #1: Form Partnerships to Create New Postsecondary Education Experiences and Degree/Credit Attainment Opportunities

We recommend that with that humility and understanding UND should form inter-institutional partnerships in the state, the region and beyond to create new flexible postsecondary education experiences and degree/credit attainment to meet the needs of the partners. These partners include K-12 school districts, Tribal colleges, community colleges, regional industries, parents of first-generation and traditional students, state agencies, international organizations and universities, to name a few.

Long-Term Goals:

- a. To close postsecondary education opportunity gaps in the state, the region and beyond.
- b. To make postsecondary education affordable through the micro-programs – any postsecondary academic credential is better for a socio-economic mobility and mastery of knowledge and skills than no credential at all.
- c. To build pathways to the four-year degree completion, by scaling up micro-credentials and creating multi-disciplinary curricular maps and plans of study.
- d. To grow partnerships locally, nationally, and internationally.

Short-Term Goals:

- a. To conduct workforce needs assessments in collaboration with the partners: listen to the partners, plan with the partners, and act with the partners.
- b. To develop and deliver innovative credit-bearing/micro-credential educational programs, by combing “literacies,” incorporating identity-conscious pedagogy and andragogy, and adding experiential learning and community-engaged learning, to the communities and partners (e.g., UND Society, Technology & Values undergraduate certificate, Cyberpsychology undergraduate certificate, and the like).
- c. To establish and facilitate dual enrollment agreements that will expand access to the university-level education.
- d. To replace “transfer” with “transition” paths in the partnerships with TCUs and two-year colleges.

Recommendation #2: Offer Convenience, Flexibility, and Reciprocity to Partners

Following the advice from Dr. Cynthia Lindquist and other presidents of North Dakota Tribal Colleges that “people need a place to congregate,” we see promise and potential in the concept and design of educational *micro-sites*. What are micro-sites? Not a novel concept but a broadly conceived design, micro-sites are place-based [however place is defined] to allow for a more effective way of forming partnerships. Micro-site may be an on-campus center, off-campus program, an extension school, an on-site student assistance and educational service at the partners’ location, a physical site for faculty to meet with students and their families outside the campus borders, an industry-based experiential learning program, or a digital platform that brings educators, students, and other partners together. Micro-site may have in-person components and facilities or distance-friendly educational experiences. Micro-sites are effective place-based ways of increasing educational opportunities with and for diverse partners, communicating the university brand, and maximizing spaces of teaching and learning.

We recommend that UND should develop micro-sites to engage and collaborate with diverse partners in the state, the region, and beyond.

Long-Term Goals:

- a. To offer convenience, flexibility, and on-site and/or remote teaching and learning. Examples include summer academies, weekend and evening courses, digital academies (e.g., Dakota Digital Academy), cohort models, theme-based programs.
- b. To treat communities and partners as the extensions of UND, cultivating their sense of ownership in educational programs and outcomes.
- c. To share human and physical resources with the partners to maximize workforce development and together challenge sedimented perspectives on postsecondary education and ways of mastery of knowledge/ies (e.g., what constitutes a classroom? why schedule and design learning around the agrarian calendar? and the like).

Short-Term Goals:

- a. To identify and eliminate possible institutional barriers to higher education access (i.e., admission processes and standards, support services, distance, need-based financial aid packages, and the like).
- b. To establish a central office to coordinate inter-institutional and community-based partnerships and to work on memoranda of understanding and articulation agreements.
- c. To utilize technology to facilitate operations and manage physical or virtual spaces of the micro-sites.
- d. To offer technology literacy trainings to all partners involved.

Recommendation #3: Build Institutional Capacity to Sustain Partnerships

Key elements for successful collaboration lie within the institutional capacity, which requires trust, communication, sense of shared interests and goals, and defined and clear expectations and roles (Baldwin & Chang, 2007).

We recommend that UND should build inter-college and inter-departmental partnerships to create innovative and flexible degrees, micro-credentials or certificates that deliver the quality of learning to the partners.

Long-Term Goals:

- a. To build systematic and flexible mechanisms that allow for mentoring/taking courses across departments/colleges for graduate and undergraduate students. Such collaborations will not only promote research and collaborative teaching but will also support the microsites and multi-disciplinary certificates and degrees.

- b. To exercise stewardship to facilitate connections between and among partners, leading to a state-wide network and coalitions of support and shared resources.
- c. To build new organizational culture of integration (move from the culture of differentiation and fragmentation) and horizontal structure of student success (e.g., faculty alone cannot support students' educational experiences, they need partners from Student Services; Student Services alone cannot support students' educational attainment, they need partners from faculty.)
- d. To lead "empowering settings" (Hrabowski III, 2019) where shared governance is embraced and sustained.

Short-Term Goals:

- a. To provide transparency and clarity on the implications of such collaborations within the framework of the MIRA budget model. Revisit and modify the model to promote and support such collaborations.
- b. To incentivize, compensate, and train faculty to promote collaboration and engage in microsites.
- c. To invest in and coordinate inter-college curricular mapping efforts to create stackable certificates or micro-credentials. These certificates and micro-credentials will help retain and incentivize students, both traditional and non-traditional, and provide on-off ramps for degree programs (Cottom, 2017).
- d. To create a virtual campus-wide hub to share innovative practices and new research in scholarship of teaching and learning across different disciplines.
- e. To diversify and invest into Student Services to support virtual and physical micro-sites for diverse students' socialization.

Rationale (fit with UND Strategic Plan)

- Goal #1 Liberal Arts
- Goal #2 Graduation Rates
- Goal #3 Enrollment
- Goal #5 Diversity and Inclusion

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Webinar (February 3, 2021) *Human Vitality in the Age of Digital Machines*, Dr. Mark Hagerott, NDUS Chancellor.

Webinar (February 10, 2021) *Reaching Underserved Populations*, Dr. Cynthia Lindquist, President of Cankdeska Cikana Community College in Fort; Dr. Laurel Vermillion, president of Sitting Bull College in Fort Yates, N.D.; Dr. Leander "Russ" McDonald, president of United Tribes Technical College in Bismarck; Dr. Twyla Baker, president of Nueta

Hidatsa Sahnish College in New Town, N.D.; and Dr. Donna Brown, president of Turtle Mountain Community College in Belcourt, N.D.

Webinar (February 17, 2021) *The Future of General Education in a post-COVID World*, UND Essential Studies Executive Committee and UND Strategic Plan Goal #1 Captains.

Webinar (March 3, 2021) *UND as a "Servant University"*, ND Representative Mark Sanford and ND Senator Ray Holmberg.

Webinar (February 24, 2021) *Ensuring Educational Opportunities at UND Continue into the Future*.

UND College of Arts & Sciences (March 11, 2021) *Eye of the Hawk Lecture*, Dr. Tressie McMillan Cottom.

Webinar (February 25, 2021) *Advancing Access and Success for Transfer Students: Insights from San Diego State University*.

Webinar (April 8, 2021) *Building Coalitions of Support for Higher Ed*, Dr. Wil Del Pilar, VP for Higher Education Policy and Practice, the Education Trust; Dr. Devinder Malhotra, Chancellor Minnesota State; Dr. Ted Mitchell, President of American Council of Education; Dr. Philip Rogers, Chancellor East Carolina University.

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