



## **University Senate Agenda**

### **September 5th Meeting**

TO: Members of the University Senate

FROM: Sarah Robinson, University Senate Chair, 2023-2024

SUBJECT: September 5<sup>th</sup>, University Senate Meeting

DATE: August 29, 2024

The September 2024 meeting of the University Senate will be held on Thursday, September 5, 2024, from 3:30-5pm via Zoom. Voting members should use the personalized link they were sent to join the webinar as a panelist. Please check your clutter/junk/spam folder if you do not see the invitation in your inbox. A public link for visitors is posted on the Senate website and in the University Letter.

#### **I. Call to Order (Chair Sarah Robinson)**

#### **II. Establish Quorum (Secretary Scott Correll)**

#### **III. Consent calendar:**


1. Approval of May 2, 2024 meeting minutes (attached)
2. SCC Annual Report (attached)
3. SLAC Annual Report (attached)

#### **IV. Business calendar:**

1. Vice-chair elections (see attached)
2. Faculty representative election (see attached)

#### **V. Announcements:**

1. Senate Executive Committee Report (Chair Zarrina Azizova)
2. Parking update (Karla Mongeon-Stewart)
3. Council of College Faculties update (Crystal Alberts)
4. Staff Senate update (Anna Kinney)
5. Student Government update (Connor Ferguson)
6. Updates from the Provost Office (Eric Link)



a. Student retention (Karyn Plumm and Lynette Krenelka)

7. Question period (max 20 minutes)

**VI. Adjourn**

Minutes of the University Senate Meeting  
May 2, 2024

1.

The December meeting of the University Senate was held at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 2, 2024, via Zoom Conference. University Senate Chair Sarah Robinson presided.

2.

The following members of the Senate were present:

Anderson, Sonya	Hume, Wendelin	Munski, Douglas
Anvari-Clark, Jeffrey	Hunter, Cheryl	Nelson, Ella
Azizova, Zarrina	Iseminger, Colt	Newman, Robert
Bakke, Rebecca	Jendrysik, Mark	Novak, Michelle
Beltz, Michael	Johnson, Amber	Oancea, Cristina
Bichel, Rebecca	Keengwe, Grace	Pappas, Brian
Bjorg, Renae	Kehn, Andre	Pokornowski, Alex
Bjorggaard, Stacy	Kinney, Anna Marie	Reading, Patrick
Blankenship, Jonathan	Kraus, Robert	Robinson, Sarah
Bowman, Frank	Lawson-Body, Assion	Rundquist, Brad
Correll, Scott	Legerski, Elizabeth	Saga, Lea
Dahlke, Rachel	Lim, Yeo Howe	Sauer, Michelle
Dodge, Michael	Linder, Meloney	Shogren, Maridee
Doze, Van	Link, Eric	Singhal, Sandeep
Elderini, Tarek	Liu, Jun	Smart, Kathy
Emter, Adelyn	Malloy, Art	Sperle, James
Ferguson, Connor	Marquis, Jared	Swanson, Brenna
Gjellstad, Melissa	Maskaly, Jonathan	Urban, Shanna
Grave, Shannon	Masursky, Danielle	Wallace, Alfred
Grijalva, James	Mayo, Whitney	Wintermute, Kaleb
Homstad, Stephanie	Milavetz, Barry	Wozniak, Mike
Hove, Hannah	Moritz, Sandra	Zerr, Ryan

3.

The following members of the Senate were absent:

Alberts, Crystal	Martin, Noelle	Seddoh, Amebu
Anderson, Brynn	Mongeon-Stewart, Karla	Snyder, Scott
Armacost, Andy	Mosher, Sarah	Tande, Brian
Cox, Paula	Nelson, Chris	Tatro, Lauren
Henley, Amy	Petros, Thomas	Traynor, Paul
Hoffmann, Mark	Price, Samantha	Wynne, Joshua
Hoppenrath, Joseph	Rajpathy, Odele	
Kempel, Sarah	Richter, Justin	

4.

Quorum was established.

5.

Without objection, the minutes from the University Senate on April 4, 2024, were approved.

6.

Ms. Robinson called attention to the Budget Committee annual report. Without objection, the report was filed.

7.

Ms. Robinson called attention to the Online & Distance Education Committee annual report. Without objection, the report was filed.

8.

Ms. Robinson called attention to the Essential Studies annual report. Without objection, the report was filed.

9.

Ms. Robinson called attention to the addition of committee membership for Essential Studies and Legislative Affairs. Without objection, the additions were filed.

10.

Ms. Robinson called attention to the updates to University Senate Bylaws. Without objection, the changes were filed.

11.

Ms. Robinson discussed the Misconduct in Scholarship Policy. Without objection, the policy was filed.

12.

Ms. Robinson called attention to the GUEST policy updates. Ms. Plumm detailed the changes. Ms. Smart moved to approve. Ms. Bjorg seconded the motion. A discussion ensued. The motion carried.

13.

Ms. Robinson called attention to the runoff election for Committee on Committee membership. Having garnered the most votes, Ms. Grabanski is the new member.

14.

Ms. Robinson called attention to the May graduation List. Ms. Gjellstad moved to approve. Mr. Jendrysik seconded. A short discussion ensued. The motion carried.

15.

Ms. Robinson called attention to the ES Program Review document attached to the meeting agenda.

16.

Mr. Goldblum provided an update from University Information Technology. He discussed summer 2024 projects coming from UIT. There will be a new UND email policy that will be implemented on or around August 1, 2024. There is currently an assessment about using a digital ID card versus the current physical ID card. UIT is looking to establish an IT governance structure to guide their work. Windows 11 will be deployed later this summer as Windows 10 has an end of support date. UND will begin patching on Mondays (Patch Monday).

17.

Mr. Harsell provided an update from the Ad Hoc SELFIE committee. The committee has focused on a few items. The committee will pause over the summer. The contract with Explorance Blue ends soon. They are looking at other platforms including Watermark.

18.

Ms. Robinson provided updates from the Council of College Faculties. There has not been a meeting since our last senate meeting, but they will be meeting next Tuesday.

19.

Mr. Wozniak provided a Staff Senate update. The Staff Recognition Luncheon is on May 7<sup>th</sup>. Anna Kinney is new president of Staff Senate. Natalie Talk is the next president-elect.

20.

Ms. Nelson updated everyone on Student Government. Connor Ferguson is the new student body president. Maya Orvis is the new vice president.

21.

Mr. Link provided an update on Provost Office activities. Mr. Link thanked everyone for all the hard work over the past year. Mr. Link discussed enrollment for the fall. Applications are up, admits are up, and deposits are up. FAFSA data has arrived from the federal government for financial aid awarding. All of our tenure applications were approved by the State Board of Higher Education. This year's budget process is still ongoing, but I want to give special thanks to the University Senate Budget committee. The HLC site visit went well. Thank you to everyone who worked on the HLC process. Mr. Link presented an award plaque to outgoing University Senate chair Sarah Robinson. The UND reported retention rate was the highest ever, and it was a NDUS system record.

22.

The twenty minute question and answer period began at 4:40 p.m. Ms. Gjellstad inquired about the internal and external reviewers for the ES program review. Ms. Plumm stated that there is currently a process to choose

and pick the review teams. Ms. Robinson inquired about the switch to Empower from TIAA. Mr. Link stated that Peggy Varberg would have the most up-to-date information. Ms. Varberg stated that this information was just received by her as well. This change is a change in administration of the back side of the plan, not the investment choices themselves. There are no changes to the plan, just who administers the plan. It is controlled by NDPERS, not UND or the university system. Mr. Elderini inquired about non-tenure track faculty in CEM. Mr. Link has asked Ms. Wages and Ms. Tanglen to reach out to Mr. Elderini. Mr. Maskaly asked about what constitutes a state device. Are personal cell phones subject to open record requests? Mr. Goldblum stated that most of the information viewed on your phone actually lives on university servers and cloud contracts. Mr. Grijalva stated that open records do not take your phone. One is requested to turn over work items to the university who turns over the requested information. Ms. Mayo asked about having building access on our personal devices. Is it secure? Mr. Goldblum thanked Ms. Mayo for the feedback and will get additional information. Ms. Oancea inquired about a device for access to the building without it being connected to our phone? Mr. Goldblum added this to the feedback form as well. Mr. Grijalva stated he has a key fob. Ms. Gjellstad asked about the Copilot AI part of the Microsoft Suite. Mr. Goldblum stated that Windows 11 will have the non-subscription version of Copilot. The question period ended at 5:00 p.m.

23.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Scott Correll, Secretary  
University Senate

# Annual Report of the University Senate Compensation Committee

April 19, 2024

**AY 2023-2024**

## **Members:**

- Sheila Netz (2024), CNPD, Voting
- Amanda Haage (2025), SMHS, Voting
- Edward Kolodka (2025), CEM, Voting
- Andre Kehn (2026), A&S, Voting
- Douglas Munski (2026), A&S, Voting
- Melissa Gjellstad (2026), A&S, Voting
- Katie Douthit (concurrent/ex-officio), Benefits Coordinator, Advisory
- Peggy Varberg (concurrent/ex-officio), AVP of Human Resources & Payroll, Advisory
- Daphne Pedersen (concurrent/ex-officio), CCF, Voting
- Eric Link (concurrent/ex-officio), VPAA, Advisory

The Compensation Committee met three times over the academic year, attending to the following business:

1. Meeting with representatives of the Huron consulting team for an overview of the compensation study objectives and process (September).
2. Completing the Senate committee review and suggesting revisions to the committee membership and charge (November).
3. Meeting with representatives from Human Resources and the Equal Opportunity and Title IX Office to discuss compensation study findings and the university plan for communicating outcomes with the campus community (April).

Respectfully submitted,

Daphne Pedersen, Chair

University Senate Compensation Committee (SCC)

**Department of Criminal Justice**  
O'Kelly Hall, Room 238  
221 Centennial Drive, Stop 8050  
Grand Forks, ND 58202-8050  
Phone: 701.777.2066  
[arts-sciences.UND.edu/criminal-justice](https://arts-sciences.UND.edu/criminal-justice)

April 30, 2024

Zarrina Azizova, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor/ University Senate Chair (2024-25)  
Educational Leadership & Policy Studies  
University of North Dakota  
Education Building Room 316  
231 Centennial Dr Stop 7189  
Grand Forks, ND 58202-7189  
701.777.3737  
[zarrina.azizova@UND.edu](mailto:zarrina.azizova@UND.edu)

Dear Dr. Azizova,

The following is a brief report of the University Senate's Legislative Affairs Committee (SLAC) activities and accomplishments from the 2023-24 academic year, due to the University Senate two weeks prior to the December 2024 meeting.

To start, the committee first met online using MS Teams on September 8<sup>th</sup>. We selected a Chair and reviewed the committee charge and membership. Note, the Chair also participated in the University Senate's Chairs luncheon on October 10<sup>th</sup>. The committee did not have a pre-established agenda or outstanding assignments remaining from the prior Chair, [Mark Jendrysik](#). That said, members showed interest in engaging proactively with local representatives. The committee organized an on-campus meeting/informal information session on October 17<sup>th</sup> with Representative [Mark Sanford](#), District 17 and Chairman of the [Higher Education Committee](#), and Representative [Corey Mock](#), District 18. The committee met again on December 6<sup>th</sup> to discuss plans for the Spring semester, including another information session with local representatives as well as Chair selection for the subsequent academic year.

With input from Meloney Linder and others on the committee, Peter Johnson ([peterj@undalumni.net](mailto:peterj@undalumni.net)), now retired but still engaged in legislative matters through UND's alumni foundation, was added to all subsequent committee meetings. At our February 5<sup>th</sup> meeting Peter Johnson provided the committee with an overview of "Team Grand Forks" which involves a collaboration between the [Chamber of Commerce](#) ([Barry Wilfahrt](#)) and local representatives on shared infrastructure interests/needs. A second information session was held at the Memorial Union on February 22<sup>nd</sup> with Representative [Zachary Ista](#) and Senator [Scott Meyer](#), with Peter Johnson facilitating the discussion. There are many more local representatives the committee may wish to consider for future information sessions in subsequent academic years (for a full list visit [GF Area Legislators](#)).



The committee held its last meeting of the academic year on April 19<sup>th</sup>. A representative from [North Dakota United](#) provided an overview of their [Legislative Update and Legislative Report Card resources](#). For the latest on legislative matters more generally visit <https://ndlegis.gov/>. In addition, the committee formally voted to add Peter Johnson’s position, [Director of Government Relations & Public Affairs with the UND Alumni Association & Foundation](#), as an ex-officio member beginning with the 2024-25 academic year.

*A special thanks to the committee members, as shown below, for their work and flexibility with scheduling, as well as to Peter Johnson and his added support. My term with the committee concludes this academic year. In January, Dr. Bret Weber was elected as the next committee Chair. Dr. Nick Wilson, upon request from Dr. Weber, has agreed to serve as a co-Chair. There are no outstanding tasks remaining for the committee going into the 2024-25 academic year. No special assignments were given to the committee by the [University Senate](#) or Senate Executive Committee. Note, the next academic year is when the state legislative session will be back in session which will likely prompt further activity and requests from the University Senate.*

**Committee Membership 2023-24**

<u>Member</u>	<u>Term End</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Selection</u>
Adam Matz	2024	Faculty [Outgoing Chair]	A&S	Vote
Nick Wilson	2025	Faculty	JDOSAS	Vote
Bret Weber	2026	Faculty [Incoming Chair]	CNPD	Vote
Sarah Nielson	2026	Faculty	SMHS	Vote
Daphne Pedersen	Concurrent	CCF		Ex-officio
Odele Rajpathy	2024	Student		Appointed
Tanner Earsley	2024	Student		Appointed
Meloney Linder	Concurrent	VP for Univ & Public Affairs		Ex-officio
Sarah Robinson	Concurrent	University Senate Chair		Ex-officio
Brian Schill	Concurrent	Staff Senate LAC Chair	Chair	Ex-officio
Ella Nelson	Concurrent	Student Body President		Ex-officio

More information on this committee can be found in the [Committee Manual](#), for the latest updates on committee composition see the [Senate Committee Roster](#). It is recommended that Dr. Weber and Dr. Wilson schedule a meeting to reconvene the committee within the first month of the Fall semester (i.e., by the end of September 2024). New terms technically begin September 1<sup>st</sup> of a given year (see University Senate [Orientation](#) webpage).

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the SLAC,

*Adam K. Matz*

**Adam K. Matz, Ph.D.**  
*Associate Professor and Graduate Director of Criminal Justice*

## **Nominees for Election of University Senate Vice-Chair and SEC faculty member, Sept. 2024**

### **Senate Vice-Chair nominees (elect 1):**

**Adam K. Matz, Ph.D.**, is an Associate Professor, as well as the current Graduate Director, for the Department of Criminal Justice within the College of Arts & Sciences. He has been with the department since 2016. He previously worked for the Council of State Governments, American Probation and Parole Association, a nonprofit organization, as well as the Kentucky Court of Justice, Administrative Office of the Courts. Dr. Matz has served on numerous committees at the university, college, and department level. He previously served as a social sciences representative from 2018-2020 and as a member-at-large from 2020-2021 for the University Senate. He has since continued to serve the University Senate through the Faculty Handbook and Legislative Affairs committees, serving as Chair of each during his last year of service. Most recently, he was elected to the Conflict of Interest/Scientific Misconduct committee beginning August 2024. Dr. Matz has also served on a variety of ad hoc committees for the university including the Parking and Transportation committee, Rural Health and Social Problems Grand Challenge committee, as well as the search committee of the current AVP Public Safety/ Police Chief. College-level includes academic program reviews, scholarships, and resources & infrastructure committees. Finally, he has been involved in numerous professional committees throughout his career, serving as Chair for the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences' Corrections Section and as a former Vice-Chair of the Global Standards Council with the U.S. Department of Justice.

Dr. Matz's research focuses on specialty courts (e.g., juvenile court, domestic violence court), probationer and parolee recidivism/desistance, risk assessment, interagency collaboration, and support for youth impacted by an incarcerated parent/guardian. He teaches courses on courts, corrections, research methods, and program evaluation. He received his doctorate in *Criminology* from Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), as well as master's and bachelor's degrees from Eastern Kentucky University (EKU). His publications have appeared in scholarly journals such as *Crime & Delinquency*, *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *Police Quarterly*, and *Criminal Justice & Behavior*.

**Wendelin Hume, Ph.D.** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at UND. She has previously Chaired her department and served as Director of the previous Women and Gender Studies Program for a number of years. She has also served on and chaired many committees during her 33 years at UND, including previously serving as Senate Chair in 2009-2010. In addition to embracing the importance of service, she enjoys mentoring graduate and undergraduate students through classes and research opportunities, and the McNair Scholars

Program for undergraduates moving into graduate education. She also supports experiential learning as she introduces students to the field through the departmental Internship Program she directs. Her research is community centered focusing on Tribal justice issues such as with NIJII.org, lessening victimization, and improving equitable access to justice.

She completed her undergraduate degree at Black Hills State University in Spearfish South Dakota and her graduate degrees in Criminal Justice and Criminology at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas.

**Senate Executive Committee Faculty nominees (elect 1):**

Tanis Walch is a Professor from the Department of Education, Health & Behavior Studies in the College of Education and Human Development. Tanis most enjoys working with students in the classroom, during internships and as a part of her research team. Her research has been supported by the North Dakota Department of Health & Human Services to increase vaccine confidence at UND, as well as a \$6 million Department of Education grant to expand the School Health Hub at Fargo Public Schools to improve mental and physical health in students, staff and families. Tanis' service roles at UND include serving on the Essential Studies committee (2014-2017); Intercollegiate Athletics committee (2014-2017; 2023-2026); CEHD Faculty Flag Marshall (Commencement Spring 2023 & 2024); CEHD chair of the Finance Committee (2022-2024); CEHD chair of promotion & tenure (2019-2020) and member (2017-2020); CEHD undergraduate & graduate curriculum committee member, and CEHD Dean search committee (2023-2024), as well as numerous community and professional service roles.

## **University Senate Ad-hoc Committee on Review of Tenure and Post-Tenure Policies and Procedures**

### **Preamble**

The University Senate recognizes the importance of fostering an environment conducive to academic excellence, scholarly achievement, and professional success among its faculty members. Promotion of tenure-track and continuous success of tenured faculty members are integral to maintaining high standards of teaching, research, and service within the academic community. Due to the recent state-wide discussions and ad-hoc committee's recommendations by the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education (03.12.24 Summary of SBHE Tenure/Post-Tenure Ad Hoc Committee Findings and Recommendations), the University Senate acknowledges the necessity of a periodic review and refinement of policies and procedures governing tenure to support faculty success and ensure fairness, transparency, and equity in tenure and post-tenure reviews.

### **Charge**

Therefore, the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee dedicated to tenure and post-tenure review will provide a platform for collaborative dialogue, assessment, and recommendation aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of faculty evaluation, tenure and post-tenure review across the university. The University Senate hereby establishes an Ad Hoc Committee on Tenure and Post-Tenure Review with the following charge:

- To conduct a comprehensive review of the existing university policies and procedures related to faculty appointment, promotion, tenure, and post-tenure review, and to identify areas for improvement or revision;
- To solicit feedback and input from faculty members, department chairs, deans, and other relevant stakeholders (i.e., UND Senate Faculty Handbook Committee, the University Promotion and Tenure Committee) regarding their experiences with the tenure review policies and procedures, and their suggestions for enhancing its fairness, transparency, and effectiveness;
- To examine best practices and benchmarks from research universities regarding faculty evaluation and tenure and post-tenure reviews and to assess their applicability within the context of our university;
- To propose recommendations for updates, revisions, or additions to the existing university policies and procedures governing tenure and post-tenure review to include specific policy language regarding post-tenure at UND that may be considered for adoption by the UND faculty handbook;
- To provide regular progress reports to the University Senate, including interim findings and proposed recommendations;
- To submit a final report to the University Senate summarizing the committee's findings, recommendations, and proposed action items for consideration by the University Senate and further implementation by the University Academic Administration.

### **Terms**

Fall 2024-Spring 2025

### **Selection**

Members will be appointed by the University Senate Executive Committee. Faculty will be selected to ensure representation from tenure and tenure-track ranks.

### **Membership**

Sarah Robinson and Alena Kubatova	Co-chairs representing Senate Executive Committee
Joelle Ruthig and Diane Darland	College of Arts and Sciences (2)

Bret Weber	College of Nursing and Professional Disciplines (1)
Diana D'Amico Pawlewicz	College of Education and Human Development (1)
Jeff VanLooy	John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences (1)
Yun Ji	College of Engineering and Mines (1)
Duane Helleloid	Nistler College of Business and Public Administration (1)
Brad Myers	School of Law (1)
*vacant	School of Medicine and Health Sciences (1)
Randi Tanglen	Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, ex officio, non-voting
Heather Wages	Director of Policy and Administration, ex officio, non-voting

**Student Academic Success & Career Engagement (SASCE)** prioritizes retention efforts for students in all undergraduate programs across campus. Retention of students at UND requires effort from all faculty and staff. Three areas of focus in SASCE this academic year include access, support, and experience.

**Access:** Student Disability Resources now reports to SASCE and we are increasing the ease for which students can contact the office and ways in which faculty and staff can provide a connection for students that might need accommodations or other forms of academic support. Student Disability Resources updated its website and implemented the option for students to schedule with their access coordinator. Students can schedule next-day appointments in person, over the phone, or via Zoom. The self-scheduling streamlines the process for students and increases access to discuss their disability accommodation needs. We have seen a marked increase in use of our services and so have partnered with TTAaDA to ensure that when faculty have a student in their course in need of accommodations, the faculty member will have the support from TTAaDA to make course changes/updates as needed. If faculty are looking to help students get connected with SDR, connections for students can be made easily in Hawk Central by completing the Referred Connections survey.

- Data point: Students receiving disability accommodations has increased from Spring 2022 (230 students) to Spring 2024 (347 students).

**Support:** Student Academic Success and Academic Advising have improved student communication plans to focus on more individualized, inclusive, and supportive language. The goal is to meet students where they are at and deliver communication on particular topics at a timely point in the semester (just in time/individualized/one size doesn't fit all communication). The plans created for students within Hawk Central can be easily updated for specific individuals or groups of students and we can be sure they are receiving information about appropriate support services. We would like to see stronger connections/relationships between academic advisors and department faculty. These connections help advisors to tailor messages appropriate to the program and the students who may need them.

- Data point: UG retention has increased following the change in advising model from 78.39% (Fall 2018) to 81.39% (Fall 2019), and then annually after COVID (Fall 2020- 76.61%, Fall 2021-77.71%, Fall 2022-82.96%). We are on track to improve that rate once again this year.

**Experience:** The Experiential Learning Center (ELC) is committed to connecting our students with valuable opportunities such as study abroad, internships, co-ops, job shadowing, and undergraduate research. Our mission is to equip students with the workforce-ready skills necessary for the future and foster their growth as globally engaged citizens by providing equitable access to these experiences. We know that increased experiential learning leads to increases in student retention. If faculty are working with students who have not been able to find opportunities like this, please connect them using Referred Connections in Hawk Central to our center. ELC staff will be visiting with Department Chairs this Fall to discuss adding those courses that have an experiential learning focus to our database to help ensure students can find them easily.

- Data point: During the 2023-2024 academic year, 1,219 students registered for internship or co-op academic credit. Additionally, funding from the Economic Diversification Grant provided by the ND State Legislature enabled the ELC to receive \$50,000 in support of undergraduate research and creative scholarly inquiry. In Spring 2024, 33 students contributed a cumulative 888.59 hours assisting faculty with their research projects.

All work within the Teaching Transformation and Development Academy (TTaDA) directly or indirectly affects student success/student retention and we acknowledge that it is a part of everyone's role at UND. TTaDA engages in faculty, staff and student development and will continue this ongoing development work but will have priorities throughout 2024-25.

**Guide Faculty Through Accessibility.** One of the major barriers to student success is accessibility, particularly within digital environments. If students cannot access course resources, they cannot succeed in completing courses, certificates and degrees or fulfilling their personal and professional goals. TTaDA staff routinely work to break down accessibility barriers by supporting faculty as they make their courses and digital content more accessible. TTaDA staff work with accessibility tools like Blackboard Ally. There have been an increased number of higher-level accommodation requests from students with vision issues (e.g. blind or low vision). TTaDA collaborates with Student Disability Services (SDR) to guide faculty to adopt or create accessible course materials, including textbooks, Microsoft documents, PDFs, videos, and interactive elements. By guiding faculty to make their courses more accessible, TTaDA plays a role in increasing student success at UND. *There are [new accessibility regulations](#) that require compliance with WCAG2.1A/AA standards by April 2026.*

**Transition from Blackboard Learn to Blackboard Ultra.** Another priority is also supporting faculty as they navigate the transition between Blackboard Learn (Original Course Experience) to Blackboard Ultra -- Blackboard's newer, more accessible Learning Management System (LMS). This shift will be required of all faculty by Fall 2025. (Currently 10% of faculty are using Blackboard Ultra). Ultra's navigation is much more intuitive, mobile-friendly, device-agnostic, responsive, and accessible. Faculty and students have reported that it is more user-friendly, more modern, and easier to navigate. Data is embedded in the learning environment providing faculty additional feedback. *Faculty can be proactive and [request a Blackboard Ultra site](#) for upcoming courses and also contact the [instructional designer for your college](#) and ask to have your materials reviewed for accessibility.*

**Offer Flexibility/Engagement in Learning.** TTaDA also acknowledges the important role flexibility and engagement play in the student experience. There are a number of ways to meet these needs:

- The Self-Paced Enroll Anytime (SPEA) courses and degree programs can offer another academic opportunity for students, especially for those needing a more flexible course schedule. For students who need an additional course but cannot fit it into their schedule, or need a pre-requisite to a course, or have one course to graduate, the SPEA format may be an option. SPEA courses are regular academic credit courses where students get 3-9 months to complete the course.
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) – TTaDA uses universal design for all learners as the best practice for course design. UDL creates flexible learning environments that meet diverse needs. When you design for everyone, everyone benefits. Three core principles include *representation*-providing multiple ways to represent information to account for different ways learners process information (what), *action/expression*-giving students a variety of ways to engage with course materials and demonstrate their learning (how), and *engagement*-challenging students to think critically and connecting them to the learning experience (why).
- Student-Faculty Engagement – Students are more likely to persist when they feel a sense of belonging and engagement in the classroom. Ways to promote engagement include create a safe classroom climate, provide a variety of active learning strategies (e.g. think/pair/share, peer review, case studies, role playing, minute paper), use a variety of assessments – not just large tests, and collect formative feedback at mid-term (similar questions with a *Small Group Instructional Diagnostic (SGID) session*).
  - What in this class assists with your learning
  - What in this class impedes your learning
  - What could I, as the instructor, do to improve your learning experiences in the course
  - What could you do to improve your own learning experiences and those of other students in this course

## UND Pilot Projects Exploring Potential New Avenues to Increase Student Success

In addition to many established and successful pathways for increasing student success and retention, UND is continuously initiating and evaluating novel ways to assist and support students while fostering academic success. Below are two current examples:

**Success Coach Pilot Project:** One of the best practices recommended for facilitating the academic success of students from non-traditional groups is providing academic success coaches who are trained to work proactively with students to identify and manage issues that can negatively impact their academic success such as time management problems, competing priorities, study skills deficits, unfamiliarity with higher education, and test anxiety and other mental health issues. Success coaches coordinate with academic advisors and career services to assist students in being successful and achieving their goals. Success coaches provide a high-touch service engaging with students, gaining an understanding of their concerns and problems, providing direction and support to help them overcome difficulties whether with their academics or personal lives, and guiding their progress toward their academic and career goals. Success coaches have become prominent parts of the student success teams at many universities, particularly in providing broader support to online students. At UND, we began the current pilot project in spring term 2023 working with students in two undergraduate online programs, psychology and civil engineering and one graduate program, special education. In spring 2024, we added the chemical engineering online undergraduate program and also began evaluating whether graduate assistants could fulfill these roles. The project continues through spring 2025 and we are examining changes in student retention, academic grades, and responses to success coach interventions across different affiliative groups among our online students.

**CircleIn:** CircleIn is a virtual student community platform that was developed to help universities reach students who are often not served by traditional student success programs. CircleIn is based on the premise that students engaging with other students and sharing knowledge and resources is an effective means of reaching those who otherwise would not be successful at taking advantage of the benefits of higher education. Two years ago, the College of Education and Human Development employed CircleIn in two online master's degree programs, Counseling and Special Education. The results were promising so in Fall 2023, Academic Affairs partnered with the Colleges of Education & Human Development, Engineering & Mines, and Arts & Sciences to provide CircleIn in all their courses to those students majoring in any of the three colleges. This past summer term (2024), we were able to expand the pilot to ALL students enrolled in all courses offered by any of the three participating colleges. Instructors can opt some or all of their courses out of the pilot project. When a course is opted out, students cannot use CircleIn to study, assist or engage in any way with other students in that course. CircleIn was developed and is still partially supported with funding from the National Science Foundation. Data from the University of South Carolina has shown that CircleIn has increased course performance especially among students that have traditionally been at higher risk for academic problems. We have two more years of the current pilot project to evaluate whether CircleIn can help UND facilitate student success, especially among those at greatest risk for not being successful at attaining their higher education goals.