

# North Dakota State Staff Senate Meeting Minutes

October 13, 2025 @ 2:30pm CT via MS Teams



*The NDUS Staff Senate serves to represent staff employees from the eleven academic institutions and employees throughout the university system. The Senate identifies staff interests and issues; acts as a forum for the discussion of staff-related matters; and facilitates communication on behalf of the campus staff members with the NDUS Chancellor and the State Board of Higher Education.*

- 1) Called to Order at 2:30 pm by President Mike O'Toole.
- 2) Roll Call
  - a) BSC – not present
  - b) CTSO – Joshua DeNio, Marla Hagemeister
  - c) DCB – Misty Lindgren, Mike O'Toole
  - d) DSU – Laura Fetting
  - e) LRSC – Meghan Dimmler
  - f) MaSU – Mindy Oconnor
  - g) MiSU – not present
  - h) NDSCS – Amy Carson, Easton Erbes, Maggie Jordahl
  - i) NDSU – Corey Landowski, Andrea Ludwig, Jenn Young
  - j) UND – Anna Kinney, Mariah Pingleton, Brandon Wallace
  - k) VCSU – Erin Edinger, Jacob Olson
  - l) WSC – Carol Campbell
  - m) HRC Rep (Mindy Oconnor) – Present
  - n) SBHE Rep (Anna Kinney) – Present
- 3) Approval of Agenda
  - a) Motion by Laura Fetting (DSU); Second by Carol Campbell (WSC); Motion passed.
- 4) Approval of [September Meeting Minutes](#)
  - a) Motion by Joshua DeNio (VCSU); Second by Misty Lindgren (DCB); Motion passed.
- 5) Reports
  - a) Campus Updates – Submit to website
    - i) NDSU – Provost interviews – 1<sup>st</sup> candidate today, 4<sup>th</sup> candidate Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>; Also in the middle of Attending Veterinarian interviews – 3<sup>rd</sup> candidate 10/13 & 14
    - ii) DCB – had professional development day since don't have classes; went through a simple syllabus DCB is incorporating to help with accessibility and consistency for students
  - b) SBHE Staff Advisor Report (Anna Kinney): <https://ndus.edu/sbhe-overview/agendas-minutes-videos/>
    - i) 2 notes of gratitude
      - (1) 1<sup>st</sup> to Jenn: minutes are immensely helpful and give Anna a lot to share out
      - (2) 2<sup>nd</sup> to all those who reached out to her prior to the last SBHE, both individually and on behalf of their Staff Senates – thinks she heard from 6 different campuses, gave her a lot to share with SBHE
    - ii) 1<sup>st</sup> official meeting that she was the official State Staff Senate representative
    - iii) Change to the structure of board meetings
      - (1) hear from presidents giving campus updates (tied to campuses that we attend in person; every other month attend in person, other months meet virtually) – got update from Minot State University this time
        - (a) increase in freshman class

- (b) Workforce Innovation Fund – received \$1.4 million going to support engineering program, new master’s program, and a new simulation center in downtown Minot
- (2) moved the staff update to not the last item on the agenda – come before the chancellor’s report and are actually the first to go out of the representative reports.
- iv) 2 big executive sessions at this meeting
  - (1) 1<sup>st</sup> to appoint the chancellor position
    - (a) Interim Chancellor Sanford was given time to do a Q&A – filled the role of the interview process; gave his vision for the system and some of his key priorities
      - (i) 3 pillars – connecting students, strengthening institutions, and serving the state
        - 1. Expanding dual credit – 40% of ND graduates don’t go to college
        - 2. 103k ND with some college but no credentials – idea of certificates or reduced barriers to help them come back and get credentials
        - 3. Emphasize importance of workforce responsiveness
        - 4. Discussed shared services – disagreement on what to call it – how can we ensure greater stability and collaboration across the system, especially for campuses that have a hard time retaining staff?
        - 5. Employee retention and opportunities for staff to have professional development opportunities
        - 6. What does the future of an 11 campus system look like? Are we in competition with each other?
      - (ii) Did address questions about his experience and how his experience is incorporated into the position – SBHE said this was an executive leadership position, not an academic position
      - (iii) Unanimous decision to appoint Sanford as Commissioner – In constitution, that is what that position is called; no changes to the job description, just a title change – leading to a whole bunch of other title changes and policy changes due to title changes
      - (iv) SBHE is very aware that there needs to be more discussion with the system
      - (v) 15 different proposals submitted in that RFP – chose a consultant to facilitate discussion regarding role of Commissioner – don’t know what that process will be – Anna is going to request attendance at a State Staff Senate meeting; if have campus visits, contact the Staff Senates
      - (vi) SBHE member Campbell has said he would come to a State Staff Senate meeting
      - (vii) CCF – shared the same concerns as staff about process and precedence
      - (viii) From a staff standpoint – should the exec committee or a subgroup meet more often? CCF was meeting weekly leading up to the SBHE meeting preparing for this
    - (b) Presidential searches – President Simone at LRSC was appointed – had been through 2 system presidential searches; Interim president at BSC hasn’t gone through the search process
      - (i) Bismarck State College in interesting position – 2 yr degrees and accelerated bachelors degrees – Carnegie classifications have changed – does BSC need to change their classification?
  - (2) A lot of different of policy readings to work through – 17 policies in a first read – 5 pulled out for more discussion
    - (a) Degrees offered – reduced credit hour discussion that has been increasing in the state, bill to offer sub-120 hr bachelor degrees but did not pass – SBHE is not going to restrict the

conversation, students will have to meet with counselors to understand the implications of receiving this degree

(b) Dual credits – passed with waiving the second reading, gives NDSU and UND the opportunity to offer dual credit in their respective counties – some conversation about that, implications to other institutions, why limit it to NDSU and UND’s respective counties?

(c) Policy 601.1 – changes to policy around presidential searches ([202509SUM-SBHE-PLCY601.1.pdf](#)) – changing the wording to may conduct a search or may fill by appointment – search would no longer be required

(d) Digital accessibility – make sure our policies are in line with federal guidelines

(3) Mike Linnell reported in our June 2025 in-person meeting that we don’t have a direct line into the SBHE – that has changed, we now have a connection with Meredith Larson

v) Question: Mike O’Toole – don’t they usually do a 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading before changing policy but that’s not what happened with 601?

(1) Anna: yes, there was a motion to waive the second reading and adopt it into policy

(2) Mike: Was it before they went into executive session?

(a) Anna: No after.

(3) Anna: pace is not known – Chancellor appointment had been presented to the public, nothing had been discussed regarding the Presidential Searches until it was on the agenda – transparency and clarity around the timeline for this.

vi) Meghan Dimmler – no vote at LRSC, just sort of announced – brought up that as long as everything was going well, that it would be considered but there was no follow up

vii) Anna – heard that it doesn’t represent equity across the system – if it happened at NDSU and UND, the public would be up in arms about it. Further separates NDSU and UND from the other campuses.

c) HRC Update (Mindy Oconnor):

i) Had class during the last meeting and hasn’t seen the minutes yet.

6) Business Agenda

a) Taskforce Chair Updates –

i) Legislative Taskforce / Bylaws (Anna Kinney)

(1) No report

ii) Staff Recognition (Heather Halvorson)

(1) Anna Kinney has an update – bugged system office – sent forward a draft for a state system employee award, talked to CEO, passed to Chris Pieske for compliance, due to NDCC can’t offer financial award, comments sent to Anna, hopefully something this year

(2) 1<sup>st</sup> meeting is October 31<sup>st</sup> – Heather was going to look at her schedule and see if she wanted a co-chair

iii) Professional Development (Greg Carlson)

(1) Had 5 or 6 people – sending out email soon if not already to set up 1<sup>st</sup> meeting

iv) Staff Affairs (Carol Campbell)

(1) Misty – have not met yet, no meeting scheduled that she knows of

v) Executive Committee (Mike O’Toole)

(1) Have not met

(2) Does like Anna’s idea of the exec committee meeting more often

(a) Meet with SBHE and HRC reps

(b) Anna share SBHE agenda when it gets posted

- b) Employee morale-open discussion, idea sharing.
  - i) Erin Edinger – campus does shared governance meetings with president, faculty senate president, staff senate president, and student government president – shared that the staff senate doesn't feel like that the topics they address are as deep as what some others address – presidents shared that the staff senate does a lot to contribute to a positive culture on campus
  - ii) DCB – has college council for shared governance – any new policy goes through college council
  - iii) Anna: Are other campuses doing work regarding rebanding and job equity?
    - (1) Concern that flatlining staff – using manager instead of director
    - (2) NDSU is looking at it but it hasn't been publicized yet.
- 7) Open Discussion
- 8) Future Meetings: November 10, 2:30-4:00 CT.
- 9) Adjournment at 3:33 pm.

**Additional Information:**

- NDSSS Website - <https://staffsenate.ndus.edu/>
- Campus Updates Submission - <https://staffsenate.ndus.edu/campus-update-submission-form/>