UND Strategic Plan

Education Focus Group

July 14, 2022, 2:00 pm

Zoom – 2 Participants

**Can you discuss a few ways that the Higher Education Committee is looking at this problem, and how UND can be a good partner?**

* One of the major tasks of the Higher Education Committee is to look at how the state utilizes educational assistance, and if we should modify it or make it more targeted in some way. We have looked at the need in education, nursing, construction trades, and other workforce shortages in the state to see how we can help fill some of these key shortages.
* When we looked at education, last year they had 350 unfilled openings for 11,000 slots in K-12 education. Of those, only about half had been filled by temporary credentialed people when school year started. We spent last year with workforce shortages of around 150-200 spots.
* We then looked at what is in the educational pipeline to fill these positions and almost all positions in K-12 will have a shortage. It is a very serious, multifaceted problem in terms of attracting people to this profession but also retaining them.

**What is the Legislature looking at to help support workforce development for education?**

* [We have a report that outlines several different ideas on ways to assist.](https://teams.microsoft.com/_#/pdf/viewer/teamsSdk/https:~2F~2Fndusbpos.sharepoint.com~2Fsites~2FUNDStrategicPlanningCommittee~2FShared%20Documents~2FWorking%20Group%203~2FSubgroups~2FStudent%20financial%20aid%20in%20North%20Dakota%20.pdf?threadId=19:c94f9769963e42be9168392aa7f05571@thread.tacv2&subEntityId=%257B%2522web%2522%253A%2522https%253A%252F%252Fndusbpos.sharepoint.com%252Fsites%252FUNDStrategicPlanningCommittee%2522%252C%2522list%2522%253A%2522https%253A%252F%252Fndusbpos.sharepoint.com%252Fsites%252FUNDStrategicPlanningCommittee%252FShared%2520Documents%2522%252C%2522folder%2522%253A%2522%252Fsites%252FUNDStrategicPlanningCommittee%252FShared%2520Documents%252FWorking%2520Group%25203%252FSubgroups%2522%257D&fileId=a8568a3e-6d78-4953-b8e3-351ffc9d298a&ctx=openFilePreview&viewerAction=view) Ideas range from scholarships, grants, and loan forgiveness. Alex Cronquist in the ND Legislative Council would have that report. Our last meeting is at UND in September, and we will decide if we will expand or modify these recommendations.
* Been looking at what is featured WICHE and what is working in other states. Some ideas are loan forgiveness if you teach in a rural school in a high-needs area. The forgiveness was up to $6,000 a year for up to 2 years. Some issues have arisen due to a cap on the number of people that each district can offer these to. But it has helped keep people in high needs areas in a small school district. It is sunsetting, but possible the committee recommends a continuation of this.
* Other states have tried ‘bring backs,’ targeting students who left higher education but did not complete a degree. They would be eligible to apply for a scholarship to come back.
* NDSU has started a ‘bring back’ program and have been pleasantly surprised with the results. This did not have any state award to help with this. This was part of normal recruitment efforts.
* The committee has a lot of good data and ideas from other states. We have the need in the state as well. We have 15 million fewer students that are traditional college age compared to 5-6 years ago so the general population trends say we need to get all the people we can.
* I like this Loan Forgiveness piece because it allows these teachers to have a starting salary that compares to other districts in the state.

**What are other incentives are seeing which may be helpful to attracting or retaining teachers in the state?**

* The Loan Forgiveness was important for our district. With the current teacher shortage, probably just about every area could be considered a critical shortage area.
* Problem is really two-fold: some of our rural areas have become more rural. If a small school is in proximity to a larger community, you are probably losing staff because they want to be in a community that offers more amenities. A large percentage of the staff that is up to 40 minutes outside of Grand Forks lives here, so if it is bad weather, they must cancel school or go remote.
* We have schools that cannot fill positions, and just keep reposting because they cannot get people to apply. This is a shortage across the board, more than just in the STEM teaching areas
* Loan Forgiveness is big to attract people, but in terms of retention I have found that offering a teacher leadership academy has been very successful. They have a cohort that works together and gets master’s degree paid for. This has helped with belonging. Professional Development helps keep them in the profession.
* The research is clear that mentorship of new faculty is critical. The workforce problems are multifaceted. It is recruitment, retention, bringing people back into the degree. Opportunity for leadership and growth and the mentorship they need which will helpfully increase their ability to mentor and lead others.
* The universities are going a good job. Students are being prepared but we need to do a better job earlier on, exposing students to different pathways and supporting them with authentic experiences when they are students before they get in the classroom setting.
* Teacher pay has not been looked at in a while. In terms of North Dakota, we have about $14,000 behind each student which places us second only to Illinois. The elephant in the room is respect and appreciation. We need to have more appreciation and respect for the work they do.

**As you think about what UND can do, what would you like to see?**

* I think that we need to look at recruitment. At Minot High School they always show where students are going to college, and far less of them seem to be going to UND these days. So, recruitment is a big part of something you need to look at.
* UND has had some special programs that have worked well for the school districts. For example: earning your master’s degree while you are still working in the classroom. Education Colleges are trying to recruit. Valley City has a ‘degree in 3’ and they are seeing success in this program.
* UND has started an Office of Teacher Recruitment and Retention <https://blogs.und.edu/und-today/2022/05/und-to-launch-office-of-teacher-recruitment-and-retention/>
* Outreach is so important. It is there, but we need to have an avenue to share this information. I used to teach the ‘Tech for Teachers’ and it was not always clear how to connect with the people that could help with this. Perhaps a quarterly meeting or semester meeting where we get K-12 people, including rural educators, and UND people together would be useful. More conversations and have people that can go into the schools. Our current efforts are piecemealed in a way, and we need to coordinate better. Keep people up to date on who is doing things at UND and how we can best coordinate.
* There is a “lack of a front door’ – we need a place to do and find these resources.
* UND’s presence at professional meetings around the state was significant in the past. This has dopped off somewhat, and it would be good to do more of these things. My observation is that this really helps from a recruitment standpoint. Bigger conversation about Outreach.
* Need for training and education. UNDs role in graduate education is critical in this regard.
* Need for better connection between the professors and understanding the needs for our professional development. Important they hear from people in the classrooms and what they are seeing. When state mandates come in, UND needs to have conversations with those in the field to see how these mandates are best fulfilled. We would benefit from these conversations.

**Is there one thing you want to see UND include in our Strategic Plan?**

* The State would welcome ideas on how we can better target or use resources to support students from a recruitment and retention standpoint. Look at the report, and if you can think of other ideas, we would be very open to this.
* I think just reaching out more and trying to be a part of the conversations and make those connections. Anytime something happens on campus I try to be an advocate for those in the field to use those UND resources. If we can find avenues to communicate better so everyone can be aware that would be helpful.