**Strategic Planning Focus Group**

**Association of Residence Halls (ARH) Student Focus Group**

**12 students**

**April 28**

1. **Why did you choose to attend UND?** 
   1. Aerospace program (academic programs).
   2. One of the more affordable programs, but also one of the more prestigious
   3. Cost and how well known the university is in aviation. Tight knit community, valuable to come to a place that has so many connections- helps with networking. Happy with my decision. Everyone is so friendly
   4. Had a lot of family members that attended UND, so coming here when my family attended, I fell in love with the school and came back.
   5. Transfer student from RI- so coming to UND has been a transition. Came from a small school, but it was not as close knit. Here people care what they are doing and the community is more close knit.
   6. Had family members that attended here. UND – out of all the schools in ND- had the most opportunities to explore. We are strong in aviation, but also the only university in the state that has a law school and a med school.
   7. What attracted me to UND was the folks that I knew through ARH. This place turns out student leaders at a high caliber with great pride in their school. Made me what to check it out. Professors are top notch- research is amazing and what we do in the classroom is applicable to real life. Finishing out my degree now.
   8. Grew up in Grand Forks and I was very interested in being a part of UND
   9. No family or friends here but wanted to stay in state. UND had best computer science program in state. Most opportunities for me.
   10. Well known school for aviation.
   11. This was the first college I applied for. Heard they have a ROTC and commercial aviation, so gave it a shot.
   12. Transfer student from Bismarck, looking at UND and the tours really helped. Community and people are so nice here. It made me want to go here.
   13. Visited here for aerospace camp. The people that I was around were hard working, refreshing to be around these types of people.
2. ~~How do you describe UND to your family, friends, and neighbors?~~ (unable to ask: time constraints)
3. **Who does UND serve, and do you believe we are currently meeting these needs?** 
   1. Who do you believe it should be serving and what do you think needs to change for this to happen?
      1. Primarily serves students. Think they do a pretty good job at this. Lot of friends at other universities that do not get served as well. This university does a good job of paying attention to students. Never had a professor that paid less attention to me than their research.
      2. For North Dakota, UND is a pretty diverse school that tries to meet the needs of all the students that are here.
      3. Feel like the faculty are always focusing on the students and what the students need. University is always wanting to get feedback from students. They reach out and try to put students first. Could be improvements- one area is the courses -especially the big general ed classes.
      4. Helping serve the American Indian population more. The social, physical and political injustices are well known, so helping with this could be a unique, worthwhile opportunity to be involved in.
4. ~~What has the university done to benefit you or your student organization most?~~ 
   1. What might the university do better to help you, or your student organization succeed? (did not have time for this question)
5. **What have been your best experiences at UND?** 
   * 1. Hockey games
     2. Meeting people from everywhere- from all over the world
     3. Event wise: participated in Chopped competition- so much fun
     4. How welcoming different organizations have been on campus. Easy to get involved. Information is easily accessible. Being able to see anyone around campus- so many important people that will have a conversation with you.
     5. Liked events through ARH. Before I joined ARH I went to these events because they draw in so many kinds of people
     6. All the events in general- UND has it down to a science. So easy to make friends with all the events and engagement
     7. Residence life experience is good at UND. Nice to have a ‘built in’ family right away when you get here
   1. **Would you recommend UND to your family and friends, why or why not?** 
      1. I have a sister who I have managed to convince to come here- so yes
      2. Yes, I convinced one of my friends to come here
      3. My brother went to another aviation school, but when he visited me, he commented that he wished he had come here because we have all sorts of folks here that are from so many backgrounds
      4. Being from New England hard to recommend UND, so many prestigious schools there, but I always recommend qualities that UND has and I always tell them to try and find qualities that UND offers at a school they go to
   2. **Can you see yourself returning to UND as an alumnus?** 
      1. Definitely- our alumni base is so strong. They are so involved, and I want to be that when I graduate. So many connections through alumni
      2. Had networking event with alumni - through various activities and they always want to get students involved. They want to connect with students.
      3. Aspirational: create a mentorship club that connects people- make it more formalized for students/alumni. First year experience and tying mentorship into this- a mentorship program for Freshman.
      4. Mentorship programs are starting to pop up in programs and students really like this. Very department focused currently, but the freshman are not as connected to departments yet, so it will be good to have a first year mentorship program that is not as focused on your department would be very beneficial.
      5. The university life course is not great- it did not connect with students well.
6. **As a student, what concerns you most about UND?** 
   1. Rising costs. Inflation all around. Especially in housing. With trade schools becoming more popular you don’t need a degree as much. People are specializing more vs. general degrees. Concerning for UND as an institution.
   2. Some gen ed classes (Comm 110) felt like the professor and some of the students didn’t want to be there. Need to make sure that the courses that we are taking add to our knowledge and skills. Ensure that every class a student takes isn’t just ‘checking boxes’ for your degree completion, but make sure the classes we are taking are value add.
   3. My aviation courses I have loved (smaller classrooms) but some of my other classes (for my other major) I feel like I am self-teaching in some ways. If they are engaged in online resources I feel like teachers are relying on those to do tests, etc. Not generating their own tests anymore. The lectures don’t match the tests and what we are talking about doesn’t correlate well. A lot of time spent online teaching yourself that curriculum.
   4. Offer more OER. Textbooks are very expensive so make them more accessible.
   5. Having some sort of cap on how much materials cost for instructions. Sometimes teachers require so many things students have to pay for that they don’t always use.
   6. The staffing- or lack thereof. “Great resignation” Half of my job now is to market UND to get people into their jobs (‘come work for UND’). Temporary maybe but it drains on the other things that you have to do. How can we propel growth if we are not stable?
7. **What do you think needs improvement?**
   1. Trash rooms- don’t have the staffing. Students want to get a refund because not getting amenities they were promised. People really riled up about it.
   2. Transcripts being reviewed prior to the graduation process. Know of a student that got credits pulled (didn’t count transfer credits) and had to retake 9 credits again. Need to make process more obvious and concrete.
   3. No or little explanation as to why certain classes will not transfer. After my transcript was looked over, I didn’t receive credit for two courses. Still don’t understand why.
   4. Other transfer credit issues- after a student transferred, they were not allowed to take a course. Transfer process needs to be improved.
   5. Value of time. Hear from other friends about the value of time not using the time efficiently. Had to pay for instructor but weather cancellations- would still have to pay for a cancellation. Professors can cancel classes as they please and we are not getting any value for that day of missed instruction.
   6. More athletic programs, things for students to do.
   7. A lot of people held pride in the Fighting Sioux and concerned that there is not as much of a tie to UND without that. We know we can’t bring back the Sioux but a lot of people resent the Hawk. Worried about the bridge between what people were used to and what we are now.
      1. Think it is the Hawk name or the Hawk logo?
         1. The way the logo is now is not as cool as the Sioux design. People would be more behind it if it were a cooler Hawk. Put pride behind the name.
         2. Getting a (real) Hawk would really help
         3. The cartoon version of the Hawk is bad. If our Hawk actually looked cool it would be better. The cartoon version does not bring a lot of pride.
   8. Swanson Hall building face the fraternities – lots of noise issues.
   9. Concern over resistance to change from staff. On committee for experiential learning. Hard hearing that so many people were not interested in this. Need to be more competitive with what other institutions are doing. Slow to get this running.
8. **What would be your vision for UND’s future?**
   1. Do you have any ‘big dreams’ for the institution?
      1. From what I have experienced so far (first year) it is everything that I wanted. I am living the dream right now.
      2. From an aviation perspective they could add more in terms of fleet that we have and different aircraft.
      3. UND serves it students and asks for feedback. Always asking for areas to improve (i.e. adding skyways so students don’t have to walk in the cold). UND cares about its students.
      4. Growth. Lots of improvements internally and externally- continue to grow as a university. I heard of UND because of aviation, but I want to hear about UND for other reasons as well. Be nationally be known for other areas as well.
      5. Big discussion has been mental health and improving this area for students. Continue improvement in this area.
      6. Seeing outreach grow- in particular with women engineers. More opportunities for outreach in general for people. Get community on to campus, not just for recruitment, but just to get people engaged.
      7. Like to see how UND can improve on the way that education is done in general. Saw lecture style is same what was used in the 1800s- we need to update this. I don’t do well in lecture style, but I excel hands on learning. Want more of this!
      8. Monorail between here and Fargo and here and the Twin Cities. Amount of access that we could have- getting people here is difficult. Geographical isolation- need to connect us more to these metropolitan areas. Once we get people ‘in the door’ there is nothing stopping us. If no monorail, a trolly system from here to downtown. Horse and buggy is the third choice.
      9. Connect us more to the community. I hear about UND a lot but being here I want people to see the great facilities that it has- getting more people here from the community. Bring in more people from out of state and outside of US.
      10. Came to a science fair when I was in 8th grade and loved it. My vision would be to continue to host things that are statewide to get communities of ND involved on campus. Use our facilities here to bring people in.
      11. At times it can get boring when it is cold. Outgrown the wellness center. UND needs to invest in things for students to do, especially when is cold. When it comes to mental health- when it is cold- is not amazing.
      12. Come back to normal operations in terms of Covid- so this is happening.
      13. Community connection- community knowing they can come to MU or be around campus. Disconnect that people feel they are welcome. We have a lot of great opportunities here, but everyone wants to leave when they finish here. Hard to get people to stay so need to make a place where people want to live. UND does offer a lot, but once you are out the community does not have a lot to offer if you are not part of a family. Need more opportunities within the community, not just the university.
      14. Starbucks in the Aviation building.
      15. If this place could become the “Space University” that would be great.
      16. My vision for us is that we help serve Grand Forks and ND as a state. Would love to see more embedded volunteer and service options in your courses. Theory in practice out in the community. If we can do that in Grand Forks that would be amazing. Being closer to downtown would be great as well.
      17. Don’t have the lack of parking talk during this focus group make it seem like we are okay with it. We have pages of past meeting notes we can provide on this topic alone.