

Roles and Responsibilities Task Force Report

December 2014

(Approved by the SBHE January 29, 2015)

Overall Purpose and Charge to the 2014 Roles and Responsibilities Task Force: Review the major recommendations from the 2006 Task Force on Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities to determine which statements and resulting policies still have integrity for the University System and which ones should be revisited and possibly revised.

I. Roles and Responsibilities Task Force-2013-14

(Some members changed during this undertaking.)

- Dr. Kirsten Diederich, State Board President, Task Force Chair
- Mr. Don Morton, State Board Member
- Dr. Kevin Melicher, State Board Member
- Dr. Larry C. Skogen, Interim Chancellor
- Dr. Dean Bresciani, North Dakota State University President
- Dr. Robert Kelley, University of North Dakota President
- Dr. John Richman, North Dakota State College of Science President
- Dr. Steve Shirley, Minot State University President
- Mr. Murray Sagsveen, Chief of Staff and NDUS Ethics Officer
- Ms. Kristie Hetzler, Executive Assistant to the State Board

II. Fundamental Questions Regarding Areas of Confusion

The seven key areas of confusion addressed by the 2002-04 Task Force on Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities, and reviewed by the 2006 and 2014 task forces were:

1. **What form of governance is intended?** Is it the intent of the SBHE, the chancellor and the cabinet, in concept and in practice, to have the Board serve as:
 - a. A commission/coordinating board for 11 separate institutions?
 - b. A governing board of a unified system of higher education?
 - c. Some other form of governance?

Conclusion: It is the intent of the SBHE, the chancellor and the cabinet to have the SBHE serve as the governing board of a unified system of higher education.

2. **What is a “unified system of higher education?”**

Conclusion: “A Unified system of higher education,” for purposes of the North Dakota University System, is understood to mean:

- a. The system is governed by the SBHE in accordance with the North Dakota Constitution and state statutes and is guided by the Belief Statements and Core Values adopted by the Board (SBHE Policy 100.6);
- b. The system is comprised of distinct, entrepreneurial institutions with unique missions working together to maximize their collective capacities to meet the priority needs of students and the state;

- c. The Board operates at the policy level providing strategic direction, leadership and an environment conducive to success for each institution and the system as a whole;
- d. The chancellor is the chief executive officer of the University System and is empowered by the Board to provide the leadership necessary and to act on behalf of the Board working with the institution presidents to achieve the vision, mission, and long-range goals for the University System adopted by the Board;
- e. Board members, the chancellor, presidents and their representatives or those acting under their direction have the right and the responsibility to express their views when considering an item the Board has under discussion. Once the Board takes action on an item, Board members, the chancellor, presidents and their representatives or persons acting under their direction, shall execute the Board's position and not advocate against it.
- f. There is partnering, collaboration, and joint ventures involving the various colleges and universities within the University System aimed at achieving the vision and mission in the NDUS Strategic Plan;
- g. There is a balance between providing the necessary flexibility to the colleges and universities to be entrepreneurial and innovative while having the institutions also cooperate in meeting statewide needs and opportunities. It is the expectation of the Board, and thereby the responsibility of the chancellor, to assure the balance is developed and sustained;
- h. Support services are provided where it is more effective and efficient to perform the services collaboratively;
- i. There are incentives, rewards and processes which are consistent with the expectations for campuses colleges and universities to function within, and as part of, a unified system.
- j. It is the responsibility of all Board members, and particularly the Board president, to assure the integrity of the University System is preserved consistent with the University System's policies and core values.

The detailed authorities and responsibilities of the SBHE, Board Chair, chancellor and institution presidents, for achieving and sustaining the unified system, are outlined in SBHE Policies, 100.6, 310.1, 304.1 and 305.1, respectively.

3. For whom do the college and university presidents work?

- a. The chancellor?
- b. The Board?
- c. Both the chancellor and Board?

Conclusion: The presidents work for the Board. However, through various policies the Board delegates authority to the chancellor for Board and system office operations and to ensure compliance with Board policies and procedures. In

the execution of delegated authority, the chancellor speaks on behalf of the Board as CEO of the University System. Institutional operations remain under the authority of the presidents, as campus CEOs.

- 4. How do the presidents report?** What is the standard or official channel of communication?
- a. Directly to the chancellor?
 - b. Directly to the Board Chairs?
 - c. Directly to individual Board members?
 - d. Directly to the chancellor and through the chancellor to the Board?
 - e. Directly to the chancellor and through the chancellor to the Board with follow-up discussions as necessary;
 - f. Other or modifications of the above?

Conclusion: The most common channel of communication with the Board is through the chancellor to the Board. It is expected that presidents, or their designees, will also have conversations with the Board Chair and/or with all Board members to keep the Board apprised of major developments. If other substantive conversations occur, the college or university president and/or a Board member should brief the chancellor, preferably in advance, or as soon as possible after the event. The standard to be applied in determining the need to inform the chancellor is “professional courtesy and good faith consideration.”

- 5. Is the chancellor the CEO of the University System? If not, who is?**

Conclusion: The chancellor is the CEO of the University System.

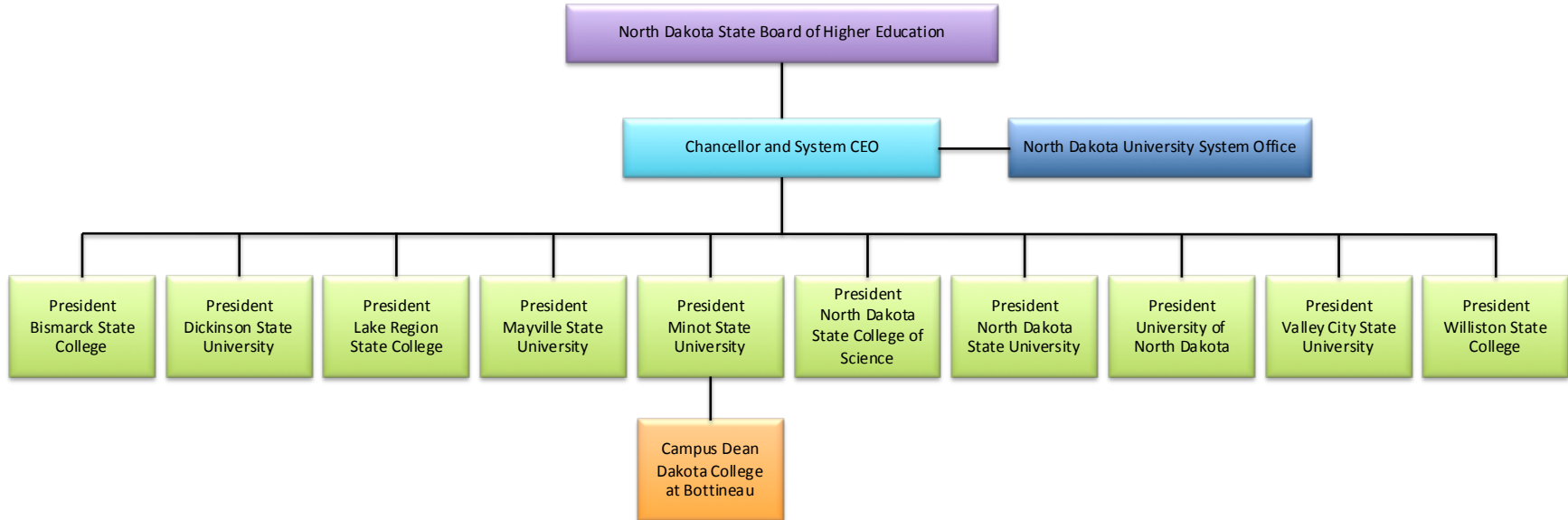
- 6. Are the existing policies adequate?** Do existing Board policies regarding the SBHE, Board members, chancellor and institution presidents accurately reflect the intent of the Board regarding authority, roles and responsibilities? Are changes in policies or practices needed?

Conclusion: The 2014 Task Force concludes that major revisions to policies are required to streamline operations, define delegated authorities, and eliminate conflicting requirements.

- 7. Is there an organizational chart for the North Dakota University System? Is there a chart that illustrates the relationships of the various entities of the system?**

Conclusion: (See chart, Section-III, on following page)

III. Organizational Chart of the North Dakota University System



IV. Operational Changes

The following actions and changes are operational and included in this report to provide a more complete picture of the actions underway to address the issues raised during the Roles and Responsibilities Task Force discussions relating to improving communication while recognizing variations in size, scope and mission of the 11 institutions of higher education in North Dakota:

1. The agenda for Board meetings will allow an institution to alert the Board of developments or concerns; i.e., to provide a mechanism and a communications channel that allows presidents to keep the entire Board apprised of developments, including new directions, plans or emerging issues, important to the institution;
2. The agenda will allow time for an institution—at the request of its president—at each meeting to provide an institution-specific update to the Board on issues such as: retention and graduation rates and efforts; enrollment strategies; construction projects; needs and wants, etc.;
3. In recognition of the variations in size, scope and issues of relevance to the various colleges and universities, the chancellor will meet separately with the (a) two major research institutions, (b) five community colleges through the College Technical Education Council (CTEC), and (c) remaining four-year institutions in whatever format or process these institutions deem to be useful and effective. These meetings or conversations are in addition to the regularly scheduled Chancellor's Cabinet meetings;
4. Any president who would like to brief the Board on an item can request to have time on the Board agenda to do so; however, items requiring Board action must be coordinated with the chancellor;
5. In an effort to make Board meetings as relevant as possible, time will be set aside to discuss major issues impacting North Dakota and/or the University System. The Board has accepted the presidents' offer to help identify the major issues, arrange resource people or presenters and lead the discussion;
6. The chancellor will have individual meetings with the presidents. The two purposes of the meetings are to determine: (1) what the chancellor and the University System can do to assist the respective institutions in being as successful as possible, and (2) what the chancellor and system needs from the president to maximize the success of the University System in serving students and the state;
7. A special effort is underway, based on recommendations solicited from the Chancellor's Cabinet, to make cabinet meetings as meaningful, relevant and productive as possible.
8. It is agreed that the university system staff, including directors and vice chancellors, are not in supervisory positions over institution officers. Their role is to provide

advice to the chancellor, cabinet, and institutions related to programmatic and policy decisions within their respective areas; chair system-wide councils; offer a system-wide perspective on issues within their respective areas including, but not limited to, policies, programs, and related activities; ensure compliance with Board policies and procedures; oversee system-wide projects; and, perform duties and responsibilities in their job descriptions and as assigned by the chancellor.