

The Roundtable on Higher Education Linking North Dakota and Its University System

In 1999, North Dakota leaders looked into the future and saw challenges and opportunities that required immediate action. They committed to taking the bold steps needed to improve the state’s economic and demographic picture.

These leaders believed the North Dakota University System to be an integral part of expanding and diversifying the state’s economy and enhancing the quality of life for all North Dakotans. As a result, profound changes are taking place, many of which reflect the growing relationships between the NDUS and its many public and private partners.

As members of the Roundtable on Higher Education, these leaders are helping to carve out a brighter future for the state of North Dakota. This publication focuses on the success of this remarkable initiative and the rewards of maintaining its momentum.

The Roundtable on Higher Education: Before and After	
BEFORE	AFTER
640,000 visions of what a university system should be and do for the state	One common vision for the NDUS
Multiple and conflicting expectations by stakeholders of higher education	A clear set of expectations agreed to and expressed through fiscal and performance accountability measures
The NDUS not connected to the state’s public agenda	The NDUS closely aligned with the future needs and opportunities of students and the state
A risk-adverse environment	Responsive, entrepreneurial, risk-taking campuses
The NDUS viewed as a financial burden to the state of North Dakota	The NDUS viewed as an economic engine for the state
The NDUS seen as individual campuses providing regional benefits	The NDUS seen as collectively benefiting all of North Dakota
Public and private sectors working, at times, in isolation of one another	An increase in private/public partnerships
Legislative focus on funding	Bold legislative action to provide “flexibility with accountability” for the NDUS
The NDUS driven by a budget	The NDUS drawn by a vision
A tendency to apply the “gotcha” mentality	Relationships built on mutual trust and common purpose
A study of the state’s higher education system about every 10 years	An ongoing study of the state’s higher education system with the roundtable process keeping it alive
An agenda for each NDUS institution	A system-wide agenda to create a brighter future for the state and its citizens

Stakeholders in Creating a Brighter Future for Our Citizens and Our State

Public and private sector representatives share their thoughts on the power and potential of the Roundtable on Higher Education.

Larry Isaak

Chancellor, North Dakota University System

In 1999, 61 leaders from government, education and the private sector came together to envision what a university system for the 21st century should look like and how it could contribute to growing our state's economy.

Now, four years later, examples of the impact of empowering North Dakota University System campuses are bountiful. Here are just a few:

- Universities are delivering bachelor's degrees in cities where there are community colleges, and community colleges are delivering technical training in cities that are home to our universities.
- Research activities have increased dramatically, as have partnerships between the private sector and the campuses; new technology and research partnerships are nurturing budding entrepreneurs and providing services to international companies.
- Campuses now can retain revenues from attracting additional students, contracts and research to improve responsiveness to students and the private sector.
- The NDUS has implemented an accountability system that supports all six cornerstones of the *Roundtable Report*.
- Campuses are collaborating to provide LPN training via distance delivery to rural areas.
- Online classes provide "one click" access from anywhere in the state — or the world.
- Campuses are placing an increased emphasis on articulation agreements to ease student transition between institutions.
- In partnership with the state, the NDUS is implementing a new administrative system (*ConnectND*), which will result in increased efficiency, service and responsiveness to student and state needs.
- NDUS institutions are reaching out to students in other countries to expand diversity, cultural experiences and international connections to our campuses and state.

Members of the roundtable, the North Dakota University System listened to what you had to say, and we got the message! You laid the groundwork for providing flexibility with accountability, and, as a result, have re-energized the entrepreneurial and risk-taking spirit on our campuses. With your expert guidance and steadfast support, the University System will continue to push the envelope and help create an environment in which the state, the system, our students and all those we serve will be successful.

It has been my pleasure to play a role in this landmark initiative.



Larry Isaak



Gov. John Hoeven



Dr. Richard Kunkel

John Hoeven

Governor, State of North Dakota

1999–2000 State Government Roundtable Representative

The Roundtable on Higher Education has redefined the role of our universities in the public and economic life of North Dakota, garnering great benefits for our citizens and national honors for our state. By granting our colleges and universities greater flexibility and asking them to be more accountable, we have unleashed the entrepreneurial spirit of North Dakota's best and brightest. We have made education a genuine force for economic development in the new century.

I was privileged to be among those who served on the inaugural roundtable in 1999, so I know firsthand the excitement of working with a team to forge a clear, unified vision for our campuses. I also know firsthand the satisfaction of seeing that vision realized in some of the practical achievements of our state. Today, as governor, I take great pride in seeing the launch of dynamic new programs and projects that grew out of our work with the roundtable — programs like centers of excellence and projects like Alien Technology's new manufacturing plant at NDSU.

Centers of excellence, to take one example, embody the roundtable's commitment to make education a driving force for our economic development efforts. As hubs of research, scholarship and business on our campuses, they combine education with economic development to create new business opportunities and higher-paying jobs for North Dakota citizens. That is the focus of our administration.

But the work of the roundtable moves on. Our campuses remain rich with potential to help us build our future in North Dakota, and now you have an opportunity to tap those riches. I wish all of you the best as you embark on your roundtable experience, and I also wish you the same successes we've enjoyed beginning with the first roundtable.

Dr. Richard Kunkel

2003–04 President, State Board of Higher Education

As president of the State Board of Higher Education, I am amazed at the synergy created by linking the intellectual capacity of the North Dakota University System with the ingenuity and resources of the private sector.

As a board, we are committed to sustaining the momentum of the Roundtable on Higher Education. Accordingly, we have developed a strategic plan that is connected to and supported by campus alignment plans. This strategic plan is based upon the needs and opportunities of the state and the citizens we serve. The foundation upon which this plan was built is the *Roundtable Report*. That connection is evident in every page of the strategic plan.

Roundtable members have provided the vision and expectations; the board and system have focused on bringing both to reality. As a board, we work hard to operate at the policy level while providing the structure and environment that enable NDUS campuses to be successful and deliver peak performances.

As North Dakota's public and private sector leaders, all of us are being challenged to rethink the way we do business and to look for shared economies. But, by working together, we can explore possibilities only dreamed of when working as separate sectors of society. For this reason, I truly believe the Roundtable on Higher Education can — and will — change the destiny of North Dakota.



Sen. David Nething



Sen. Ray Holmberg



Roger Reiersen

David Nething

1999–2002 Chairman, Roundtable on Higher Education

I have been delighted to participate in this journey of discovery called the Roundtable on Higher Education. As roundtable members, we have explored the conditions and trends which will impact our state and concluded the North Dakota University System is our best chance for a brighter tomorrow.

Through this public/private partnership based upon mutual trust and common purpose, I truly believe we can build a North Dakota for the future — a future in which all regions of the state will prosper and grow.

In 2001, the interim Committee on Higher Education had the pleasure of visiting several University System campuses where we witnessed first-hand the remarkable changes taking place as a result of this initiative and the passage of landmark legislation. We saw how granting the University System flexibility with accountability had begun to reap significant benefits for our state. Since then, we have seen multiple examples of what is being accomplished by unleashing the power and potential of the University System.

But the work of the Roundtable on Higher Education has just begun. Roundtable members, it will take the best effort of all of us to sustain this momentum and effectiveness, but the beauty of this relationship is that each of us will benefit from its success. Together, we can continue to build a statewide agenda for economic and demographic growth, and we can continue to serve as a national model of empowerment and success.

Ray Holmberg

2003 Chairman, Roundtable on Higher Education

Four years ago, we embarked on a change in focus and direction for higher education, unparalleled since the 1930s and probably unattainable until present day. That is the legacy of the Roundtable on Higher Education, now into its fifth year of existence.

The overall goal of the roundtable was to create a university system that meets the rapidly changing needs and opportunities of students and the state, is entrepreneurial in its thinking and action, and where responsible risk-taking and failure are expected and accepted.

Collectively, through the roundtable and subsequent legislation in both 2001 and 2003, we decided that higher education needed to take a greater and more visible role in our state's economic future in order to grow and prosper. To accomplish that task, a new relationship between the legislature, the executive branch, the private sector and the University System was established. Under the leadership of Sen. Nething, Gov. Hoeven, the State Board of Higher Education, the private sector and other stakeholders, the roundtable concept is the law of the land.

Now, the challenge is to sustain the vision. But even more to the point, our goal during the upcoming interim is not only to sustain that vision, but to embed the tenets of the roundtable in a new culture. A culture where the basic behavior patterns have been agreed upon and are followed. Where the power and potential of the University System and the needs and opportunities of the state are recognized and accepted as the way to do business.

As members of the 2003-04 roundtable, you are critical to making the roundtable an integral part of the North Dakota culture. Thank you for making a difference.

Roger Reiersen

**Chairman, New Economy Initiative
Private Sector Roundtable Representative**

The new knowledge-based economy presents both a challenge and opportunity for states like North Dakota. If we, as a state, utilize the strength of our top-quality higher education system, we have the ability to excel in the knowledge economy. The work of the roundtable opened the door for that to happen.

Our higher education system addresses two issues: attracting new talent and creating new opportunities. Our colleges and universities are a magnet for talent and a key to future development and prosperity. Successful communities across the nation are placing a high value on their colleges and universities, and those investing in them are reaping great rewards.

Business has a high degree of dependence on higher education, and, as we move forward, we will rely on them even more. Through the work of the roundtable, North Dakota's higher education system has awoken to help meet the challenges facing the state and our business growth. This new direction as set forth can be described in one word: engaged.

The roundtable empowered our colleges and universities to actively contribute to the solutions to our state's challenges. The University System has accepted this direction energetically and has expanded its mission beyond providing high-quality education. The results to date have been exciting.

New partnerships between business and higher education institutions have emerged. The campuses have become proactive in working with business to define new career paths and emerging opportunities. The University System has stepped up to the plate to be a major player in economic development.

But our work is not done. We have only tapped the surface in uncovering the true value of this resource. We need to continue to explore ways in which higher education can engage with the private sector and support the new economy emerging in our state.

Roundtable Members: Building a Solid Foundation for Public and Private Partnerships

Current and former roundtable members were invited to respond to the question, “What are the most important changes that have come about as a result of the Roundtable on Higher Education?” In their own words, members describe the dynamic relationships between the University System and its many public and private partners.

Communication between higher education and the private sector has improved significantly. This has resulted in enhanced economic development opportunities in our state as both entities work together more closely.

Don Hedger, Killdeer Mountain Manufacturing

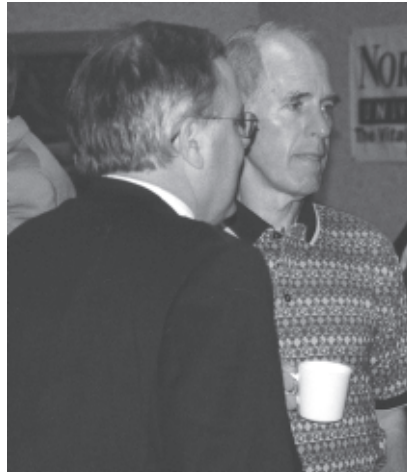
The Roundtable on Higher Education has brought many changes and important improvements for North Dakota. It has provided direction and a road map for the future and established several targets, goals and cornerstones.

It has brought about a change in attitude, a realization of the dependency between the NDUS and the state and that all parties need to work together to grow together. It brought leaders together from the public, private and higher education sectors who took it upon themselves to rethink higher education and started a change in the way in which the system and state government carry out their responsibilities. The change is constant and must continue.

It has helped develop an understanding that the best method of delivering higher education in North Dakota is as a system, not a collection of 11 campuses. Great strides have been made because of the roundtable in making the system flexible, accountable and responsive.

Flexible, accountable, responsive, empowering — all important changes as a result of the roundtable.

Bruce I. Christianson, SBHE member, 2001–2007



Sen. Tim Flakoll and Fargo Mayor Bruce Furness, 2002 roundtable meeting

I think the most important change that has come from the 2000 Roundtable on Higher education is two-fold.

First, the *Roundtable Report* created a better awareness on the part of the legislature of the goals and needs of the University System. This was an important change.

Second, the flexibility for the universities as is evident in the funding and curricular offerings is an important and substantive change that I believe was the product of the roundtable.

Ryan Bernstein, student SBHE member, 1999–2000

By far the most important accomplishment and change was getting the governor, the legislature and the board of higher education on the same page with a jointly developed shared vision for higher education in North Dakota and a plan to achieve future goals. We did not have this before.

The roundtable also moved the campuses to a more unified system of higher education than previously.

The other important change was the delegation of responsibility to the campus presidents for managing their own institutions including financial allocations. There still needs to be a realistic accountability for meeting board expectations.

Bill Isaacson, SBHE member, 1998–2002

I think the most important changes that have come about as a result of the roundtable involve governance and better understanding of who plays what role.

Prior to the roundtable, there were too many temptations for legislators, board members, campus presidents and others to get involved in each others' jobs. This resulted in duplication of efforts.

The system approach to the universities in North Dakota is supposed to generate unified thinking. The legislators, the board, the presidents and the faculty are supposed to envision a system that best serves North Dakota's students. The roundtable has helped bring all the players to the table to refine what it means to be a system, rather than a collection of colleges and universities. The roundtable can play that role well into the future.

It's often said that the devil is in the details. The roundtable can help provide a forum to examine how the details are being worked out as we continue to build a university system for North Dakota.

In addition, the roundtable has helped clarify that the University System can be an engine for economic development in the state. Those are the benefits I've seen from the roundtable discussions and activities.

Dennis Hill, North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives



Roger Reierson presents the Bellwether Award to Sen. Dave Nething, 2002 roundtable meeting



(Left to right) Wayne Kutzer, Department of Career and Technical Education; Curt Wolfe, Information Technology Department; Sen. Ken Solberg, 2002 roundtable meeting



Bill Goetz, Gov. Hoeven's chief of staff, 2002 roundtable meeting



Bev Clayburgh, SBHE member; Phil Leitner, 2001-02 North Dakota Student Association president, 2002 roundtable meeting



Chuck Stroup, 2002-03 SBHE president, 2002 roundtable meeting

I think the most significant change which has come from the Roundtable on Higher Education has been the start of a change of attitude from the legislature. The legislature is starting to recognize the need for flexibility within the higher education system. However, an important component of that change includes accountability. Time will tell whether there is a continuation of trust of the higher education system by the legislature. Any significant accountability issue that should arise in the near future could change the tide back to the “micro-management” environment that existed before the roundtable.

Another key component that must continue is the open and frank communications between the higher education system and legislators. Legislators must feel that they are key stakeholders of the system. Legitimate and measurable accountability measures must be maintained and modified as needed. If these are agreed upon by legislators, the necessary flexibility component will remain in place. The roundtable is an innovative approach, but is only a road map for continued success for the higher education system.

Rod St. Aubyn, former Senate member

The most important changes that have come about as a result of the Roundtable on Higher Education are centers of excellence, entrepreneurship, defined missions, fewer barriers to growth and a cohesive legislative message. It has been an honor and a pleasure to be part of bringing this about under the leadership of John Hoeven.

Jack Dalrymple, Lt. Gov., State of North Dakota

To me, the most important change that has come about due to the Roundtable on Higher Education is the increased authority that the University System has for making decisions and appropriating money. The legislature will always have a key role to play in the spending of taxpayer dollars, but university officials know best what is needed to make our colleges and universities the best they can be.

In addition, the roundtable has opened important doors between the education community and the business community. Ultimately, many of the graduates of the University System will be seeking jobs in the private sector, and the interaction between these two groups will help the University System equip its students for the next chapter in their lives – that of seeking employment upon graduation.

I have appreciated the opportunity to be a part of the roundtable and wish all the participants the best of luck in the future!

Craig Larson, Starion Financial

I believe that giving universities greater flexibility in financial matters and in program development that is regionally accessible was a major step in creating responsive universities. While the dialogue generated by the roundtable forced the state and the legislature to rethink the University System and its operations, I still believe that the state remains ambivalent about how to enact the full array of recommendations offered by the roundtable. To do so, the state will need to become more trusting of system campuses and more committed to generating revenue to meet the expectations the public may have for the University System.

Hardin Aasand, faculty representative to the roundtable, 1999–present

Private sector input is critical to strategically position and strengthen the University System to respond to companies’ needs and allows or enhances their ability to be competitive globally. Private sector involvement will help shape the goals, objectives, capacity building, etc. that the University System needs for it to be an engine for growth and to shape the future of North Dakota.

Strategic planning should be system-wide, but campus-based, to implement the vision. Legislative thought and action must allow and enhance the University System to respond.

Jennifer Feist, Valley City - Barnes County Development Corporation

As a direct result of the roundtable sessions, in my opinion, there is a far better realization, understanding and appreciation of what higher education means to North Dakota in relationship to economic development in the state. It was refreshing to meet with representatives of the executive and legislative branches of government, as well as community leaders, together with those in higher education and to see a “coming together” of these groups as we all realized there is one common goal for the future, and, that in order to achieve that goal, we need to work together as partners. There was a strong emphasis on the importance of higher education as the engine of growth for the state, almost to the point where there may have been some who have expected more of higher education than it is possible to deliver. The roundtable, I believe, inspired all and emphasized the importance of good cooperation among all stakeholders.

I am very pleased that we can look forward to another gathering of the roundtable participants, and, with that meeting, a new burst of energy.

Bev Clayburgh, SBHE member, 1996–2007

The Roundtable on Higher Education has brought a fundamental shift in public policy in regard to the influence higher education has on the economic and social vitality of North Dakota. This shift has been felt by SBHE members, college presidents, faculty, staff, students and community leaders alike. Expectations remain high. Achievement will come from bold and patient leadership and innovators and visionaries who truly believe a difference can be made.

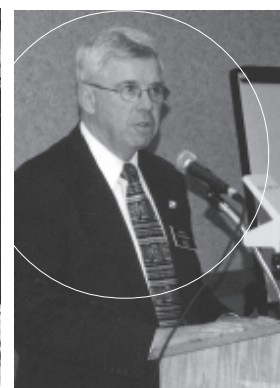
Chuck Stroup, SBHE member, 2000–04



Sen. David Nething and Rep. Nancy Johnson, 2001 roundtable meeting



(Left to right) Ryn Pitts, private sector representative; Sen. Tony Grindberg; Dale Knutson, University System faculty representative; Jennifer Feist, private sector representative; Heather Lee, 2001–02 student SBHE member, 2002 roundtable meeting



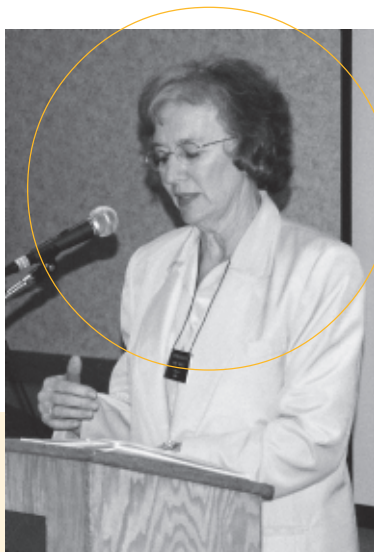
Sen. Rich Wardner, 2002 roundtable meeting

The legislature’s awareness of the contributions of the NDUS to the state has increased, as has financial flexibility. The system’s contribution to economic development, while a laudable goal, has overshadowed the importance of the traditional purposes served by higher education. Amid these developments, NDUS institutions are dealing with increased expectations and accountability without a corresponding increase in support.

Bethany Andreasen, faculty advisor to the SBHE, 1999–2000

While there are numerous changes that have come about since implementation of the roundtable, one seems to stand out more than the others. The most important change was to open communication lines among business leaders, state agencies and higher education institutions (including administration, faculty and staff). By understanding that communication is the key to a successful environment, I believe the roundtable opened the doors to allow a more innovative strategy to start emerging throughout each sector of business in the state. People started working together instead of against each other. Within higher education, institutions started developing relationships and working together for the students. The roundtable is proving to be a catalyst for innovative solutions to problems that existed for many years, and, as a result, businesses understand more now than ever that educational institutions are a key to their success.

Heather Lee, student SBHE member, 2001–02



Rep. Janet Wentz, 2002 roundtable meeting



Sen. Elroy Lindaas; Craig Larson, private sector representative; Rep. Pam Guleson, 2002 roundtable meeting

NDUS Campuses: Where the Rubber Hits the Road

Here's what NDUS campus presidents have to say about the impact of the Roundtable on Higher Education.

The Roundtable on Higher Education has created our roadmap for the future — depicting our direction as a University System. With development and implementation of the six cornerstones, all 11 colleges and universities are now focused and moving in one unified and energetic manner, especially through our annual strategic planning efforts. For example, at North Dakota State College of Science, our success as an institution is now based on our ability to accomplish our goals, which are defined via these six cornerstones. Thus, the roundtable has helped to elevate these great North Dakota higher education institutions to ones that are, in fact, being recognized as the vital link to a brighter future for the state of North Dakota.

Dr. Sharon Y. Hart
North Dakota State College of Science

Universities have become more nimble and far better able to deal with challenges and opportunities. More public, education and civic leaders have come to see an important role for universities in creating a new future for the state — both in terms of the traditional role of universities and in our expanded, direct involvement in economic development.

Dr. Charles Kupchella
University of North Dakota

A major benefit of the Roundtable on Higher Education can be seen at the NDSU Research and Technology Park. The roundtable was the basis for the flexibility and empowerment needed to attract Alien Technology and make the park the site of the world's first mass-scale radio frequency identification tag plant. In a single step, North Dakota created more than 300 new high-paying jobs and positioned itself to be an international leader in this emerging technology. This success resulted from the empowerment of NDSU to leverage the state's investment.

Dr. Joseph Chapman
North Dakota State University

The Roundtable on Higher Education changed our focus from a campus that acts in a self-directed, non-aligned manner to a campus that is part of a system working toward a compelling purpose and vision. The roundtable provides a framework that encourages cooperation and collaboration among institutions in order to serve the state's needs, rather than an arrangement whereby a group of independent entities compete against one another.

Dr. Ken Grosz
Campus Dean, MiSU-Bottineau Campus

The Roundtable on Higher Education is providing a shared vision for the University System. This is partly accomplished by all campuses applying the roundtable's cornerstones to our strategic plans.

The legislation that gave us more flexibility at the campus level came out of the roundtable's recommendations. That flexibility has been invaluable in helping the campuses respond quickly to rapidly changing needs of business and industry in North Dakota.

An improved climate for appropriate risk-taking is another benefit. We have to be more entrepreneurial to compete in a global economy. The roundtable realized this and provided the permission to think and act competitively.

Dr. Donna Thigpen
Bismarck State College

As a recent candidate for the presidency at Mayville State University, I found the work of the Roundtable on Higher Education to be extremely valuable. The *Roundtable Report* laid out the vision and expectations of higher education very clearly. The direction set forth with each of the six cornerstones was enormously impressive. The roundtable has provided a well-organized road map for strategic planning that will help our campus move forward with innovative flexibility and thoughtful vision.

Dr. Pamela Balch
Mayville State University

Thanks to the roundtable, many of the key players in all relevant circles and levels of responsibility have similar goals and expectations for higher education. Shared goals are an important foundation for success as institutions and as a state, and shared accountability indicators ensure that everyone is on the right track. Increased financial flexibility has been a vitally important institutional tool for dealing with increasingly scarce resources.

Dr. Ellen Chaffee
Valley City State University

A major benefit of the Roundtable on Higher Education for Williston State College has been flexibility. It enables the college to make curricular changes to meet student needs, expand delivery modes to increase student access and respond to community development needs. The roundtable provides a vision of unification for the University System, encouraging campuses to jointly develop and deliver programs.

Dr. Joseph McCann
Williston State College

The most immediate value of the Roundtable on Higher Education for Lake Region State College has been the flexibility in budget management, which has allowed the college to be more creative in its programming and offerings. It has been extremely helpful to have a one line-item budget and to be able to retain and carry over funds. This has encouraged greater partnership and risk taking in programming, such as the collaborative practical nursing program. Carryover has allowed the creation of a pool of funds to be invested in the development of additional programs as needed. This has allowed the college to increase accessibility in dual-credit and other off-campus delivery.

The greatest impact of the roundtable has been bringing together the colleges, state government, the private sector and the general population in a common higher education agenda.

Dr. Sharon Etamad
Lake Region State College

The NDUS, as well as individual colleges and universities, is more engaged in enhancing economic development as a result of the Roundtable on Higher Education. Human capital and innovation are critical factors in today's economy, and NDUS institutions are clearly doing a better job of developing human capital and participating in innovative program delivery and research.

The single factor with the greatest power to explain differences in per capita income between states is the percentage of college graduates. Since implementation of the roundtable, the number of graduates has increased, as well as enrollment and the quality of programs and services. Partnerships with business, government and the non-profit sector have also increased.

Dr. Lee Vickers
Dickinson State University

Flexibility with accountability has been particularly valuable to Minot State University. Flexibility in the use of tuition dollars has allowed the university to be more responsive to new initiatives and more entrepreneurial in the development of centers of excellence. The accountability measures have focused assessment efforts on key indicators of high-quality programs and provide critical information for the long-term growth and development of the university.

The goals of the roundtable have provided a vehicle for the development of partnerships with business and industry. These partnerships benefit students in internships, field experiences and, ultimately, employment. They directly benefit faculty in conducting research.

Dr. Erik Shaar
Minot State University



**Dennis Jones, President,
National Center for Higher Education Management
Systems (NCHEMS), Boulder, Colo.**

The formulation of state-level public policy toward higher education is changing in critically important ways. While there are many dimensions to the evolving set of relationships between state government and colleges and universities, the key elements are:

- A greater emphasis on the role of institutions in helping to address the priority needs of the state and its citizens and less attention to the creation of a system of higher education as an end unto itself.
- More emphasis on accomplishment and performance accompanied by more autonomy being granted to institutions regarding how these agreed-upon ends are to be accomplished.

In this arena, North Dakota is recognized as one of only two or three states that are “getting it right” — that have adopted an integrated set of policies directed at achieving a clearly delineated set of state goals. Specifically, North Dakota has:

- Developed goals that focus on improving the economy and quality of life for North Dakota — the cornerstones in the *Roundtable Report*.
- Formalized a new relationship between government and higher education — autonomy with accountability.
- Made explicit, in statute, those things for which the system of higher education will be held accountable.
- Devised and agreed upon a long-term financing plan tied to this new vision.
- Put in place a mechanism to review and discuss, on a yearly basis, the goals and the progress being made — the annual roundtable meetings.

North Dakota is to be commended for the leadership it has exhibited in this important area of policymaking. The challenge now is to stay the course and avoid sliding backwards into old ways of doing business. Those old ways may be more comfortable, but they will serve the citizens of North Dakota less well.

Congratulations on a job well done — and thank you for providing a model of good practice which I can point out to other states.

The Eyes of the Nation Are Upon Us ...

2002 Bellwether Award

Roundtable on Higher Education

“Clearly, North Dakota’s leadership and partnership in bringing together representatives from the private sector, from the legislature, from public schools, from the community — everyone pulling together to meet the common goal and vision of how to transform education and improve the quality of life for the state of North Dakota and citizens — is truly worthy of replication.”

Dale F. Campbell, founder of the Community College Futures Assembly, Bellwether Award presentation, a meeting of the Roundtable on Higher Education, June 2002

2002 Council of State Governments (CSG) Innovations Award

Roundtable on Higher Education

“At a time when states and territories are facing extremely difficult fiscal constraints, innovative ways to perform state-government functions are even more critical... In a real sense, everyone wins when states vigorously pursue better, more cost-effective ways to provide services to citizens.”

Dan Sprague, executive director of the Council of State Governments, *State Government News*, November/December 2002, announcement of 2002 Innovations Awards winners

The Goal of the Roundtable

To enhance the economic vitality of North Dakota and the quality of life of its citizens through a high quality, more responsive, equitable, flexible, accessible, entrepreneurial, and accountable University System.