

## A Resolution In Support of NDUS Diversity Tuition Waivers

**WHEREAS**, the North Dakota Student Association (NDSA) represents the voice of North Dakota's 45,000 public college and university students; and,

**WHEREAS**, the purpose of NDSA is to represent all students enrolled in the North Dakota University System (NDUS) and advocate on issues of higher education in support of access, affordability, quality, and the student experience; and,

**WHEREAS**, the NDSA is committed to the promotion of diversity, equity and inclusion within both the NDSA and NDUS; and,<sup>1</sup>

**WHEREAS**, the NDSA recognizes that this issue is near resolution and acknowledges that this delay is due to the organization's General Assembly not meeting quorum; and,

**WHEREAS**, SBHE 820.1 grants institutions the ability to develop tuition waivers to create a culturally diverse student body<sup>2</sup> for the better of all students in the academic community NDUS institutions include a diversity waiver for this purpose; and,<sup>3</sup>

**WHEREAS**, although Bismarck State College's (BSC) and University of North Dakota (UND) School of Law waivers focus solely on race, other institutions may have waivers with broader requirements such as sexuality, gender identification, and tribal affiliation or have requirements related to just GPA and credits per semester like UND; and,

**WHEREAS**, there have recently been civil complaints brought forward to challenge BSC and UND School of Law's diversity waivers on the basis of discrimination against White or Caucasian students being unable to apply for said waivers, and;

**WHEREAS**, students at North Dakota institutions may be educated on the racial injustices in the state's history that directly benefitted its White population while impeding socioeconomic mobility for those targeted by said injustices; and,

**WHEREAS**, diversity waivers exist to bridge the socioeconomic gap created by these racial injustices that still echo lasting effects on surviving groups to this day; and,

**WHEREAS**, the inclusion of diversity waivers in the state allows for minority students to see North Dakota as a safe and inclusive place to pursue higher education, where the removal of such would suggest otherwise; and,

**WHEREAS**, there is a significant economic impact brought to North Dakota by out-of-state students, who make up 41.7% of the NDUS population, and the removal of the cultural diversity waiver would signal to those students (including White students) that concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion are not part of the NDUS; and,<sup>4</sup>

**WHEREAS**, this civil complaint would negatively impact the state of North Dakota because out-of-state interests may not fully grasp the impact of university relations to historically



under-represented groups, and the removal of these waivers will especially affect American Indian and tribal communities who hold a special relationship with institutions of higher education due to their location on ancestral land; and,

**WHEREAS**, college campuses are hubs of diversity in the state and their respective college towns, where in Bismarck, their non-White population is 10.7% and at BSC their non-White population is 13.2%, making the campus more racially diverse than the city it is located and out of the ≈43,000 total students within the NDUS during the 2023 fall semester, an approximated 19% identify as non-White compared to 13.4% of the entire state identifying as non-White; so,<sup>5-6</sup>

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the NDSA supports BSC, UND, and the NDUS in the utilization of cultural diversity waivers because of its commitment to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion for all our students including continuing to support and fund said waivers<sup>4</sup>; and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the implementation of cultural diversity waivers supports equitable access to higher education and without such waivers, an equal opportunity for students to be able to attend institutions of higher education and attain advanced degrees would be considerably limited; and,

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that the NDSA is aware of the ramifications of the civil complaint turning in favor of the pursuant party, which has the potential to invalidate, and permanently remove cultural diversity waivers for both public and private institutions nationwide and understands the urgency and gravity of the situation regarding its relationship to BSC, UND, and UND School of Law, along with the potential effects on every other institution of higher education in the country.

*Approved by the North Dakota Student Association General Assembly  
Saturday, January 20th, 2024*

<sup>1</sup>NDSA-23-2021 A Resolution in Opposition of HB 1298

<sup>2</sup>State Board of Higher Education Policy 820

[https://ndusbpos.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/NDUSPoliciesandProcedures/ET1PMU\\_B0qZLo4upTGTSxnwBjGy1HyWHDfID6e9psCHJ\\_w?e=P2eLex](https://ndusbpos.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/NDUSPoliciesandProcedures/ET1PMU_B0qZLo4upTGTSxnwBjGy1HyWHDfID6e9psCHJ_w?e=P2eLex)

<sup>3</sup>Bismarck State College Cultural Diversity Waiver

<https://bismarckstate.edu/forms/cultural-diversity-waiver/>

<sup>4</sup>NDUS 2023 Fall Enrollment Report p. 31-2

<https://ndus.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2023/10/2023-Fall-Enrollment.pdf>

<sup>5</sup>Bismarck State College Community Report 2020

<https://bismarckstate.edu/about/reportsoutcomes/Community-Report/>

<sup>6</sup>United States Census Bureau