

North Dakota Student Member on the State Board of Higher Education

Summary of the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education

The **North Dakota State Board of Higher Education (NDSBHE)** is the governing body responsible for overseeing the state's public higher education system. It provides strategic direction, policy development, and fiscal oversight for the state's colleges and universities as outlined in 15-10-01 of the North Dakota Century Code. The board is composed of seven citizen voting members appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate, as well as a student member who is first voted on by the North Dakota Student Association (NDSA) and then selected by the Governor. Additionally, non-voting members, such as faculty and staff representatives, contribute perspectives from within the university system.

The board establishes policies for the 11 public institutions within the North Dakota University System (NDUS), including two research universities, four regional universities, and five community colleges. It also allocates funding, approves budgets, and makes decisions regarding academic programs, workforce development, and research initiatives to align with the state's economic, social, and cultural needs. The board's mission is to enhance the quality of education, increase accessibility, and foster innovation across the state's higher education system. Its strategic priorities focus on improving student retention and graduation rates, strengthening collaboration between institutions and stakeholders, and addressing workforce demands in key industries such as healthcare, energy, and technology.

Beyond setting policies, the board holds authority over significant decisions, including hiring and firing institutional presidents, approving tenure for faculty, authorizing new building projects, selling institutional land, and handling other matters essential to the operations of the NDUS. Through these roles, the board plays a vital role in shaping the educational landscape to meet the needs of students and the state.

How the Student Member is Chosen

The student member of the NDSBHE is selected through a process coordinated by the North Dakota Student Association (NDSA), a group composed of delegates from each of the 11 institutions within the NDUS. The NDSA meets monthly to discuss campus issues, advocate for change, and propose resolutions on matters affecting students. During their April meeting, the NDSA nominates three candidates to the governor's office for the role of the student member on the State Board of Higher Education. From these nominees, the governor conducts interviews and selects the candidate they believe will best represent both the students and the state.

Requirements to Apply

To be eligible for the student member position, candidates must meet the following criteria:

- Have completed at least one year of study at an NDUS institution by the time they assume the position.
- Be enrolled as a full-time student at an NDUS institution at the time of assuming the position.
- Have attended at least three separate NDSA meetings before the nomination period opens in March (can be bypassed by a suspension of the NDSA bylaws).
- Be a full-time resident of North Dakota.
- Complete and submit the State Board of Higher Education Election Packet.

Roles of the Student Member

The student member on the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education is a voting member with equal authority and decision-making power as the other seven citizen members. This role offers a unique opportunity to represent the interests of the student body in shaping policies and decisions that affect the state's public higher education system. The student member is typically assigned to the Student and Academic Affairs Committee and the Research and Governance Committee, though the Board Chair may reassign them to other committees if their perspective is deemed more valuable elsewhere.

While not required, it is strongly recommended that the student member visit all 11 institutions within the North Dakota University System during their tenure. These visits allow the student member to connect with students, faculty, and administrators, ensuring that their concerns and insights are effectively communicated to the board. This engagement helps the student member serve as a crucial bridge between the board and the broader university community. The position also involves significant interaction with SBHE staff, legislators, institutional presidents, and students. To support the time commitment required for this role, the student member receives a full tuition waiver.

Applicants are highly encouraged to connect with the current student member on the State Board of Higher Education to discuss various aspects of the role and gain insight into its responsibilities. Additionally, it is recommended that applicants review past public meetings available on the SBHE website to better understand the discussions and decision-making processes of the board. This preparation provides valuable context and helps applicants familiarize themselves with the board's work.