



An Open Letter to the State Legislature

North Dakota Senators and Representatives:

The North Dakota Student Association represents the voice of the State's over 45,000 college and university students. We are an organization directly funded by students with the singular goal of representing the collective interests of students. Our organization attracts a diverse range of individuals, each with their own thoughts, priorities, and beliefs. Yet, we are all united in our support of higher education in the State of North Dakota.

As students, we've seen the cuts. We know first-hand our state is facing tough times and even tougher decisions. The decision to expand your support to higher education could be the very decision that will move the direction of our state towards financial stability and prosperity. One powerful tool to support this mission is the Challenge Fund Grants, which have unequivocally benefitted every college and university in the State.

Challenge Fund Grants encourage institutions to seek financial contributions from private donors through a two-for-one match program. So, if a private donor provides \$2, the institution receives \$1 from the State of North Dakota. To those donors, their \$2 is worth \$3.

As you consider the direction of our state, the leadership of the Student Association strongly encourages you to join us in the support of Challenge Fund Grants. We urge you to consider three major benefits that show that this program is the best money North Dakota has ever spent on higher education.

Challenge Fund Grants provide an excellent opportunity to triple the State's investment.

Following the legislature's creation of the Challenge Grant Program in 2013, institutions swelled with support from private donors. Potential donors jumped at the opportunity to amplify their donation once they recognized that their \$2 donation was worth more than \$2. Because of this program, the institutions have gained more than \$150 million for scholarships, educational infrastructure, research, and technology since 2013; the initial investment of \$51 million tripled. The State of North Dakota continues to reap the rewards of supporting colleges and universities who continue to be on the cutting edge of research and innovation.

Challenge Fund Grants improve relationships between private industry and public institutions.

The grants build stronger relationships between private industry and each of the institutions, and both parties profit from this partnership. Institutions receive financial support from the private industry, and private industry receives increased exposure to the most qualified talent. Students take notice of companies that invest in their education. Putting modern technology in the hands of students provides invaluable experience and teaches them the skills that give them the competitive edge they need as they transition into the workforce.

Challenge Fund Grants provide unique and invaluable opportunities to students.

Between 2015 and 2017, 71% of the State's \$22.1 million of the Challenge Fund Grants supported student scholarships. That is almost \$16 million used to attract the brightest talent from within our



state and across the nation who will become our workforce of tomorrow. These are the students who will one day be building our communities, serving our citizens, and bringing new life to our state. At a time when North Dakota faces unprecedented revenue shortfalls, we need to expand the horizons of students and our state. The best way to do this is by supporting the Challenge Fund Grants. Your support in past biennia has helped to make our eleven institutions regionally and nationally competitive. Let's keep this momentum going so that we can help drive our state towards a brighter future.

The best way to create a healthy economic future is to create more high paying jobs, which is exactly what higher education does. Supporting higher education is supporting the future of North Dakota. Higher education produces engineers, lawyers, nurses, electricians, farmers, teachers, and entrepreneurs. These professionals diversify our economy, which is exactly what our state needs right now. Challenge Fund Grants effectively invest in students, foster relationships between the industry and the institution, and provide unique opportunities to students.

It's up to us as students to become the workforce of tomorrow, and it's up to you to support that goal and provide the opportunities for innovation and advancement for higher education in the State of North Dakota.

As the voice of the students, the North Dakota Student Association thanks you for considering three of the benefits Challenge Fund Grants provide to the State, and we urge you to make investments that will lead our beautiful state on the path to financial stability and economic prosperity. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jacob Dailey". The script is fluid and cursive.

Jacob Dailey
President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas Fyffe". The script is fluid and cursive.

Thomas Fyffe
Vice President of Internal Affairs

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kaleb Dschaak". The script is fluid and cursive.

Kaleb Dschaak
Vice President of Communication and Outreach

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jared Melville". The script is fluid and cursive.

Jared Melville
Vice President of Governmental Relations