

Message from President Cook

May 10, 2023

Hello everyone. It's graduation week in Fargo. Congratulations to 1,942 students eligible to graduate this semester. I look forward to celebrating with you, your families and your loved ones on Saturday. It should be a lot of fun. I have the honor of being involved with various ceremonies over the weekend. One in particular I'm looking forward to is our ROTC commissioning event Saturday morning and I also have the honor to bestow an honorary doctorate for Sheila Challey. Soon to be Dr Challey later that day and Saturday as well. So, for all of you out there here's some fun facts about our graduates.

- Of all of our graduates 93% will be employed or go on to graduate school after graduation.
- 82% of our North Dakota students will stay in North Dakota and serve our state.
- Our largest number of graduates will come from the College of Engineering. Business administration is our fastest growing program for enrollment and nursing is our largest single program in the program with the most added options to meet the workforce needs of North Dakota and our region.

So, kudos to all those programs but really just congratulations to all of our graduates. Can't wait until Saturday.

Other big news coming out of North Dakota and Fargo is that the legislature wrapped up at the end of April and I'd like to express my extreme gratitude for their work and our Governor's work in supporting NDSU and our mission. It looks like our Governor just signed off on our bill today so we're all pretty excited about what lies ahead. A few highlights.

- Together we were able to allocate funding for salary increases what we call a 6 and 4. So, a salary increase in 2024 or in 2024 6% and then the next year of 4%. Great news for everybody.
- We were able to secure \$59 million dollars in state funding for the Center for Engineering and Computational Sciences. So, that's a new facility for all of our great work in engineering, precision agriculture, computational sciences, renewed energy, and so on.
- We also were able to secure \$89.4 million in state funding for it what we call the Waldron Hall replacement facility for our work in agriculture and how we really serve the state of North Dakota in that space.
- They also supported a 96% hold harmless budget clause and provided one-time dollars of \$4.8 million for new programs relating to enrollment and retention so overall, the outcome of the legislation, of the legislature, rather was extremely favorable to NDSU. Extremely favorable to higher education across the state of North Dakota.

Again, just want to extend my great appreciation for all their hard work. They have a very difficult job.

On campus, we're also celebrating nurses' week this week. So, thank you to all the hard work that nurses do on campus but across our region. We had 21 NDSU nursing students recently complete a privately funded international nursing practicum in Malawi Africa. So, we often talk

about all the great things we do right here in our backyard but we have students traveling the globe all the time.

- These students traveled 8,800 miles bringing 1,300 pounds of medical supplies to make a difference in the lives of Malawi citizens. So, love the big hearts and how they're making a difference across the globe.
- Nursing students closer to home also completed practicums around the region this spring making a big impact, of course, on our backyard right in our community and of course serving our land grant mission.

So, thanks to nurses out there and thanks to all of our nursing students we really appreciate you. On the congratulations front, we got a few fun things going on here.

Congratulations to Sumitha George, assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering, for recently receiving an NSF Grant to study computer system efficiency. She plans to hire some graduate students in her lab and include undergraduate students in her program and her research. So, I look forward to hearing all about those experiences and the vast new knowledge that we're going to gain from her important research.

Congratulations also to Cheryl Wachenheim, professor in agribusiness and applied economics for providing the 60th Faculty Lectureship, one of NDSU's oldest and most prestigious awards. Her presentation focused on understanding decision-making through behavioral economics and I have to say, I sat in, my wife and I both sat in on that one and she did an absolutely remarkable job. So, congratulations there.

On the athletics front, congratulations to our women's cross-country team for winning a Summit League Championship. They actually won it last fall but they honored me and surprised me with my first championship ring so I haven't taken it off since last Friday. I worked really hard to get this ring. So, kudos to the whole women's team there, and boy, we have track and field men and women working hard this weekend, actually in Fargo. So, excited to see how many more championship rings that they bring home.

All right, so I've been doing these videos for a year. I've got to tell you my favorite story from the videos, if you'll bear with me here, you know my wife and I often go and enjoy eating at the dining halls. Last week I was being served by one of our students and I'll leave his name out of it not to embarrass him but he's a graduate student. As he was serving me in the dining hall he stopped and he said he loves my videos. Last semester he was watching them from his home country Ghana in Africa and he said now he's getting the chance to serve me in the dining hall. So, I have to admit that touched my heart. It meant a lot. It was kind of fun and I go, I figured okay at least people in Africa and Ghana are watching these videos so I got that going for me. So, anyway, I didn't name him so I hope I didn't embarrass him too much. But, I want you to know that you made my day so thank you.

That wraps things up. Amazing things going on this week with graduation. A ton of energy on campus with the weather turning better. Just a lot of great fun things. People are coming out of the woodwork.

Last night we were feeding students until late in the night in the dining halls. Kind of the Late Night Breakfast which is a great tradition. But, just great to see everybody.

Really looking forward to seeing everybody on campus here this week for graduation. I hope everybody has an amazing week, an amazing graduation, and an amazing summer. I'll see you all soon and Go Bison everyone!