

Message from President Cook

June 15, 2023

Hello everyone. I hope you're enjoying your kind of warm summer weather and staying cool as needed I know after our April, I will take summer all day all week all summer long.

So, there's a lot of exciting things happening on campus. I wanted to just update on a few of them. We've had over a thousand, I think 1,200 FFA students on campus. We've had all kinds of other kids camps and Engineering STEM Camp, lots of athletic camps and then even a drone competition where high school students across the state competed. That was a new one for me and I have to tell you pretty awesome.

We're also starting to see incoming students on campus for orientation so we're welcoming our next batch of high school kids and transfer students to NDSU.

We have a couple of kind of fun new positions that we've hired. So, our new Dean of the College of Business, the Ronald and Kaye Olson Dean of the College of Business, Kathryne Birkeland, just took the position and just started here this past week so we're excited to have her on board. She's going to do a great job.

Following an internal search, we are pleased to have Dr. Ron Werner-Wilson, who's been doing an awesome job for us now, come and serve as the Interim Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences and we're going to do a national search for that position here starting in the fall. So, we got some new dean positions getting filled which is critical.

Also, on the governance side we recently elected Kay Hopkins as president so she gets to serve one year as the president-elect before becoming president the following year. So, we still have Kristi Steinmann in the leadership role as president for the next 12 months but excited to be working with them.

I also want to just encourage everyone to come out and celebrate Juneteenth at the community-wide event on June 17th at NDSU's Renaissance Hall. We had a great celebration there last year and I know there's going to be a film and other activities on the 19th right around that event and then also, of course, just want to recognize pride month this June and look forward to celebrating with our LGBTQ and community as students come back to campus this fall in lots of various ways. So, a lot of excitement happening there.

Probably the biggest news for us is the legislative session. So, we wrapped that up. I want to just say thank you to the legislature.

They really were good to higher education. They're very good to North Dakota State University. We worked hard. A lot of long days, weekends and nights but at the end of the day a lot of really good things came and I just want to let all of them know we're very appreciative.

A couple of the items. One is that we received a 6 percent merit increase for FY 24 and a 4 percent increase in FY 25 and this all relates to giving salaries and benefits increases for our staff and faculty really to help offset inflation which is pretty critical for us. Now historically, the way that works is that we get the tuition increases. We get excited, everybody's happy but we don't have a way to pay for it and so the way we pay for it is by increasing tuition.

This year, I think the first time ever, the legislature back-filled that part of our budgets we don't have to raise tuition. That was kind of the deal that we cut and because when it comes to our salary and fringes we're covering about 65 percent with our tuition. It's critical that they back-

filled us in that way for us. So, again really grateful for their support. They also provided equity funding to help raise employee salaries closer to market rates.

So, in addition to the 6 and 4 we got some equity funding and we really have allocated these dollars, are in the process of allocating, these dollars to some of our front-line employees who I think we believe need it the most. So, the legislature was really good to us in that regard and really helping our staff and faculty with some of those raises.

The legislature, also for NDSU, invested in a new Center for Engineering and Computational Sciences. So, this is something that's been on our list for quite some time. It's going to allow us to modernize our learning environment by providing collaborative disciplinary hands-on experiences which are key in engineering but really in all kinds of learning at the at the collegiate level and so, we're going to be standing up various new work spaces including a Collaborative Design Studio which will really be the premier maker space on campus to give our students the tools, the equipment, materials, and support they need to design and make these really cool dreams happen especially in their senior projects and so this will bring all the disciplines of engineering, but, other disciplines together to really make something special right on campus. So, it's a great new facility.

We have a little bit of fundraising to do before we start to build so that gives me some work to do this summer but the facility itself is going to focus on Precision Agriculture and autonomous systems. Energy Stewardship. Artificial intelligence and cyber security and Entrepreneurship and commercialization of new technology. All super critical things that, you know, that we need and of course, Engineering has been really, you know, historically our largest college and historically really part of how we identify and having new facilities to facilitate our education research and service in that space is critical.

We're also incredibly grateful to have another facility, an agricultural field lab facility, or sometimes we call it the Waldron Hall replacement building that will, it will be located most likely on the northwest corner of campus and this isn't about student education but it's going to be a lot more about research and research that impacts North Dakota. So, we will have some graduate and undergraduate students working in there but it's going to be about research which of course about 60 percent of the research that we do at NDSU relates to our great work in agriculture and this is a facility we desperately need. It's going to house plant breeding, agronomy, weed sciences, horticulture, plant pathology and soil sciences. Again, the idea is to really create the right environment for the kind of research to bring our faculty together with industry to result in, you know, really making plant varieties and other things that are better adapted to the North Dakota growing conditions. So, this is also really critical.

Again, a quick snapshot of the things that the legislature did for NDSU and for higher education, and sincerely we're very, very grateful.

Lots of kudos on campus. So, congratulations to plant pathology doctoral student Abbeah Navasca. She's been selected to participate in the FFAR Fellowship program. This is a highly competitive fellowship that focuses on providing exceptional professional development and career guidance to cultivate the next generation of food and agricultural sciences. So, that's an exciting opportunity for us there.

Congratulations to the new early 20 student-athletes from baseball, softball, wrestling, and women's and men's golf teams that recently earned academic honors. They really emulate the true student-athlete that we are so proud of here on campus. Their commitment, hard work just show that we care about winning on the field, which we had a great spring, but we also care

about winning off the field or mat or course and in the classroom, which is really the top priority. So, kudos to them. Congratulations to Jacob Sundberg for receiving the prestigious, this is very prestigious, Astronaut Scholarship for the 2023-2024 academic year. So, only 68 students across the United States receive this award. So, that's quite an honor for Jacob so we're very proud of him for achieving that. Also, congratulations to the 3,620 NDSU students who earned their spot on the spring 2023 Dean's List. In order to make the Dean's list, students must learn to 3.50 GPA or higher and be enrolled in at least 9 class credits to qualify. So, that's just telling you we have a lot of students who are working really hard taking academics very seriously and we're very proud of all of them.

So, I think that's a recap. So, we've had a great year. Had a great year with the legislature. We're doing a lot of fun stuff here on campus getting a lot of these young students, our young future students, onto campus and that's a lot of fun and so for me, I hope I see you as I'm traveling around the state. I hope you recall last year I just took a couple of weeks and just tried to hit every corner of the state. We've got the plans to do that again so I'm going to be running around all over the state for the next couple of months. This year, I get to bring my wife with me. She wasn't up here yet so she's gonna have the great joy of really understanding what North Dakota is all about. What the 1962 land grant mission means to North Dakotans and of course what you all are looking for in North Dakota State University. So,

I'm really looking forward to seeing you in your hometown over the next few weeks and months and I can't wait to do it. So, until then have a great summer and Go Bison, everybody!