

Message from President Cook

August 17, 2023

Hello everybody I hope you're as excited as I am for students to be back on campus and to start the Fall semester. This has been a fun week, loved welcoming staff and faculty over to the house for the picnic aside from the bees and wasps, for those of you who were there you know what I'm talking about. It was a really fun day.

Later this week, Saturday is move-in day so thanks to everyone for helping welcome our students onto the campus. I'll be running around with my wife with water in the golf cart like we did last year, trying to help you all out. But I really appreciate everybody welcoming students and their families onto campus. It really is, it's a great day.

Later that night is the evening carnival at the Memorial Union, so hopefully you all have a chance to swing by and partake in the festivities, it's really a lot of fun. Last year, I know I stayed up way past my bedtime but it was worth it.

You should have also received a lot of information, for all those of you on campus, about Welcome Week, the goals, the activities, there's a lot going on. I'll call out a couple of key ones, so number one is the walk through the university gates on Monday, August 21st at 10 A.M. For me, this is what really marks the start of the semester in so many ways and is a great way to welcome all of our students, so we're sending everybody on campus through the gates at the same time, something a little differently than we have done in the past, but it should be a lot of fun. So, I look forward to seeing everybody there lined up cheering and hollering and making sure it's a great day for all of our new students. I think it's a great tradition.

I will add, our good folks in Student Affairs have given us all the information about events and all the rest, but one of the things they've suggested we all do and I love the idea, is just simply wear your name tag, then new students when they're walking around campus, they're gonna know who you are, they're going to know that you work here, maybe know a little bit about your background and they'll ask you questions and you'll be able to help them out, so please try to do that if you remember that'd be great.

You also might remember, at the end of the spring semester I requested reports from the President's Council's that all line up with my five strategic priorities, so I appreciate all the hard work everybody did and especially the hard work of those council members, that was really incredibly important. There are a lot of things from those recommendations that come to mind. Now, I'm going to start rolling those recommendations out here in the next few weeks, so stay tuned for that, but here we are for first week of classes you know we're talking about students who have success we're talking about retention, so just really go out of your way to make sure our students have a great first week and a great first semester and of course a great first year.

Regarding well-being, of course we want to invest and really care deeply about one another, so let's start the semester off by building a real sense of community. I think we do that for our students when they walk through the gates, so that'll be fun, but let's just really look out for each other and really care about everybody's well-being. It's such a critical issue for us, so the President's Council on Well-Being did a lot of great work this last year, I know they're going to continue to do great things, but they developed a health and all policies assessment checklist, they coordinated the walk to well-being event last fall, and then the campus cleanup event last spring. I participated in that, that was a lot of fun. They implemented the American College Health Association National College Health Assessment, that's a mouthful, to gather student

health and well-being data which is really important for us to strategize and move forward and set the right priorities, and then they developed and implemented a sexual assault response training, which of course is also really important for us.

You know, regarding diversity, inclusion, and respect, again one of my five priorities, we welcomed our new and improved Bison Bridge Program. This is dedicated to students who are first generation, Pell eligible, students of color. They're already on campus, they're already connected with student mentors who have similar backgrounds. I got to swing in and welcome them this week which is a lot of fun, but we're really looking forward to having them all on campus and we're looking forward to them having a great year as well, so really going to enjoy all of us working to make sure that's happened.

Some Kudos are always a good way to end these videos, so Jeremy Hamm, PhD here at NDSU, was awarded the Springer Early Career Achievement Award, a really important award, and we're really proud of him. It's an early career achievement award in research on adult development and aging, designed to honor an individual whose work has made significant early career contributions, so this is a big deal, way to start your career off right. Dr. Hamm, very proud of you, kudos.

I also want to do a shout out to Hollie Mackey and Chris Ray. They were awarded the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction Aspiring Principal Pipeline Grant. So, this is a pretty cool grant, it'll allow us to admit 10 new fully-funded master's students this fall who will be simultaneously going to school here, but also be working as new assistant professors working toward their administrative credentials in nearby school districts. So, talk about our hard work making an impact with our land grant mission and making an impact on the K-12 community, absolutely love it, congratulations to Dr. Mackey and Dr. Ray.

I also want to say thank you to Dean Wallin, Kimberly Wallin, for sharing these achievements, but also really for a ton of work that she's done in terms of creating the newly formed College of Arts and Sciences. But really, the shout out goes to everybody on campus. We did a lot of hard work, we went from the seven to the five colleges, a lot of hard work and restructuring and really setting us up to be successful moving forward and excited about the transformation and just deeply grateful to all of you for all your hard work on that.

On the athletics front, kudos to Jen Lopez, our head volleyball coach, for receiving the USMA AVCA Team Academic Award, recognizes the high GPA maintained by the volleyball team, so kudos and thank you Coach Lopez. Thank you to you, thank you to your team, and thank you for caring about academics, great job, really proud of that.

Ok, so here's the best one, maybe the most important one. Kudos to Fargo's team North Dakota youth baseball team for advancing to the Little League World Series, how about that? I think this is the first time a North Dakota team has made it to the Little League World Series. I think that's pretty awesome. Let's just hope there are a few future Bison on that team representing the Dakotas today and, of course, Bison Athletics in the future. Otherwise, back to everybody, welcome back, excited for the new year, I can't wait to see you on campus.

Have a great semester everybody and Go Bison!