

Message from President Cook

September 5, 2023

Hello everybody it is week three at NDSU and we're off to a fantastic start. I have Becky Bahe with me here today. Becky, tell everybody kind of what you do at NDSU. Yeah, hello I'm the Director of the Career and Advising Center. So, I help students from the beginning to the end and beyond. We really are helping students get into their classes and find out who they want to be here at NDSU, and then we help them align with a career leader.

So, Becky is one of the great leaders here on campus and I have to ask so, how long have you worked at NDSU? Well, as of today, September 5th I am starting my 19th year here at NDSU. How does that happen? You know, you come to a great university, think you're going to be here for three to five years, and the next thing you know it's year nineteen. So, in your role you're involved with all kinds of student-centered initiatives that we're working on and a big part of that has been how are we welcoming students onto campus and so it really, it's been an awesome couple of weeks a great vibe on campus. Talk a little bit more about some of the things that you've been involved with and some of the things that our students have been involved with. Yeah, so the welcome week activity is everything from move-in weekend where we just had a ton of volunteers helping, you know, the entire campus community really comes out and shows that it is truly a welcome to NDSU and we're all involved with it. And then all the different activities from Saturday Night Live, great, great activities there, the Block Party the walk through the gates. You know, it really is a celebration of who we are and so lots of people are doing great work to make that happen.

So, I want to just double down on that. Huge kudos to everybody for making move-in day, welcome week the first couple of weeks, super special and it really takes a team or a family to make that happen. I've got to tell you so, move-in day what was it 95 degrees? One would think that that would be a tough day. I heard nothing but praise.

Sincerely, from parents, families, students, staff, faculty. They just knocked it out of the park. And then I love the carnival that night which is a lot of fun and then we had the block party which was also a lot of fun and then we just kept grinding right away. So, everything's been pretty spectacular. So. It's been great. Yeah, we just have to tell everybody thanks so much for caring about our students and then frankly again my favorite. I'm going to keep talking about it, was walking through the gates. We had 2,000 plus freshmen walk through the gate and everybody on the community line the sidewalks to say we're glad you're here and we're going to keep doing that week after week after week.

So, it's been fun so far. It has, it's been a great start to the year. All right so, one of the things that you're working on that speaks to student success is around this concept called Professional Advising and I'm guessing not everybody knows what that is. So, what is professional advising, Becky. Yeah so, professional academic advising is for, we have staff who are on hand to help students understand their curriculum.

You know, when do they need to take classes, what classes to take, but also paying attention to those students when things are starting to get difficult. Whether you know, the student starts to stumble in a class, need some assistance, that advisor can be there to help them find the resources so that they can stay on track and truly be successful here at NDSU. Which is absolutely awesome and really a paradigm shift for us in terms of how we're doing advising. We're rolling it out this fall.

So, how many advisors do we have right now? Talk a little bit more about the structure. Yeah so, we have 28 professional academic advisors which is an increase from previous years so we're able to just cover the entire campus. So, all academic programs have professional academic advisors and so, they have about 250 to 300 students that they're really focusing on to make sure that they get a good start into their time at NDSU. Okay, that sounds great.

So, can you give me, can you think of maybe an example or something that has happened this year that maybe didn't happen before or maybe the kind of things that you, that are going to happen now for our students that maybe haven't happened in the past. Yeah, actually I can think of two right off the bat and one is you know, for our students and even our staff. So, we were able to be on-site for move-in weekend just with that extra staffing and the availability. But we stayed in the Memorial Union for all the way through ad-drops, almost two weeks, so students didn't have to go find someone. They knew right where to go to get the assistance they needed.

And then we've also heard from some faculty when students are, you know, needing to work through some curriculum pieces, we had a faculty that said wait you'll take care of that for us? And so just really relinquishing some time for faculty to really spend where they want to in their research and in service time and teaching. Which is great and that's absolutely the idea. So, a lot of different stakeholders out there where this is going to really change and really improve their experience.

You kind of touched on it but I'm an incoming freshman. What's a professional advisor going to do for me that's going to help make my journey here a little bit better? Yeah so, as a first-year student that interaction with that advisor is going to be sitting down figuring out what your goals are and what you want to accomplish at NDSU and they'll help you create a plan to do that. And so, that you know you know, when your anticipated graduation date is and what classes to take and then they're also going to kind of, you know, keep a little bit of an eye on as things aren't going well to make sure that they can still keep you on track and help you through that. So, a great person for resources too if you're like, I don't know who to talk to, the advisor can be that first point of contact. Yeah, I love it okay.

So, I am an Alum or a parent of a prospective student or an incoming maybe student who's still in high school. You've kind of answered this but any, how is professional advising, why should they be excited about this? Yeah, I think we've heard from alums and parents just the value of that when they've seen it happening. That the student doesn't feel as lost. They feel more excited, engaged in their time at NDSU and so, you know, we've had about a dozen that have done this before but not in every area and so to know that we can do this across camp is huge. Yeah, fantastic.

So, we're super excited about professional advising at NDSU. Kudos to you and your leadership. Kudos to all the new professional advisors and really everybody. This impacts a lot of different people changing roles. But it's all about making our students more successful here and that's of course, what we want to see and so and again kudos to everybody who welcomes students here during move-in week and welcome week and all the rest of the people. There's a lot of volunteering weekends, nights, during the first couple of weeks on campus and we appreciate you and we appreciate all that you're doing and to make NDSU a little more special.

One more kind or round of kudos for me is I want to do a huge shout out to all of our alum and supporters. I spent the weekend in Minneapolis. Got there early, again pretty good time, and I know we had a football game and the football game was great and I'm really excited for our coaches and their families and the staff and the student-athletes and for the success that we had

on the field and that's fantastic. But I also just want to say a huge shout out to our alumni and our supporters. We took over Minneapolis in a meaningful way. The tailgating was great, the venue was fantastic, you know, the experience was really a lot of fun for everybody and that's really important. And then I got to tell you even Sunday morning my wife, we're at brunch. We didn't get back until later on Sunday, and the Bison Nation who were continuing to show up, you know, sporting our colors and all the rest was a lot of fun and so, I just want everybody out there to know that we really appreciate you and we appreciate how you support us.

So, thank you for that and then to kind of keep on that theme we have yet another football game this Saturday in the Fargodome and this is a really special and unique game and it's about much more than the football game once again. At the game, we'll have the Fargo PD Officers tossing the coin at the beginning of the game, an honorary gesture. Officers Zach Robinson, Tyler Hawes, and Andrew Dotas.

We really appreciate all of you and appreciate you coming out and tossing the game and, of course, as I think everybody here in our community knows these were the officers that were involved in the July 14th incident in which fellow officer, Jake Wallin was killed and other officers, of course, were injured including a civilian.

These are heroes in our community. This is a small gesture on our part to say thank you for what you all do every day. It's really important and I tell you it's a gesture that goes even beyond that to all first responders. To what you do all day in North Dakota, in our backyard, in the upper Midwest.

And so hopefully, we'll see you all out there. It's about the football game but it's a lot more than that and so this is our way of just saying thank you to all of them. For what you do to make us safe and respond to our communities when others wouldn't do it and so we're deeply grateful and we're excited to be able to celebrate that a little bit and say thank you this coming weekend. So, that's all I got.

Now Becky's gonna get mad at me for saying this but the two best Bison future that we have, you have two kids. Give a shout out to your two kiddos in this video you got to do it you won't get the chance to do it again. All right so, to Clayton and Peyton, they love the Bison and they were actually at the walk through the gates, too welcoming students in. A couple of future Bison, Clayton, and Peyton. So, they'll get a kick out of that. All right, with that everybody one, two, three...Go Bison! Have a great week.