

Message from President Cook

September 20, 2022

Hello everyone. I haven't checked in for a little while but a lot has been going on. First and foremost, on the athletics front, my wife and I have had the pleasure of attending a number of different events. So, ranging from watching the Women's Soccer Senior night at Dakota Field which was a really great afternoon, to watching a number of volleyball matches in Benson Bunker.

I've checked out the Men's and Women's golf teams competing out at Oxbow a little bit and one really fun evening was heading to watch our Men's and Women's Cross-Country teams out at Moorhead. They had a Twilight event I would encourage everybody to check that out next year it was a lot of fun. So, of course, the most recent event was our Bison football game down in Tucson and so we spent a couple days down there meeting with alumni. Really celebrating the whole end of the week and weekend with our with our alumni base who are absolutely amazing. I think something like 10,000 people just took over the town. So, well it's a tough game not exactly what we were hoping for. I just have to tell you I'm so proud to be part of Bison Nation. So proud of how our coaches and really all of our alumni but especially our student-athletes performed. Handled everything with class, worked their tails off, and I think we walked out of there in a better place than when we left. So, just very proud of how that all turned out although it was a little tougher than perhaps we were all hoping it would be.

But, you know moving forward on the academic side of the house, my wife and I have had the pleasure of attending a lot of different events. One of the really exciting ones was watching our Jazz Ensemble and Wind Symphony perform alongside the world-renowned Boston Brass who then got the chance to come over to the President's residence and spend some time together. I'll tell you I am blown away by our Challey School of Music and the amazing international talent like the Boston Brass that come and work alongside of our students. It's something that's very very special about NDSU. So, along with that just a number of other things. Running around checking out some of our ag and livestock facilities. Had some nice tours with some faculty and students and you start to learn really what the education and research experience and just the dedication we have is all about. Also, engaging with some community leaders here in Fargo-Moorhead, the Grand Farm folks.

We brought in some international businesses like AGCO, a world-renowned leader in precision ag. These are the kind of folks that we want to work with when it comes to creating great research and great student experiences. This is exactly you know really where we want to be. You know, one other highlight that was a lot of fun, was we dedicated the Louise over in the Barry Building with the Barry Foundation family and the Foundation themselves. Just got to learn a little bit about the long-standing history that they have with our institution, the amazing things that they've done for Fargo, and in North Dakota which was a lot of fun for me as well. So, even more on the internal front, you know, just I'm continuing to meet with all of our colleges. I think I've met with every single college, academic units, administrative units. I met with Student Government, our student affinity groups, continuing just to have a dialogue about where I think we need to go. You may recall, a couple of weeks ago, I sent out an email that talked about my five themes.

You know, enhancing enrollment, retention, and student success. Prioritizing our R1 Carnegie classification. Number three is investing in the well-being of really our students, faculty, and staff across the board. Diversity, inclusion, and respect are going to be a real priority for me.

I'm going to continue to talk about that over and over again. I think it's critical. And of course, the fifth priority is going to be all about a land grant. I've obviously spent a lot of time crisscrossing the state understanding what I think the state wants from NDSU. So, that's going to be something that's absolutely critical for us moving forward.

So, across all those things I've elevated again a couple of councils. A council on retention which relates to that first focus area. When we recruit students here we want them to be successful. We need to do everything we can to make sure that they progress and have a have an amazing experience so we're going to continue to make sure that that's critical. I mentioned earlier another council on diversity, inclusion, and respect is going to be at the presidential level and so I want to continue to emphasize the importance and value of that.

And on the research front, if you recall, I did a little reorganizing there and I'm going to make sure that research Carnegie R1 classification is a top priority as well. So, all those things are going to be big key areas of focus. Like I said, crisscrossing the campus community getting feedback on all of those. Because every time I meet with these groups I learn something that's really helpful and I need that I need all the help I can get. But trying to get as much community buy-in as possible and then candidly as much focus as possible moving through the semester.

And so with that I hope you're all having a great week I'm looking forward to homecoming which is right around the corner. We're going to be celebrating a number of activities during that week including a lot of our contributions around R1 being a research institution and all of our athletics events but all the things that we're doing for our students as well.

So, it'll be a very very exciting week and I know a ton of Bison are coming into town for that so I cannot wait to see and meet many of you and it should be a great week or two and with that, I'm just going to say Go Bison!,