

# **GOVERNANCE IS TO ENSURE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES SERVE THE PUBLIC INTEREST**

**- Larry Isaak**

## **OVERVIEW**

North Dakota governance of Higher Education, based on the Principles of Constitutional Autonomy, is defined as a "moderate-limited" level of control. Higher Education is:

- Subject to judicial review;
- Subject to legislative policy and appropriations power; and
- Empowered with a significant degree of independent control over many higher education functions.

North Dakota utilizes a consolidated governing board model similar to that employed by 22 other states.

- The state has one board overseeing all 11 institutions; and
- The board has broad authority over finances, personnel, property, and programs.

## MISSION

Constitution - Key concepts:

- Unified system;
- State Board of Higher Education has full authority over institutions; and
- State Board of Higher Education has the authority to organize or reorganize the work of each institution.

Major studies / Initiatives - Sample findings

- Policy makers are frustrated with no clear agenda and no clear spokesperson;
- The governor and the Legislature call for a focused policy agenda;
- The need for a cohesive system is paramount;
- North Dakota needs a "true state system;" and
- The system should feature diverse institutions working in concert to serve the public agenda.

Issues:

- The State Board of Higher Education should define the core values of the system and lead the efforts to support them.
  - Student centered - Access, retention, and completion.
  - Excellence - Board expectations and definition.
  - Efficient - Affordability and values.
- Collaboration should be an operational imperative.
  - Program delivery.
  - Administrative functions.
  - Specific workforce development initiatives.

## **MONEY**

### Legislative appropriations:

- Funding formula;
- Operational appropriations amount; and
- Capital improvements amount.

### Board:

- Tuition;
- Required fees;
- Budget requests to Legislature;
- Capital Improvements priorities; and
- Constitutional authority - State Board of Higher Education has authority over the appropriations provided by the legislature, but cannot divert money specifically marked for a specific institution.

### Campus:

- Auxiliary operations;
- Contracts for services, including research; and
- Grants, including research.

### Issues:

- Affordability is a key challenge that must be resolved.
- Expenditures can meet audit standards; that does not mean they are essential.
  - How does the system ensure the best use of revenues?
- The facility master plan must be measured in the "light" for rapidly evolving delivery methods of instruction.
  - Does the system really need all the physical plant in place?

## **MANAGE**

### Constitution:

- State Board of Higher Education has full authority to establish policies and procedures that guide the operations of the system and the individual institutions.

### Major studies/ Initiatives - Sample findings

- The State Board of Higher Education must elevate its role;
- The State Board of Higher Education must enhance its leadership position.
- A shared vision is needed.
- Planning is a vital function of the State Board of Higher Education.
- Policies that define the roles of personnel are critical for the operations of the system and each institution.
  - Presidents report to the Chancellor.
  - Board hires/fires presidents after Chancellor recommendation.
  - Presidents manage the institutions guided by board policies and Chancellor supervision.
  - Presidents' goals and evaluations process is led by the Chancellor in accordance with State Board of Higher Education policies.
- The State Board of Higher Education establishes expectations, sets specific goals, and holds the chancellor and the presidents responsible for meeting those standards (Tone at the top).

### Issues:

- Role clarification is essential
- Who decides the degree to what alternative program delivery methods are offered/utilized by the system and each institution.

## **MEASURE**

State Board of Higher Education establishes system-wide measurement expectations.

- What is to be measured?
- Who will do the measuring?
- When will it occur?
- How will it be done?

Institution, Chancellor, and president goals and measures can be established in addition to the board's measurement expectations.

Measurement results should be useful for decision making as well as providing the basis for public information initiatives.

Issues:

- "That which gets measured gets done." What are the State Board of Higher Education's priorities?
- How does the system fully utilize the excellent technology infrastructure (including people) in place?

## **MONITOR**

The State Board of Higher Education develops policies and procedures that support system-wide monitoring for the purposes of compliance, early detection of potential problems, effective program performance, and general efficiency.

- Major policy initiatives;
- Fiscal practices; ex. Audits, financial ratios;
- Activities selected for measurement;
- Mission needs; ex. Teacher shortages, Bakken University;
- Student success; and
- Research activities.

Issues:

- The system office is designating new dashboards that should be valuable for efficient monitoring of some functions.
- Can the State Board of Higher Education define/develop other monitoring mechanisms in addition to dashboards and formal reports?