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February 12, 2019

Mr. Mark Kennedy  
President  
University of North Dakota  
264 Centennial Dr Stop 8193  
Grand Forks, ND 58202

Dear President Kennedy,

The intent of this letter is to provide mid-term feedback as directed by the State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) in June 2018.

After a review of various metrics as well as strategic plans for several of your initiatives, I can conclude that in the past six months, you have continued a remarkable balancing act: meet the urgent needs of running the campus today but take action to position for the future. For the former, I commend you for your success and steady focus on retention and attainment, and your efforts as you manage your enterprise in tight fiscal conditions. With regard to the latter, I commend you for responding to the direction of the SBHE to continue, despite tight budgetary conditions, to develop innovative approaches to UND campus challenges. Even though some of your initiatives have yet to be formally approved by the SBHE, there exists nonetheless adequate evidence to conclude you remain on the trajectory of an innovative and adaptive leader. Furthermore, your “Grand Challenges” framework has provided an effective management and communication narrative that a wide group of stakeholders, especially faculty, staff, and graduate students, can understand and organize around. Some specifics include:

You continue to position the campus within the new financial realities of the past biennium of historic cuts, including substantial staff reductions and program terminations. Yet you are also proposing new ways to tackle thorny system-wide problems like financing and bonding to address deferred maintenance, and these are initiatives which could ultimately benefit the entire system and the State of North Dakota.

You and your team continued to innovate in the area of online education, and I look forward to data that is forthcoming from your PEARSON experiment. Your actions since June indicate that you are responsive to several tasks assigned by the SBHE ENVISION 2030 guidance to position North Dakota for a new, emerging economy built around energy and digital technology. In particular, you have provided leadership to grapple with the future of UAS, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, as well as Big Data. Your speeches and briefings have been backed up by actions: redirecting people and resources into the new areas. Your willingness to redirect existing both labor and capital to re-aligning UND to the future growth areas is indeed one of your remarkable strengths.

Your system-wide approach to research is also noteworthy, exhibiting leadership as you lead your campus to pursue higher levels of research collaboration with NDSU. This new level of cooperation and collaboration is almost historic and has shown our citizen stakeholders there are other ways of resolving

The North Dakota University System is governed by the State Board of Higher Education and includes:

Bismarck State College • Dakota College at Bottineau • Dickinson State University • Lake Region State College • Mayville State University • Minot State University  
North Dakota State College of Science • North Dakota State University • University of North Dakota • Valley City State University • Williston State College

President Mark Kennedy

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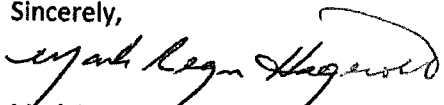
tough issues if we work together. Your compelling briefings in support of several legislative efforts to secure additional research funding have been helpful to our legislative leaders as they shepherd through the historic bills, HB 1333 and SB 2282.

It is with regard to your relationships with the citizen stakeholders that I provide my main counsel, which is offered in a very positive spirit, with the best intention to help you and UND. After holding several listening sessions with the larger body of UND stakeholders, your ability to connect with, communicate, and take input from this larger body is an area of relative need. I encourage you to continue to be a servant leader for our state, acutely attuned to the needs of the remarkable range of stakeholders in North Dakota: from small town farmers, sports boosters, up to national leaders in energy, technology, and finance. Many of these stakeholders have supported UND and the State of North Dakota for quite literally generations, and your patience and attentiveness to their counsel and observations, while I acknowledge very time consuming in and of itself, will assist you as you lead the state's Flagship university. I am glad to support you in this effort, to include making available the assistance of the statewide North Dakota University System Foundation, if you or your stakeholders may find this partnership helpful.

Our state is a complex and challenging place, being the nation's second largest oil producer yet also a state of proud family farms and wonderful small towns. UND will help make the future better for every citizen, and having them understand your vision, and better able to know you, personally, is my hope.

In summary, I am impressed by your cost cutting and day-to-day management of the campus enterprise, as well as your innovation and your strategic realignment plans for the future. I am also confident that with continued improved connection and communication with faculty, staff, alumni, and citizens of Grand Forks and our state, you will be even better able to lead UND out of the difficulties of the recent past, and into an even more successful future.

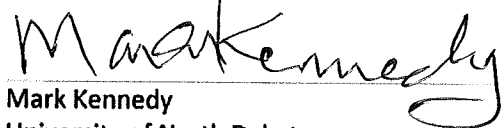
Sincerely,



Mark R. Hagerott, Ph.D.  
Chancellor

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I acknowledge receipt of my mid-term performance evaluation.



Mark Kennedy  
University of North Dakota

Date

February 21, 2019

cc: Don Morton, Chair  
State Board of Higher Education