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Chancellor says increase needed to keep up with rising costs, support ‘big agenda’

BISMARCK – North Dakota University System officials are requesting an additional $84 million of state funding for the next two years, an increase Chancellor Hamid Shirvani said is needed to keep up with rising costs and to support the “big agenda” of the system and the state’s 11 public colleges and universities.

Forum editorial: Higher ed requires a ‘vision’

At first glance, Chancellor Hamid Shirvani’s proposal for an $84 million general fund budget increase for North Dakota’s University System is a jaw-dropper

To train more doctors, UND seeks new building

UND’s School of Medicine and Health Sciences plans to ask the Legislature for $124 million for a new building, which officials said would help address the state’s shortage of health care workers.

Hamid Shirvani, chancellor, North Dakota University System, Bismarck, column: ‘Educating for change’ is our universities’ challenge

Simply put, we want to create free minds, not ideological ones. The free mind thrives on the world of experiences with all of its contradictions, ambiguities, ironies and paradoxes.

NDSU family therapy program hailed as national leader

FARGO – Tom Stone Carlson said most family therapy programs train future therapists to work with “general clients” – which usually means white, heterosexual, upper middle class couples who make up the bulk of the field’s research

NDSU’s $33 million research facility not your typical greenhouse

FARGO - Ken Grafton said he’s fielded plenty of questions about the $33 million Agricultural Experiment Station research greenhouse complex on the west side of the North Dakota State University campus – especially its price tag.

*Click on the title to go to the full article.
Some of the articles are no longer available seven days after publication. They are, however, archived on the publication's website and are available for a small fee.
Budget proposal would revamp ND support for colleges

The presidents of North Dakota’s two largest universities say they support a new method of parceling out aid to the 11 schools in North Dakota’s university system, one that partly relies on how many class hours their students finish.

To view the original article please visit: http://www.thedickinsonpress.com/event/article/id/63658/

BISMARCK — The presidents of North Dakota’s two largest universities say they support a new method of parceling out aid to the 11 schools in North Dakota’s university system, one that partly relies on how many class hours their students finish.

The formula, drafted by a group of finance officials at four of the colleges, is included in Gov. Jack Dalrymple’s budget recommendations to the Legislature. The governor’s plan includes almost $21 million to implement the formula, and assures schools they wouldn’t lose money by it.

It includes data on the number of classes that students finish, the types of courses they take and the building space on each campus. The numbers are then adjusted to even out differences between large and small schools, and the cost of offering specific courses.

Kayla Effertz, a senior policy adviser to Dalrymple, said Thursday the goal was to compare each college’s cost of educating each student, and use that information to determine the right level of state support for each school.

“I think campuses have a desire to be on a level playing field with one another, and that’s what this really aims to do,” Effertz said.

North Dakota State University would be the biggest beneficiary of the proposed formula. Budget documents say if it is implemented, NDSU will get $6.4 million, or about 30 percent of the $20.9 million included in Dalrymple’s suggested budget.

Officials at NDSU have long complained that the school’s share of state support is too meager when compared to its enrollment. Dean Bresciani, NDSU’s president, called the proposed formula “exceptionally balanced” and said it had been “developed very carefully, very thoughtfully.”

“It’s objective, it’s appropriate, it’s conservative and serves the needs of the campuses, and it’s equitable,” Bresciani said.

The University of North Dakota is one of three schools in the system that would not get added money. The other two are Williston State College and Minot State University.

UND President Robert Kelley said he welcomed discussion about the new financing method.

“We certainly have worked very hard ... on finding a way to do a bit more of an understandable way of approaching appropriations and funding for higher education,” Kelley said. “I look forward to making this work.”

The plan has the potential to remove a major source of infighting in the Legislature, where college officials who felt their institutions were being shortchanged sometimes took their arguments directly to lawmakers.
During the 2005 Legislature, the presidents of NDSU, Lake Region State College and Bismarck State College pressed lawmakers to approve $12.2 million in new spending for their campuses, despite opposition from Robert Potts, the university system's chancellor at the time.

Friction from the incident and other disagreements between Potts and Joseph Chapman, who was NDSU’s president at the time, eventually led to Potts being forced out as chancellor.

Aside from NDSU, budget documents say seven other schools would get extra money infusions from the formula.

Among North Dakota’s public four-year schools, Dickinson State would get $2.2 million, Valley City State $1.9 million and Mayville State $904,705, budget documents say.

Among the system's two-year schools, Bismarck State College would get $3.5 million; Lake Region State College at Devils Lake, $2.8 million; the North Dakota State College of Science at Wahpeton, $2.2 million; and Dakota College at Bottineau would get $968,128.

Effertz said the governor's office “hasn’t had any real pushback so far” on the plan.

“If we get on here, we’ll be able to really have a very predictable, accountable, transparent way of funding higher education,” she said.
Gov.'s budget includes money for Minot

North Dakota’s governor is offering Minot additional flood assistance and help in dealing with growth issues in his proposed budget for the next biennium.

To view the original article please visit: http://minotdailynews.com/page/content.detail/id/571409/Gov--s-budget-includes-money-for-Minot.html

North Dakota’s governor is offering Minot additional flood assistance and help in dealing with growth issues in his proposed budget for the next biennium.

A closer look at the details of the 2013-15 state budget proposal released by Gov. Jack Dalrymple Wednesday shows a number of line items that will directly affect the area and its residents. Dalrymple, in Minot Thursday, outlined a spending plan that, for Minot and Ward County, is highlighted by $60 million for flood prevention.

Local legislators expect to look carefully at those figures to make sure the amount is enough, but Dalrymple said it is adequate to get the work started.

"At least the flow has begun," he said. "That should be as much as they can use for quite some time."

Cindy Hemphill, Minot finance director, said the $60 million should be enough to do the acquisitions and flood-protection design work, which could take a few years to complete.

"We really feel quite good about that number," she said, "We felt that was probably a good number to go with."

The State Water Commission awarded $30 million to Ward County, Minot and Burlington for home acquisitions earlier this year from an appropriation made during the 2011 legislative special session. Only a fraction of the $17.75 million awarded to Minot has been claimed because work continues to close out many of the home sales.

The governor's budget includes line items of $674,000 and $3.5 million for the North Dakota State Fair. State Fair Board president Gary Knell, Hazen, said the fair took out a Bank of North Dakota loan for nearly $3.5 million to do flood repairs and seeks state help in repaying that money. The fair also requested additional money to cover flood-related costs of repaving and to support an increase in premiums paid to exhibitors.

Dalrymple said the money to restore the flooded fairgrounds is reasonable request.

"They deserve it. They have done a lot on their own," he said. "They deserve some help to bring it all the way back."

In other flood assistance, the Rebuilder’s Loan Fund would be renewed, providing loans of up to $30,000 at 1 percent interest to flooded homeowners. Dalrymple proposes to expand the program to include mobile homes, allowing displaced residents to get loans to buy their Federal Emergency Management Agency temporary units.

To address Minot's growth issues, Dalrymple's budget includes $25 million toward expansion at Minot International Airport, which would match the $25 million maximum that the airport could get from the Federal Aviation Administration. The city is developing plans for a new terminal and parking lot. The terminal cost has been estimated at $40 million, with other associated costs bringing the total to around $85 million.

First District Health Unit, a regional public health service based in Minot, would share in $1.2 million with two other health units that are looking at expansions and enhancements.

Lisa Clute, director at First District, said the unit requested $300,000 for the biennium to hire the equivalent of two full-time staff because of the growth in demand for services.
More help is needed to keep up with the number of sewer inspections and license inspections for restaurants and hotels. The unit has had extra work with inspections of flooded properties. There’s also been greater demand for immunizations, Clute said.

In addition, the health unit is counting on extra funding to increase its educational efforts in areas where public health concerns are increasing, such as sexually transmitted diseases. Clute said just providing information about the health unit has become important because of the number of new people from outside the area who are unfamiliar with how public health is delivered in North Dakota.

In other proposed spending, $500,000 is included in the governor’s budget for Minot Air Force Base retention efforts. This continues existing state funding.

Dalrymple proposes $1.8 million for physical plant renovations at Minot State University and an extra $4.7 million for campus operations. The operational money largely goes for staff compensation increases and more security and mental health services for students.

MSU would be eligible for a new grant fund that Dalrymple is proposing to assist the three oil-impacted colleges and universities. The schools could submit applications to address needs created by oil impact. The funding request could be for indirect needs, such as providing faculty housing in a tight and expensive housing market.

Dalrymple is offering a new higher education funding formula that he said will increase the transparency of university and college funding. The plan would base funding on student credit hours completed and would consider fields of study and level of education as weighting factors.

Colleges and universities would get $89 million more in total, of which $21 million is to ensure that no school sees a cut in funding during the transition. The money also includes a $6 million increase in scholarships.

The recommended budget includes $17 million in grant money for public schools facing rapid growth, defined as 4 percent a year. This is a reduction from the 7 percent growth required to be eligible under an existing program, but Dalrymple said the grants will be graduated so that schools with the most growth pressure will receive the most help.

A new $200 million fund would be available to provide school construction loans at an interest rate as low as 1 percent. The loans would not count against schools’ debt ceilings.

Mark Vollmer, Minot Public Schools superintendent, said the district has had growth over 4 percent in particular years, but the average has been 3.5 percent annually. The percentages don’t tell the whole story, though, because even at an average 3.5 percent, it amounts to 1,000 new students in the past six years, he said.

"We are being impacted heavily by the oil activity in western North Dakota and by value-added agriculture in this region," Vollmer said. "We are going to be making an appeal to the governor and legislators to make sure that Minot isn't forgotten in this funding mix."

He added that the construction fund would benefit Minot.

"We have to build new schools, and we believe we need to make some improvements with regard to overcrowded elementary schools right now," he said. "Those construction loans are a huge benefit because it does allow us to get those loans paid back quicker, and certainly with less impact on local taxpayers."

Dalrymple said Minot also could benefit from the budget’s recommendations for child-care assistance. The state has been offering some assistance, including training of workers, but a new program in the proposed budget provides $5 million to pay for facilities for child care.

The state would pay 80 percent of the cost of portable units designed for care of up to 18 children. The state also would assist with renovating an existing building. Private child-care providers would need to apply for grants through a city or county. Dalrymple estimated $5 million could provide for 20 to 25 of the portable units.
On Thursday Gov. Jack Dalrymple provided an explanation for why his budget recommendation for a Bismarck State College project was nearly $7 million less than what the college had requested in state funds.

BSC had requested $40.2 million for a new fine arts and learning center. The proposal was recommended for approval by the Board of Higher Education and consisted of $20 million in state funding and $20 million in private donations.

Dalrymple’s recommendation was for an appropriation of $13.3 million for the BSC project during his budget address at the Capitol on Wednesday.

BSC officials have proposed building a new Communications & Creative Arts Center on campus. The proposed facility would include three theaters, space for the communications and visual arts departments and a learning center.

Dalrymple said during a Tribune editorial board meeting that the overall project was viewed as a necessary expansion. However, he said the three theaters were not deemed necessary at this time. The proposal’s $20 million in private donations played a large factor in the budget decision.

Dalrymple used the current North Dakota Heritage Center expansion project as a comparison. The $51.7 million project was approved by the Legislature in 2009. A total of $39.7 million would come from the state while the Historical Society of North Dakota would need to raise the remaining $12 million through private donations. The state dollars for construction would be released once $6 million of the privately-raised commitments had been secured.

Dalrymple said “that was a statewide effort” for well over a year to secure $6 million whereas BSC wanted to pursue $20 million for “a community project.” He said the odds weren’t high that BSC would successfully be able to raise the $20 million.

“In a few years they could come forward with, say, $3 million in raised money and ask for $6 million, $7 million, that might be another thing to consider,” Dalrymple said.

Claudia Berg, expansion coordinator for the state historical society, said the historical society received a letter in fall 2010 that the $6 million threshold had been met. She said the historical society has raised roughly $10.5 million so far toward the expansion.

According to BSC President Larry Skogen the college will continue to use the Sidney J. Lee Auditorium for its theatrical projects. He said the college may choose to pursue funding for the theaters in the future.

If the Legislature approves the $13.3 million the new center is tentatively scheduled to be completed in 2015.
North Dakota's colleges have a number of building projects in Gov. Jack Dalrymple's proposed budget. The University of North Dakota's medical school would get a new $68 million building as part of an expansion of its ability to train new doctors. The governor also wants $12 million to renovate the UND law school. North Dakota State University would get $29 million for a new science and engineering building. Bismarck State College is in line for $13 million to replace its library. Dalrymple's budget includes money to renovate a gym at Mayville State University and administrative buildings at the state College of Science in Wahpeton and Williston State College. Lake Region State College at Devils Lake would get $6 million to expand a technical center that is used for nurse training.
Published December 5, 2012
Jennifer Johnson, Grand Forks Herald

**UND report: Need for rural docs will worsen**
The School of Medicine and Health Sciences’ Advisory Council said in the report that not only is there not enough physicians, but there aren’t enough physicians where they are especially needed — in rural areas and small cities, including those of the Oil Patch.

To view the original article please visit:
http://www.grandforksherald.com/event/article/id/250886/publisher_ID/40/

With North Dakota’s aging population and a growing number of new residents in the Oil Patch, the shortage of physicians throughout the state will worsen, according to a report UND released Tuesday.

The School of Medicine and Health Sciences’ Advisory Council said in the report that not only is there not enough physicians, but there aren’t enough physicians where they are especially needed — in rural areas and small cities, including those of the Oil Patch.

Physicians in small cities have twice as many patients to see as those in metropolitan areas. In rural areas, physicians have five times as many patients, the report said.

It notes that UND is an important part of the solution. Nearly 40 percent of physicians in the state receive some or all of their medical training at UND.

The med school recently said that it’s seeking $124 million from the Legislature for a new building to increase the number of physicians it can train.

The advisory council’s 127-page biennial report, delivered to legislators Tuesday in Bismarck, also covers the health of state residents. Made up of 15 healthcare stakeholders, the council delivered its first report in 2010, as required by state law.

Among other findings of the report:

- **General health:** Smoking has decreased in metropolitan areas, but remains essentially unchanged elsewhere. Obesity is less of a problem in the state compared to nationally, but it has been increasing over time, particularly in non-rural areas and in females. The state also has higher cancer rates in both males and females compared to the rest of the U.S.

- **Physician shortage:** In rural areas of North Dakota, the number of physicians in office practices is 5.2 per 10,000 population and in hospital practices is 0.7 per 10,000 population.

  In rural areas nationally, it’s 6.2 for office practices and 1 for hospital practices.

  In metropolitan areas of North Dakota, it’s 25.8 per 10,000 for office practices and 4.6 for hospital practices.

  In metro areas nationally, it’s 19.7 for office practices and 6.1 for hospital practices.

- **Future needs:** Half of North Dakota’s physicians are 45 to 64 years old, which means a large number will be retiring in the next several years and needs replacing. A shortage of up to 360 physicians is estimated to occur by 2025. If the population grows to 800,000, about 500 more physicians will be needed. If it grows to 1 million as some have predicted, the state would need about 1,000 more physicians.
The population boom in the Oil Patch, a nonmetropolitan area, is expected to make a big contribution to that growth. It’s now 160,000 and may grow to as much as 700,000 as early as 2020, at which point the overall state population would be nearly 1.2 million.

• **Aging population:** North Dakota's median age has steadily increased by 11 years from 1960 to 2010, going from 26.2 to 37.2. Older populations tend to require more health care.

• **Potential solutions:** To address these problems, the advisory council suggests increasing the health care workforce by retaining more med school graduates in the state and expanding class sizes.

Last year, UND's medical school agreed to enroll 46 more students and add 17 more residencies each year under an initiative called Grow Our Own Doctors, which is backed by the council. Now the school says it’s running short on space, which is why it’s proposing a new building.

In addition, the council suggests expanding the field of geriatrics to prepare health care providers for the increasingly older population and calls for a better health care delivery system.
Governor scales back BSC fine arts plan

Bismarck State College is downsizing its original plans for a new fine arts and learning center.

To view the original article please visit: http://bismarcktribune.com/news/local/bismarck/governor-scales-back-bsc-fine-arts-plan/article_134b89ea-3f1e-11e2-9780-0019bb2963f4.html

Bismarck State College is downsizing its original plans for a new fine arts and learning center.

The college was hoping for $40.2 million in state funding for the center but might have to change its plans after Gov. Jack Dalrymple recommended spending $13.3 million on the project.

Administrators had wanted to add three theaters, space for the communications and visual arts departments and a learning center. BSC President Larry Skogen said the new theaters will no longer be included in the immediate plans.

“It scales back the vision but addresses immediate needs on campus,” Skogen said. “We very much appreciate that the governor recognized a need on our campus.”

BSC uses the Sidney J. Lee Auditorium for its theatrical projects and will continue to use that space, Skogen said.

A fine arts center has been part of a campus master plan since 1994 but other construction projects have kept it from being done.

“It was time for this project to come up,” Skogen said.

Last fall, BSC received a $108,000 planning grant from the Office of Management and Budget. The school used $13,000 for a structural engineering review of the existing library and $95,000 for design and site planning of the Communications & Creative Arts Center.

The review recommended demolishing the current library due to structural damage and building the BSC Communications & Creative Arts Center in its place.

The Board of Higher Education recommended approval for $20 million in state funds and $20 million to be raised by the college.

“Right now that is not the governor’s suggestion,” Skogen said.

Next to a University of North Dakota Medical School request, the BSC center was the largest higher education budget request.

Under the revised plans Skogen said the center will house the communications department and the visual arts department, which is currently housed in the men’s dormitory.

The BSC Learning Commons within the center would provide traditional library services but in a 21st century format, Skogen said.

“It is not to build a new library,” He said. “This new center will contain a learning commons ... It will include space to collaborate, space to study, space to do research and space to have access to library services.”
Skogen said there will still be some volumes of books available there but a lot will be transitioned to electronic books and resources.

“It’s not going to be your grandfather’s library,” he said. “A library with stacks and stacks of books is not today’s learning environment.”

Skogen said BSC will now have to wait to see what the Legislature does with the governor’s recommendation. He also said no private fundraising can be done without the Legislature’s approval.

“We can only add to this project what we’re authorized,” he said.

Even though the college will not be able to include performance theaters in its project under the governor’s proposal, Skogen said BSC may choose to add them in coming years.

If approved by the 2013 Legislature, Skogen said the center will be completed by 2015.
DSU partners with U-Mary to offer advanced degrees

In a rare public-private school partnership, Dickinson State University announced Tuesday that it will collaborate with the University of Mary to offer an assortment of advanced degrees.

To view the original article please visit: http://www.thedickinsonpress.com/event/article/id/63566/

DSU, which offers bachelor’s-level and associate degrees, will team with the Bismarck-based Catholic institution to provide students the opportunity to receive master’s degrees in business, nursing, education and counseling beginning in March.

The announcement was made at a joint news conference at the Henry Biesiot Activities Center, which was attended by several dozen onlookers and media members, along with speakers DSU President D.C. Coston, U-Mary President Fr. James Patrick Shea and North Dakota University System Chancellor Hamid Shirvani.

“This is a momentous announcement for educational opportunities in this entire region,” Coston said. “To say this region is rapidly changing would be an understatement. Because of the engagement that Dickinson State has with citizens of this region, they talk to us about what they see as their evolving needs, many of which are directly related to expanded educational opportunities.”

In addition to the master’s opportunities at DSU, the schools also outlined a plan to explore the possibility of a “4+1 accelerated module” in which a student could earn a four-year degree from DSU and a master’s from U-Mary in five years, one less year than the standard six years needed to obtain a master’s-level degree.

“Dickinson State University is a wonderful institution of higher learning and is an integral part of this community and the fabric of western North Dakota,” Shea said. “We’re proud to announce a partnership with them. It’s a beautiful thing to have institutions like ours working together to serve people, serve students and serve this region.”

The partnership is the latest in a series of recent collaborations entered into by U-Mary, which also offers degrees in Catholic studies and theological studies at Arizona State, the largest public research university in the U.S. Through its extended learning programs, DSU offers undergraduate degrees in Bismarck, Williston and online in four states.

The two school presidents and Shirvani championed the newest partnership as one that sets institutional egos aside and puts the needs of students and those in western North Dakota who wish to continue their education first. The rare intermingling of private and public institutions was in the best interest of the people of western North Dakota, said Shea, who spent time as a priest in Killdeer and as an instructor at Trinity High School before ascending to his position at U-Mary.

“This will bring the best of what our institutions know about and do and will serve students in a whole new way,” Shea said. “We already have a lot of graduate students here in Dickinson, many of whom drive to Bismarck every week. We just said ‘why not offer these programs right here in Dickinson?’”

Shea went on to call the plan “a model of unity” and of “what can happen when good people come together to focus on the greater good.”
The news seemed to come as a breath of fresh air for members of DSU’s faculty and administration as the school has been mired in controversy for much of the past two years. A scandal involving DSU’s artificial inflation of enrollment numbers came to light in early 2012, leading to the school being placed “on notice” by its accrediting body, the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

The next step after being placed on notice is for an institution to lose its accreditation with the NCA, which also oversees U-Mary. U.S. Department of Education officials visited the DSU campus last week, although the nature of the visit is unknown. Representatives from the DOE have not returned calls made by The Press.

In 2011, a state audit brought to light questions about DSU’s admission standards and the awarding of unearned degrees, which led to the ousting of former school president Richard McCallum. The partnership with DSU, however, seems to indicate that U-Mary has little question as to whether DSU will continue to be an accredited institution.

“We hope that this collaboration is a sign of our confidence, not just in Dickinson State University, but in the community of Dickinson as well,” Shea said. “My understanding is that the accreditation issues are being addressed robustly by Dr. Coston and his staff. We’re making an active trust, which is always a risk, but we’re willing to do it to have this opportunity to serve. The integrity of an institution depends upon the integrity of its leadership.”

Coston said initial conversations over the potential of a partnership began in 2011. U-Mary will have a presence at the DSU campus and will work with DSU administration and staff to hire new faculty to coordinate and administer course, said Shea.

“We are pleased to be part of this wonderful new public and private partnership,” said Shirvani. “We are particularly interested in serving the adult learner population, giving them more opportunities to complete an education that may have been interrupted by other commitments or to change careers based on the employment opportunities in North Dakota today.”
North Dakota University System seeks $84M budget boost
Chancellor says increase needed to keep up with rising costs, support 'big agenda'
North Dakota University System officials are requesting an additional $84 million of state funding for the next two years, an increase Chancellor Hamid Shirvani said is needed to keep up with rising costs and to support the “big agenda” of the system and the state’s 11 public colleges and universities.

To view the original article please visit: http://www.inforum.com/event/article/id/382233/publisher_ID/1/

BISMARCK – North Dakota University System officials are requesting an additional $84 million of state funding for the next two years, an increase Chancellor Hamid Shirvani said is needed to keep up with rising costs and to support the “big agenda” of the system and the state’s 11 public colleges and universities.

If approved by legislators during the session that starts Jan. 8, the additional funding would bring general fund spending for the NDUS operational budget to nearly $600 million – a 16.3 percent increase compared to the $516 million of higher education funding for the current biennium that ends June 30.

The proposal also requests $146 million in capital expenditures to support 14 campus construction projects. The proposal includes $30 million for a new classroom and laboratory building at North Dakota State University, and $38.5 million for the first phase of a proposed new building for the University of North Dakota’s School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

Shirvani said the state has made strides in funding its institutions in recent years. Still, he said more investment is needed to bring NDSU and UND to the next level while increasing workforce development at the two-year schools and improving the overall quality and outcomes of higher education.

“"We have a golden opportunity in this state to really make a mark," he said. “Do we have a good system of higher education? Yes, of course we do. But do we want it the best, and do we have the opportunity to do so? Yes, we have absolutely the most fantastic opportunity.”

The proposal will face its first test Wednesday morning when Gov. Jack Dalrymple delivers his 2013-2015 executive budget address to legislators. It is expected to show which higher education plans he supports and guide legislative discussion next year.

Shirvani said the higher education proposal calls for more general fund money to cover the costs of inflation, regular maintenance, and salary and retirement increases. Those costs alone account for more than $25 million, or about 30 percent of the $84 million increase.

The remaining $59 million would fund several state priorities, including $25 million for the campuses and $5.5 million to hire extra security officers at the 11 schools.

Shirvani said the item that has drawn the most attention is his $8.5 million request to double the size of the NDUS office staff.

He said the money would recover the $3 million of cuts to the central office legislators handed down in recent years. The funding also would allow the system to hire new auditors, academicians to help shape systemwide policies and attorneys who could handle legal services for most of the campuses.

The goal, Shirvani said, is to reduce duplication of services among the 11 schools and run a more efficient system.
“The question is, are we serious about building a system or not?” he said. “If you’re serious, that’s not very much in comparison to the $1.6 billion budget of the system.”

Rep. Bob Skarphol, R-Tioga, said Shirvani is an “incredibly visionary” leader who was hired to the top spot in the NDUS earlier this year to reform higher education. Still, he said Shirvani’s budget proposal could be a tall order for legislators because the perception of higher education in the state has been “severely damaged” in recent years.

“It’s going to take a lot of convincing to accomplish everything that the chancellor wants,” Skarphol said. “But I think we need to afford him the luxury of listening to his vision and trying to make an intelligent decision.”

The budget proposal also includes two ranked lists of campus construction priorities that total 14 projects with a request for $146 million of state funding.

The top-ranked priority is a new $124 million medical school at UND to handle a projected enrollment increase. Shirvani said officials settled on a $38.5 million request for the next biennium to start the first phase.

A new science, technology, engineering and math classroom and lab building at NDSU that President Dean Bresciani said is “critically important” also is on the list. If approved, the new building would move instructional activities out of cramped spaces that are 40 to 100 years old.

“We’re excited about the building both as relief of that, but also as a model that might be applied to other campuses in the system,” he said.

Bresciani said the building would feature a “universal design,” meaning the space is intentionally kept generic to allow its use for several disciplines instead of just one college.

“That means the building can be used on a round-the-clock basis by as many science and engineering disciplines as possible, which means it gets a far more intense, efficient use than a typical classroom building,” he said.

Bresciani said NDSU’s top priority for the legislative session is a new higher education funding formula that would provide more equitable per-student funding to the state’s 11 campuses – a change many legislators called for after the 2011 session. He said a proposal is expected, and the plan seems to have broad support.

“That’s not just for NDSU; that’s something long overdue for the entire system,” Bresciani said.
Forum editorial: Higher ed requires a ‘vision’

At first glance, Chancellor Hamid Shirvani’s proposal for an $84 million general fund budget increase for North Dakota’s University System is a jaw-dropper. But further scrutiny suggests his proposal comports with the vision of a “big agenda” for the system’s 11 colleges and universities.

The important word for the future of higher education is “vision.” Shirvani came on board a few months ago and quickly advanced ideas that were visionary and practical. They ranged from imposing tougher admission requirements to catching up with delayed investments in education programs, research capacity and campus buildings.

If approved, the system’s two-year budget would rise about 16 percent, from the current $516 million to about $600 million. That amount does not include a one-time capital expenditure request of $146 million to fund 14 campus construction projects, including new classrooms and laboratories at North Dakota State University and a new building for the University of North Dakota’s School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

It’s a lot of money. But if the system is to keep up and excel, significant investments are necessary. The chancellor, who is new to the job, was quick to grasp the strengths already in the system. More importantly, he saw the potential for across-the-board, world-class excellence. It’s a theme shared by NDSU President Dean Bresciani and former NDSU President Joseph Chapman.

The budget has to go through the legislative meat grinder, and it’s no surprise the chancellor’s proposal has raised eyebrows. No one expects his budget blueprint to skate through the Legislature without changes. That’s the process. However, a few lawmakers are hung up on what they perceive or allege was mismanagement and/or malfeasance in the university system in the last few years. They apparently will obsess on the past, while the chancellor and others who value higher education move forward. Moving forward is the better option.
DEVILS LAKE - Two grants worth millions of dollars combined will allow a wide range of people to receive training in the quickly growing area of precision agriculture.

The Dakota Precision Ag Center at Lake Region State College in Devils Lake has received a total of $3.28 million in grants. One grant comes from the U.S. Department of Labor and is worth $2.99 million, while the other grant comes from the North Dakota Department of Commerce and is worth $288,600.

The larger federal grant will fund training for recent veterans or workers who are currently unemployed due to foreign trade. The smaller state grant will provide additional education for workers already employed in the agricultural sector.

Paul Gunderson, director of DPAC, said the ag center was first funded in 2006 as one of North Dakota's Centers of Excellence under Gov. John Hoeven.

"Three of the community colleges were funded initially. We're the only one that's still funded at the community college level," Gunderson said. "And we were funded twice, which was not done at any of the other institutions."

Initially a research program was launched exploring the fiscal and technical impacts of the use of precision ag technologies, which Gunderson said have become more pronounced over the years.

"They'd been in use down here in the corn belt and in the Red River Valley amongst potato and sugar beet growers, but had never been used, for the most part, out here in the High Plains," Gunderson said. "My proposal was very simple - give us a chance to assess these technologies and if they work, I'll do two things for the state of North Dakota."

The first was to produce jobs, which Gunderson said has happened repeatedly.

"We can't claim all of them, but my goodness, just in the ag equipment industry alone, if you were to look on their website you'd see 228 positions listed this morning (Tuesday) for precision ag technologists. Well that was unheard of six years ago," Gunderson said. "So the level of adoption of the technologies has really accelerated as producers have made the discovery for their own operations that indeed these technologies do work."

The second thing Gunderson promised was to provide an entrepreneurial platform for people who wanted to develop new technologies with the ag center.

"That's why we embarked on the slurry manure tool initiative, because one of the things that was obvious to us was we could address synthetic fertilizer, which is in either urea powder form or anhydrous ammonia gaseous form," Gunderson said. "But what about all of our livestock producers, whether they've got turkeys or pheasants or dairy or swine or beef - more beef than anything else. What precision technologies would work, because they're using manure as their fertilizer product?"

To help address this need, Gunderson has designed a slurry manure injection tool that should be completed later this winter and be ready for trials in the spring. If all goes well, it could give producers a new and innovative tool to spread their manure fertilizer in a much more precise manner, similar to what is used for synthetic fertilizers.

The two most recent initiatives of the ag center are the training grants. For the $288,600 state grant, they proposed to bring agricultural equipment dealership employees and agricultural co-op employees to sites where they would receive specialized training in precision ag technologies.
Gunderson said they also knew, based on their experience with answer farms, that they first had to get the employees to a basic level of computer literacy. Answer farms are owned by local producers and have three-year agreements with the ag center to devote some acreage for research and educational purposes.

"It's been fascinating to note how many technicians really have never done much with this," Gunderson said, shaking the computer mouse on his desk. "And if they haven't done this they can't create prescription maps. If they can't create prescription maps, they are somewhat limited when conceptualizing with a producer why something isn't working the way it should be working."

In addition to computer information technology training, the program will also offer specialized direct current electrical training, as well as customer service training.

The customer service training is being offered because of situations that were repeatedly observed on various answer farms. Gunderson said when equipment breaks down, producers get anxious because a deadline is always looming. Often the dealerships don't have enough staff to get on site right away, so a producer can wait many hours before a technician finally arrives to fix a malfunctioning piece of equipment.

"By then, the producer is not only irritated, he's normally animated. And now you're stuck with the situation of how do you handle this customer? How do you deal with this customer in a helpful manner?" Gunderson said. "Because the last things equipment dealerships and co-ops want to do is lose a customer."

The $2.99 million federal grant has an adjacent but complementary focus, which is on returning veterans and workers who have lost their jobs due to competition from foreign trade. Gunderson said veterans generally already have a good understanding of technology such as GPS because it is often used in military equipment like Humvees and tanks.

"Some of them are keenly interested in either returning to a production role in agriculture or returning into a technician role with production ag," Gunderson said. "It's amazing, we've got a large number of vets that are coming into our state looking for training opportunities and employment, and they weren't raised in our state. But they're heard of the economic opportunity here, so that's what they're going after."

Gunderson said examples of people who lost their jobs due to foreign trade would be employees at Bobcat in Bismarck who were laid off when their jobs were moved to South Korea.

The proposal for the federal grant was to provide about a year of training for those workers so they could take positions in the precision ag industry.

To do this a sort of educational boot camp will be developed to offer workers all the training resources they need.

Three modes of training will be used, the first of which is direct current course work, which will take place on campus. Gunderson said technicians often have difficulty servicing DC equipment because of its sophistication and the fact that it usually has to be fixed out in the field, where conditions can be less than ideal, because that's where the equipment has broken down.

In addition to a DC lab on campus, Gunderson said they are also looking at outfitting a mobile lab in a semitrailer or fifth-wheel to bring the training on the road to dealers or local communities. This would be the second mode, and Gunderson said they have already received a lot of interest in the mobile lab from both inside and outside of North Dakota even though it's not even close to being operational yet.

The third mode is online work, which will require teaching students to use the online tools themselves in addition to the regular course work.

Rollout for the federal grant will begin next August with the initial boot camp activity. Funding for this grant ends after three years, after which Gunderson expects the program to be sustainable on its own through course work fees.
As for the state grant, it begins rolling out next spring, with funding set to last for two years. After that, Gunderson said the program will be handed off to the Workforce Training departments of any interested community colleges so it can be sustained into the future, as well.

"It will be our pleasure to do the design and development work, and then other folks can take it," Gunderson said.
To train more doctors, UND seeks new building

UND’s School of Medicine and Health Sciences plans to ask the Legislature for $124 million for a new building, which officials said would help address the state’s shortage of health care workers.

To view the original article please visit: http://www.grandforksherald.com/event/article/id/250357/

UND’s School of Medicine and Health Sciences plans to ask the Legislature for $124 million for a new building, which officials said would help address the state’s shortage of health care workers.

A new building would enable the school to cope with more students, eliminate long-term maintenance costs associated with the existing 60-year-old building and potentially bring in more federal funds, the school’s Dean Joshua Wynne told the Herald editorial board Tuesday.

As a doctor and an educator, he said, he believes the need for the med school building is just as essential as transportation and other public services.

“This is not simply an educational proposal, or a higher education proposal,” he said. “This is infrastructure for the state of North Dakota, especially in the western counties of the state.

“Having a nice road, and not being able to transport someone to an appropriate health care facility, I don’t think that’s enough. We have to have both.”

The medical school has been down this road before. During the 2011 legislative session, it had sought $28.9 million for an addition to the existing building, but was rebuffed by the governor, who thought lawmakers would balk at the cost. UND ended up getting $1.8 million to train more doctors and other health care workers.

Costly option

The new building is the costliest of the school’s three options to accommodate the resulting 24 percent enrollment growth. The existing building is a former hospital built in 1952, and it’s under strain from the growth, according to Wynne.

One alternative option is an 80,103-square-foot addition with an estimated price tag of $38.5 million.

Another alternative has twice as much space as the first with an estimated price tag $68.3 million.

A new 376,812-square-foot building would cost $124 million but, Wynne said, would be less expensive to maintain than an old building with an addition. Also, a new building could bring in an estimated $37 million in federal funds over 40 years, he said.

With the new building, the university would be eligible for a bump in each federal research grant it gets to pay for building maintenance. The alternative options would not be eligible for this bump, according to Wynne.

The new building would be constructed on the Bronson Property just north of the present school and be completed in 2016, if all state funding is approved.

Temporary housing and other options would have to be explored, as class size expansion would hit hardest around 2015-2016.
“We would have a major problem for a year or two,” Wynne said.

State Sen. Judy Lee, R-West Fargo, who chairs the Interim Health Services Committee, said her committee has seen all three options and backs the new building.

“We have a pressing and crucial need throughout the entire state for all of those medical professionals, and you can’t educate them if you don’t have a place for them,” she said.

**Enrollment up**

Besides the new building, the medical school plans to ask lawmakers for $11.4 million for more faculty and support to cope with the rising number of students.

Enrollment is growing because, last year, the Legislature agreed to have the school enroll 46 more students and add 17 more residencies each year under an initiative called Grow Our Own Doctors.

Current enrollment totals 775, including some of the additional students.

The idea of Grow Our Own Doctors is to recruit health care workers from within North Dakota, which is easier than attracting new workers from other places, Wynne said.

Although the need for rural physicians has always been strong, fast growth in the western part of the state exacerbates that need. At the same time, a third of the doctors in the state is 60 or older and nearing retirement.

“If we don’t start with younger people, we could have a perfect storm,” Wynne said. “Our current problem could be exacerbated dramatically.”

However, he stressed the school is not planning to build a space and hoping to fill it. The calculations are based on the present real needs of the school, plus the growth from the class size expansion, he said.

“We really need to get our arms around health care costs,” he said. “From an industry standpoint, that’s a real issue and we really need to do something about it.”
Simply put, we want to create free minds, not ideological ones. The free mind thrives on the world of experiences with all of its contradictions, ambiguities, ironies and paradoxes.

To view the original article please visit: http://www.grandforksherald.com/event/article/id/250179/publisher_ID/40/

BISMARCK — In this age of a dynamic global economy, new industries are replacing those we had in the industrial age. Established companies are reinventing themselves, and new companies are being created all the time.

In education, our challenge is to figure out how to prepare people for multiple careers and, most likely, for careers that don’t yet exist.

Educating for change demands helping our young people “learn how to learn” and at the same time, build a solid educational foundation that goes beyond a narrow approach or single discipline.

Our focus must be on teaching, research and innovation rather than numbers and statistics. We must always demand quality rather than quantity. With so many proprietary colleges, overly bureaucratic accreditation processes and an infatuation with form over substance, I wonder whether we’ve made a Faustian bargain that trades a truly classical and solid education for a watered-down version, one that satisfies the marketplace of today but not tomorrow.

One of the best ways to look to the future is to start with the past. I am reminded of a conversation of Socrates called the Phaedrus, written by Plato. In it, Socrates — who wrote no books — gave three reasons why he did not like the written word.

Writing, he said, would deprive Athenians of their powerful memory, for if everything is written down, there would be no need to memorize.

Writing also would change the form of education, he said. In particular, it would force students to follow an argument rather than participate in it.

And writing would change the concept of privacy and the meaning of public discourse. Thus, for Socrates, the widespread use of writing presaged a cultural disaster.

In a sense, Socrates was correct. Without a doubt, writing undermined the oral tradition that he believed to be the best way to express serious ideas, beautiful poetry and authentic piety.

But Socrates did not see what his student Plato did — that writing would create new modes of thought altogether and provide wonderful new pathways for the intellect.

In the same way that the written word challenged the genius of the Greek mind, so has the current information revolution subtly — and not-so-subtly — altered the way our own generation thinks and writes. It has changed our “sense-lives” and our mental processes. We need only to look at our children to see this change.

These changes represent major challenges for our universities. But I’m reminded of a comment made years ago by Clark Kerr, the former president of the University of California, when he was asked about the role of the university in American society.
A reflective man, Kerr replied that America’s great research and teaching universities were a unique part of the heritage of the Western world and would remain among the most enduring institutions of society.

He observed that if one took the year 1520 as a starting point, there were only 75 institutions in the Western world that still exist in recognizable forms, with similar functions and with unbroken histories. These include the Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church, the City Council of Venice, the Parliament of the Isle of Man (a self-governing kingdom 20 miles long in the Irish Sea), the Parliament of Iceland — and 70 universities.

Kings, feudal lords, guilds and monopolies have come and gone; so, too, have nation states and corporations.

But these 70 universities — Edinburgh, Cambridge, Glasgow, Louvain, Sienna, Verona, Paris and so on — still are in the same locations with some of the same buildings, with professors and students doing much the same things and with governance carried on in much the same way.

In this age of unparalleled change, it’s vitally important that America’s great universities remain a constant — something durable we have inherited from those original 70 European universities.

At least I hope they remain so, but keeping this legacy will require careful stewardship.

In the United States, a longstanding compact between the public and its universities grants the schools unique autonomy and scholarly freedom in exchange for effective and responsible scholarship, the education of an informed citizenry and the preparation of society’s future workforce.

There is also a sense that university teaching and research must involve not just the transfer of knowledge but also a commitment to developing the whole person. To achieve this, we have learned not to isolate our scholars within the ivory towers of academe or their own disciplines, but instead to connect the scholars to others — both in and beyond the academy.

What does this mean? It means we must all become lifelong learners, and the goal of our schools should be to make each of us a self-motivated learner.

For the university, it also means we must move away from trying to fill students with information that becomes quickly outdated and, instead, prepare students for active and continuous learning.

Any student who graduates without good cognitive skills, a willingness to pursue continuous learning and a sense of the values that guide our lives will lack the survival skills needed for this new millennium.

In the North Dakota University System, we should strive to create a liberal education for our students. And that’s “liberal” not in the political sense but in the sense of education that’s fit for free individuals in a free society.

Simply put, we want to create free minds, not ideological ones. The free mind thrives on the world of experiences with all of its contradictions, ambiguities, ironies and paradoxes.

The ability to deal with these multiple experiences, walk with confidence through ambiguity, distinguish fad from trend and make informed decisions does not come from narrow interests or an ideological framework.

An education that prepares students for the future relies on a strong foundation built in the past and an equally strong preparation that lets them keep learning on every day of their lives. We can ask no less of our universities or ourselves.
FARGO – Tom Stone Carlson said most family therapy programs train future therapists to work with “general clients” – which usually means white, heterosexual, upper middle class couples who make up the bulk of the field’s research.

But that can leave professionals unprepared when they work with people who don’t fit into that group, including racial minorities, gay and lesbian couples, and low-income families, said Carlson, associate professor and coordinator of North Dakota State University’s couple and family therapy program.

“The literature’s pretty clear working with the LGBT community that therapists who haven’t received any training or maybe have some biased beliefs can actually cause increased harm in terms of increased rates of depression, anxiety and maybe increased suicidal ideation just from actually going to treatment,” he said.

Carlson said that concern prompted the NDSU program to shift its focus in 2004. Rather than just require students to take one diversity class, issues of social justice are now at the center of all of their courses as they make their way through the two-and-a-half year program to earn a master’s degree.

Prospective students and top scholars from across the country have taken note, and it is now viewed as a national leader in couple and family therapy. The program recently won a national training award from the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy – only the second time the award went to a program rather than an individual.

In his nomination letter, Purdue University professor Douglas Sprenkle said the program has already made “a significant and lasting impact” on the field.

“Their efforts to raise the visibility of the need for training programs to make the issues of diversity and social justice central to training of all couple and family therapists are deserving of recognition and is a model for the entire field of couple and family therapy,” he wrote.

Carlson said the program used to attract regional students. Now, 40 to 50 applicants vie for the eight spots in the program each year.

“One of the things that’s happened is that students who are really interested in diversity kinds of ideas are really attracted to our program,” he said. “We now have students applying to our program from all across the country and Canada who are wanting to come and move to Fargo and come to NDSU because of our focus.”

Besides a full class schedule, students work for a year at the NDSU Family Center seeing clients under professional supervision, spend another year as an intern in a community agency and write a thesis.

Jim Deal, head of the Department of Human Development and Family Science, said the program’s shift mirrors a broader trend in higher education of narrowing the focus to produce students who are better able to do well in their chosen careers.
“I think there was a time when you could define yourself very broadly and you could be successful and you could train students who were employable,” he said. “But I think as the field has expanded that more and more people are looking at people who are specialists rather than generalists, and I think that’s what this recognizes.”

Many family therapy programs across the country have recognized this trend and tried to change, Deal said. But many of them “haven’t done a very good job of it,” he said, while NDSU has thrived.

“What our faculty have done is figure out a way to be unique in what they do and figure out how to be very good at doing it,” he said.

The department could eventually add a Ph.D. program to its family therapy offerings, which could shift again from teaching active therapists to producing the next generation of trainers and researchers who would advance the field, Deal said.

“It’s something we’re definitely going to consider,” he said.
FARGO - Ken Grafton said he’s fielded plenty of questions about the $33 million Agricultural Experiment Station research greenhouse complex on the west side of the North Dakota State University campus – especially its price tag.

But he said the facility, with its dozens of individually controlled greenhouse compartments and ability to safely research invasive insects and weeds that haven’t come to the region yet, can’t be compared to the temporary greenhouses that pop up in store parking lots each spring.

“This is very, very much a research facility,” he said. “You can consider each compartment being a research laboratory. The only difference is that you’re growing plants in it and it’s a glass roof.”

Grafton, NDSU’s vice president for agricultural affairs and director of the Agricultural Experiment Station, said the facility was dreamed up a decade ago. Officials went to the state Legislature in 2003 to get approval, and in 2005, they got the initial funding to start designing the state-of-the-art complex.

The state gave more than $27 million over several legislative sessions to make the facility a reality, and private donors contributed the remaining $5 million. Construction began in 2008, and the first researchers moved their work there in the spring of 2010.

Grafton said the complex is “very large” – a bit of an understatement considering it has just under 2 acres of indoor growing space, divided up into enclosed rooms that each have their own water, heating and electrical supplies to create highly precise environments in each chamber.

“We can have one greenhouse compartment at 85 degrees and a relative humidity of 100 percent, and another greenhouse compartment at 70 degrees and 50 percent relative humidity,” he said.

Greenhouse Manager Julie Hochhalter said it’s a “500 percent” improvement from the old greenhouses, which were built in the early 1950s to combat stem rust in wheat. At the time, there were four breeding programs on campus; now there are 18, and there wasn’t space for all of them.

“In the last 50 years with GMO crops and other things, there’s some security measures that needed to be upgraded and control methods that have come out that improve the research,” she said.

Hochhalter said the energy-efficient facility is partially heated by geothermal technology, and the compartments boast energy curtains to keep heat out on sunny days and hold the heat in during the winter.

It’s also durable, she said, with efficient acrylic windows rather than glass that can be patched and should last 25 years. The facility already withstood two storms packing wind gusts more than 80 mph that blew apart temporary greenhouses on the NDSU campus, she said.

The complex has plenty of high-tech features. Hochhalter can control each compartment, adjust settings or be alerted to water leaks 24 hours a day wherever she is through an online connection.
“There is no other university that has a greenhouse like this,” she said. “You’d have to go to private industry to find one, and I would say there’s maybe four or five with these capabilities on this scale.”

The facility isn’t finished yet. Grafton said construction is ongoing on a final phase to be completed in the late spring. It will add biosafety rooms that can research invasive pests, genetically modified organisms and other regulated items after the federal government gives its approval.

Hochhalter said 66 rooms are open for research so far, and 62 rooms now have projects. About 300 graduate students, researchers, faculty and hourly workers now use the facility.

The complex has already boosted research capabilities and helped recruit leading scientists, including Maricelis Acevedo, the 2010 recipient of an international award honoring her as the outstanding female scientist working in wheat, Grafton said.

“She came to NDSU in part because of the greenhouse and the capabilities,” he said.

Acevedo is a leading researcher on Ug99, a devastating stem rust originally found in Africa that’s expected to eventually reach America, Hochhalter said. For now, Acevedo has to go to Kenya to plant wheat and do her research, but Hochhalter said the work can happen at NDSU once the biosafety labs are approved.

Those secure labs, with a variety of safeguards to prevent accidental contamination, also will be able to conduct research on the emerald ash borer and other invasive pests that could wreak havoc if they made their way to the region.

“It is one of the best greenhouse complexes in the nation,” Grafton said. “There are very few that would compete against it.”