



PRESIDENT LEADERSHIP PROFILE

AUGUST 2025

The Position of President

The South Dakota Board of Regents invites nominations and expressions of interest for the position of president at Northern State University (NSU), one of the six universities governed by the board. We are seeking a forward-thinking, innovative, and collaborative leader who can help build upon Northern's impressive accomplishments. The ideal candidate will be someone who can guide the university as a vibrant and comprehensive regional institution, serving both undergraduate and graduate students.

The president serves as the chief executive officer, responsible for the successful management of all facets of the university. Northern serves over 3,500 students, including high school dual-credit, graduate, and international students, on its scenic 75-acre campus in Aberdeen, a thriving community of 28,000 located in northeastern South Dakota. NSU is a leading residential university recognized for its excellent instruction, strong community involvement, and a range of extracurricular activities. It is a regional comprehensive university that meets the educational and workforce needs in business, academics, the arts, and the sciences. The university offers personalized teaching and student services, expanding access through our online and flexible programs based on a mission-driven approach.



Personal Qualifications and Qualities

The ideal candidate will bring a results-oriented mindset, strong executive acumen, and an ability to drive strategic growth. Key qualities, experiences, and characteristics include:

- **Strategic Visionary and Change Leader:** A forward-thinking executive who can align institutional goals with long-term strategic planning, drive innovation, and position the university for sustained competitive advantage in an evolving higher education landscape.
- **Relationship Builder and External Connector:** Proven ability to cultivate and strengthen relationships with students, faculty, staff, business leaders, policymakers, and community stakeholders to enhance the university's influence, partnerships, and market relevance.
- **Executive Communicator:** A compelling and authentic communicator who actively listens, builds consensus, and represents the university with credibility and professionalism at the state, regional, and national levels.
- **Organizational Optimizer:** A team-focused leader who can empower high-performing talent, streamline operations, and foster a culture of accountability, innovation, and continuous improvement.
- **Student Success and Innovation Champion:** Committed to delivering measurable value for students by expanding academic quality, career-readiness initiatives, and experiential learning opportunities that align with workforce needs.
- **Visible and Entrepreneurial Leader:** A dynamic presence on campus and in the community - engaged, energetic, and eager to explore new business models and revenue-generating opportunities that serve both mission and margin.
- **Skilled Fundraiser and Brand Ambassador:** Demonstrated success in leading fundraising efforts, cultivating donor and alumni engagement, and elevating the institution's brand and philanthropic culture.
- **Financial Strategist:** Deep understanding of higher education finance, including state-level appropriations, operational efficiencies, and long-term financial planning to ensure institutional sustainability.
- **Industry and Government Collaborator:** Ability to initiate and expand partnerships with private industry and government agencies that result in new programs, research opportunities, and economic development for the region.
- **Calculated Risk-Taker and Change Agent:** Informed by data and driven by outcomes, the candidate will embrace innovation and take bold, strategic actions to advance the university's mission and impact.
- **Proven Academic and Executive Credentials:** An earned doctorate or terminal degree with a track record of executive-level leadership in complex, mission-driven organizations. Exceptional candidates with a graduate degree and substantial leadership experience will also be considered.
- **Experienced Organizational Leader:** Demonstrated success leading large, multifaceted teams and navigating complex organizational challenges with integrity, clarity, and operational discipline.

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

Following a strong four-year term under its previous president, Northern stands on solid ground, with significant momentum and forward-thinking initiatives already in motion. A state-of-the-art academic facility is scheduled for completion this December, complementing a slate of innovative academic programs and a growing network of partnerships that extend well beyond campus into the region's economic and civic fabric.

Northern's mission is clear: to equip students with the skills, mindset, and adaptability they need to lead in today's complex world, whether through liberal arts or professional disciplines. At the same time, the university plays an active role in elevating the economic and cultural life of its surrounding communities. Its vision is to be recognized across the region as a dynamic, student-centered institution committed to teaching excellence, innovation, and workforce development. The next president will have the unique opportunity to lead a high-performing organization and shape its next chapter, driving strategic growth, cultivating partnerships, and enhancing impact at both local and global levels.



■ Strategic Pathway

Northern State University's strategic pathway outlines a framework for fulfilling its mission of preparing students through liberal arts, professional education, and e-learning while benefiting the local community. The vision is to provide transformational educational experiences and foster collaborative partnerships for the public good.

Guided by core values of Community, Discovery, and Integrity, the next president will be an innovative leader, advancing this framework and spearheading initiatives such as strategic enrollment management, brand enhancement, and quality improvements, positioning Northern as a premier destination for liberal arts education.

■ Enrollment

Enrollment and retention remain key areas of focus for the next president. The university has made progress in developing new academic programs and expanding its graduate offerings to align with student demand. Further efforts to grow sustainable enrollment should focus on strengthening the university's overall curriculum through strategic planning and creating an ideal academic, learning, and social environment to promote lifelong student success. The Strategic Enrollment Management Plan acts as the roadmap for targeted recruitment and retention initiatives.

■ Advocacy

The next president will have numerous opportunities to strengthen the university's solid support network. It is crucial that he or she continues to actively engage the local community, seeking input from stakeholders and forming partnerships through regular communication and collaboration. As Northern's most visible advocate, the next president must collaborate with local, state, and regional sources to achieve the university's future goals.

As part of the state's higher education system, Northern must collaborate with the other five institutions and the Board of Regents to promote the state's investment in higher education. Northern's next president will need to partner closely with the Board of Regents, other presidents, and legislators to continually improve processes and resource use, as well as advocate for policies and funding that encourage the innovation and entrepreneurship expected at each institution.

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About Northern State University

■ History

Since the university was founded as the Northern Normal and Industrial School in 1901, progress has been constant in its curriculum and campus life. Over its 124-year history, Northern's faculty and staff have consistently worked to meet the needs of both college students and high school students through the Center for Statewide E-learning and high school dual credit programs, which are offered in traditional, online, and HyFlex formats. As technology advances, NSU continues to offer high-quality, accessible, and affordable education.

■ Academics

NSU maintains the highest standards of academic excellence and promotes learning through both traditional and non-traditional teaching methods. The university offers a comprehensive curriculum with more than 50 programs spanning associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees.

This fall, NSU will introduce a Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, further expanding its academic offerings. While the university has long been recognized for graduating highly trained teachers in South Dakota, it is now also acclaimed for excellent instruction in fine arts, business, and sciences. Northern State's dedication to academic excellence is reflected in its extensive accreditation. The university's outstanding arts programs are especially notable, with theatrical and musical offerings that regularly draw large audiences from across the region, showcasing Northern's cultural influence beyond campus.

■ Campus

Several major campus improvement projects have been completed at Northern in recent years. Since 2016, new and renovated facilities on campus have added more than \$110 million in value. These transformative projects include expanding the Johnson Fine Arts Center, Northern's main performance venue; building three new suite-style residence halls; and opening the state-of-the-art Harvey C. Jewett IV Regional Science Education Center, which has improved research and science education for NSU students as well as K-12 students across the region.

Athletic facilities have also been significantly improved with the addition of the Athletic and Recreation Fields and the Regional Sports Complex, which features Dacotah Bank Stadium. These venues offer excellent facilities for both competition and training.

Other facility improvements include the full renovation of Gerber Hall, home of the Millicent Atkins School of Education, as well as updates to performing arts and teacher education spaces, and upgrades to technology in many classrooms. Looking forward, the Northern Business and Health Innovation Center is scheduled for completion in December 2025. This new facility will house the School of Business and the upcoming BSN nursing program, demonstrating Northern's continued investment in providing state-of-the-art educational environments.

■ Students

In fall 2024, Northern State University enrolled 3,708 students, marking the largest first-year class since 2014 and the highest headcount enrollment since at least 1998, with a retention rate of 77%. Most students come from South Dakota and nearby states, but Northern also draws students from across the nation and globally.

NSU continues to attract high-achieving students, offering numerous opportunities for undergraduate research collaborations with faculty. The university is committed to supporting non-traditional and first-generation students. Students view Northern as a nurturing environment with low student-faculty ratios and personalized interactions, perceiving the campus as welcoming and community-focused, with dedicated professors genuinely invested in their academic and personal success.

Northern State University sponsors 15 NCAA Division II sports for around 400 student-athletes and competes in the 16-team NSIC in the Upper Midwest. The Wolves enjoy a strong community and regional fan base, leading the conference in attendance and ranking nationally. They have secured five individual national championships, two team titles, conference championships, and several All-American honors.

■ Faculty

NSU's vibrant campus community thrives through teamwork, cooperation, and mutual respect within an environment that fosters knowledge, culture, and varied viewpoints. Faculty at Northern State University take great pride in their teaching and commitment to student growth.

■ Foundation and Alumni

The Foundation is currently in the silent phase of a targeted campaign to raise scholarships, support operating for the School of Business and Department of Nursing, and additional marketing resources for the university. As of July 1, 2025, over \$10 million has been pledged to the campaign.

2024 AT A GLANCE

TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 3,708 Students

UNDERGRADUATE:

3,169 Students

GRADUATE:

539 Students

SOUTH DAKOTA RESIDENT:

3,011 Students

NONRESIDENT:

697 Students

TOTAL DEGREES AWARDED:

Undergraduate Degrees Awarded: 281

Graduate Degrees Awarded: 86

TOP MAJORS:

Elementary Education,
Business Administration, Biology,
Criminal Justice, Psychology



About Aberdeen

Aberdeen is a vibrant community that combines the friendly atmosphere of a small town with the amenities of a larger city. The city boasts a vibrant arts scene, top-notch schools, and plenty of recreational and outdoor activities. The university maintains a strong, positive relationship with the local community and the surrounding region. Situated in northeastern South Dakota, Aberdeen serves as the hub for business, healthcare, and culture in the area.

Northern State University is a vital asset to this expanding community and plays a crucial role in its economic growth, contributing approximately \$229 million annually to South Dakota's economy. The university enjoys strong community support, offering numerous employment and internship opportunities for students and encouraging active participation from local residents in campus cultural and athletic events.

Procedure for Candidacy

Nominations and applications will be accepted until an appointment is made, within the practical limits of the process, as finalists are identified. Applications will remain confidential except for those invited to the Northern State University campus for interviews. ***For full consideration, applicants should submit materials by September 24, 2025.***

All application materials should be submitted electronically to nsupresident@sdbor.edu and must include the following:

- A letter of interest;
- A current résumé or curriculum vitae; and,
- The names of five or more professional references with each person's position, office or home address, e-mail address, and telephone numbers.

If interested parties have questions, contact Kayla Bastian, Chief Human Resource Officer of the South Dakota Board of Regents, at 605-773-3455.

The South Dakota Board of Regents is comprised of nine-members who governs public higher education in South Dakota. The governor appoints board members for six-year terms; one student regent is appointed for a two-year term.

The South Dakota Board of Regents is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The Board of Regents ensures that all employment practices are free of discrimination. Arrangements for accommodation required by disabilities can be made by contacting Kayla Bastian at 605-773-3455 or kayla.bastian@sdbor.edu.

