

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

Academic and Student Affairs

**REVISED
AGENDA ITEM: 6 – E (2)
DATE: April 3-4, 2024**

SUBJECT

New Program Request – NSU – MS in Strategic Innovation and Leadership

CONTROLLING STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY

[BOR Policy 2.3.2](#) – New Programs, Program Modifications, and Inactivation/Termination
[BOR Policy 2.3.3](#) – External Review of Proposed Graduate Programs

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

Northern State University (NSU) requests authorization to offer a MS in Strategic Innovation and Leadership. The proposed program will prepare students to analyze, lead, and innovate within organizations. In this program, students will study dynamics of innovation, leadership theories, design thinking, creativity, decision making, communications, and team dynamics. Graduates will be prepared to lead organizational change, drive business growth, add customer value, and create competitive advance through innovation.

The Executive Director approved the Intent to Plan, which the Board was notified of at the [June 2023](#) meeting. Per BOR Policy 2.3.3, an external review of the program was conducted, and the final report of the reviewers was received by the Board office. The report, along with NSU’s response to the report, are included in Attachments II & III.

IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATION

A summary of the program proposal has been included as Attachment I. Additional information on this proposal is available from the Board office by request.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment I – New Program Request Summary: NSU – MS in Strategic Innovation and Leadership
- Attachment II – External Review Report
- Attachment III – NSU External Review Response

DRAFT MOTION 20240403_6-E(2):

I move to authorize NSU to offer a MS in Strategic Innovation and Leadership, as presented.

**Full Proposal – MS Strategic Innovation and Leadership
Northern State University**

BOR Recommendation: The Board of Regents Academic Affairs and the Executive Director support the program request. This program will increase the number of graduate-credentialed professionals in northeast South Dakota prepared with a mix of innovation and leadership courses in the Business discipline to support change across a variety of organizational situations.

Program Description:

The Master of Science in Strategic Innovation and Leadership prepares students to analyze and lead an organization's ability to innovate. In this program, students will study the dynamics of innovation, leadership theories, design thinking, creativity, decision-making, communications, and team dynamics. Graduates will be prepared to lead organizational change, drive business growth, add customer value, and create competitive advantage through innovation.

Strategic Impact –

NSU Strategic Impact: Northern State University has a key partnership with the Northern Innovation and Startup Center. The MS in Strategic Innovation and Leadership supports building a digital economy ecosystem in northeastern South Dakota by shaping organizational and business leaders who think creatively and who are focused on continued innovation.

The mission of Northern State University is to “provide diverse academic, civic, social and cultural opportunities that prepare students through the liberal arts, professional education and E-learning for their future endeavors, while also enriching the local and regional community.” The NSU strategic plan further emphasizes the university's aspiration to be recognized regionally for its performance in four key thematic areas. The Master of Science in Strategic Innovation and Leadership program is closely aligned with the Strategic Planning Themes of Distinctive Learning (innovation is a central focus of the program, and the intended learning outcomes for graduates are relevant to the leadership needs of contemporary organizations) and Distinctive Partnerships (the majority of program graduates will complete an entrepreneurial project or collaborative internship with a community organization, several of which have already indicated that they are supportive of the development of this program).

BOR Strategic Impact: The proposed program supports the current Board of Regents' Strategic Plan. Goal 2: Access and Affordability, is supported by providing an affordable option for students and accountability through efficiency. This master's program supports Goal 3: Academic Excellence, Student Outcomes, and Educational Attainment with a curriculum of quality, rigor, and relevance to South Dakota and the region's economy. Goal 4: Workforce and Economic Development, is supported by the potential for greater earnings for the graduates from this proposed program. This proposed program also supports Goal 5: Financial Health and Competitiveness, by the anticipated growth in the number of undergraduate and graduate degrees awarded. The proposed program will attract both traditional and non-traditional students who look to further their education and advance their careers.

Program Summary:

The classification of this program will be 52.0213 [Organizational Leadership]. This program is proposed to be offered both on-campus and online (specifically HyFlex). NSU will pursue ACBSP accreditation for the proposed program.

Duplication and Competition:

While no other South Dakota university currently offers an MS in Strategic Innovation and Leadership, there are a number of related programs offered at NSU, USD, and BHSU.

The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) for 2022-2023 reporting shows that South Dakota produced a total of 76 masters-prepared graduates in related fields.

Regental Universities¹:

University	Master's Degrees Conferred in Related Fields	Total Number of Master's Degrees Conferred at Each Institution
BHSU, MS Strategic Leadership	13	60
NSU, MEd Leadership and Administration	13	113
USD, MS Public Administration with Leadership in Public Management Certificate	20	530
USD, MS Administration with Organizational Leadership	30	

Private SD Universities²:

University	Master's Degrees Conferred in Related Fields	Total Number of Master's Degrees Conferred at Each Institution
None	0	--

Total Sum of SD Peer Findings:

University	Master's Degrees Conferred in Related Fields	Total Number of Master's Degrees Conferred (All SD University)
Total	76	703

The number of conferred master's degrees in related fields, specifically Strategic Leadership, as reported by IPEDs was 76. This is approximately 11% of the total number of master's degrees awarded by these universities.

Northern's MS in Strategic Innovation and Leadership program offers a Business-discipline-based, well-balanced approach to innovation complemented with leadership that will prepare graduates to lead innovation and change in organizations for intrapreneurs and entrepreneurs. Northern worked with the Center on Rural Innovation (CORI) to envision a pathway from an AS in Digital Entrepreneurship to a BS in Business Management or Management Information Systems (MIS) to an MS in Strategic Innovation and Leadership.

¹ Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) for 2022-2023

² Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) for 2022-2023

There is demand in northeastern South Dakota for a Business-discipline program that is broader than a specific industry (existing Northern master's degree programs in Business are specific to accounting and banking) and that is open to students who did not complete bachelor's degrees in Business. Both Northern's MS in Banking and Financial Services and MS in Accounting Analytics have several undergraduate prerequisites commonly found in bachelor's degrees in Business.

Competitor University Peers³:

University	Master's Degrees Conferred in Innovation and Management	Total Number of Master's Degrees Conferred at Each Institution
Regent University, MBA Innovation Management	109	1090
Ottawa University-Online, MS Innovation and Management	65	215
Salve Regina, MS Innovation and Strategic Management	59	187

Workforce Outlook/State Need:

According to the South Dakota Department of Labor & Regulation, the "Management" occupation is projected to grow by 11.76% during the period from 2020-2030 in South Dakota

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the "Management Analysts" occupation is projected to grow by 11.4% (a total increase of 108,400 openings) nationally during the period from 2021-2031 and by 13.7% (a total increase of 450 jobs) in South Dakota during the period from 2020-2030. (<https://money.usnews.com/careers/best-jobs/management-analyst>)

According to the EMSI SDBOR Program Demand Gap Analysis Report, the "Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services" occupation is projected to grow by 20.7% (a total increase of 3,508 openings) in South Dakota during the period from 2020-2030. Similarly, the "Management of Companies & Enterprises" occupation is projected to grow by 9.9% (a total increase of 522 openings) in South Dakota during the period from 2020-2030. Additionally, the SDBOR Program Demand Gap Analysis indicated that business administration and management was an area in which there was a significant gap between the number of annual job openings and annual degree completions. This area showed the biggest gap among all areas studied by EMSI. The gap was 64 at the master's degree level and 494 at the bachelor's degree level.

According to the 20-2028 employment projections by the South Dakota Department of Labor, Sioux Falls MSA occupational employment projections for all management occupations have a predicted growth rate of 11.5% and an increase of 492 jobs in the Sioux Falls MSA alone. (Labor Market Information Center, South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, July 2021 https://dlr.sd.gov/lmic/menu_projections_occupation.aspx)

³ IPEDS, 2022-2023

Typical job titles that are associated with a Master's in Management, Leadership, Innovation, and Strategy include Training and Development Manager, Human Resources Manager, Sales Manager, Executives, and Principals.

Managers - Training & Development

SD - \$102,330

Nationally - \$120,130

Managers - Operations

SD - \$129,370

Nationally - \$97,970

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/>

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will analyze the dynamics of innovation capabilities, resources, and preferences.
2. Evaluate team and group dynamics in the workplace.
3. Demonstrate critical thinking skills through the use of data analysis/business intelligence to assist top management in the strategic decision-making process.
4. Analyze one's leadership skills and develop a plan on how to develop as a leader.
5. Apply creative and design thinking to solve business problems.

When designing the curriculum for this program, NSU faculty in the School of Business met with Jim Cramer Hon AIA, Hon IIDA, CAE, a specialist in design intelligence at Georgia Institute of Technology. Mr. Cramer is an alum of Northern State University ('69) who also serves as Distinguished Professor of the Savannah College of Architecture and Design. Mr. Cramer has authored four books including Design+Enterprise, now in its 3rd Edition. He has written over 220 articles and book chapters for numerous publications and was the founding publisher of both Architectural Technology and Design Intelligence. Mr. Cramer discussed and shared syllabi of courses at Georgia Tech that focus on innovation, creative thinking, and design with Northern faculty.

The outcome for graduates of the program will be assessed by requiring students to complete a survey in the capstone course. The graduate faculty coordinator will work with the Career Services Coordinator to track employment and career trajectory outcomes of graduates of the program. The program will be evaluated on a regular cycle following ACBSP guidelines and BOR policy, and employer focus groups or surveys will be included as part of the regular cycle of evaluation.

Projected Enrollment:

ESTIMATES	FISCAL YEARS*					
	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	5th Year	6th Year
Students new to the university	5	5	6	6	6	6
Students from other university programs						
Students off-campus or distance continuing students	3	3	3	3	4	5
		7	7	8	8	9
Total students in the program (fall)	8	15	16	17	18	20
Program credit hours (major Courses)**	120	225	240	255	270	300
Graduates		7	7	8	8	9

**Do not include current fiscal year.*

***This is the total number of credit hours generated by students in the program in the required or elective program courses. Use the same numbers in Appendix B – Budget.*

All students entering this program are expected to be new to an NSU graduate program. Many of the students enrolling in this program may be recently graduated NSU students who have completed their undergraduate degrees. The proposed program will arguably also be attractive to NSU alumni, members of the Aberdeen community, and the surrounding area who seek graduate education linked with the possibility of career advancement in a setting that is convenient to their home or business.

Current enrollments in other NSU graduate programs in the School of Business were used in determining the estimated enrollment. The 5-year average number of graduates from the MS in Accounting Analytics and MS in Banking and Financial Services is 10.

Projected Revenue/Expenses:

	FINANCIAL HEALTH SUMMARY					
	1st FY24	2nd FY25	3rd FY26	4th FY27	5th FY28	6th FY29
TUITION & FEE REVENUES	41,931	78,621	83,862	89,104	94,345	104,828
PROGRAM EXPENSES	68,432	68,432	68,432	68,432	68,432	68,432
NET (T&F REVENUES LESS PROGRAM EXPENSES)	(26,501)	10,189	15,430	20,672	25,913	36,396
OTHER SUPPORTING REVENUES	-	-	-	-	-	-
NET AFTER OTHER SUPPORTING REVENUES	(26,501)	10,189	15,430	20,672	25,913	36,396

According to NSU's analysis, the minimum number of students required for the program to break even is 12.

Existing faculty will be utilized in teaching. Northern State University is budgeting one-quarter of each of four faculty member's workloads for the program, equating to 1.0 FTE. One adjunct faculty member will be needed to support the program, as well. The 400/500 level courses are currently being offered, and seats are available in the courses; therefore, not creating a need for additional faculty for those courses. As soon as this program is eligible, Northern will submit final documents for the program to be approved for ACBSP accreditation.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Crookston Campus

Business Department

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2900 University Ave.
Crookston, MN 56716
(218) 281-8176
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February 29, 2024

Dear Board of Regents,

Thank you for the opportunity to evaluate and review the proposed Master of Science in Strategic Innovation and Leadership at Northern State University (NSU). This document provides findings based on a review of the program curriculum, faculty, services, and other pertinent findings. In addition, this document provides a summary of recommendations including strengths and areas for improvement of the proposed program.

Program Curriculum

The curriculum in this program is well aligned with the needs and desired skill sets of organizations. Specifically, hiring authorities are seeking individuals with skill sets addressed in this curriculum including, but not limited to, critical thinking, innovation and creativity, leadership, business analytics, and communication. This program is unique in that it is housed in the School of Business but is intended to be taken by students with various undergraduate degrees. This will allow NSU to serve more students with this program than they would with a traditional Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree offering.

This program can be taken as either a traditional two-year master's program or can be done in a 4+1 format. With the 4+1 option, 12 credits in the master's program overlap with undergraduate courses allowing students to complete their master's degree in an accelerated manner. This provides a competitive advantage for NSU as current students can complete an undergraduate and master's degree in less time. In my experience, this is especially attractive to student-athletes who choose to complete their degree in 5 years, and thus, this accelerated program should be promoted to incoming student-athletes. This option may also be attractive to traditional-aged college students who have taken college credits while in high school. There is an increasing number of new high school graduates attending higher education who earned college credits in high school. Many of these students may still be interested in attending college for 4 years, and thus this accelerated option may be attractive to them.

The program will also be delivered in a hyflex modality, whereby students can choose to attend class in person or online. Providing multiple ways in which students can attend and engage in the courses will help to recruit students who may not have otherwise been able to pursue this degree program, and thus will increase enrollment in the program.

The courses in this program are well suited to meet the learning outcomes of the program and to prepare students for advancement in their careers. Some potential items to consider related to the curriculum in the program include the following: 1) Utilizing the Field Guide to Human-Centered Design in BADM 742 and 2) Consider adding additional electives. These recommendations will be discussed in detail next.

One of the required courses in the program is BADM 742 – Creative Thinking and Design. The proposed course syllabus addresses a variety of pertinent topics in this realm. In addition to the text that has been identified, I

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would recommend the faculty teaching this course consider also utilizing a free e-book from IDEO.org titled “The Field Guide to Human-Centered Design.” This book walks students through the design thinking process and provides a variety of resources that can be used to enhance creative thinking and solve problems.

The program provides students with a variety of elective options. As the program grows, it may be beneficial to offer additional electives that allow students to further tailor their master’s degree to their field of interest. Additional course topics may include strategic planning, change management, artificial intelligence in business, business ethics and social responsibility, and digital marketing. I would highly recommend adding a course on managing change or embedding these topics into one of the required courses as these skills are needed by managers that are leading in an innovative environment.

Faculty

The current faculty within the School of Business are diverse and able to offer a strong program. The faculty within the School of Business have expertise in various business functions including management, marketing, accounting, economics, and finance. In addition, many of the faculty have professional experience and/or research experience in the leadership realm. It does not appear that any of the faculty have taught specific courses related to creativity and innovation; however, these topics are often embedded within the business curriculum, especially in management and marketing. Thus, it is assumed that the faculty has sufficient knowledge of these topics. One recommendation would be to continue to provide funding to faculty teaching in this program for professional development specifically related to teaching courses in innovation and creativity to further enhance their knowledge in this realm.

The program intends to utilize current faculty to teach the courses in the program. If the program grows significantly, adjuncts will be hired to teach undergraduate courses so that current faculty can teach the master’s level courses. In addition, the electives in the program can be taken by both undergraduate and graduate students, which will provide some synergies. If the program grows and additional faculty are hired to teach in this program, it is recommended that a faculty be hired who has prior experience or training in the innovation and creativity realms.

Services

The NSU campus and the School of Business provide students with a variety of services and resources to support their education. The Beulah Williams Library has adequate research resources for those needing to conduct research as part of their master’s program. In addition, NSU is currently in the process of building the Northern Business and Health Innovation Center. This new facility will provide an enhanced learning environment for students and will aid in the recruitment of new students to the School of Business and the Master of Science in Strategic Innovation and Leadership. Furthermore, NSU is home to the Northern Innovation and Startup Center, providing students in this program with opportunities to engage with entrepreneurs and innovators in the region, thus further enhancing the program.

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Student Recruitment and Enrollment

The proposed program lays out an adequate recruitment plan and has identified attainable enrollment numbers. When recruiting individuals to this program, it is recommended that NSU alumni be communicated with about this opportunity. In addition, it is recommended to create partnerships with regional businesses that have employees who may benefit from this program. Specifically, it is recommended that companies that provide tuition reimbursement benefits to their employees be targeted. One item to note is that the projected enrollment numbers for the first year seem rather low, especially the number of off-campus or distance students. Given the hyflex modality of this program, it is highly attractive to online students, and thus this program should be actively promoted to distance-learning students.

Recommendations

This program has many strengths. First, this program is unique with very few similar programs available. There is a program that is somewhat similar at Black Hills State University; however, it does not focus as heavily on creativity and innovation. The curriculum in this program addresses skillsets that are highly in demand by employers including critical thinking, innovation and creativity, leadership, business analytics, and communication. One potential weakness in the program is the lack of a change management course. It is recommended that a change management course be added as an elective or that these topics be embedded into one of the courses in the program. This is important because managing and leading in innovative environments creates a lot of uncertainty and change that needs to be managed effectively.

This program was developed to be taken by students with a variety of undergraduate degrees and those working in a variety of industries, making this program highly attractive to a wide variety of individuals. This program can also be taken as a traditional two-year program or in an accelerated manner, further enhancing its attractiveness to current NSU students, alumni, and prospective students. In addition, admissions to this program does not require a placement test such as the GRE or GMAT, which removes barriers to entry for potential students.

Another strength of the proposed program is the efficiencies and customization outlined. Some of the courses in the program are cross-listed so they can be taken by both undergraduate and graduate students, thereby creating efficiencies in the program. This master's degree will be delivered in a hyflex modality making it accessible to students regardless of their location. Students are also able to somewhat customize their program of study with the variety of electives and the customizable capstone experience.

Other strengths of this program include the Northern Business and Health Innovation Center that is planned to be constructed. This new building will provide students with a state-of-the-art learning experience and will likely attract students to the program given the modern facilities. In addition, NSU houses the Northern Innovation and Startup Center. It is recommended that the School of Business partner with this center to provide students in this program with real-life projects and experiences. These high-impact practices can help to aid in the recruitment and retention of students in the program.

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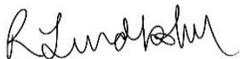
Another strength of this program is the positive feedback received from the advisory board, as well as the plethora of community support. One area for improvement would be further developing connections with industry to create partnerships to funnel students into the program. Many employers provide tuition reimbursements or incentives to their employees. NSU should identify regional employers that provide tuition incentives and actively market this program to those entities.

One area of concern is the projected enrollment numbers for the first years. These numbers seem quite low, particularly the projected number of online/distant learners in the program. This program is intended to help individuals from a variety of backgrounds advance in their careers. Additionally, it is offered in a hyflex modality. Given these two items, it is recommended that resources be allocated to marketing this program to online and distance learners to increase enrollment.

After reviewing the proposal for the Master of Science in Strategic Innovation and Leadership, and meeting with the administration and faculty, it is clear that there is a need and demand for this program. It is evident that the team at NSU has done their due diligence in creating this program which will help to fulfill a niche within their region and beyond.

Please feel free to contact me at rlundboh@crk.umn.edu or (218)281-8190 with questions.

Best Regards,



Rachel Lundbohm, DBA
Assistant Professor, Management
University of Minnesota Crookston



Northern State University Response to Dr. Rachel Lundbohm's report dated February 29, 2024

Program Curriculum

Dr. Lundbohm recommended three items to consider with regard to the curriculum: 1) consider adding additional elective courses, 2) ensure topic of managing change is included in current curriculum or added as a new course, and 3) incorporate a specific resource in BADM 742, Creative Thinking and Design.

Dr. Lundbohm recommended adding additional elective options to enable students to tailor the master's degree to their field of interest. Northern State University School of Business appreciates this recommendation, and in the short term, faculty will add a statement in the elective section of the degree's program of study that allows for additional electives approved by the Dean. This gives students an opportunity to meet with their faculty advisor, discuss their area of interest, and choose alternative electives with approval of the Dean. As the number of students enrolled in Northern's MS In Strategic Innovation and Leadership grows, faculty will create additional courses in the program that will give students further flexibility. Faculty will review all elective substitutions that have been approved by the Dean to consider students' areas of interest when expanding course offerings in the program.

Dr. Lundbohm also recommended ensuring that the topic of managing change either be included in the current curriculum or added as an additional course. The curriculum currently has several courses where managing change is in the student learning outcomes of the course or is a topic discussed as part of a student learning outcome. Among the required courses in the MS in Strategic Innovation and Leadership, BADM 550-Business Leadership, BADM 740-Communication and Team Dynamics, and ACCT 730-Managerial Accounting and Business Intelligence address managing change. Among the elective courses in the program, BADM 539-Quality Management, BADM 551-Organizational Development, and BADM 560-Human Resource Management all address managing change from different perspectives. For example, ACCT 730-Managerial Accounting and Business Intelligence addresses managing change from a financial perspective. BADM 740-Communication and Team Dynamics addresses managing change from a communication perspective, and BADM 550-Leadership addresses managing change from the perspective of leading an organization through change.

In BADM 742, Creative Thinking and Design, Dr. Lundbohm recommends adding a free resource guide to the course readings along with the textbook that faculty have already identified for the course. The

faculty teaching this course reviewed the material and are considering adding aspects of the free resource guide to the textbook already identified for the course.

Faculty

Dr. Lundbohm suggested in her report that as Northern's MS In Strategic Innovation and Leadership program grows and as additional faculty are hired, the new faculty have professional work experience in innovation or creativity industries. The faculty appreciate this recommendation and will design the job posting of any new faculty to elevate professional experience in these industries as a preferred qualification.

Services

Dr. Lundbohm stated that the Northern Business and Health Innovation Center and the Northern Innovation and Startup Center are great opportunities for students to engage with entrepreneurs and innovators in the region. The faculty plan to capitalize on these resources and engage students from the launch of the MS in Strategic innovation and Leadership program. The Northern Innovation and Startup Center plays an integral role on campus, in Aberdeen, and in the larger region, and Northern faculty are deeply involved in the work of the Northern Innovation and Startup Center. The Director of the Northern Innovation and Startup Center will immediately engage graduate students in the MS in Strategic Innovation and Leadership program with Aberdeen area entrepreneurs and innovators. Faculty who are teaching the fall 2024 courses in the program are incorporating student participation in the Northern Innovation and Startup Center's "Technology and Entrepreneurship Summit," which will held on campus and streamed in September 2024, in their courses. When the new building opens, the Northern Business and Health Innovation Center will become a keystone in Northern's MS in Strategic Innovation and Leadership.

Student Recruitment and Enrollment

Dr. Lundbohm recommended communicating with NSU alumni and businesses in the Aberdeen region about the new program as a way of recruiting new students. She also mentioned that student athletes or students who are transfers or who are entering NSU with high school dual credits are great candidates for the program either as a stand-alone master's degree or as an accelerated master's degree. The Northern State University School of Business is working with the Chief Enrollment Management Officer and the Director of Communications and Marketing to develop and launch a marketing plan for the master's degree. Part of the marketing plan engages the School of Business advisory boards and the Chamber of Commerce.

In the approved new degree program, Northern State University included a conservative estimate of our enrollments in the first five years. The University's plan is to outpace those conservative enrollment estimates through a robust marketing and recruitment campaign. Offering the MS in Strategic Innovation

and Leadership program on-campus, online, and via HyFlex modality will be attractive to prospective students, as flexibility in program delivery is consistently ranked as one of the top factors for students in choosing a graduate program. Northern State University Graduate Studies and the School of Business will market and promote the flexibility of modalities in the MS in Strategic Innovation and Leadership.



**Center
on Rural
Innovation**

February 28, 2023

Northern State University
1200 S. Jay Street
Aberdeen, SD 57401

Dear Mr. Ohmer,

On behalf of The Center on Rural Innovation, we are pleased to provide this letter of support for the addition of a graduate degree in Strategic Innovation and Leadership to Northern State University. The Center on Rural Innovation (CORI) is an action tank currently supporting a network of 36 rural communities, including Aberdeen, SD, in developing resilient economic development strategies based on innovation and entrepreneurship and in building new pathways for tech economy jobs and businesses as part of a sustainable ecosystem.

Advanced knowledge is extremely beneficial for those interested in advancing their career into middle and senior leadership positions of an organization; a Master of Science in Strategic Innovation and Leadership would prepare students to analyze and lead an organization's ability to innovate as well as prepare them to lead organizational change, drive business growth, add customer value, and create competitive advantage through innovation. This program could also assist in retaining bachelor degree graduates in South Dakota for their graduate studies, and complete a broad program offering, from associate's through master's programs, to support the work of the Northern Innovation and Startup Center.

CORI is pleased to support Northern State University's proposal to add an MS in Strategic Innovation and Leadership and believe this program could contribute to building the academic infrastructure for the technology ecosystem in Aberdeen and the surrounding area. This innovative initiative is an important aspect of economic and innovative marketability and we look forward to continuing to support this initiative and future endeavors.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

374A2DD936A3447...

Matt Dunne
Founder & Executive Director

**Building innovation
in rural America from
the ground up.**

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Dean, School of Business
Northern State University
1200 South Jay Street
Aberdeen, SD 57401

Dear Regents:

It is my understanding Northern State University is in the process of exploring the potential for a Master of Science in Strategic Innovation and Leadership offering. As you know, Dacotah Bank has been well served by a steady pipeline of NSU graduates throughout the years, many of whom have assumed mid- and senior-level leadership positions within the company.

One of the greatest challenges Dacotah Bank faces is the ongoing and emerging need for qualified leaders with the requisite capabilities to address the needs of an ever-changing business environment. I trust other employers within the region would express similar views and would be in full support of Northern State University providing an offering for early-career and seasoned leaders designed to equip them with the ability to lead organizational change, innovate within a complex environment, and design and execute people strategies for long-term organizational success.

In conclusion, Dacotah Bank would like to offer its full support of the Master of Science in Strategic Innovation and Leadership at Northern State University.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Bowman
Senior Vice President Chief Talent Officer





February 14, 2023

South Dakota Board of Regents
c/o Dr. Brian Maher
306 East Capitol Avenue, Suite 200
Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Dr. Maher and the SD Board Regents Members:

I write today in support of the Northern State University (NSU) request to add a master's degree in Strategic Innovation and Leadership. One of the key pillars of economic development is education; especially high quality regional post-secondary education. For years NSU has served as northeast South Dakota's regional comprehensive university and adding this MS will further enhance NSU's standing in completing its mission and further educating individuals.

The MS in Strategic Innovation and Leadership will prepare students to analyze and lead an organization's ability to innovate. Students will study dynamics of innovation, leadership theories, design thinking, creativity, decision making, communications, and team dynamics. Graduates will be prepared to lead organizational change, drive business growth, add customer value, and create competitive advantage through innovation. Furthermore, this MS will support the work of the Northern Innovation and Startup Center.

A graduate degree in Strategic Innovation and Leadership will also provide enhanced knowledge for management and marketing practitioners not typically included in an undergraduate degree program. Such advanced knowledge is extremely beneficial for those interested in advancing their career into middle and potentially into senior leadership positions of an organization. Additionally, individuals who earn this MS degree will enhance their lifetime salary earnings, thus, driving wealth enhancement. Studies consistently show those who have an MS can increase their lifetime earning potential by over 20%.

I strongly encourage you to support the addition of a master's degree in Strategic Innovation and Leadership at NSU. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kindly,



Michael L Bockorny
CEO
Aberdeen Development Corporation



February 21, 2023

Dr. Doug Ohmer
NSU School of Business
1200 South Jay Street
Aberdeen, SD 57401

Dear Dr. Ohmer:

I would like to lend my support to the Masters in Strategic Innovation and Leadership degree that Northern State University is proposing. Leadership and innovation are the keys to business success as we move deeper into the knowledge economy. This programming would definitely align well with the Northern Innovation and Startup Center and would certainly benefit the many regional companies that are seeking to grow their businesses and develop their future leadership team.

In my day to day work, I deal primarily with small businesses and startups that are not yet to that stage of their business. However, it doesn't take long for founders to realize there is so much more to their businesses than the daily operations, which is their initial focus and rightly so. Having access to this type of education and also to the professionals in the field would be a great resource for them. I could see a great opportunity to pair small growing companies with graduate students. Students could expose business owners to aspects of leadership and innovation they may not have considered and would certainly struggle to implement in the busyness of their ongoing operations. Northern has always been ready to engage their staff and students with the business community, and I expect this degree would only enhance those opportunities.

For too long there has been very limited amount of graduate studies being offered in the business field in our region and at Northern specifically. This new Master's program would be a welcomed addition.

Sincerely,

Kelly Weaver, Regional Director
Small Business Development Center



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