

The Student Voice

Subject: Leadership at NDSU

Listening Session: 10/25/2021

Prompt 1: In general, what does an exemplar leader look like at NDSU?

This prompt was asked in a generalized way to learn what students want from anyone in a leadership position at NDSU. In terms of *general characteristics*, students see an exemplar leader as someone among us, not “high profile”. Students want to be able to visit with campus leaders and know that they have lived or seen lives similar to their own. They expect leaders to be well rounded, willing to learn, understand, and support. They expect leaders to be able to hold others accountable. Students expect leaders to understand diverse backgrounds and difference between people, and to take it into account when making decisions.

Communication was the most discussed skill an exemplary leader needs to possess at NDSU. Being willing to listen and to talk were common themes. Students want leaders who listen to others below them, leaders who are able to sit down and have a conversation with anyone, leaders who foster collaboration amongst different branches, and leaders who will provide answers. Accessible and responsive were key words.

In terms of *motivation*, students expect NDSU leaders to have others best interest at the center of decision making. Our leaders need to care about physical, social, and mental wellbeing of all people at NDSU. Leaders need to do what’s right despite the fear of pushback. They need to be people who will take a stand on critical issues affecting NDSU’s people and work to handle those issues well.

In terms of *action and presence*, student expect leaders to interact within the community. Leaders should advocate for students and care about their failures and successes. Leaders should have the time to care about what’s going on in campus life and participate in it. They want to see leaders at campus events, big and small. Participation in campus life opens the door for students to talk to them and to understand student needs.

Prompt 2: Are these the things you want in the next President of NDSU?

In general the answer to this question was yes. The skill of communication was again highlighted. Students want the President to be able to communicate with empathy, transparency, and connection to the community. Timely follow up and information about action was another theme. They want the President to be visible to students on campus. They believe our next president should have a strong education background, preferably someone with a degree in education. Students believe the President needs to be someone who is experienced working with people of diverse backgrounds, races, and abilities, and would prefer a person who personally holds an underrepresented identity. Students think the President needs to have passion, charisma, and a love for Fargo. Someone with a good relationship with the community and students. They think the best candidate may come from inside NDSU. “We want someone who can understand our problems and reply according to our needs.” Students also want someone who will stay and provide long-term stability.

Prompt 3: Why are these things important?

"Because it's the future of NDSU." This will affect future generations. Students would feel safer if they felt closer to the highest position and knew they were concerned about them. When well-being and inclusion move in a positive direction the first thing that it drives is the overall good health of the academics. It's important for the students' voice to be more heard and felt on this campus. Students want campus to feel more interpersonal and less transactional. "I want another reason to like being at NDSU." If we want NDSU to grow in number, students will be drawn to the experience and environment students are describing.

Prompt 4: What's one priority you want leaders at NDSU to focus on?

Put in the effort to embody NDSU's values. Diversity, equity, and inclusion. Improve the school for everyone. Sexual assault awareness, wellbeing of students. Focusing more on high quality training. Having more training for faculty. Creating a more diverse faculty. Long-term education goals and striving for excellence. Build perspective and empathy through participation. Financial accessibility is another key issue. Every penny helps.