Cultural Charter of the University of North Dakota

University of North Dakota

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Recommended Citation
University of North Dakota, "Cultural Charter of the University of North Dakota" (1959). UND Publications. 40.
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Foreword

This statement of what we believe about the University was prepared by a committee composed of faculty and students. While each section was the subject of careful scrutiny and vigorous debate, there was remarkable unanimity in substance. It was formally presented over the signatures of all members of the committee under the title "A Preamble for Higher Education at the University of North Dakota" on May 5, 1959. It was unanimously approved by the Student Council on May 12 and by the Faculty Council on May 14.

This is more than a general statement of purposes. It implies policies to be spelled out in other contexts. No such statement can ever be final. Our goal is to achieve for each generation, in ways appropriate to the times, standards of excellence which the faculty and students covet for their University. We are proud to have this Cultural Charter, the result of joint faculty-student effort, as a guide for the present and as a help in building an even better University of North Dakota in the future.

GEORGE W. STARCHER
President

THE University of North Dakota is administration, faculty, and students all working together with mutual obligations and responsibilities to attain intellectual, artistic, civil and social ends. In the fullest sense, it includes all of its graduates, for learning and knowledge are not brought to an end by a diploma. Ideas and values are sterile if they do not extend beyond academic walls and a commencement day.

AN ADMINISTRATION should foster and encourage the efforts of faculty and students, providing the maximum opportunity for them to work together in attaining the goals of a university as a whole.

A FACULTY of scholar-teachers, recognizing that prescribed attitudes, methods and solutions are foreign to the university spirit, will leave the student’s mind wholly free from dictation as to his own life and ideas.
THE FINAL responsibility for his education rests on the student, who should discipline himself in mastering the specialized knowledge which today requires of him, and also consider the values which make his life and work purposeful. While availing himself of every possibility provided for intellectual and cultural growth by administration, faculty, other students and the community; while participating in those phases of university life which school him in social relationships and responsibilities, and while strengthening the unique qualities which make him an individual, the student must carry his education beyond the requirements of the classroom into his leisure hours and make it a continuing part of his life.

INTELLECTUALLY, the university student must learn to make intelligent decisions and to dissent when his knowledge of facts and his standard of values demand dissent. He should learn to assume his social and economic responsibilities in society. He should gain from his curriculum and his teachers the essential facts, the methods of determining facts and of reasoning to sound conclusions from them, the techniques for keeping abreast of new facts and conclusions as they are discovered and formulated. If a graduate student, he should participate in the production of new knowledge by means of research and scholarly work. The student should also become acquainted with the great creative thinkers who have concerned themselves with the basic problems of men and the universe. He should be able to do these things in a university which is an important part of the total university system of the United States, and not merely a service institution for the people of one state.

THE EXCELLENCE TOWARD which the student should strive is not a matter of intellect alone. It is also a matter of emotional response and discriminating taste, to both of which the fine arts contribute. Whether for general knowledge or for the purposes of specialization, the university student should have the opportunity of approaching the arts at the level of orientation if his background is limited, at the level of challenge and stimulation if he is already acquainted with the arts in their complexities. He should both participate and appreciate. He should be encouraged to recognize, to understand, to enjoy but also to view critically, the areas of artistic experience, whether in the classroom and studio or in the cultural life of the community. From such experience, he should develop and refine judgment and taste, as well as acquire a body of experience that can be expanded to enrich his life.

IN AN ATMOSPHERE which fosters enthusiasm for rigorous mental discipline, which discredits the cheap and merely expedient, the university student should develop a standard of honesty and integrity. He should gain the self understanding from which proceeds understanding of other people. Since tolerance is essential to all social growth and development, he should, in a cosmopolitan university community with diversified enrollment, develop a sincere respect
for other races. Through contact with the beliefs and attitudes of others, he should not only gain respect for their opinions, but also re-evaluate his own convictions in the light of new ideas and learn to maintain those convictions to which free and honest inquiry leads him.

IN AN EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY in which the student is viewed as an individual, he can develop the strong moral qualities necessary to leadership, cooperation, social and civic responsibility, and he can embark on the endless search for a considered sense of values which will influence all consequent decisions and actions.