

Strategic Plan
for Judicial Branch Education
in North Dakota

Prepared by:
Continuing Judicial Education Commission
North Dakota Supreme Court
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Vision Statement:

“The Judicial Branch Education Commission will provide innovative education and training programs to guide and inspire a unified Judicial Branch in an ever-changing environment.”

Background

The process of developing a strategic plan for judicial branch education in North Dakota began in 2006 when a team from the Judicial Branch Education Commission was selected to attend the Leadership Institute in Judicial Education at the University of Memphis. That plan was completed in 2007 and was used to guide the work of the North Dakota Judicial Branch through June of 2012. In March 2012, the Commission again looked at the challenges facing the court system and began the process of revising the Strategic Plan to cover the period of July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2017. In 2016, the Commission began the process of updating the education plan for 2017-2022.

Theory

In preparing to draft the plan, the Commission reviewed the Principles and Standards of Judicial Branch Education as published by the National Association of State Judicial Educators. The Commission considered the purpose of judicial branch education and the value it brings to the court system.

To provide structure to the plan, the Commission applied the concept of learning organizations to its work within the court system. A learning organization, as defined by Harvard professor David Garvin, is an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights.

The building blocks of a learning organization are as follows:

- A Supportive Learning Environment
- Concrete Learning Processes
- Leadership that Reinforces Learning

These concepts were used in developing the long-term goals of the Judicial Education Commission.

The Commission believes that building on these concepts while continuing to use adult learning theories and methodologies will result in highly developed judges and court professionals, which is the purpose of judicial branch education.

Process

The Commission began work on the current strategic plan at a planning retreat in October 2016. For the purposes of planning, an expanded committee was formed which included representatives from the trial court administrators, court reporters, and the North Dakota Clerk of Court Association.

The Commission reviewed the vision statement developed during the 2012 planning retreat and agreed upon a new vision which is supported by the goals. From there, the Commission participated in an educational session on learning organizations and mindsets. The members brainstormed the challenges facing the court system and how the Commission can help meet those challenges. After a series of meetings, the Commission adopted a new vision statement and four overarching goals.

Goals

The Vision Statement is supported by the following goals:

- I. Develop innovative programs and delivery models that encourage collaboration, outreach, and the sharing of knowledge.
- II. Guide the development of concrete learning processes and business practices that assist judges and judicial branch employees in modifying behavior by creating, acquiring, and applying new knowledge and skills.
- III. Expose judges and judicial branch employees to trends, best practices, and developments related to the judicial process

- IV. Inspire and develop leaders and faculty who reinforce learning and provide supportive learning environments within the judicial branch.

The attached chart includes a detailed account of the goals, strategies, and activities, associated with the judicial branch education strategic plan.