

My name is Stephanie Schendel and I was a student at Dickinson State, where I served the student body in various capacities to include but not limited to, Science Club President (3 years), Student Senate General Senator (4 years), Student Representative on the Committee to Review Tuition Cost/Structure, and was nominated by the Department of Natural Sciences for Outstanding Graduate of the Year 2022. I am writing in strong opposition to HB1446 as a steward of education, having seen firsthand the negative effects autocratic, authoritarian administration has on scholastic quality and function.

Universities, especially small ones, depend on faculty with tenure to ensure continuity of programming and that incoming students receive the same quality of education as the students that came before them. Dickinson State has had five presidents in the last ten years. The average time to earn a degree is four years and each degree has different course requirements. Students depend on tenured faculty to ensure they complete the necessary classes, which may only be offered every other year depending on the degree and course, to finish in a timely manner. Faculty form close relationships with students, many manage course loads beyond the typical 12 credits of teaching hours, while mentoring students and pushing them as individuals to reach their goals. The expectation that a tenured faculty member be required to bring enough revenue to cover the expenses associated with their own contract is preposterous and unfairly targets the most specialized areas of education. It is simply a matter of fact that classes like Organic Chemistry and Pathophysiology will have fewer students than the average course. Does that mean the faculty teaching these courses are shirking academic responsibility or are less valuable to the university? Of course not.

Shared governance is a requirement of accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission. There are already systems in place and committees responsible for tenure review. Bypassing or eliminating the authority and responsibility of these systems goes against every governing entity already in place including the State Board of Higher Education, the State of North Dakota and the Higher Learning Commission and places that authority precariously in the hands of one individual. It also jeopardizes the university's accreditation. Dickinson State has a positive economic impact on the city of Dickinson and the surrounding area. Should they lose accreditation, it would have a negative impact on the entire city, which saddens me as an alumnus and alarms me as a property owner. The property around Dickinson State has a certain amount of its value attributed to the fact that it lies in close proximity to an accredited four-year university.

If the argument for this legislation is that is purely a financial necessity to ensure the success of the university, I urge the governing authority to conduct an internal audit of university expenditures. In my time at Dickinson, I attempted to implement an on-campus daycare for students, staff and faculty. While researching the necessary requirements for such a program and associated costs, I was abhorred to find the gross mismanagement of funds on the part of administration. I can direct any interested party to the evidence of this mismanagement, as it was so plentiful there would be no way it could be disguised in its entirety.

But in truth, the former argument is fictitious and this is a shameless power grab attempt on the behalf of one individual. If you question this statement, please see the testimony of current and former university presidents on this matter. This legislation has little to do with finances, as the administration

is responsible where monies are delegated already. I have witnessed the loss of excellent tenured faculty that dedicated their careers to Dickinson State due to administrative mismanagement and the students and North Dakota University Systems learning to go on without them, are the collateral damage of this fallout.

In closing, I humbly but emphatically beseech the State of North Dakota Senate to do what I cannot as one individual. You have the authority to stand up for higher education in North Dakota and the people in the city of Dickinson. Please use the power granted to you by the constituents, take to heart the testimony of the many well-meaning over the well-connected few, and vote no on HB 1446.