

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION



Letters: Proposed Bill in N.D. to Reshape Tenure Would Discourage Whistleblowing

Correspondence from Chronicle readers.

Proposed Bill in N.D. to Reshape Tenure Would Discourage Whistleblowing

MARCH 9, 2023

To the Editor:

I'm a tenured faculty member at Dickinson State University, part of the North Dakota University System. The placement of the North Dakota situation into a larger national discussion about the future of tenure is certainly relevant for various important considerations ([“Some States Want to Reshape Tenure. This Time, They Might Succeed,”](#) *The Chronicle*, March 7). As someone who does not write from the left side of the political spectrum, I would urge cautious reflection regarding politics and

academics. For instance, in various digital spaces, people have at times recognized tenure as a framework of protection from the ideological excesses on the left at institutions of higher education. However, such a consideration is not the main focus of this letter.

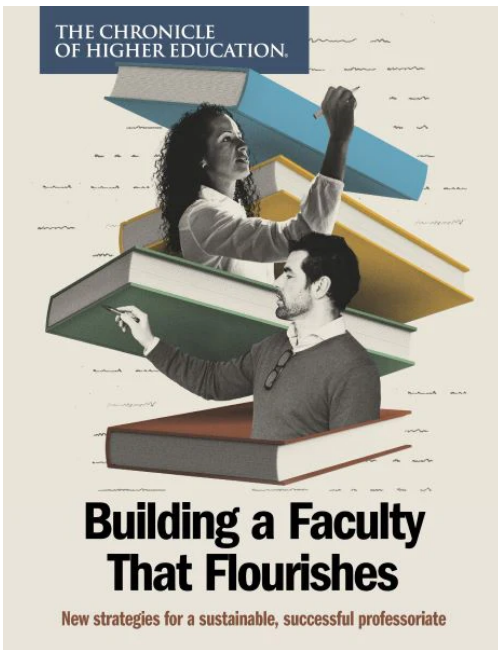
From inside North Dakota, there is a contextual reality to House Bill 1446. Within media publications and email communication, I have been “on the record” with my view of this bill as a mechanism to minimize whistleblowing at DSU and in the NDUS. The reality is that there are circumstances in which only tenured faculty can bring necessarily high attention to problems with overall management, faulty procurement, retaliatory behavior, and academic integrity. Within the NDUS (including DSU), tenured faculty have been a part of whistleblowing efforts in these areas either as whistleblowers or as supporting whistleblowers.

Promoted or embraced by certain members of the educational and political establishment in North Dakota, House Bill 1446 (even in its current version) is an onward march through and over such whistleblowing efforts. This is my informed judgment. I have seen a lot of open records. I have a lot of contacts in the state. I have been a part of such whistleblowing efforts. I probably don't have a large fan base within the aforementioned North Dakota establishment.

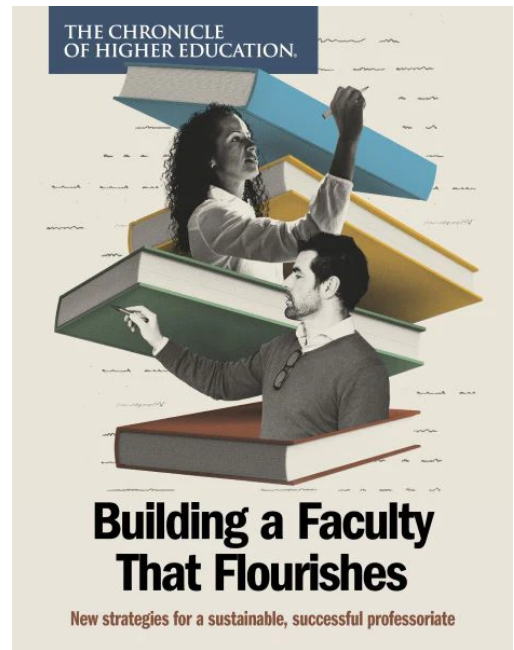
So, maybe the controversies of the North Dakota tenure bill can continue to keep the role of tenured faculty for transparency and accountability in the conversation, even nationally. However, in this letter, I have highlighted a contextual reality that should be emphasized in *The Chronicle*. I ask the members of the North Dakota Senate to protect whistleblowers by opposing House Bill 1446.

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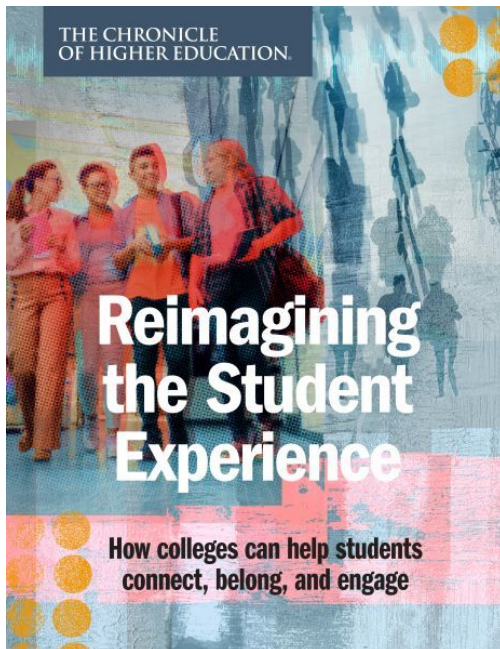
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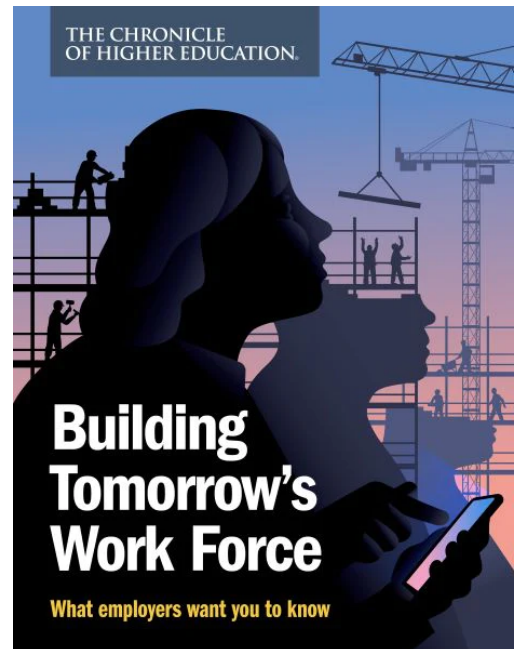
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