

HB1179
Bill Testimony
Rep. Eric J. Murphy
District 43, Grand Forks

This bill requires an institution under the control of the State Board of Higher Education to give 24 days of paid time off (PTO) to faculty on a 12-month contract or appointment and to establish a system to track the use of this PTO. Note that faculty on 9- and 10-month contracts are not eligible. Faculty on a 12-month contract can carry over 30 days or 240 hours of PTO into the next calendar year.

Discrepancies in North Dakota University System

Currently at North Dakota State University (NDSU), according to NDSU Policy 130 Annual Leave in section 5, "*Annual leave for 12 month faculty and other non-banded job categories not identified in #3 above is earned at a rate of 16 hours per month, 24 days per year. Annual leave will be prorated for those who are less than fulltime. For non-banded employees on 9, 10, and 11 month appointments, see section 320.*"

Meanwhile, at UND, administration has been reluctant to have a similar policy. In fact, at UND, 12-month faculty have no PTO, although breaks during semesters and between semesters are considered workdays for faculty on a 12-month contract. Why is this important? Because many 12-month contracted faculty just take these days off as well as time during the summer, creating a chaotic system in which time off is not tracked nor accounted for by administration. Hence, this bill requires an institution with faculty on a 12-month contract to have their PTO recorded and tracked, adding financial accountability of this time.

Attempts over many years to convince UND administration to internally adopt a policy like that at NDSU have proven to be fruitless. This leaves a legislative route to be a viable option, and legislative authority is evoked due to the financial ramifications of not tracking faculty time off.

What are the costs?

Until separation from the institution, there is no additional costs for this PTO other than the system to account for PTO use, which is in place for staff and administration. Upon separation, the individual will be paid for the PTO in their account, which is up to 54 days of PTO. This additional cost can be saved in salary and benefit savings until a new hire is made to replace that faculty member.

Summary

Having two major research institutions with a vast difference in benefits for 12-month contract faculty is not ideal. Further, not accounting for time off is not a financially responsible position and allows for abuse of this system. This is a straightforward bill that normalizes PTO for 12-month contracted faculty between all institutions in the NDUS.