

1/31/2025

To: Government and Veterans Affairs Committee

Subject: Faculty Senate Support for Continued Tenure at NDSCS

Dear Members of the Government and Veterans Affairs Committee,

The NDSCS Faculty Senate, representing the dedicated faculty members of North Dakota State College of Science, hereby expresses its strong support for continuing tenure at our institution.

Tenure, a cornerstone of academic freedom, plays a vital role in:

- **Ensuring Quality Education:** Tenure promotes a culture of excellence by encouraging faculty to engage in continuous professional development, scholarly pursuits, and innovative teaching methods.
- **Strengthens Institutional Reputation:** A strong tenure system enhances an institution's reputation as a place that values academic excellence and supports the intellectual growth of its faculty. This reputation attracts top students, fosters collaborations with other institutions, and enhances the overall prestige of the university system.
- **Protecting Academic Freedom:** Tenure safeguards faculty members' right to pursue research, express diverse viewpoints, and engage in scholarly inquiry without fear of reprisal. This freedom is essential for fostering a vibrant and intellectually stimulating learning environment.
- **Attracts Top Talent:** Tenure is a highly valued benefit that helps institutions attract and retain the most talented and accomplished scholars. It signals potential faculty members that the institution values academic freedom, supports their research endeavors, and offers a stable and rewarding career path.
- **Retaining High-Quality Faculty:** Tenure helps retain talented and committed faculty members who are essential for the continued success of NDSCS. It provides stability and security, allowing faculty to focus on long-term teaching, research, and service goals.
- **Contributes to Public Good:** Tenure benefits society by protecting academic freedom and supporting scholarly inquiry. It allows faculty to address critical social and global challenges, contribute to advancing knowledge, and inform public policy debates with rigorous research and thoughtful analysis.

- **Focus on student learning:** Without the constant worry of job security, tenured faculty can dedicate more time and energy to student learning. This can manifest in various ways, such as:
 - Developing innovative teaching methods: Experimenting with new approaches to engage students and enhance learning outcomes.
 - Providing individualized attention: Offering students more personalized guidance and support, including mentoring and advising.
 - Engaging in scholarly activities that directly benefit students: Conducting research that informs teaching and creates valuable learning opportunities for students.

Tenure fosters an environment where faculty can freely explore diverse ideas and prioritize student learning, ultimately enhancing the quality of all students' education.

We understand the complexities surrounding tenure and the need for ongoing evaluation of its effectiveness at two-year institutions. To address some of these concerns, NDSCS has drafted a post-tenure review policy that we feel fairly represents the needs of the faculty and the university system. However, we believe that the benefits of tenure for both faculty and students at NDSCS significantly outweigh any potential drawbacks even without this procedure in place.

The Faculty Senate is committed to working collaboratively with the legislature and other stakeholders to ensure that tenure policies are fair, transparent, and effectively support the mission of NDSCS, the university system, and the State of North Dakota. We believe a robust tenure system is critical to maintaining a high-quality educational experience for our students and fostering a thriving academic community.

We urge the legislature to consider tenure's value carefully and support its continued existence at NDSCS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Whitmore', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Benjamin J. Whitmore M.Ed. CEC
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