



# Minot State University Faculty Senate

To: House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee  
State of North Dakota 69th Legislative Assembly

Re: House Bill 1437: A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 15-10 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the prohibition of academic tenure at two-year colleges.

Testimony by the Faculty Senate of Minot State University  
6 February 2025

Dear esteemed members of the committee:

We, the Faculty Senate of Minot State University, strongly urge the House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee to give a Do Not Pass recommendation to HB 1437. The personal growth and educational development of students enrolled in the North Dakota University System is the primary focus of faculty across our varied institutions. Eliminating academic tenure at two-year institutions would endanger that growth and development.

At the center of what we do is student success—both for students preparing for the 21st-century North Dakota workforce and for those going on to advanced study at other NDUS institutions. Elimination of tenure puts the continuity of these students' degree programs and the mentorship and advising of students done by those programs' tenured faculty at risk.

Academic tenure is neither automatic nor "employment for life." To earn tenure, faculty members undergo a five-year process during which students, supervisors, and peers evaluate a faculty member's engagement with and accomplishment in teaching, scholarship and professional development, and service. This process is repeated on a yearly basis across this period. If a tenure-track faculty member receives tenure—not all do—performance reviews continue each year for the entirety of their career. In fact, beginning in Fall 2025, all tenured NDUS faculty members also undergo an additional and regular post-tenure review.

Tenure is the keystone of colleges' and universities' ability to ensure the supply and retention of highly-qualified, student-centered faculty. Tenured faculty form the backbone of programs that produce a highly competent and productive workforce. The continuous professional development these faculty members engage in enables them to assess and improve the effectiveness and currency of students' programs. Tenured faculty also provide professional services that ensure their institutions are efficient, effective, and connected to the communities and employers they serve. For example, tenured faculty oversee the

delivery of countless hours of rural and community outreach like supervising and mentoring student paraprofessionals serving in rural K-12 schools throughout North Dakota—work that would not happen without those students' tenured faculty mentors.

Across the United States, college and university instructors who are not tenured or eligible for tenure are limited in their ability to contribute these many hours of additional work in support of students and academic programs. If tenure were eliminated, then the state's institutions of higher learning would have to recruit new, paid workers for those tasks who would be less likely to have expertise in students' fields and less able to build the sort of continuity of experience that supports institutions and their students.

Moreover, academic tenure supports academic freedom, and the commitment to scholarship that academic freedom makes possible enables faculty to identify and create educational experiences that align with disciplinary expertise, workforce needs, and the newest ideas and technologies. These are the educational experiences that best train our students to achieve lifelong success.

Academic tenure ensures the ongoing production of quality, engaged graduates who help our state grow to the best of its great potential. We ask you to make sure that continues by giving HB 1437 a Do Not Pass recommendation.

Yours sincerely,

The Faculty Senate of Minot State University