

Good morning Chairman Schauer and members of the House Government and Veterans Affairs committee, my name is Mike Lefor and I represent District 37 - Dickinson in the House of Representatives. I am here to speak in favor of HB 1437.

Today, I want to discuss the potential benefits of not allowing tenured professors at two-year colleges. It may sound controversial at first, but when we consider the dynamics of community colleges and the unique needs of their students, the idea of tenure becomes less about academic freedom and more about flexibility, accountability, and the quality of education.

First, lets talk about flexibility. Our two-year institutions serve a wide range of students, from recent high school graduates to working adults seeking new career skills. These students, need professors who can adapt quickly to the evolving demands of the job market and the community. Without tenure, colleges can hire faculty based on their expertise and the immediate needs of the curriculum, without being locked into long-term contracts that might not serve the best interests of the students.

Tenure, in many cases, creates an environment where professors feel secure in their position even when they might not be meeting the expectations of the institution. Removing tenure could motivate faculty to continually demonstrate this through teaching effectiveness, student outcomes, and innovative contributions to the college community.

When educators are incentivized to perform everyone benefits especially the students. One of the core purposes of a two-year institution is to provide a high-quality education that directly supports the career aspirations of students. Without the security of tenure, professors would have to remain focused on delivering the best teaching and engaging their students effectively.

This could reduce the tendency for some faculty to become disengaged or complacent over time, as they would always have to prove their worth through student success, innovation in the classroom.

The increased cost of higher education in North Dakota and increased competition from other states necessitates becoming more flexible in how we deliver education in our state.

Finally, the absence of tenure could create an environment where faculty feel more motivated to innovate and collaborate with peers. Without tenure, faculty would have an incentive to stay engaged, pursue professional development, to continue to improve and better student outcomes.

Non-tenured faculty at our two-year institutions can bring fresh perspectives, and stay nimble in the face of changes. By moving away from tenure in the two-year institutions we create an environment that is more accountable, financially sustainable, and focused on the dynamic needs of students in the 21st century.

Additionally, the bill spells out the particulars of defining progression and advancement criteria at each state of tenure and including post tenure review. It establishes an annual evaluation of all faculty by the president of each institution.

Further, it establishes a procedure for post-tenure review every three years.

I would ask the House GVA committee to give HB 1437 a "do pass" recommendation. Thank you.