



Testimony for 69th Legislative Assembly – Senate Education Committee

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Submitted in Opposition to Engrossed House Bill 1437

Chairman Beard and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

My name is Andy Armacost, and I serve as the President of the University of North Dakota. I should begin by acknowledging the work of Representative Motschenbacher on this bill and for his willingness to amend the original bill.

Tenure is a cornerstone of a successful academic enterprise, as it supports academic freedom and the advancement of freedom of speech. It supports the reputation of our universities and allows us to build a highly qualified and productive faculty, which is the very basis of a sound educational system. It supports innovation and economic prosperity within the state, which advances the interests of our citizens.

There must be systems of accountability and meaningful review protocols attached to any tenure system to promote excellence and ongoing productivity. This is true whether tenure exists at a two-year or four-year institution, and the responsibility for maintaining systems of accountability and meaningful review protocols falls on individual institutions and on the State Board of Higher Education (SBHE).

We humbly advocate for legislation that is in line with the recommendations and principles established in the report of the recent SBHE ad hoc committee on tenure, particularly the directives for improved post-tenure review protocols at each campus under the control of the SBHE. Several important amendments have already been made to create better alignment.

Our final concern is the proposed committee structure for post-tenure review as described in the final sentence of section 1.C. That sentence, we believe, is overly restrictive, and post-tenure review should have a structure that aligns with best practices. We suggest the removal of that sentence.

With such a change, we support this bill. Thank you.