



## Faculty Senate

**Date:** March 6, 2023

**Legislation SB 2247:** Related to specified concepts at institutions of higher education; to provide a report; and to provide an expiration date.

**Constituents:** District 40, North Minot, including Minot State University (MiSU); District 03, SE Minot; District 05, SW Minot; and District 38, West Minot.

**Our information source:** On February 16, 2023, the Minot State University (MiSU) Faculty Senate approved a resolution supporting CCF, SBHE, submissions from individual institutions, and the public in Opposition to SB 2247.

**Our specific concerns:** The positions and rationale in the above statements are consistent with the MiSU's Faculties' concerns about the proposed legislation. The NDUS (North Dakota University System) and all campuses have in place procedures for addressing faculty accountability, student rights, and freedom of expression; this legislation ignores those existing policies. SB 2247 also targets academic freedom, a stated mission in NDUS, standards, and practices. If enacted, SB 2247 will negatively impact faculty recruitment and retention and thus hurt the quality of teaching and students' learning in the NDUS.

SB 2247 is inconsistent with, and at worst, a direct threat to, multiple programs' accreditation processes and the HLC (Higher Learning Commission) process requirements. An example of these issues can be seen in the accreditation requirements for Teacher Education (CAEP), Addiction Studies (NASA), Speech-Language Pathology (ASHA), and Nursing (CCNE), all of which must demonstrate that students have standards related to diversity, equity, and inclusion by exposing students "diverse populations, life experiences, perspectives, and background" (CCNE). To meet the criteria laid out by these accrediting bodies and programs, courses and faculty must demonstrate consideration for "the impact of adverse social, environmental, and political factors" (NASAC) and "advocate for social justice" (NASP). Roughly 33% of the students at MiSU are enrolled in programs directly affected by these accreditation standards. These and other programs frequently meet their degree criteria by having students take courses in social science, history, and cultural studies that are part of the general education of all students, as well as requiring them to take courses that address specific concerns in their fields. SB 2247 would make providing those courses and adhering to the standards required more difficult.

The negative impact is not only confined to students at NDUS institutions but also the North Dakota workforce and economic development. Problems with accreditation arising from restrictions on what is taught would make it much harder for students to work in their chosen fields and provide services to the public they are trained to serve. If SB 2247 becomes law, it will make obtaining a license for students coming from the NDUS significantly more difficult – in



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some cases, even impossible. As the legislature is keenly aware, areas like education, addiction treatment, speech-language pathology, and nursing face critical shortages in the ND workforce. Putting in place, SB 2247 would make recruiting students into the NDUS programs and enabling them to join the ND workforce more difficult.

Finally, SB 2247 takes that control from the State Board of Higher Education, campuses, and faculty. Doing that would seem to conflict with Article VIII, Section 6, Item 6b of the ND Constitution, which states, "The said state board of higher education shall have full authority over the institutions under its control with the right, among its other powers, to prescribe, limit, or modify the courses offered at the several institutions."

**Our position:** Therefore, the MiSU Faculty Senate urges a vote for "do not pass" on SB 2247.

**Approved by:** Voting Members of the Faculty Senate (Motion approved at 2/16/2023 Faculty Senate Meeting)

**Thank you** for taking the time to consider this request.

Minot State Faculty Senate