

Minot State University Faculty Senate Resolution on Defending Academic Freedom

RATIONALE:

WHEREAS [NDCC Chapter 15-10.4](#) and [SBHE Policy 401.1](#) affirm the importance of academic freedom to the proper functioning of universities, in line with the American Association of University Professors' [1940 statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure](#), by virtue of which faculty, who are experts in their respective disciplines, have responsibility for curriculum; and

WHEREAS state legislative proposals are being introduced across the United States that target academic discussions of subjects considered divisive, difficult, controversial, or challenging in schools, colleges, and universities; and

WHEREAS educating about our nation's history of racism, sexism, and gender discrimination is critical to the active and engaged pursuit of knowledge necessary to produce engaged and informed citizens in a multiracial democracy; and

WHEREAS institutions of higher education have a responsibility and opportunity to help build equity and advance justice through evidence-based curriculum; and

WHEREAS all NDUS institutions have public statements describing their commitment and efforts to advance the values of diversity and inclusion, and these institutional efforts are supported by the [NDUS Diversity Council](#); and

WHEREAS legislation preventing evidence-based teaching of race, gender, and other topics from university instructional curricula poses a threat to continued institutional and program accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission and/or other accrediting bodies; and

WHEREAS a recent [North Dakota United poll](#) found that an increasing number of K-12 teachers have considered or are already leaving the profession, as they experience pressure to not teach "controversial topics" exacerbating North Dakota's [workforce shortage of K-12 teachers](#); and

WHEREAS the K-12 environment is relevant to the North Dakota University System (NDUS) as many of our institutions deliver dual credit courses and our campuses have Teacher Education programs that, by design, prepare future teachers within the K-12 system and state legislation banning discussions of race, gender, and other topics works against campus efforts to recruit and retain students in the state; and

WHEREAS the Faculty Senate at Minot State University acknowledges and respects existing constraints on speech that is illegal, defamatory, threatening, harassing, or that impedes the work of the ND University System;

RESOLUTION:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Minot State University Faculty Senate steadfastly upholds the principles of academic freedom and the independence essential for institutions of higher learning in allowing for students and faculty to explore and educate themselves on any topic deemed of value to students and faculty.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Minot State University Faculty Senate resolutely rejects any attempts by bodies external to the faculty to restrict or dictate university curriculum including matters related to race, gender, and other topics.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Minot State University Faculty Senate stands with our K-12 colleagues throughout the state of North Dakota and other U.S. States who may be affected by restrictive legislation when they teach from diverse evidence-based perspectives in U.S. history and civics education.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Minot State University Faculty Senate affirms the [Joint Statement on Efforts to Restrict Education about Racism](#), authored by the AAUP, PEN America, the American Historical Association, and the Association of American Colleges & Universities, endorsed by over seventy organizations, and issued on June 16, 2021.

Adopted by the Minot State Faculty Senate on April 7, 2022.