



February 25, 2020

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chairwoman
House Appropriations Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Room 121
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: House Bill 775 – Collective Bargaining – Baltimore City Community College – Faculty

Baltimore City Community College Position: Oppose

Dear Chairwoman McIntosh:

Baltimore City Community College (BCCC) opposes House Bill 775. The Bill would single out BCCC and allow collective bargaining of its faculty, while continuing to exempt the faculties of other state institutions of higher learning from the strictures of faculty unionization. In addition, the costs associated with collective bargaining would have a significantly negative impact on BCCC's mission of serving the educational and career needs of Baltimore City.

BCCC will see increased costs if this Bill is implemented, including almost half a million dollars in estimated yearly costs associated with hiring new personnel to manage contracts, office space for union officials, fringe benefits, legal fees related to hiring attorneys to handle labor relations, staff training, upgrading the payroll system, and other transactional costs. Moreover, unionized labor often increases the wages institutions pay across the board for their employees. Because collective bargaining agreements often require institutions to maintain specific employment levels for unionized workers, BCCC may be forced to provide more jobs than are warranted, even when it faces fiscal challenges due to low enrollment numbers and/or reductions in state aid.

In addition, estimated costs might increase based on the number of disputes per year and the circumstances surrounding the disputes. But the real costs could be significantly higher, in terms of the time and effort required to deal with unionization efforts, contract negotiations and, ultimately, potential contract disputes and employee grievances.

BCCC falls into the "hold harmless" state funding formula and as a result, BCCC does not receive any state aid increases. For that reason, any costs associated with collective bargaining would have to be funded by an increase in tuition. Our students are extremely cost-sensitive. We know that for every percentage increase in tuition, our College will lose students. As a result of a decrease in enrollment numbers, BCCC may experience additional reductions in revenues.

Because of the added costs, collective bargaining will limit BCCC's development of new academic programs and/or lead to a reduction in academic programs. Similarly, unfunded collective bargaining expenditures may force BCCC to reduce its offerings geared toward workforce development. Baltimore City relies on BCCC to provide educational and career services for its residents. To the extent that BCCC suffers a detriment, the City of Baltimore will also be negatively impacted.

At previous institutions, I had success engaging the faculty through a shared governance model. The collaboration in decision making is much stronger in a shared governance model.

Shared governance is an inclusive process by which the College community has the opportunity to influence decisions on matters of planning effectiveness, policy, procedures and programs. Shared governance is formed around seven (7) general principles. These principles serve to define a mutually beneficial and sustainable relationship between the faculty, students, staff, administration, and the Board of Trustees. The principles are:

1. Informed & Broadened Representation to Influence Decision-making
2. Transparency & Clarity of Operations & Decision-making
3. Open Flow of Information & Lines of Communication Among all Areas & Members of the College
4. Diverse Involvement
5. Mutual Respect & Trust
6. Accountability
7. Deliberations that Advance the Interest of the College

The nature and scope of shared governance is at an institutional policy/procedure level, not at an operational or implementation level.

I believe that my working relationship with the Faculty Senate at BCCC has been strengthened. We meet regularly and have discussed shared governance and I appreciate their patience and understanding as I build my new leadership team. I have recently completed the hiring of my leadership cabinet and we are now in a position to thoughtfully proceed and discuss the strengths of shared governance with the Faculty Senate and others at BCCC.

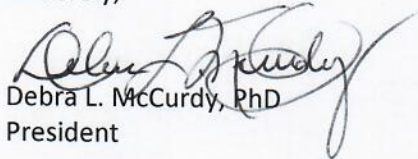
The College is presently engaged in carrying out the 12 Realignment Tasks identified by the legislature in 2017. Introducing collective bargaining for faculty members at this point would complicate and hamper the process of right-sizing the operations of the institution and setting it on the correct, healthy path. BCCC would need to redirect operational funds to address collective bargaining costs instead of focusing our spending on academic programs, student success, career centers, academic advisors and tutors, information technology, services for students, child care services, and faculty/staff development.

Finally, House Bill 775 would provide yet another instance of BCCC receiving disparate treatment. Full-time faculty at other Maryland institutions of higher learning are exempt from collective bargaining. By imposing collective bargaining on BCCC, the legislature will again hold the College to a different standard than it holds other, similar institutions.

For all these reasons, Baltimore City Community College respectfully opposes House Bill 775.

Thank you for your support of higher education and Baltimore City Community College.

Sincerely,



Debra L. McCurdy, PhD
President

cc: Members of the House Appropriations Committee