



HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
House Bill 275
State Personnel - Collective Bargaining -
Faculty, Part-Time Faculty, and Graduate Assistants
February 14, 2023
Unfavorable

Chair Barnes, Vice-Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 275.

Shared Governance, which has been an integral part of higher education for 100 years, is a way of ensuring meaningful faculty and graduate student participation in institutional governance. USM produces an [annual report](#) on Shared Governance that emphasizes the importance of faculty involvement in personnel decisions, selection of administrators, preparation of the budget, and determination of educational policies. Shared Governance within the USM is dynamic and nimble. It has been informed over the years by consistent dialogue including actionable items on faculty governance and academic freedom; budgetary and salary matters; financial exigency; the selection, evaluation, and retention of administrators; college athletics; governance and collective bargaining; and the faculty status of college and university librarians.

It should not be understated that graduate assistant and faculty collective bargaining in Maryland, and subsequent unionization of these units would cause significant disruption to operations across every administrative and academic unit of each university. While the shift would be felt most acutely day to day by Academic Affairs, the administrative offices of Human Resources would be tasked with leading, facilitating, and otherwise maintaining the formal labor relationship with the bargaining units' elected representatives. This will further tax existing positions within campus human resource departments. This excludes the education, training, and guidance which will be required to facilitate all necessary parties to a collective bargaining structure. It is likely that should it come to pass, at least in the inaugural year of a formal bargaining relationship with faculty and graduate assistant populations, that additional personnel would be necessary, at minimum for administrative support purposes. Without any exclusionary language in the bill, there are potential additional challenges of navigating the consolidated collective bargaining process.

For faculty, both tenure-track and adjunct, a collective bargaining structure would tend to eliminate institution's attention to salary competition within disciplines. Such standardization of scales, which - common to organized labor pay structures - would conceivably dilute competition for higher end faculty positions (e.g. STEM, Business, Health Professions), and further affect both recruitment and retention of highly qualified faculty.

Such a structure risks USM institutions being hamstrung to continue incentivizing people to stay through retention raises and equity adjustments, which they now have the flexibility to administer, and may not under a collective bargaining structure.

Faculty and graduate students play an integral part in the ability of USM institutions to provide the scope and quality of educational experiences expected of Maryland's senior public institutions of higher education. Graduate assistants, in addition to pursuing their own education and Master's or Doctoral degree through taking classes and conducting research, complement the teaching and research activities of the faculty, and in doing so allow the faculty to engage more students in focused instructional opportunities. They also provide the institution with an ability to more rapidly adjust the educational opportunities to meet student needs and preferences that can't be accommodated for by the faculty alone. The USM values the important role played by graduate assistants in facilitating an institution's charge to promote teaching, research, and public service, and also want to emphasize that they are students first. Graduate assistants' tuition is paid for by the institution where they are attending in addition to health benefits and a stipend.

The USM, however, is asking the committee to adopt an unfavorable report on House Bill 275. The actual, true cost, fiscal impact of House Bill 275 is inestimable. It is difficult to assess the fiscal impact of establishing collective bargaining rights for graduate assistants – let alone faculty. For comparison, a recent collective bargaining agreement at the University of California increased average costs by over \$5,000 per graduate student. This would equate to tens of millions of dollars if a similar cost was incurred for each graduate student in the USM.

The USM respectfully urges an unfavorable report on House Bill 275.



About the University System of Maryland

The University System of Maryland (USM)—one system made up of 12 institutions, three regional centers, and a central office—awards 8 out of every 10 bachelor’s degrees in the State of Maryland. The USM is governed by a Board of Regents, comprised of 21 members from diverse professional and personal backgrounds. The chancellor, Dr. Jay Perman, oversees and manages the operations of USM. However, each constituent institution is run by its own president who has authority over that university. Each of USM’s 12 institutions has a distinct and unique approach to the mission of educating students and promoting the economic, intellectual, and cultural growth of its surrounding community. These institutions are located throughout the state, from western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, with the flagship campus in the Washington suburbs. The USM includes Historically Black Colleges and Universities, comprehensive institutions, research universities, and the country’s largest public online institution.

USM Office of Government Relations - Patrick Hogan: phogan@usmd.edu