

**Written Testimony Submitted to the  
Maryland Senate Finance Committee  
By Benjamin Bradley, Discovery Strategies and Systems Librarian  
HB493  
State Personnel - Collective Bargaining - Faculty, Part-Time Faculty, Post Doctoral  
Associates, and Graduate Assistants  
February 13, 2024**

**FAVORABLE**

Hello, my name is Ben Bradley, and I first want to thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony. I started at UMD about 7 years ago, as a graduate student at the College of Information Studies. During that time I held a position as a GA and a second position as a student worker. I started at the University of Maryland Libraries, as a librarian, just about six years ago.

Like other faculty, librarians have expectations of scholarship and service which are in addition to, what we would call, our “day jobs” as librarians. Librarians across the state system teach information literacy, helping students understand fact from fake news. We support, preserve, and make accessible faculty research. We create programs to make education more affordable such as textbook lending programs and open educational resources. We manage large physical and electronic collections, managing and developing systems and websites to provide access to our resources to a wide range of users in our communities.

I support this bill because, as a faculty librarian, I have seen how declines in support of the UMD Libraries affect my colleagues in the Libraries, faculty across the university, and students. Collective bargaining is a right we need in order to advocate for better conditions.

You might expect that during the Information Age, there would be greater investment in managing all this information that libraries provide, which we have seen in the past few years can have serious real-world implications. However, if you look at the data provided by UMD’s Institutional Planning, Research, and Assessment (IRPA),<sup>1</sup> you will find that this is not the case. Today College Park has about 5,000 more undergraduate students and 1,000 more graduate students on campus than it did in 2001. There are about 900 more staff, 800 more faculty, and 500 more GAs. The number of courses has grown by about 30%, so that there were 1318 more courses in the Fall of 2022 than in the Fall of 2001, yet over that period of time the Libraries lost over 1/3 of its total personnel: staff, faculty, and GAs.<sup>2</sup> The number of faculty librarians at UMD in 2001 was 107 and in 2022 that number was 62, a 42% drop. That is up from an all time low of 57 total librarians the previous year.<sup>3</sup> The staffing situation at the UMD Libraries is more dire today than it was in the fallout of the Great Recession. Less personnel means there are fewer people to manage the increasingly complex resources the system invests in. There are more

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://public.tableau.com/shared/ZWKZMQTQ8?:display\\_count=n&origin=viz\\_share\\_link&embed=y&device=desktop](https://public.tableau.com/shared/ZWKZMQTQ8?:display_count=n&origin=viz_share_link&embed=y&device=desktop)

<sup>2</sup> [https://public.tableau.com/shared/CJBER82KM?:display\\_count=n&origin=viz\\_share\\_link](https://public.tableau.com/shared/CJBER82KM?:display_count=n&origin=viz_share_link)

<sup>3</sup> [https://public.tableau.com/shared/5PPKK7B9G?:display\\_count=n&origin=viz\\_share\\_link&embed=y&device=desktop](https://public.tableau.com/shared/5PPKK7B9G?:display_count=n&origin=viz_share_link&embed=y&device=desktop)

students to help, more courses to instruct, and more faculty to support, yet less people to do it all. It means that librarians, not just at College Park but across the system, are asked to do more and more with less and less: services are cut; subscriptions canceled; librarians burnt out. This demonstrates divestment by the university in providing access to information and the resources to interpret that information. It also demonstrates retention issues as librarians struggle with their workloads and leave.

I urge this committee to provide a favorable report on HB 493, so we can have the tools to make concrete changes to improve the conditions at our universities. Collective bargaining rights are extended to a variety of classes of workers throughout the state, yet for some reason state law explicitly states, if you teach at a university, are a librarian, or happen to be a student, you do not have access to these rights. I ask you to provide a favorable report