

Dear Committee:

Many faculty strongly disagree with joining a union and worry that the unique character of each university could be lost if all our faculty are represented under a single umbrella. That is a risk the legislature should not take.

These excellent universities, from Salisbury University on the Eastern Shore to Frostburg University in Western Maryland, and the ten others in between, have established a wide array of character and missions to meet the varied needs of our students and our future workforce. That's why it is imperative that we protect the mission and quality of education at Bowie State University, Towson University, and UMBC just as much as we protect the great work of our faculty and students in College Park. Each of these institutions operate on their own budgets and are run very differently.

From my own experience I know that the faculty at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) are quite distinct from the faculty at the other USM institutions including University of Maryland, College Park where the authors of the aforementioned article are faculty. For example, here in Baltimore, we're preparing the next generation of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, lawyers, and social workers. Many of those faculty have clinical responsibilities taking care of patients. And many are also employed based on the research they are conducting. In fact, the majority of faculty at UMB are additionally involved in teaching outside the classroom, which is quite distinct from the faculty at College Park and the other institutions.

At UMB, teaching occurs in dental clinics, medical outpatient facilities, in hospital units, and operating rooms, for example. Teaching and learning happens twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, including holidays. Due to these distinct differences, one cannot imagine that a union representative, especially one that has historically represented administrative staff and autoworkers, could effectively represent a faculty as diverse and distinct as those across the University of Maryland, Baltimore, nor truly collectively bargain with equal interests in mind. Salary structures, incentive compensation, benefits, work environment, even the potential grievances are quite different.

It's important to recognize that each of the Universities within the system already has a shared governance model to help sort out these issues. Although the authors seem to dismiss this, perhaps due to their own poor experience of it, the shared governance structure at UMB is successful and well regarded across campus. Faculty members have easy access to communication on a regular basis with the University President and Provost. Faculty representation is present on funding committees as well as search committees for leadership of the University. In fact, UMB has had multiple new deans, a new provost, and a new president all within the last few years, and faculty representation was present, via shared governance, on each of these search committees.

Recruitment and retention of faculty are primary roles for any University's leadership. The needs and the means to perform these tasks are quite different across the University System of Maryland. Some universities are located in an urban environment, while others are located in a rural environment. For instance, the cost of living in rural Somerset County, where

University of Maryland, Eastern Shore is located is very different from that of the University of Maryland, College Park, just a few miles from Washington, D.C. Unionization of the university system as a whole may seem like a benefit for faculty and some institutions, while imposing great harm to others.

Calls for the legislature to allow unionization of the entire University System of Maryland recklessly ignore the needs and interests not only of the faculty at each of our unique institutions of higher learning, but of the students we serve and the next generation of Marylanders whom they will serve. Legislators should step away from this plan, and urge each university to further strengthen their current shared governance system to ensure better working conditions that work for each university. This is the path each individual university should take.

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