

House Bill 493 / Senate Bill 823
State Personnel - Collective Bargaining - Faculty, Part-Time Faculty, Postdoctoral
Associates, and Graduate Assistants
House Appropriations Committee / Senate Finance Committee
March 7, 2024

Letter of Information

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share St. Mary's College of Maryland's analysis of Senate Bill 823.

In general, this bill would extend collective bargaining rights to full- and part-time faculty at the College, as well as any future postdoctoral associates and graduate assistants; it should be noted that the College does not currently retain any postdoctoral associates or graduate assistants on our faculty or staff. Senate Bill 823 would also require full- and part-time faculty members to establish separate bargaining units from one another. In our assessment, this bill would materially alter the existing deliberative, collaborative, and collegial process of shared governance by which our institutional decisions are made.

The College's current model of shared governance has historically functioned well as a mechanism which requires all stakeholders to focus on the best interests of our students and the College's long-term success. Recent achievements of our existing shared governance structure include the strong and successful collaboration between Admissions and faculty to increase enrollment, as well as the development and execution of our most recent strategic plan – "The Rising Tide" – which has been the focus on an integrated, campus-wide effort. A new shared governance effort to be put forward later this year is a faculty-led initiative to develop new academic programming. The College is also currently in the process of undertaking an assessment of the status of shared governance at St. Mary's College of Maryland to ensure that all parties continue to be engaged in achieving our commonly supported mission. Finally, Faculty Bylaws concerning work-place conditions are routinely examined and updated through the shared governance process to ensure that any and all faculty members have a forum to voice their concerns or requests in real-time. Such a process has been underway over the last few months and will be finalized in the fall of 2024.

Establishing collective bargaining rights for faculty would add additional responsibilities for management, including the need for additional staff in human resources, restructuring of job

responsibilities within academic affairs for non-bargaining supervisors, and substantial training. This would require new resources at a time when budgets are already incredibly tight.

St. Mary's College of Maryland remains committed to offering a premier liberal arts education that is both affordable and accessible to a broad spectrum of Maryland students. We also remain committed to continuing our long tradition of productive and collaborative relationships with both faculty and staff to address both programmatic and workplace needs through existing processes. Thank you for your consideration and continued support of St. Mary's College of Maryland.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Tuajuanda C. Jordan". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Tuajuanda C. Jordan, PhD
President