

TESTIMONY OF TINA M. KELLEHER, PHD
BEFORE THE
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE OF THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
For a hearing on
HOUSE BILL 661: "STATE PERSONNEL –COLLECTIVE BARGAINING – Faculty"
MARCH 04, 2025

FAVORABLE

Chairperson Barnes, Vice Chairperson Chang and distinguished members of the House Appropriations Committee:

My name is Dr. Tina Kelleher and I [link to my previous testimonies](#) that go back to 2012 for perspective on why moving this bill is so long overdue. I have served nearly 25-years at Towson University in a range of roles and am currently Full-Time Non-Tenure Track faculty. My actual title is about to change for the fourth time in three years, despite doing the same exact job. The USM intends to reclassify lecturers at TU as "Professors of Teaching."

Committee Members, the best way to empower faculty *regardless of job title* would be to enable collective bargaining rights *for all ranks*. As is, according to Towson, I have worked there three years rather than nearly a quarter century when calculating retirement and accumulated sick leave, because we only obtained access to such benefits as of 2022. Some lecturers hired since are still being told inconsistent things about their benefits eligibility.

Contrary to what the USM will surely claim, most faculty cannot participate in shared governance at all. As the first contingent faculty member elected to serve on the TU Senate back around 2010, the most common questions I heard were not the kinds of things shared governance can address. Tenure-line colleagues often learned about decisions at the same time I did, through an email blast or when the senate was informed of what had already been decided from an undisclosed star chamber.

Indeed, since 2000, Towson has had a total of 9 different Presidents (6 "permanent appointees" and the rest "interims," who usually had at the time been serving as Provost, so that chief academic officer role has seen many challenges and much volatility). Further, the hiring of a fleet of quarter million dollar earning AVPs over the past half decade or so is not the kind of decision-making most faculty would have sanctioned *vis-à-vis* "shared governance"; to use the USM lingo, it is not an "efficient and effective" management of university resources, particularly in tight budgetary times.

In 2025, we cannot afford to stall a bill affirming our democratic commitment to collaborate with administrators in good faith and with transparency, to optimize learning experiences for our students. We want our institutions and our students to thrive; we need more tools to ensure their success.

I urge a favorable report on HB 661: we need *shared* rather than *sham* governance – and we need the proverbial table to exist before it is even possible to have a seat at it. Thank you.

