

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland Senate Finance Committee
SB0006
State Personnel - Collective Bargaining - Nontenure Track Faculty
February 05, 2026
FAVORABLE**

Good afternoon Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee.

My name is Chris Kauffman and I am a full-time professional track faculty at University of Maryland, College Park. I am working with my colleagues in United Academics of Maryland (UAM), an affiliate of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), to secure collective bargaining rights for faculty in Maryland's public four-year institutions.

I am a Senior Lecturer in Computer Science with 12 years of experience at two other universities, in Virginia and Minnesota. I have been startled by the lack of voice that faculty have at College Park compared to my past institutions and am advocating for change that would benefit the whole university community by giving faculty proper shared governance. I teach large undergraduate programming courses, occasionally reaching more than 500 students each semester. Preparing students for a career in computing is why I do this job but it has been made much harder by the environment at College Park.

Specifically, the following have weighed heavily on me and would likely be remedied through collective bargaining.

- **JOB SECURITY:** As a professional track faculty that does not have tenure, I could be dismissed at any time it is financially sensible for my department or college to do so. While my contract indicates a multi-year commitment, the conditions under which I can be let go are extremely mild and I worry about my job from year to year. A union with collective bargaining rights would provide greater stability as multi-year contracts would have enforceable provisions.

- **FAIR HIRING TREATMENT:** When I was hired, my department failed to provide me a contract and did not provide me with basic access to the university systems to run my courses. Students were impacted negatively by these conditions, As well, I was without effective healthcare for some time as my family navigated a new city. This was a huge error on the part of department and college officials but there were almost no repercussions. Despite my complaints, it seems many newly hired faculty have experienced similar problems since it happened to me. Onboarding, providing employee benefits, and enabling work are basic functions that a union would help guarantee happen smoothly for new faculty.

- **DIMINISHING EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS:** Since I started at UMD in Fall 2023, the university administration has quietly reduced the contact hours with students in courses. By my calculations, semesters are effectively one week shorter now than they were then (F2023: 30 Tue/Thu lectures, S2025: 28 Tue/Thu lectures). Simultaneously, the tuition for students continues to rise giving them less education at a higher cost. There seems to be no input from faculty on these decisions and no means for us to protest the negative effect reducing class time has on students. A union would do wonders to hold administrators to account so that such decisions cannot be made in such a unilateral fashion.

- **FAIR ADVANCEMENT STANDARD:** I value my Tenure-Track faculty colleagues greatly but the vast majority of students at UMD receive large chunks of their education from Professional-Track

(non-tenure) faculty like me. Despite shouldering the brunt of the educational work, we have the weakest job security and lowest standing among faculty. In my department, freshly hired tenure-track faculty would vote on my job advancement despite their having just finished graduate school while I have 12 years of experience. A union could easily correct such disparities by standardizing the university's approach advancement and ensuring equal standing among tenure and non-tenure track faculty.

- TRUE SHARED GOVERNANCE: The faculty at UMD have a senate which debates issues and passes resolutions but these are advisory only. The administration has the final authority to do as it wishes and has often ignored faculty sentiment to the detriment of students and research. A union would enable faculty to check that power, balance decisions to include education and research perspectives, and guide the direction of university in a democratic fashion.

The University of Maryland is a crucial institution in our state and I want to see it thrive, to see its students well-educated citizens of the world, and see its mission to advance our understanding of world succeed. I grew up witnessing first-hand the power that faculty union has in holding improving colleges: my father was a unionized professor in the Minnesota State college system. Their union was successful in bargaining to keep administrative costs in control and ensure their institutions focused on to education and discovery. A similar union at UMD would go a long way towards rectifying the above problems and many others.

I urge you to support UMD faculty and provide us with the right to collectively bargain. Most other public employees in Maryland have been granted that right already. As higher education has come under fire on many fronts, providing us the ability to legally organize will aid us in resisting such attacks and further the university's mission for years to come.

Sincerely,

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This testimony has been submitted on behalf of this individual by the United Academics of Maryland (UAM).