

I am currently the chair of the Legislative Affairs Committee for the Council of University System Faculty (CUSF), the representative faculty body of the University System of Maryland, a body on which I have served for five years.

I write to formally share a resolution passed unanimously by CUSF (28-0) at our meeting in December 2025, a resolution we have passed almost annually since 2010. We urge that the restrictions on collective bargaining should be lifted for all faculty.

We are in a very weak position as an advisory-only body, like all shared governance throughout the eleven campuses of USM. Our advice can easily be ignored.

Shared governance within the USM is extremely weak in principle. At my campus (UMD-College Park) it is currently working pretty well because our president and provost want to listen to us. But that was not true with the last president at UMD. In general, it depends on the whims of presidents and provosts. We are "advisory only" and generally ignored.

Let me give a few examples from across the USM system: Two years ago CUSF tried to raise concerns about the process by which tenured faculty can be fired, that it does not accord with national standards as set by the AAUP, and our vigorous attempts to get basic policies revised went through every proper channel (including a committee for that purpose) and then were rejected by a claim that somehow it was not legal, when in fact it is the norm nationally.

There were three votes of no confidence by faculty senates last year in the USM (two at Frostburg, one at Bowie state) and they seem to have been basically ignored by the Chancellor.

A search for a new president at Frostburg (the prior one died in office) is being led by a committee appointed by the Chancellor that does not include the elected faculty senate leadership on that campus (in contravention of USM bylaws, which clearly direct that the members of committees like this are to be whenever possible elected). After the problems there last year, this is an issue of grievous concern to the faculty there.

One of the tenure track members of the Bowie faculty, who participated in the effort to have a vote of no confidence in the Provost at Bowie State, and who was an elected member of CUSF, was suddenly fired (presumably that same Provost) in November 2025. We do not know why. Faculty at Bowie seem now collectively to be scared of speaking up about anything going on there.

There are other ways that shared governance works, especially when we agree with what the Chancellor wants, including issues like financial support for USM in general. But USM has a strong tendency to bury problems rather than confront them. A collective bargaining body could provide meaningful checks by helping to protect faculty and by helping to address problems and concerns.

Holly Brewer

Burke Professor of American History & Associate Professor, University of Maryland  
Chair, Legislative Committee, Council of University System Faculty



COUNCIL of UNIVERSITY  
SYSTEM FACULTY

**Resolution affirming Council of University System Faculty  
support for Collective Bargaining Rights  
Passed at CUSF General Body Meeting 12/10/2025  
28 yea, 0 nay (unanimous)**

**"Resolution Reaffirming the CUSF Affirmative Position for Collective Bargaining Rights for  
University System of Maryland Faculty**

**Whereas, the Council of University System Faculty (CUSF) serves as the faculty advisory  
body for the University System of Maryland (USM); and**

**Whereas, CUSF Council passed 23-3 the following resolution on November 16, 2010 which  
was and still is the current position of CUSF regarding collective bargaining.**

**CUSF urges the Chancellor and the Board of Regents to support legislation extending the  
right to consider the alternative of collective bargaining to USM faculty. This is not an  
endorsement of collective bargaining. Rather CUSF would like each campus to have the right  
to consider collective bargaining if it chooses based on its circumstances, as other public  
sector employees,  
even on some of our campuses, already have done."**

The motion above was passed every year by CUSF between 2010 and 2017, and then again in January  
2024, December 2024, and December 2025 for a total of at least 11 times previously.

n.b..The link to the 2017 minutes, which records the earlier votes, is here.

<https://www.usmd.edu/usm/workgroups/SystemFaculty/meetings/gen20171214.pdf>