

**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland House Government, Labor and Elections Committee
HB0106
State Personnel - Collective Bargaining - Nontenure Track Faculty
February 10, 2026
FAVORABLE**

Good afternoon Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and members of the House Government, Labor and Elections Committee.

My name is Victoria Koerner. I am an adjunct in the Department of English at Frostburg State University. I strongly urge your support of collective bargaining rights for non-tenure track faculty, including adjuncts.

I have been employed as non-tenure-track (specifically, adjunct) faculty at two Maryland colleges since 2019. I am currently employed at Frostburg State University. These institutions of higher education rely on non-tenure track faculty, including adjuncts, to meet demand. These colleges could not meet demand without these employees. Therefore, these employees are necessary and an integral part of the University's success.

The schools, rightfully so, require adjunct faculty to be highly-qualified, meaning the faculty member must possess the same credentials, i.e., a minimum of a Master's Degree in their field, as full-time faculty teaching the same courses. Compensation should be commensurate with education and experience. The label "adjunct" does nothing but create false division.

Adjunct faculty at my current institution are limited to two 3-hour courses per semester, for a teaching load of 6 credit hours per semester. In exchange for teaching these courses, the University compensates the adjunct at a starting rate of \$2,200 per course, or \$4,400 per semester. When divided by the total number of hours worked (including teaching, student conferences, lesson planning, grading, and administrative tasks), this is below minimum wage. A business operating in the private sector could not get away with this exploitation. Why is the University shielded?

The University usually employs two to three adjuncts in my department. For perspective: two adjuncts teaching two courses costs the University \$8,800 per semester, which would equate to \$17,600 per year. Even for one person, this is below poverty level. These part-time positions could be combined into permanent positions, with commensurate pay and benefits. At a minimum, adjuncts should have the right to negotiate for better pay and conditions without fear of retaliation. The need for these employees exists. The State is choosing to exploit these employees. There is no other conclusion. Why has this practice been allowed to continue?

The savings for the State do not end there. Tenure-track employees receive valuable health insurance and a retirement plan. Adjunct faculty receive no health insurance or retirement plans. This shifts the burden to the State. Many adjuncts teaching at four-year institutions in Maryland actually qualify for Medicaid! The State saves money by shifting the burden to Medicaid. If this was not the case, the practice would cease. One might expect these conditions at an entry-level job, but for a highly-qualified and experienced M.A., tasked and entrusted with teaching college-level courses to Maryland's students, it is a travesty. Adjuncts are clearly, unequivocally being exploited.

Adjunct faculty often receive no professional development. When I was hired by my current employer, I was told there is no orientation for new faculty, as "there is no money in the

budget for it." As a result, I was thrown into teaching a new course, with a Learning Management System I had never seen before, with exactly one week to build the course and learn to navigate the software, all while familiarizing myself with the college's policies and procedures. At the same time, I was held to the same standard as full-time tenure-track faculty with regard to students' learning outcomes and student and faculty evaluations. I have yet to receive any formal training or professional development at this institution.

Job stability for adjuncts is non-existent. There is a large pool of adjuncts, with many teaching at multiple schools. Assignments seem to be arbitrary, and job offers often come at the last minute. Missing a semester means refamiliarizing yourself with the job, and bringing yourself up-to-date on changes in policies and procedures. This makes it difficult to build relationships or feel any sense of community. Morale is often low. Teachers feel unappreciated. These are not optimal working conditions. How does this constant disequilibrium serve the best interest of the students?

The turnover rate is understandably high among adjunct faculty. The stress and exhaustion of working multiple jobs while being in constant limbo leads adjuncts to burn out. Many leave the teaching profession entirely. Tuition rates at the school continue to increase, but funds seem to be allocated to everything except retaining highly-qualified, experienced faculty members. Recruitment and retention of students (i.e., revenue stream) seems to be a priority, but fair compensation and a sense of stability for the faculty who teach them is not.

The University ostensibly exists to educate students; it is ironic that many of the people doing the educating receive the lowest pay of any employee not just on campus, but anywhere in Maryland.

Finally, to dispel a myth, adjunct-taught classes are usually filled to maximum capacity; the term "overflow" is a misnomer. As stated previously, the college could not meet demand without these employees. They are necessary. They (we) deserve a voice.

To summarize, non-tenure-track faculty often have demoralizing workloads, inadequate professional development funds, low pay, no health insurance or retirement benefits, and little, if any, job stability. Strengthening their voice through collective bargaining will improve the vital teaching and research of our universities. All students and faculty, as well as the people of Maryland, will be uplifted when these faculty have this basic right.

The time is now for these faculty to have the same bargaining rights that are available to almost all Maryland public employees and faculty in 25 states, including our neighbors in Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C.

Sincerely,

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