



COUNCIL of UNIVERSITY SYSTEM FACULTY

Board of Regents Report April 7 2023 (for April 14 meeting)

The Council of University System Faculty has had two general meetings since my last report, on February 24 and March 28. The executive committee also met on March 6, and will be meeting on April 10. We have been continuing to gather information, now more systematically, to address a range of issues of concern, many of which will be resolved in future; we are making strategies and plans to systematically evaluate and target issues that need improvement or attention. We are having great conversations.

Executive Committee

The executive committee has started to work with the new Vice Chancellor Alison Wrynn and Assistant Vice Chancellor Zakiya Lee to set up taskforces that align with some of our priorities, focusing on faculty status & workload, teacher retention and recruitment (in line with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future), and Mental Health. In addition we are following up less formally, in tandem with the library Council and UMD-Pact, to make recommendations with regard to Open Access. We have also been working hard on a redesigned survey strategy to assess shared governance across all twelve campuses. We have designed two surveys to assess the views of 1) a few leaders in shared governance on each campus as well as 2) the broader faculty at each institution. We appreciate the help we have received from both President Aminta Breaux and from Vice Chancellor Wrynn in distributing the broader survey, in particular. While responses are still incoming, I can report as of April 7, seven of twelve campuses have responded to the first survey. More importantly, 10 of 12 campuses have widely distributed the second survey. At this moment we have 734 responses, which will provide impressive comparative data to make recommendations about how to identify and encourage best practices, and where to focus efforts of improvement. Both surveys close on April 18.

General Body Meetings

At our meeting on February 24, we passed a resolution to **support removing current state restrictions on graduate student collective bargaining**. The text is included below. Note that this text was responding to bills proposed to the Maryland legislature in prior years, and not to this year's legislative bill that sought to remove restrictions on both graduate students and on faculty.

Committee progress: Our new "research committee" is beginning to address a range of issues that have arisen from many representatives, including those related to research policies and open access. This committee is reaching out to broaden our membership so that we have input from all campuses to include issues that arising from a range of campuses (we can appoint new committee members, selectively). Other committees have been very busy as well: **Educational Policy** has

organized a terrific town hall to give guidance to faculty across the USM system on how to respond to CHATGPT and related AI writing programs (such as Google's Bard). They are also still focusing on issues of open access, as well as on transfer credits and policy, issues which we will take up at our April meeting if we can fit them in (if not, then in May). Our **Faculty Concerns** committee has been focused on issues related to mental and physical health and has organized a town hall on such issues for early May. **The Legislative Affairs** Committee worked on the resolution with regard to the restrictions on graduate students and collective bargaining, and have now taken up other issues, related both to faculty and to a range of other issues in response to issues raised in this spring's legislative session.. **The Awards** committee is delighted that its recommendations for faculty awards were accepted by the Board of Regents. **The Rules** committee has been working on changes to our bylaws to allow better methods of voting in response to greater reliance on electronic and hybrid meetings. They have polled our members and are suggesting revisions to our constitution. They will also be organizing our elections for our April meeting.

CUSF Resolution in Favor of Graduate Student Collective Bargaining
Passed at CUSF General Meeting on February 24, 2023

“Whereas the Council of University System Faculty (the Council) consists of faculty representatives elected by the faculties of the constituent institutions of the University System of Maryland (USM) to represent USM faculty; and

Whereas it is the Council's responsibility to consider and make recommendations on matters of System wide professional and educational concern to USM faculty; and

Whereas the Council advises the USM Chancellor and reports regularly to the USM Board of Regents on matters of interest to USM faculty; and

Whereas CUSF members and their constituents are committed to supporting graduate students at USM institutions, who represent the next generation of higher education teachers, researchers, and scholars; and

Whereas support for graduate students at USM universities is an excellent investment in the growth of the Maryland economy because USM graduate students contribute substantially to the next generation of Maryland leaders in education, business, health care, and research; and

Whereas pursuing a graduate education is inherently challenging, and unnecessary additional challenges related to financial support and compensation, health care benefits and working conditions create barriers to recruitment to and completion of graduate programs; and

Whereas CUSF members and their constituents have observed that students pursuing graduate studies at USM institutions face significant challenges relating to working conditions, financial support, compensation, and benefits; and

Whereas CUSF members and their constituents believe that these challenges have a deleterious effect on the education and research mission at USM institutions; and

Whereas USM graduate students have consistently expressed a desire to address these challenges by engaging in collective bargaining; and

Whereas bills proposed in the Maryland General Assembly in each of the last five years that would allow graduate students at USM institutions to engage in collective bargaining have earned consistent, overwhelming support from graduate students and USM faculty and staff; and

Whereas graduate students at many top research universities have formed collective bargaining units in recent years; and

Whereas graduate students are transitory employees with no direct, sustained professional ties to state government; and

Whereas graduate students at USM institutions do not have supervisory or managerial control over their institutions or working conditions; and

Whereas individual graduate students at USM institutions with a collective bargaining unit will have the option not to join or financially support a union;

Be it here resolved that the Council supports the amendment of Maryland law to allow graduate students at USM institutions to engage in collective bargaining.”

Respectfully submitted,

Professor Holly Brewer

Chair, Council of University System Faculty