



UNIVERSITY SENATE RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF DEMOCRATIC ATTEMPTS TO OBTAIN GRADUATE WORKER COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RIGHTS

WHEREAS, the faculty, staff, students, and administrators of the University of Maryland's College Park campus acknowledge ongoing collective bargaining efforts by employees of the University.

WHEREAS, the University Senate is the principal shared governance body of the University representing faculty, staff, students, and administrators, with the power to "develop and approve resolutions in order to take a public stance on" issues, stating values or concerns of the University community.

WHEREAS, in December of 2022, the 2022-2023 Graduate Student Government – an official representative body for graduate students at the University of Maryland, College Park "charged with securing and protecting the welfare, rights, and interests of all graduate students at this institution" – unanimously passed a legislative bill (1) supporting Collective Bargaining rights for graduate workers across the University System of Maryland.

WHEREAS, the Graduate Student Government deems Graduate Worker's access to Collective Bargaining "a democratic right" (2) Maryland State Law currently denies to student employees, including teaching assistants, research assistants, and other graduate employees within the University System of Maryland.

WHEREAS, University graduate workers formed a Graduate Labor Union (4) which achieved a supermajority on October 1, 2024, (5) and testified in favor of legislation allowing certain full-time and part-time faculty, postdoctoral associates, and graduate assistants collective bargaining rights (6).

WHEREAS, an unwillingness to voluntarily bargain with University of Maryland Graduate Labor Union presents serious challenges for graduate workers in minoritized populations (3) and the campus community, given significant reliance on this segment of the University workforce.

WHEREAS, despite requests signed by students, union members, and members of the University's Graduate Assistant Advisory Council (7), the University of Maryland, College Park, administration testified against Maryland state legislative action granting graduate workers collective bargaining rights.

WHEREAS, University administrators have openly stated: "At this point, the campus remains opposed to collective bargaining rights," for workers, claimed collective bargaining would limit the University's ability to work with graduate assistants directly, and asserted such work would limit student-mentor relationships with faculty (8).

WHEREAS, the right to collectively bargain with the University was enacted into law for certain state employees but not for graduate workers (9) following testimony by University administrators before the Maryland State House of Representatives and Senate.

WHEREAS, members of the Graduate Labor Union at the University of Maryland, College Park, have requested voluntary recognition by the University and disavowed claims unionization would fray healthy mentorship and work relationships, outlining positive outcomes at institutions across the United States (10).

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the University Senate supports actions, including Collective Bargaining rights, which empower campus workers to negotiate conditions of employment with the University.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the body affirms and supports unanimous Graduate Student Government resolutions AND democratic campaigns providing workers collective bargain rights at the University of Maryland, College Park, through voluntary recognition or other means.

References

1. [GSGA41-R09](#) – A Resolution to Support Collective Bargaining for Graduate Assistants and Employees in the University System of Maryland was unanimously passed by members of the University of Maryland’s Graduate Student Government in December of 2022.
2. [From GSG](#): “In December 2022, the 2022-2023 Graduate Student Government unanimously passed a legislative bill that advocates for allowance of graduate student workers across the University system of Maryland to access Collective Bargaining rights, which would allow for the ability to form a union and access a democratic right that has been a federal mandate since 1935.”
3. From [Commentary: Md. legislators don’t know it, but their next union vote will shape our future](#): “Better pay and working conditions for graduate workers will serve to make a graduate education more accessible to and obtainable for folks from diverse backgrounds and different walks of life. Unionizing graduate workers at UMD is an obvious and critical action to take,” doctoral research assistant Anthony Garove says. Without union voices, we could see fewer Maryland doctors and nurses of color, higher turnover among workers navigating student life and lackluster representation of those with disabilities in critical campus communities.
4. The [University of Maryland Graduate Labor Union](#) formed through the Fearless Student Employees group in fall of 2023. The union’s efforts have been bolstered through work with the United Auto Workers, which has represented some 100,000 higher education employees. This union is not formally recognized by the University of Maryland, College Park, nor is it recognized by UM System administrators for the purposes of negotiating outcomes on behalf of graduate employees.
5. During testimony before the Maryland House and Senate in Spring of 2024, Graduate Labor Union representatives presented physical cards that amounted to nearly 1 in 5 graduate students. As of October 1, 2024, members of the University of Maryland Graduate Labor Union card campaign report signed cards from 60% of graduate workers at the institution.
6. As reported by the Diamondback’s Sam Gauntt in [UMD graduate students, administrators testify on state collective bargaining bill](#) (February 16, 2024)
7. The [UMD Graduate Labor Union delivered a letter](#) to the Office of Provost Rice on February 12, 2024, “demanding neutrality from UMD admin” as legislation promoting collective

bargaining rights entered the House and Senate. Members of the Graduate Assistant Advisory Council, among the signatories, highlighted the power of a stronger collective bargaining agreement while acknowledging the interim power that the current meet and confer process holds.

8. As reported by the Diamondback's Sam Gauntt in [UMD graduate students, administrators testify on state collective bargaining bill](#) (February 16, 2024)
9. As reported by Maryland Matters reporter Elijah Pittman in [University System of Maryland, AFSCME sign contract covering multiple campuses](#) (August 2, 2024)
10. From [Stop stifling UMD graduate workers' voices. Grant them collective bargaining rights:](#) Graduate workers at Michigan, Rutgers, Minnesota, NYU and more have unionized with great success. And graduate workers at all private universities already have collective bargaining rights, a fundamental step in forming a union. ... While the University of Maryland is not legally required to engage in collective bargaining with graduate workers, it can and should do so for the sake of all students and our shared learning conditions.