

University System of Maryland

Organization of the Meet and Confer Representative Selection Process

Principles and Guidelines

- 1) Upon their request, the Graduate Assistants (GAs) and Adjunct Faculty (AF) at each University System of Maryland (USM) institution will be given the opportunity to select an outside labor organization to represent them in periodic meetings with administration (referred to as “meet and confer” or M/C).
 - a) The GAs and AF may choose to continue to meet directly with administration without a labor representative.
 - b) In general, upon a successful election, one outside labor representative will represent all of the institution’s GAs or AF. However, in exceptional circumstances, an institution may agree to more than one representative if, within the GA or AF populations, distinct communities of interest clearly exist whose concerns can be addressed adequately only with separate representation.
 - c) The M/C process is available to GAs who are covered by the USM Policy on Graduate Assistants, No. III--7.11, and AF, as defined in USM Policy on the Employment of Adjunct Faculty, No. II—1.07.
- 2) Each institution will have functioning GA and AF advisory groups that meet policy requirements. If feasible, these groups should be selected through election by a reasonable number of GAs or AF, either as part of a larger shared governance organization or as a separate GA or AF advisory group. If an election process is not feasible, then the advisory group will consist of all GAs or AF who volunteer to serve on the group.
- 3) Once formed, each advisory group and institution administrators will develop a charter for the group’s long-term governance and organization, including elections regarding the engagement of an outside labor representative for the M/C process.
- 4) The advisory groups will meet at least twice a year with key institution administrators, consistent with the above policies.
- 5) At the beginning of each fall semester, GAs and AF at each institution will be provided with information about the M/C process, including the opportunity for AFs and GAs to elect to engage a labor organization consistent with these Guidelines. The Guidelines, along with information about the institution’s GA and AF advisory groups and contact information, will be published on the institution’s website and readily accessible.

- 6) The USM will provide for:
 - a) Amendments to the current GA and AF policies to reflect the availability of M/C and the fundamental requirements for the M/C process.
 - b) The preparation of guidelines and fact sheets for use and distribution as each institution determines is appropriate.
 - c) An orientation and training program for campus administrators and others to take place after a request by GAs or AF for an election is made at an institution.

- 7) Selection of External Representation for M/C. Upon the request of a GA or AF advisory group, an election will be held at the institution to determine whether GAs or AF wish to engage an external representative.
 - a) To initiate the election process, the GA or AF advisory group will also have to provide an expression of interest on the part of at least one external organization to serve as their meet and confer representative.
 - b) The election should be administered in collaboration with the GA or AF advisory group in a manner intended to maximize participation, subject to basic USM and institution ground rules.
 - c) Election ground rules will be developed by the advisory group and institutional administration and will include:
 - a) The standards for qualification as an external representative.
 - b) A requirement that the election be held within 60 days of a written request by the GA or AF advisory group, unless the group specifically requests a longer period.
 - c) A minimum period of three to seven days, during the academic year, in which voting may take place. The voting period may exceed 7 days if needed at an institution.
 - d) The ability of GAs and AF to vote electronically from a remote site.
 - d) A minimum of 50% of GAs or AF must participate in an election for it to be valid. However, if exceptional circumstances make 50% participation infeasible, an institution may establish a lower voting threshold of at least 30%.
 - e) If a majority of those voting choose to participate in M/C with a labor representative, then the labor representative will be the entity that receives the most votes among those under consideration.

- 8) Once an election is held:
 - a) If the voting threshold is achieved, and a majority of those voting elect to engage a labor representative, then the representative elected will serve as the meet and confer representative for three years from the date of their selection. After three years, the election process must be repeated.
 - b) If 50% participation is not achieved, or if a majority of those voting elect not to engage a labor representative, the advisory group will continue to meet with administration without a labor representative.

- c) The President of the institution may certify the validity of an election where less than 50% participation has been achieved upon a showing of exceptional circumstances which demonstrate that the election process nonetheless has been fair and representative.
 - d) If the election does not result in the selection of a labor representative, the institution will not be required to hold another election for two years.
- 9) The institution will collaborate with the GA or AF advisory group on the selection process and will provide logistical support, including:
- a) The ability to identify and contact the GA and AF populations, including the provision of the names and institution email addresses of GAs and AF to GA and AF advisory groups and interested unions.
 - b) A mechanism for electronic voting.
 - c) Opportunities for GAs and AF to meet with potential labor representatives on campus.

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