

# Graduate Student Council Meeting with Key Members of UMCES Administration

Meeting over Interactive Video Network

18 November 2013

## Participants:

UMCES Graduate Student Council members: Dale Booth(HPL), John Gardner(HPL), Robert Sabo(AL), Dave Kazyak(AL), Caroline Coulter(CBL), Lauren Gelesh(CBL)

UMCES Administration: Erica Kropp (Vice President for Administration), Lisa Ross (Director of Human Resources), Dave Nemazie (Associate Vice President for External Affairs), Ed Houde (Vice President for Education), Don Boesch (President, via telephone)

The Graduate Student Council (GSC) is the elected, graduate student advisory body in UMCES. USM policy requires the GSC to meet with key members of the administration at least once each year. This meeting fulfilled that requirement.

## Meet and Confer Policy

The main purpose of this meeting was to discuss the USM Meet and Confer Policy that allows graduate student assistants (GAs) to consider and, should they choose, to elect a labor organization to represent them in labor-related business within UMCES.

There was discussion and explanation of Meet and Confer (M/C). The UMCES GSC had voted to not seek labor representation one year ago. The GAs have an opportunity to revisit that decision this year and to hold an election by the GAs on the question if they choose.

It was agreed that the decision by the GSC to either hold an election or not will be communicated to Vice President Houde by 2 December 2013. Should the GAs decide to hold an election, they must identify candidate labor representatives. The decision must be formally submitted to USM by Vice President Houde. The GSC will confer with GAs at their respective Labs and reach a consensus on whether to conduct an election on labor representation. The GSC process to reach a decision should be directed by Jeanette Davis, the GSC chair, who should communicate the decision to VP Houde on or before 2 December.

Two questions and concerns regarding M/C were discussed. 1. Costs of engaging labor representation and responsibilities for covering costs are not fully understood. 2. It was noted that the M/C Guidelines state that elections for labor representation by GAs are for a three-years term, but there is no guidance on how GAs could terminate labor representation before three-years should they choose. Vice President Kropp will seek an answer to these questions<sup>1</sup>.

## Other Meeting Topics

The numerous avenues for graduate students to interact and be represented in UMCES administrative activities were noted and discussed. A major pathway is through UMCES Administrative Council meetings, at which the GSC has direct representation through its Chair or Vice-Chair twice a year. The Chair and Vice-Chair also are invited to participate in the annual UMCES Faculty Convocation. Graduate students, through their GSC, are represented on the UMCES Faculty Senate and the UMCES Graduate Faculty Council. GSC members are invited to participate in Lab Administrative Council and Faculty meetings. Graduate students can express concerns, make recommendation, or requests at any time by communicating with Vice President Houde.

It was noted that the GSC should hold elections annually within each Lab to elect two members. Vice President Kropp will review the GSC history to determine the date of establishment of the GSC in 2012, which will indicate when annual election should be held.

A question related to provision of professional development opportunities for graduate students, as noted in UMCES Graduate Policy III – 7.11 IV.B, was raised. GSC members suggested that UMCES and each of its Labs report on or indicate professional development opportunities that are available. GSC members felt that there are insufficient professional development opportunities through the institution. Associate Vice President Nemazie noted the seminar on resume writing, grant writing, etc. GSC members agreed that classes like this and other opportunities should be implemented. GSC member John Gardner will draft a recommendation and send it to VP Houde.

### **Meeting Documents**

University System of Maryland. Organization of the Meet and Confer Representative Selection Process. Principles and Guidelines. December 2012.

INITIAL FACTS ABOUT THE NEW “MEET AND CONFER” PROCESS FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTS AND ADJUNCT FACULTY IN THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF MARYLAND. November 2012.

MEET AND CONFER PROGRESS REPORT, FALL 2013 TERM. Graduate Assistant Advisory Group.

UMCES Policy on Graduate Assistantships, III-7.11

<sup>1</sup> Vice President Kropp communicated with System Administration on 19 November 2013. The response from J. Goedert, Associate Vice Chancellor is: “As a general matter, once an election is held and a labor representative is chosen, that union will serve for three years. However, if an advisory group believes that this is not acceptable, they could seek to negotiate a ‘decertification’ provision in their MOU with the union. Although not necessarily required in the Meet and Confer context, some sort of MOU is advisable. We don’t have any in place in the USM to date, but if your advisory group gets to that point, we can certainly assist in pulling together some model language and format.”