

Collective Bargaining Bill

Meet and Confer (M&C) is a policy adopted by University system Maryland (USM) which allows Graduate Assistants (GAs) to have formal discussions with the administration regarding employment issues. In the absence of unionization and collective bargaining, this platform can be used by the GAs to voice their concerns. However, there is concern that this policy does not give a firm standing to GAs to voice their concerns. The administration has no binding obligation to honor the concerns of the GAs raised in the discussions. The administration has largely been overlooking the issues raised by GAs in a number of institutions in USM like UMD, Bowie State, Towson etc.

Collective Bargaining Bill (CBB) gives the right to GAs to unionize and collectively bargain with the administration on issues like employment hours, wages, benefits etc. Getting this right is the first step.

1. Senate Bill 521 states that if graduate students utilize their right to collective bargain, then each system institution shall have **separate** bargaining units. If an institution decides to exercise their right to collectively bargain, other institutions can very well keep their M&C and choose to **not** bargain collectively. For example if UMD feels that M&C is not working for them and decides to unionize, we can keep our M&C if we choose to.
2. There are some lingering concerns regarding this Bill that should be made clear. If the bill is passed, it does **not** guarantee that UMBC GA's will/will not:
 - Become employees,
 - Lose their FICA exemption,
 - Experience health insurance premium increases.

For example, if the bill is passed and one day we decide to trigger our right to collectively bargain, we can unionize but it does not necessarily mean that we automatically become "employees" and lose the FICA exemption and experience an increase in health care premiums.

3. Another concern is that if unions increase compensation it would mean less overall Graduate Assistantships will be offered. There is little evidence that this would be the result when observing other GA collective bargaining units.
4. A lot of institutions in USM have shown their concern regarding the huge difference in stipend and the cost of living. Details of how issues have persisted

in generations of GAs and comparisons of Cost-of-Living Deficit between peer schools can be found in

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yfdMf_W2hUh8mByXN1RpFV4ziY1wAQXZswtmZvw2VMA/edit?usp=sharing

5. We will not take an official stance on this Bill unless the majority of the graduate students vote for it.
6. You can find last year's stance of GAAC here [UMBC Position Statement on GA Collective Bargaining Bill '21](#), you can find more information about CBB here [General Info : Collective Bargaining Bill](#), and you can review Senate Bill 521 here [Senate Bill 521](#).
7. If you have any questions, please reach out to us gaac@umbc.edu, afayayz1@umbc.edu, r120@umbc.edu, nirandj1@umbc.edu, and for technical assistance on the Bill, you can reach out to AWalinskas@marylandtaxes.gov.
8. You can read the concerns of our fellow USM GAs here https://docs.google.com/document/d/1b52K03MjNZKmOCscUjlrars0Qx11KPK_OYduovbb_A/edit.
9. Your feedback is valuable to us. Please vote on the Bill and share your concerns with us in the attached survey.