

To: State House of Representatives and Senate Finance Committee

From: AJ “Tito” Baca Jr., Ed.D. – President MC-AAUP

Re: Bill HB 247 / SB 175 – **IN FAVOR**

Date: February 15, 2023

The full-time faculty (FTF) at Montgomery College (MC) have been organized and represented by the AAUP national labor group for over 40 years. Up until this past year, the MC-AAUP has been the only FTF labor group in higher education with collective bargaining rights in Maryland. So, we know how fortunate we are and to play an integral role at our institution. We are proud to be part of the decision-making process that complements the efforts of our Shared Governance groups and the collaborative solution-oriented effort at MC. This directly impacts students and academics at our institution.

How is our Labor Group different than what you see on TV?

- We cannot and do not strike and do not negotiate in the media;
- We do not publicize internal matters except for verified extreme circumstances;
- We do collaborate constructively, regularly, and effectively with Management.

What is our overall charge?

- Engage, inform, and mobilize constituents, but also hold them to account to protect the Contract;
- Negotiate terms of the (FTF) contract including compensation, benefits but we also discuss working conditions, and negotiate things like office hours and policy related to online learning, but are also a means of constructive dialogue across the college;
- Protect the Contract by utilizing embedded formal / informal collaborative resolution strategies;
- Serve as checks and balances related to hiring practices, dismissals, and various decisions that impact faculty and / or our work;

- Navigate the grievance process, serve as an informal mediator, find common ground solutions, and work to actually avoid grievances whenever possible;
- If our program coordinators are asked to do work over the summer without compensation, we ask why, when that is contrary to verified policy. If we had grad assistants (GA's), and it was claimed that they were paid \$37/hr., since not all of these positions are similar, we would ask how they are able to track and quantify all the hours GA's spend on planning, grading, working in a lab, researching, and helping classmates, all of which are outside the easy to keep track of teaching hours. But we would do so respectfully and in the interest of finding truth to justify our compensation ask;
- Further, our Mgmt. team meets with us regularly but also has members on our Shared Governance groups because they recognize the differences in the issues that are discussed in these respective groups. In fact, in the absence of a binding contract, the role of Shared Governance in terms of faculty input and real change is quite limited and confined to the ultimate objectives of Mgmt., not those who are actually in the classrooms. As such faculty should not and do not go to Faculty Council meetings for compensation issues, colleague / supervisor disputes, or specific evaluation matters. It is inappropriate to do so and to say otherwise is at best disingenuous. As a matter of fact, our labor group resolves dozens of issues each year that are simply not appropriate in the Shared Governance arena. Our Mgmt. team recognizes this and has embraced the delineation of our respective groups. Still, we often collaborate with our Faculty Council when there is overlap, but we stay in our lanes and complement each other quite well.

How do we support students and the institution?

- Testify at County Council Budget Hearings each year to advocate for MC and our students;
- Proudly attend national labor group meetings to share and gather information about our Mission and collaboration efforts with Mgmt.;



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- Support faculty and their right to academic freedom, which enhances the educational experience for students and affords students the right to choose classes that suit their needs /interests;
- During the pandemic, we approved the transfer of unused travel funds for 2 years to an emergency student fund to help students who lost jobs, housing, medical care, or needed food;
- Contribute to MCAAUP scholarship fund to support several students each year;
- We give faculty a voice and in doing so afford Management the opportunity to make informed decisions, solve problems they may not be aware of, and help to create a sense of community engagement through forums and focus groups.

Most faculty understand Mgmt. prerogative. They do not need to have the final say – they just need to have A SAY, and be heard..., with a contract in hand that can leverage real change but also ensure consistency and equity across the institution. It would be difficult to make a sound argument that this is not in the best interest of any college or university. So you likely can see, we are more than salaries and benefits, we are about quality of work and life, which helps to make MC a desirable destination for faculty.

Chapter plays a critical role across our institution, and we are proud of our contributions. We do not always agree with Mgmt. and things are not perfect, but we have healthy and productive mechanisms in place to address those differences. At the end of the day, we recognize that one of the most effective ways to support our members includes advocating for a strong and healthy institution and we proudly do so.

So on behalf of the FTF at Montgomery College, we humbly but proudly submit this testimony in support of FTF and graduate assistants at 4-year institutions in higher education across Maryland in their efforts to gain the right to organize, collectively bargain, and advocate for their respective constituents. Thank you!