

Delores G. Kelley, Chair  
Brian J. Feldman, Vice Chair  
3 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

SB 658  
Supporting

Dear Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman, and Members of the Finance Committee,

As a graduate assistant and student at UMCP, I spend well over 40 hours per week on campus. My responsibilities at work have grown exponentially and the expectation that I take on new tasks has similarly risen. It is expected of me to remain as a “yes man” within the college to pick up any slack left by the full time faculty and staff. Without the hard work of the graduate students across campus, the university would not be able to function properly to maintain its high academic standards.

Throughout my tenure on campus, I have continually experienced severe anxiety like so many others; my anxiety stems from my increased work responsibilities, classwork, as well as my economic well-being. The thought of paying rent at the beginning of the month or rationing my already limited shopping cart at the grocery store sends me into a spiral because our stipends do not allow us the ability to save anything we receive. It’s ironic that we do not receive a livable wage yet we are expected to keep the doors open at the university. We are educators, researchers, administrators, and advisors yet it is increasingly clear that we are underappreciated for all of our hard work.

With all of our responsibilities and anxieties, it would make sense that some well deserved time off would be needed. However, given my 12 month contract, I am expected to be in the office every single week of the year (including all breaks). I do not receive any time off (paid or unpaid). If I would like to take some time off, I can either be told “no” or I can be told that I have to make those hours up before I leave (I have experienced both scenarios). Last semester, it took me three weeks of 60+ hours on campus to make up that time so I could travel back home to attend my brother’s wedding. That is simply outrageous and unfair. I should not be expected to place my work duties before my own brother’s wedding or to fear my supervisor telling me that I cannot leave because I have not made up my hours.

This is clearly a system designed to keep the powerful in power and to suppress the powerless. Quite frankly, I expect more from a world class institution like the University of Maryland and I urge you all to support SB 658 to grant us collective bargaining rights.

Sincerely,

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