

**IMPLEMENTATION PROPOSAL – “MEET AND CONFER” PROCESS FOR ADJUNCT FACULTY AND  
GRADUATE ASSISTANTS AT USM INSTITUTIONS**

**3/7/12**

The USM is committed to protecting and enhancing the status of its employees and students. In the recent economic downturn, the USM consistently dealt with budget reductions and constraints in ways that softened their impact on staff, faculty and students. Working closely with state officials and our staff unions, we minimized furlough burdens, avoided layoffs, and protected salaries despite dire economic conditions. At the same time, the USM took serious measures to implement the recommendations of the legislative Task Force on the Status of Adjunct Faculty and Graduate Assistants with the goal of improving the status of both of those groups. Consistent with these commitments, the USM is supportive of establishing a system for graduate assistants (GAs) and adjunct faculty (AF) at USM institutions to select an outside organization (or organizations) to represent them in a meet and confer process with institution administration.

The USM will establish a process by which AF and GA organizations on campus may undertake the selection of an outside representative.

- This process will be consistent with appropriate legal parameters, requirements for fairness and adequate representation, fundamental principles of higher education shared governance, and administrative feasibility.
- Upon demonstration through the selection process that the GA or AF organization wishes to be represented in the meet and confer process, the representative may work in conjunction with GAs/AF for three years at the discretion and direction of the GAs/AF. Upon completion of a three year period, the representative organization may seek reappointment through the established selection process. During this three year process the Adjunct faculty and Graduate Assistants who voluntarily elect to pay dues to a representative organization may have this done through a payroll deduction.

The purpose of the meet and confer system is to provide AF and or GAs with an opportunity to have outside representation in periodic meetings to share their concerns with institution administrators. This process offers an opportunity for dialog and discussion about matters of concern to AF and GAs and possible options for addressing those concerns. However, as current state law does not enable USM to engage in collective bargaining with GAs or AF, these discussions are not negotiations as part of a collective bargaining process. The Institution will give serious consideration to the information, views and suggestions gained from the meet and confer process in any relevant policy decisions regarding AF and GAs and retains final authority over such decisions.

- The Meet and Confer process will be closely monitored by the Chancellor’s Office to help ensure a meaningful and productive engagement. In furtherance of this goal the Chancellor’s Office shall:
  1. Require that each institution establish a format and timeframe for discussions to take place between GAs/AF and designated institution personnel.

2. Require that each institution provide support to the process by which GAs/AF engage in the meet and confer process, including the selection of a representative organization to join with them in discussions with the designated institution personnel.
  3. Affirm the institutions' final authority regarding matters raised in the meet and confer process.
  4. Provide that the institution will inform GAs/AF in writing of decisions resulting from meet and confer discussions. The decisions resulting from the meet and confer process will become part of the institution's policies if applicable.
- The existence of the meet and confer process on a campus is not intended to, nor will it, restrict the role or function on institution shared governance. Shared governance bodies and other groups of GAs or AF (directly or through representatives) remain free to confer with administrators regarding any matters of concern to those groups.