

Dear Colleagues:

We are all aware of how faculty priorities have been belittled and faculty rights and responsibilities diminished in the State of Wisconsin, especially over the last decade. Concurrently, the political landscape has become increasingly polarized at both the state and national level, and the influence of lobbying and money on governmental decisions continues to grow.

In response, in 2011, the UW-Milwaukee University Committee began the process of creating an organization that would have the funds to influence political decision-making through lobbying, and thus represent the interests of our campus faculty in the public arena. We modeled the new organization “Milwaukee Organization Representing the Faculty Senate (MORFS)”, on the “Public Representation Organization of the Faculty Senate (PROFS)” created in 1976 and functioning since then on the UW-Madison campus (see profs.wisc.edu for details). PROFS has been effective in influencing political decisions to the benefit of faculty, though with a focus on issues of special interest to UW-Madison.

Regrettably, the process of activating MORFS on our campus was not allowed to move forward in 2011, due to lack of cooperation from the past Governor’s office, and that status did not change throughout the duration of his administration. Fortunately, with a new Governor in office this year, activating MORFS has at last been able to continue ([link to document with full details and history](#)).

So now, we are asking UW-Milwaukee faculty to make MORFS functional by becoming contributing members. In a survey of the UW-Milwaukee faculty conducted in 2011, 70% of those responding (roughly 25% of all faculty at that time) indicated that they were willing to support MORFS financially. Over this coming year, we will determine how many (and at what level) UW-Milwaukee faculty want to take advantage of this historic opportunity. Given our total number of faculty, a realistic annual level of contribution is in the range of \$20,000 (the minimum considered necessary to be viable) to 30,000 per year. This estimate includes an expectation that some faculty will chose to contribute at levels higher than 0.1% (in proportions consistent with the 2011 survey results). With contribution information in hand (by late Spring 2020, we will be able to develop a strategic implementation plan for MORFS (largely determined by the expected annual budget) which will be presented to the Faculty Senate for approval.

Members of the University Committee (which will serve as the Board of Directors for MORFS) are planning to visit department meetings during the coming academic year to encourage MORFS membership, provide information, and answer questions. MORFS, Inc. will provide a voice to UW-Milwaukee faculty when working with the Legislature, state officials, federal officials, and the general public. PROFS and MORFS have already signed an agreement, committing to a collegial and collaborative relationship, and to jointly address issues of mutual interest and benefit whenever possible. **In order to have the greatest impact, we need the support of the entire faculty. Please use this form to join ([link to membership form](#)).** **Together, we can make a difference!** Contact mschwartz10@wi.rr.com for more information.

Sincerely,

UW-Milwaukee University Committee
Bettina Arnold, Kathleen Dolan (Chair), Tina Freiburger, Laura Otto-Salaj,
John Reisel, Mark D. Schwartz, and Julia Snethen