CHAIR’S REPORT: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

In 2010-2011, the Staff of the University System of Maryland (USM) has continued to face many challenges. Budget cuts continue to affect all Staff both at work and at home. At our monthly meetings, representatives from each campus have met to discuss and share staff concerns. As the Chair of CUSS, I have attended and reported those concerns at the Board of Regents (BOR) and monthly Chancellor’s Council meetings. It is because of these meetings that I am aware of and appreciative of the support we receive from the Chancellor, the BOR, the Presidents of our institutions, the Maryland General Assembly and our Governor. It is to these entities and you that I say: Thank You for your continued support.

Late Summer/Fall 2010
CUSS met at Salisbury University on August 17, University of Maryland, Baltimore on September 28 and at Frostburg State University on October 26. Elections were held for Members-At-Large (Ayman Abdo (UMUC), Gus Mercanti (UMCES)), who serve for one year on the Executive Committee.

The Council reviewed the BOR Awards process, with the intent of making the process less time consuming on the institutions, and devised ways to increase participation. In addition, the criteria for a new award of Effectiveness and Efficiency were created. As you are aware, the BOR Awards are the highest honor bestowed on Exempt and Nonexempt Staff, and includes a prize of $1,000 and a recognition plaque to the awardee. Appropriate notices are also publicized in campus communications to acknowledge the accomplishments of the winners.

A change to the Bylaws was approved that set the maximum number of representatives from any institution to three. The Council expressed their concerns regarding same-sex spousal benefits to the Chancellor and the Board of Regents. In August, the Chancellor’s office sent out guidance to all institutions regarding how to handle inquiries of same sex spousal benefits, and, in September, the Board of Regents adopted a resolution to comply with the Attorney General’s Opinion regarding the recognition of same sex marriages validity in other states. Specifically:

The Board of Regents adopted a resolution the morning of September 17, 2010 to comply with the Attorney General’s Opinion regarding the recognition of same sex marriages validly made in other states.  Retroactive to July 1, 2010, same sex spouses are eligible for all spousal USM benefits, notably tuition remission and various types of leave.

Winter 2010/2011
The Council met on November 16 at the University of Maryland, College Park with the Council of University System Faculty (CUSF) and the University System of Maryland Students Council (USMSC). At this joint meeting, staff, faculty, and students shared their experiences of...
CHAIR’S REPORT (cont’d)

how each is impacted by the activities of the others and discussed shared concerns regarding the activities of the Maryland General Assembly. We were joined at the meeting by USM Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs Irv Goldstein, who gave a report on USM, and Director of Legislative Affairs Andy Clark, who gave a presentation on how USM is working with Maryland government, and the issues that impact all employees of USM. The joint meeting ended with discussion on challenges and opportunities faced by all three sets of constituents. Continuing the forward momentum established last November, there will be another joint meeting November 15, 2011.

The Council also met on December 14 at the University System of Maryland Office, and on January 25 at the University of Maryland, University College. At these meetings, the major topics of discussion centered on a presentation by Cynthia Shaw, UMCP Senate Staff Affairs Chair on the Optional Retirement Plan at the University of Maryland, College Park; recognition of Cindi Hale, founding member of CUSS; and recognition of CUSS by the Chancellor and his appreciation for the work of the Council. The Chancellor also thanked CUSS members for their input on the USM Strategic Plan 2010-2020, which was adopted by the Board of Regents on December 3. Our February meeting took us to Annapolis to visit the Maryland General Assembly. Several CUSS members braved the snowy weather to visit the offices of 47 senators and 141 delegates to introduce or re-introduce our elected officials to the Council of University System Staff and the important role staff has in achieving the mission of the University System of Maryland.

Spring 2011
April and May found us at Towson University and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. During these meetings, the major topic was budget – the USM was hit with a $4 million cut. However, the Chancellor, Board of Regents, and Presidents vowed to do everything within their power to fight another year of furloughs and layoffs. Thanks to the active participation of System Staff and Faculty, 1,426 letters were sent to members of the General Assembly (450 within the first 3 hours) in response to proposed changes to pension and benefits. Ms. JoAnn Goedert met with CUSS to discuss a proposed Voluntary Separation Plan that, in the end, proved impractical to implement for the System. Also, thanks to some last minute campaigning by USM, wording was added to one of the budget bills to include retention raises to operationally critical staff. This was a huge victory for CUSS. CUSS decided to move forward with a proposal for a new Board of Regents Awards category for Shared Governance.

Summer 2011
CUSS members met at the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore in June. We held our elections for Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary at this meeting. Willie Brown was re-elected as Chair, Gynene Sullivan from UMB was elected as Vice Chair, Karyn Schulz from UB and Brian Souders from UMBC were elected as Co-Secretaries. We ended our calendar year by meeting at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Sciences on Solomon’s Island in July, where we discussed the Board of Regents award process, the upcoming joint staff, faculty, and student meeting, and a letter or plaque of appreciation to both Chancellor Kirwan and Governor O’Malley, thanking them for their continued support.

Looking Forward
During this last year, thanks to you and the support of those mentioned in the opening paragraph, we have avoided furloughs and layoffs, were recognized as significant contributors to the mission of USM and our institutions, influenced the decisions made by the General Assembly with regards to benefits and pensions, work closely with faculty and students, and actively participated in the decisions that directly impact all staff of the university system.

Staff will be facing many old and new challenges in 2011-2012. CUSS wants to hear and share your concerns with senior leadership and our legislators.

Sincerely yours,
Willie Brown, UMCP
Chair, CUSS
A MESSAGE FROM THE CHANCELLOR

This past year marked another year of both challenges and accomplishments for the University System of Maryland (USM). Once again, the hard work and professionalism of the men and women who work every day on behalf of the USM and the students we serve was on display.

As the economy continued to struggle toward recovery, we faced another difficult and challenging legislative session in Annapolis. Our efforts in recent years to forge a stronger partnership with state leaders—aligning USM priorities with state priorities—have served the USM well. While we were not held harmless in terms of budget cuts, the USM fared about as well as we could have hoped.

Governor Martin O’Malley’s proposed budget for the USM provided for slightly less than flat funding, with $8.7 million targeted toward “buying down” two percent of a proposed five percent tuition increase for full-time in-state undergraduate students. The General Assembly cut $4 million—or less than .4 percent—from the Governor’s proposed FY 2012 budget for USM. As a result, the USM is slated to receive $1.062 billion in overall general fund and Higher Education Investment Fund (HEIF) support in FY 2012. However, in order to address a remaining budget gap of $17 million, the USM may receive some additional modest budget reductions.

While any cut is a disappointment, the modest size of this cut is significant when viewed from a national perspective. Clearly, Governor O’Malley and the General Assembly are very much bucking the national trend of disinvestment in public higher education. Whereas Maryland cut the USM’s budget modestly, we have seen higher education cuts of 50 percent in Pennsylvania, 30 percent in California, and 15 percent in North Carolina—a state that historically has been very supportive of higher education. As you might imagine, these states are looking at huge tuition increases, enormous erosions in quality, massive layoffs, devastating service cuts, or some combination thereof. Clearly, Maryland has chosen a different—a smarter—direction.

Unfortunately, the approved FY 2012 budget—once again—does not include funding for merit pay increases or COLA salary adjustments. I am pleased to note, however, that the budget as approved will not require USM faculty and staff to take any furlough days. As you know, I expressed to the Board of Regents, to institutional presidents, and to state leaders my deep concern over the demoralizing impact of round after round of furloughs. I am pleased that Governor and legislature heeded this call to discontinue furloughs and have the authority to address compensation issues as we move into FY 2012.

In addition, as a token of recognition for the sacrifices state employees—including USM Staff and Faculty employees—have been asked to make in recent years, the budget also includes onetime payments of $750 for every state employee. In addition, thanks to a hard fought USM effort, the budget bill includes language to allow retention pay increases to prevent the loss of critical USM staff, in addition to critical faculty.

As you know, the CUSS letter writing campaign through CapWiz was an important factor in establishing this ability to retain USM staff in “critically operational positions.” The CapWiz letters also included language that advanced efforts to suspend furloughs.

Finally, with regard to pension and benefit actions, current state employees (including USM staff) ended up in a much better place than the initial legislative proposals recommended. While current employees will have to pay more for their current pension benefits, new employees hired after July 1, 2011 will have a reduced pension benefit, and premiums and co-pays for retirees are increased, all in all Maryland is in better shape than most states in the country and USM employees still have an excellent health benefits and retirement program.

Working with the Board of Regents, the Council of Presidents, the Council of University System Staff, the Council of University System Faculty and the USM Student Council, we have made every effort to manage our budgetary issues in a thoughtful, balanced, and judicious manner. Our goal, as always, is to take actions that have the least impact on our students; protect the integrity of our academic and research programs; and minimize the hardship for our dedicated Staff and

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Faculty employees. It is an enormous source of pride to me that the USM community has responded so effectively to our fiscal challenges. We are serving more students than ever, our research productively continues to rise impressively, and the reputation of our institutions is at an all-time high. This is quite a testament to the dedication and quality of our Staff and Faculty employees.

As we continue to work together to navigate the USM through both good and difficult times, I remain impressed with the efforts and commitment of CUSS. This diverse group of individuals from across the University System has stepped forward to work cooperatively and collegially for the betterment of USM institutions and USM staff. CUSS is one of the USM’s greatest assets and an important element in our rise to national eminence. As we move forward with our three critical Systemwide priorities—closing the achievement gap, enhancing Maryland’s competitiveness, and promoting environmental sustainability—I know CUSS will once again be an important and positive force in our collective efforts.

The Board of Regents and I commend Willie L. Brown for his leadership as Chair over this past year and we look forward to working with him again in FY 2012. We also commend this year’s Vice Chair, Colette Becker, Co-Secretaries Giordana Segneri and Karyn Schulz, Members-at-Large Gus Mercanti and Melissa Stein, and the Chancellor’s Liaison to CUSS, Rosario I. van Daalen for all of their efforts on behalf of CUSS.

Even as we face serious challenges, I continue to believe that USM’s future is very bright. We enjoy strong support from our state, we have a talented Board of Regents committed to building the quality and impact of the USM, and we have an impressive spirit of collaboration across the USM. This latter asset is exemplified by the efforts of CUSS, which have been such a vital part of our success on every level. I look forward to our partnership continuing to yield productive and beneficial results for the USM.

Sincerely yours,
William E. Kirwan,
Chancellor

The Council of University System Staff (CUSS) was established in 1992 by request of the Board of Regents to advise on matters relating to the development and maintenance of a new USM Pay Program for Staff employees. CUSS is comprised of Systemwide Staff employees with representatives from each of its 12 institutions. Institution membership is proportionate to the number of Staff employees at the individual Institutions with a minimum of two representatives per Institution. CUSS has direct communications with the Chancellor and the Board of Regents, and is a member of the Chancellor’s Council. Its responsibility is to consider and make recommendations on issues affecting Staff employees. It is also responsible for keeping the Staff employees informed on CUSS activities and System-related actions.

CUSS meetings are held the fourth Tuesday of each month, giving each Institution an opportunity to host a meeting. The CUSS Executive Committee also meets with the Chancellor as often as needed but at least once a year.
As the economic woes continued into 2011, the State Legislature was once again faced with a ballooning budget deficit. The budget balancing act would be much more difficult to achieve due to the fact that there would be no federal funds available to be applied to the deficit, as they were in 2010. As always, Higher Ed was very vulnerable to the budget cutting ax, however, the Governor’s budget, as submitted, was more favorable to the USM than most anticipated. The real work was in facing the House and the Senate, all of whom had their budget cutting knives sharpened and ready to carve. One of the major issues confronting employees statewide was Retiree healthcare and pension reform, which directly affected members of the employees and teachers pension plan. Other issues included the reduction in funding to the USM Office, a voluntary separation program, tuition and a proposal to study a possible merger between UMB and UMCP. In the end, when the smoke cleared and the session came to a close, we had a balanced state budget and the USM, for the most part, came out of this legislative year better than expected.

For a more comprehensive review of the 2011 session, please review the 2011 End of Session Report which can be found at usmh.usmd.edu/usm then by clicking on Government Relations. Also, another good read is the 2011 End of Session Report (Major Actions of the Maryland General Assembly) by visiting oea.umaryland.edu/gov/index.html.

It is without a doubt that the USM would have fared far worst had it not been for the dedication and hard work of the Chancellor Kirwan, Patrick J. Hogan, Andy Clark, all the System Councils, Faculty, Staff, Students and our campus legislative work groups. Thanks to all for their efforts!

The Communication Committee revamped their mission statement for 2010-2011 to include not only communicating with CUSS’s various constituents (Exempt and Nonexempt Staff employees) and with the Chancellor, Presidents, Regents, Faculty, Students, Regents, Legislators, etc.) but also to implement new ways to “get the word out” quickly and efficiently. This year saw the first effective use of CapWiz, an online system that allows for the generation of form letters to various audiences. USM has been using CapWiz for a few years. With this year’s discussion of revisions to the pension system, however, as well as the addition of layoffs to an already salary reduced staff, CUSS was able to mobilize Staff across the system to write to their legislators in protest.

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As you can see from this issue of the newsletter, it has undergone a few design changes. In 2011-2012, the Committee will also work with the USM Office (USMO) to create a new logo for CUSS, give the CUSS website a new look to make it more user friendly, and work with all campuses to communication CUSS’s good work more effectively.

BENEFITS & COMPENSATION COMMITTEE
CHAIR: MI’SHAUN STEVENSON, BSU
The function of the Benefits and Compensation Committee is to review current compensation packages and proposals from Campus, System, and State personnel offices, for both exempt and nonexempt staff as needed. We will review and comment on USM policies, procedures and practices when called upon as it relates to levels of pay, classification schemes, proposed changes in benefits to include Health Care, Life Insurance, Tuition Remission, Annual, Sick and Personal Leave, as well as other non cash compensation packages.

This year the Committee discussed at length suggested changes to healthcare benefits and retirement plans, new guidelines on tuition remission, as well as possible ways to boost morale and still compensate employees during these tough fiscal times. We look forward to bringing forward relevant areas of concern that impact both exempt and non-exempt staff in an effort to promote overall work life balance.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & RECOGNITION COMMITTEE
CHAIR: CHRIS THOMAS, CSU
The role of the Community Outreach & Recognition Committee is to develop and execute activities that provide for the professional and social development of Staff at the University System of Maryland. The committee’s role is carried out, in large part, by organizing and recognizing the selection of the Board of Regent Staff Awards. The award represents a culmination of the tremendous accomplishments by USM Staff employees to perform above and beyond their individual job responsibilities. These individuals reflect the wonderful spirit of excellence found in each institution across the system.

The committee was pleased to welcome a new award category: Effectiveness and Efficiency in an Academic or Administrative Transformation.

This year, the award nominations came from 9 institutions within the University System of Maryland, while the review committee members represented 7 different institutions. The awards recognized Exempt and Nonexempt Staff employee accomplishments in various areas of service. Each winning applicant received a $1,000 stipend and commemorative plaque recognizing their contribution. In light of the difficult economic times, it is comforting to know the USM recognizes the importance in maintaining these awards to recognize Staff employees who continue to do great things.

On Friday, February 25, 2011, current members of CUSS met with Cindi Hale, founding Chair of CUSS. She was presented with a plaque recognizing her contributions and attended a lunch in her honor.

(from l to r): Dolores Jackson, UMCP; Debby Mathis, UMUC; Willie Brown, UMCP and current CUSS Chair; Cindi Hale, UMCP; Larry Lauer, UMCP and past CUSS Chair; Colette Becker, UMB and CUSS Vice Chair; and Sister Maureen Schrimpe, UMCP.
BOARD OF REGENTS USM STAFF AWARDS

A CUSS initiative, the Board of Regents’ USM Staff Awards represents the highest honor bestowed by the Board of Regents for achievements of Exempt and Nonexempt Staff employees from Institutions within the University System of Maryland. The awards are presented to two Staff employees in each category—one Exempt Staff and one Nonexempt Staff—for a total of eight awards. Each recipient will receive a $1,000 stipend, and will be awarded a plaque. In addition, appropriate notices will be placed to publicize each honoree’s accomplishments.

Exceptional Contribution to the Institution and/or Unit to Which a Person Belongs

Exempt

JIM LORD
Design Director, Creative Services, UMBC

“Jim has worked closely for many years with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions to design print materials for recruitment, admissions, and orientation. These projects have included designing the two sided Live More/Learn More view book; designing printed material for the College. The campaign, which creatively used social networking and photography and quotes by current UMBC students to engage prospective students; and overseeing the current marketing campaign, UMBC Super Heroes. Over the 11 years that Jim has designed our recruitment and admissions publications, undergraduate enrollment at UMBC has increased an average of 1.4 % per year.”

Nonexempt

SANDRA H. RAMSES
Management Specialist, Department of Biological Sciences, Salisbury University

“Last semester she initiated an effort to fix up our student study lounge, which has long been just a room with random chairs and tables. In just a few days Sandy put up posters, brought in plants, and arranged for some new furniture to make the room more inviting and functional. It has become a very popular place for students to gather. This semester, Sandy decided we needed a departmental t-shirt. Working with one of our artistic faculty members who designed a departmental logo, Sandy arranged for the printing of the shirts and has been selling them to students and faculty. The shirts have sold out quickly, and they have proven to be a great way to promote our department and SU. All of these projects were initiated by Sandy, and they have all contributed significantly to the esprit de corps among our Biology majors and faculty.”

Extraordinary Public Service to the University or to the Community

Exempt

KAREN TREBER
General Counsel, Office of the President, Frostburg State University

“One of the recent projects Karen initiated that ties the University to the Board of Education includes creating a means by which students can take and receive credit for FSU courses while still in high school. This meant having high school teachers certified to teach the university level courses and offering the courses during the regular high school day. She continues to encourage the BOE and the University to add courses to the roster available, so that more high school students may be exposed to university-level work and earn credits. Accelerated programs such as these have been a priority not only of the University, but also of the University System of Maryland and the Maryland State Board of Education.”

Nonexempt

DONNA MESSICK
Administrative Assistant, Nabb Research Center, Salisbury University

“Donna is one of those unsung heroes who give selflessly of her time. Without complaint, Donna arrives early to work each day and almost always stays late, nearly always returning on weekends and on evenings to finish tasks which needed to be done but which were unable to be completed due to the continuing press of work during the academic work week. She has also, as a volunteer, transcribed records and made them available for students and researchers. Most recently, Donna transcribed the nineteenth century manumission records of Somerset County, for the first time making them readily available at the Nabb Center to patrons and students.”
Outstanding Service to Students in an Academic or Residential Environment

Exempt
ALAN SANTOS
Director of Student Services, Dept. of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Maryland, College Park
“Al stands out to me above all the rest because he goes beyond advising students in their academic endeavors. He takes the time to meet with them one-on-one to see how they are doing personally, emotionally and physically. Many students are stressed and some have depression when joining the undergraduate community. On more than one occasion I have seen Al motivate and encourage students who are struggling with stress/depression to have an outlet for their stress, such as exercise (running, biking, playing sports, etc.). He takes time out of his day to run or bike with the students, encouraging them to interact with each other and build essential social networks of support.”

Nonexempt
CECELIA JORDAN
Program Management Specialist, Dept. of Biology, University of Maryland, College Park
“Cecilia is very committed to assisting undergraduate students. She has volunteered for three years to teach new freshman in UNIV 100 - An Introduction to the University course. Through this course she works with a teaching assistant to develop lesson plans that help her student’s transition to life at the University of Maryland and the Biology, Chemistry and Biochemistry majors. Cecelia has always been great to work with as she takes her role very seriously and keeps me abreast of students who may be encountering issues as soon as she spots them. Her teaching assistants enjoy working with her and she always has a freshly baked goodie for her UNIV students! The time and effort invested in teaching the course go well beyond the call of duty and exemplify a commitment to student service.”

Effectiveness and Efficiency Award in Administrative Transformation

Exempt
JEFF MCKINNEY
Director ECE, ISR Physics and Math Computing, University of Maryland, College Park
“There were approximately 40 physical machines (some were server class machines and some were desktops flipped on their sides) and almost all were doing a single task, leaving them idle most of the time. Within a year, Jeff’s use of virtualization software consolidated 40 servers into two physical machines running 30 virtual machines. These changes provided faculty and staff with a much more reliable system while keeping the budget flat. The next year, ECE combined its computing with the ISR, whose 30 physical machines often sat idle. Jeff was able to fully meet all computing needs with only three physical machines running 40 virtual machines. This allowed improvements in both customer service and reliability and cut the IT budget for ISR by 30% and for ECE by 10%.”
### 2010-2011 CUSS Staff Representatives

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<td>Abby Byrnes, Chris Thomas</td>
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<td>Frostburg State University</td>
<td>Jay Hegeman, Jesse Ketterman, Stacy Wassell, Bernard Wynder</td>
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<td>Salisbury University</td>
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<td>Towson University</td>
<td>Kay Kazinski, Brenda Yarema</td>
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<td>University of Baltimore</td>
<td>Karyn Schulz (Co-Secretary), Giordana Segneri (Co-Secretary)</td>
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| University of Maryland, | Willie Brown (Chair)  
College Park | Dolores Jackson  
Mike Paszkiewicz  
Sister Maureen Schrimpe |
| University of Maryland Eastern | Corey Bowen  
Shore | Rena Finney  
Chenita Reddick |
| University of Maryland | Meredith Levesque  
University College | Debby Mathis  
Melissa Stein |
| University System of Maryland | Mary Reed  
Office | Rosario I. van Daalen  
(Chancellor’s Liaison to CUSS) |

For a full listing of all minutes regarding USM Councils and other pertinent information, point your browser to:

Staff Council: http://www.usmd.edu/usm/workgroups/SystemStaff/index.html
Board of Regents: http://www.usmd.edu/regents/minutes/
Faculty Council: http://polaris.umuc.edu/cusf/
Students Council: http://www.usmd.edu/usm/workgroups/StudentCouncil/index.html
USM Main Page: http://www.usmd.edu/