



Report from the Council of University System Faculty
Board of Regents
February 2012

The CUSF General Body met on Thursday, December 8, 2011 at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science. President Donald Boesch welcomed CUSF to the campus. In his comments he provided a brief history of the Center and highlighted some of the Center's innovative programs.

Senior Vice Chancellor Irv Goldstein provided an update on USM academic affairs. The status of the Dream Act generated the most discussion. Dr. Goldstein noted that the Act was passed by the Maryland Legislature, but will be voted on in the next election as a referendum for overturning the legislation. He outlined the parameters of the Act, answered questions regarding the Act, the events surrounding its passage, and the referendum, noting that if the referendum passes, it will become the law. Other topics of discussion were the UMCP/UMB Merger Study, the Coalition Lawsuit, and the USM Budget.

Assistant Vice Chancellor JoAnn Goedert provided an update on the Proposed Child Abuse Policy. There were many CUSF concerns regarding the proposed policy, as follows:

Essentially, the policy indicates that a professional must report an incident when they "suspect" abuse. It was noted by several people that "suspect" involves plausible denial. In many cases, it becomes easy for instructors to simply not suspect abuse that may have occurred.

There must be administrative support to implement the policy and training programs to assist faculty in the implementation of this policy. Just as there is training for sexual harassment, similar training could be provided for suspecting child abuse.

There may be potential unintentional consequences of this policy where faculty choose avoidance and eliminate assignments where students might reveal abuse. For example, faculty may eliminate an assignment such as a reflective essay or journal where students might write about an incident of abuse. Many faculty members use reflective journals. These assignments may be eliminated thereby eliminating the opportunity to discover suspected abuse in the first place. It is an avoidance issue. In another example, a faculty member noted that students applying for a scholarship have written about the obstacles that they have overcome (i.e. childhood abuse) and how this has not only made them a better person but more worthy of the scholarship. In this situation, is the faculty member required to report this suspected abuse? Another faculty member suggested that faculty may need to put a disclaimer in their course syllabi to the effect that if a student writes about childhood abuse in any of their assignments, the instructor is obligated to report the abuse.

After lunch Assistant Vice Chancellor Goedert provided an update on the Proposed Family Leave Policy and she requested CUSF input. CUSF comments were as follows:

The Towson University family leave policy was formally approved by CUSF via two resolutions last academic year.

The general consensus was that the tenure clock should be automatically stopped for maternity leave unless it is requested by the faculty member not to be stopped. In this regard, it was noted that one faculty member applied for early tenure to avoid problems with tenure and stopping the clock. In addition, a faculty member who is sufficiently prepared for tenure may not have a need to stop the tenure clock. Also, it was noted that the initial appointment letter which often sets the tenure clock could include a statement to stop the clock for maternity leave.

In reference to the parity issue, where faculty and staff have similar policies, it was noted that faculty teach courses within the specific time frame of a semester. Hence, the policy needs to consider covering classes on a semester basis.

What should be included within the purview of the policy? Discussion included the potential inclusion of family leave, maternity leave, and care givers including sick parents in the policy. Several faculty indicated the need to provide leave for sick parents. This is already an issue for many faculty; however, as the baby boomer generation grows older, it will increasingly become a problem.

Unlike faculty who are state employees and where family leave is a potential benefit, the problem for research associates is that they are funded by the grant or contract which has a beginning and ending date and as such, no continuity or carryover in benefits. Although no solution was offered, CUSF recognized that this was an issue that should be addressed in the development of the policy.

The policy may need to address the needs of different classes of faculty including Adjunct II faculty.

The faculty who often need maternity leave are young, untenured and have not accrued sufficient leave.

Nearby care giving services including nursing rooms should be provided, not merely on campus.

The CUSF Executive Committee met with the Chancellor, Senior Vice Chancellor and Faculty Senate Chairs at USM for its regular biannual meeting on Friday, December 9, 2011. In addition to many of the aforementioned topics, other items of discussion included faculty workload concerns and faculty access to all-faculty email lists.

The CUSF General Body met on Friday, January 20, 2012 at USM. Senior Vice Chancellor Irv Goldstein welcomed CUSF and reviewed the proposed policy revisions to the USM Appointment, Rank, and Tenure document. Dr. Goldstein gave a brief background on the impetus for the revisions, noting that the need for technology transfer resulted from the USM Strategic Plan. He provided the current proposed wording, and in a very close vote, CUSF passed the following motion:

CUSF supports the proposed wording changes provided by Senior Vice Chancellor Irv Goldstein in the ART document.

As a result of a procedural point of order raised regarding whether the votes of the two telephone attendees should count, the following motion was passed.

The rules committee shall review and make recommended changes regarding telephone voting, if needed.

Other motions that passed at this meeting were as follows:

Change the CUSF Constitution to eliminate the reference to UMBI which no longer exists.

Accept the citation motion wording with possible revisions to be submitted later during the day.

Chancellor Brit Kirwan greeted CUSF and joined the meeting before lunch. In his comments and presentation, he provided an update on topics such as the USM Budget, Strategic Alliance, Public Corporation Status, Family Leave Policy, Child Abuse Policy, the Coalition Lawsuit, and opened the floor for a question and answer session.

The next CUSF General Body Meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 15, 2012 at Bowie State University, which will include a panel discussion on “The Lasting Legacy of Shared Governance.”

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