



## COUNCIL of UNIVERSITY SYSTEM FACULTY

Regents Report April 16,2021

**Academic Integrity-** The Academic Integrity Team leaders meeting sponsored by MJ Bishop and CUSF has been rescheduled from April 7<sup>th</sup> to the end of April and the beginning of May to help CUSF finish the last changes to the policy effort and allow for a talking document to be presented to the team leads. We are getting closer to creating a final document.

**Technology effort-** Technology subcommittee members Patricia Campbell and Doris Santa Maria Makang, worked with USM's CIO Michael Eismeier and MJ Bishop on a memo to the CIOs and provosts of each of the campuses, asking them to jointly respond to a series of questions about technologies that are required for faculty and staff on their campuses, as well as technological resources that are provided to faculty (e.g., VPNs, secure cloud storage). The memo also asks about their plans going forward, as we move out of the emergency situation created by the Covid pandemic and return to something closer to normal. I have attached a copy of the memo for your reference along with this report. The memo was distributed to the CIOs and provosts on March 9 by Michael Eismeier. It was due back on Friday the second but as of Saturday there we only 4 responses (College Park, UMGC, Frostburg and UMBC). Further efforts to collect the responses will be made by Dr. Zakiya Lee.

On another front, Michael Eismeier is supposed to be getting a new date set up with Mr. Bruchaleski CIO of the Maryland Judiciary, but so far, he has not been successful in setting a new meeting date. Efforts are still underway.

CUSF is greatly appreciative of the help of Mr. Eismeier and MJ Bishop.

**Structural Inequalities subcommittee-** is in the process of preparing a virtual town hall. A tentative date has been set for May 12<sup>th</sup>. Coppin State University will host the event. The panel will be on faculty experiences with structural inequalities, but it will focus on solutions as well as obstacles. One possible title is: "Faculty Diversity at USM: Experiences in Structural Inequalities and Possible Solutions".

The panel will start with some background and facts about structural inequalities in academia. Dr. Lorenda Naylor of the University of Baltimore has gracefully agreed to be the moderator and to provide this background on structural inequalities. Submissions of faculty experiences and related concerns are being collected and will be concluded by April 9<sup>th</sup>. The speakers at the town hall will be faculty from schools not represented in the earlier held Panel Discussion. Speaking invitations are being extended to faculty at Bowie, University of Baltimore, Coppin, University of Eastern Shore, Salisbury University, University of Maryland Center of Environmental Studies, and Frostburg State University. Topics for the Town Hall are being decided upon now by the committee and will be sent out in advance to faculty so that questions can come from the "virtual" floor. Invitations to attend will be sent to all USM faculty, USM Council Chairs, Regents and Presidents. Because of the size of the virtual setting registration will be required however, it will stay open until the end of the meeting.

**Shared Governance Survey Report-** The council's shared governance survey has been distributed and at the time of this writing the committee has heard from ten schools with the remaining due in shortly.

**THE COVID 19 subcommittee: Survey Results** I have the committees Power Point data and the report as attachments to the email accompanying this report.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS INFORMATION WAS PRESENTED AT THE CHANCELLORS COUNCIL AND IT WAS AGREED THAT THE PRESIDENTS AND CHANCELLOR WOULD REVIEW AND WORK WITH CUSF TO BRING RELIEF TO THE CONCERNS DESCRIBED IN THE SURVEY.**

COMMENTS:

**CUSF's COVID Subcommittee prepared a survey for faculty with the purpose of** helping the committee to narrow down an approach in determining what if any help CUSF may sponsor alone or with USM support to ease the impact of the pandemic for faculty. Thus, the survey prepared was not a professional research survey but more along the lines of an informal poll.

It was anonymous. It did call for the respondent to provide the school, faculty type (e.g. Full-time, part-time, lecturer, tenure, non-tenure) and length of time at the school. The survey was originally distributed to CUSF representatives in January and asked that they get help from their faculty Senates in seeking responses from others. By the end of February the committee had only a little over one hundred responses. Discussion at that February CUSF meeting led to a communication push on the various campuses and in little over a month the response numbers had swollen to over 2000 by survey closing time this past week. Specifically, the survey responses totaled 2,013 with 1,158 written comments. The schools represented in the data collection were response heavy in the larger traditional institutions despite efforts to get the survey out to the schools whose faculty were not well represented by the February and March numbers.

The faculty who answered the survey were largely full time. They constituted 1607 of the respondents (approx. 18% of USM fulltime faculty according to Iris data). Of the fulltime faculty 918 did not have tenure as opposed to 773 responding yes. 614 the full-time faculty respondents had been in their positions for more than 16 years with those from 0 to 5 years closely behind them with 586. The remaining group ranged from 6-15.

The data responses identified the biggest COVID concerns for faculty fell into the following four categories:

- Teaching faculty was the most important concern. The survey identified concerns around being able to provide a quality work performance in duties like advising, scholarship, academic integrity, service, resources and support for teaching online, while keeping students engaged.
- Balance between work and life was singled out with concerns focused on greater care giver responsibilities, heavier workload and physical and mental health issues.
- The need for Vaccine Availability.
- Better Guidance from Admin – Provost, President, Deans, Chairs (including transparency, justification for decisions, inclusion in the process and communication efforts)

The written response summary represents 640 of the 1,158 the 518 not published were either repetitive of the topic replies or miscellaneous category topics. The written responses identify the same areas of concern as the data.

That being noted, the written responses are much more explicit as to what is bothering faculty on a personal level and as such draw the most interest from the results of this survey. The timing I referred to earlier in my comments coupled with the overall passion displayed by faculty in their responses suggest two conclusions as to why the response level took such a dramatic turn in less than a month: Faculty **feel** alienated from the decision making process related to their role and career and let down by the shared governance process in the initial covid response. Comments like “It has all been top down”, “Word of mouth is NOT the way to let us know of vaccinations”, or “All the above issues could be more effectively addressed with a more serious faculty involvement and shared governance.” In short, faculty **feel** their ideas have not been sought nor do they see evidence that they have been heard for those ideas that have been given. Further, **faculty fear** the top down approach will continue as the schools attempt to return in the fall. One response sums up the feeling: “Need to decide on “new norm” WITH faculty input.”

The subcommittee is making the following recommendations for future action:

- *This committee will focus on the feedback and issues that are being experienced by faculty because of the pandemic. Its focus will be to monitor the concerns of faculty as reported by CUSF representatives or their constituents, and to **recommend to the general council** those that may require action by CUSF and/or attention by the system.*
- Dissemination of the system wide survey results and those specific to the individual institutions will be made.

Comments: While I am not a professional mental health worker, nor for that matter are any of the committee members, it is their opinion and my own that this simple survey speaks volumes as to the personal concerns and feelings felt by faculty. **Faculty, like us all**, are tired, overworked, and find themselves short on patience. The survey hit a raw nerve at a time when change is once again raising its uncertain head. In reading the responses I urge you to consider the timing and the possibilities of actions that may include faculty in the decision-making process. CUSF will be back to the Presidents with their suggestions as what might be help us to work out the problems this survey highlights.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Brunn

CUSF Chair