

**Council of University System Staff
October 22, 2002
Frostburg State University**

Members Present

Joe Hill – UMBC
Sally Hearn - UMBC
Nicole B. Buffington – UMES
Hermetta Hudson – UMES
Dale O'Neal – BSU
Marie Meehan – BSU
Jay Hegeman – FSU
Patrick McLane – FSU
Judy Lowe – SU
Susann Shoop – TU
Steve Agnes – UM,B
Colette Becker – UM,B
Andrianna Stuart – UMCP
Susan Conroy – UMUC
Vera Maher – USM
Raymond Frederick - UB

Alternates

Arthur Hanlin _FSU
Bill Crockett – UM,B
Mary Edwards, TU
Mary Reed, USM

USMO Liaison

Rosario I. van Daalen

Guests

Dr. Catherine Gira
Ms. Kathy Snyder

Call to Order

Chair Joe Hill called the October CUSS meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. at Frostburg State University.

Greetings and comments from FSU President

Patrick McLane introduced Ms. Kathy Snyder, FSU Director of Human Resources, and Dr. Catherine R. Gira, President of Frostburg State University. Dr. Gira welcomed CUSS to FSU and expressed to this body how important the staff employees were at FSU. However, as stated by Dr. Gira, since Collective Bargaining has become an issue, she had to dissolve the internal Staff Senate to avoid conflict of interest. FSU was the first University to vote for union representation and according to the union, it was inappropriate to continue the Staff Senate to voice concerns. The PeopleSoft Human Resources phase is being implemented at FSU.

The Chair welcomed a new member, Nicole Bush-Buffington, from UMES.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the September 19th, 2002 will be approved at the November 19th meeting along with the October minutes.

Report of the USMO Liaison

Rosario I. van Daalen informed the group regarding the hiring freeze policy that is now in effect. This freeze does not affect teaching faculty and student employees.

Special exceptions may be made by providing justification to the University Presidents and the Presidents providing justification to the Chancellor for the final approval.

TU CUSS Members raised the question of layoffs because their University is presently under going a staff audit which is said to be the groundwork for layoffs. However, there has been no discussion concerning layoffs or furloughs. Retirement and attrition are the current practices used to avoid layoffs and furloughs.

On October 11, 2002, the Board of Regents approved Policy VII, 7.26, (Leave for Disaster Service) for those who are certified by the American Red Cross as a Disaster Service Volunteer during a Level II disaster.

Dr. Stanley F. Battle has been named as the new President of Coppin State. Dr. Burnett had been the former president for the past 33 years. Coppin is dealing with a great deal of budget stress and there is a need for massive renovations.

Open Enrollment will begin November 11th. The State has not provided any information on changes

Chair's Report

Six Staff Awardees were honored at the BOR Meeting on 10/11 and their checks are to be mailed to them. We must make sure all recipients receive their checks.

The Chancellor's Council (University Presidents) met to discuss budget issues. Furloughs and layoffs may be an option (previous years actions to address cuts). Individual Institutions must become creative in developing innovative ideas for funding during this budget crunch. Each institution must evaluate and determine if the vacant positions MUST be filled. Additionally, we can't continue to increase tuition every time we need money. If the Presidents have to give back money, they want the flexibility to decide where the money comes from and not have the legislators tell them what line items should be tapped into.

In addressing the Chancellor's Council, the concern of not backfilling retirement and other line position would impact the remaining staff employees once again with the concept of "do more with less". The Universities may have to make choices as to what they don't want done. Employees are already over-burdened and this will have an impact on services rendered. In FY04 there will be a 1.5 billion dollar deficit; same impact for FY05; in FY06 we may see the budget increase.

A concern was raised by CUSS Members that we may be in breach of grants if we are not allowed to have the staff to provide the work the grant requires. Another concern is that we are developing all these new programs, new buildings with no staff support. The quality of service will definitely be affected. Voice concerns, write/e-mail your legislators in support of higher education funding. The Legislature will return to session the second Wednesday in January 2003. Increasing tuition is not always the answer when funds are needed.

The current status of Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) at USM Institutions was corrected for Salisbury University, Towson University and UMCES in our Employee Assistance Program Proposal and presented to the BOR.

The CUSS Executive Members met with the Chancellor and reviewed the recommendation to revise the salary guidelines for Exempt Employees to reflect a possible 2.5% increase based on PMP Meets Standards instead of the average 2.5%. The Chancellor asked for additional information before he can make a decision.

CUSS asked that the market survey be conducted for Nonexempt (pay plan) salary structure. Policy requires this survey to be done every two years. Having this information in place will be the benchmark used in any adjustments which might be necessary once funding is available.

The Chancellor was in favor of clusters for EAP's until each institution can provide their own services

The Chancellor asked each of the Executive Committee Members their view of the relationship of shared governance and collective bargaining. The members expressed the desire for shared governance to continue as it is currently structured. The Chancellor acknowledged that desire, but questioned its application. This will be an issue which the B.O.R. will be addressing .

CUSS asked that the BOR Staff Awards should not be presented at the Board of Regents Meeting, it was said to be inappropriate. The awards should be presented to the recipients in a proper setting, such as the Annual Chancellor's Reception in the Fall.

Budget request for the CUSS newsletter was a point of concern. The budget request should be sent to Rosario along with justification and will be paid through an account at the System Office. All employees should receive a copy of the CUSS Newsletter.

The SHELRB (State Higher Education Labor Relations Board) met on September 26th, the issue before it dealt with a BSU police supervisor challenging exclusion from collective bargaining. Another issue, unfair labor practices, filed by UMBC and Coppin was dismissed because they did not file in a timely fashion, i.e., thirty-day time limit. This Board is located on Bestgate Road located in Annapolis across from the Annapolis Mall and will meet again on October 31st.

Decertification of a Union. A Union may be decertified if it is found to be delinquent in their duties. If a Union is voted in by a democratic body, then that same Union can be voted out by the same democratic body and process (not more than 120 days and not less than thirty days prior to the expiration of the memorandum of understanding) .

Nathan Chapman has resigned as Chair of the BOR as of October, 2002, but will remain as a Board Member. Adm. Larson will Chair the Board. This may change again after the State election in November..

Committee Workgroups

The CUSS Members went into their Committee Workgroups.

Lunch

We had a very delicious and enjoyable lunch.

Reports from Committees:

The Compensation/Benefits Committee is working on sick leave, performance evaluations and how merit pay is distributed. Policies are already in place for extended sick leave where leave can be drawn. Leave Reserve Fund is accrued from all unused personal leave. The committee will research the policy before making recommended changes. The committee also plans to research Evaluations, and/or PMPs, to ensure consistency throughout the system for evaluation and/or accountability for all employees.

Community Development Committee discussed criteria for the Staff Award Nominees. The BOR USM Staff Awards Policy will be sent out soon.

Old Business:

Please let Vera Maher know of any corrections to be made on the CUSS Member List on our web page.

New Business

Venus Windmiller resigned as CUSS Secretary to pursue a better job opportunity. Chair Joe Hill nominated and the committee approved Marie Meehan as the new CUSS Secretary.

There has been no word on the 1.25% merit increase from the Board of Public Works. A decision will be made after the election. Discussion to Lobby the Board of Public Works for the one-time bonus merit increase proposed January 2003 and supporting the policy on Shared Governance was presented by Andrianna.

The next scheduled CUSS meeting will be held at Bowie State University on November 19, 2002. Please notify the host campus if you will not be in attendance at their meeting.

Respectfully Submitted

Marie L. Meehan
CUSS Secretary