

**Council of University System Staff
December 14, 2004
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SYSTEM OFFICE**

Members Present	Alternate Members
Dale O'Neal - BSU	
Marie Meehan - BSU	Robert Smith - FSU
Judy Lowe – SU	Janine Vienna - SU
Gloria Gaguski – TU	
Joan Doremus – TU	
Angie Brickhouse - TU	
Melissa Moore - UMB	Cindy Schuster - UB
Bill Crockett – UMB	
Colette Becker – UMB	
Mary Pat Armstrong – UMBC	
Jim Citro – UMBC	
Sam Sibanda – UMBI	
Donna Taylor - UMBI	
Mary Graham Fisher – UMCP	
Chenita Kollock - UMES	
Andrew Rein – UMUC	Jim Hartsock – UMUC
Joe Hill – UMBC – Past Chair	Chancellor's Liaison to CUSS – Rosario I. van Daalen Guest: Joe Bryce, Assoc. V. Chancellor for Governmental Affairs Chancellor William Kirwan

Call to Order

The December CUSS Meeting was called to order by Chair, Bill Crockett, at University System of Maryland Office.

Rosario welcomed CUSS to the USM Office and gave us a brief history of this office and the pictures represented on the walls of the conference room of the thirteen institutions in the USM.

After careful review of the November minutes, a motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as amended.

Chair, Bill Crockett, introduced our guest speaker, Joe Bryce, Associate Vice Chair for Governmental Affairs.

- Joe Bryce thanked CUSS for their support when he was a candidate for the State Retirement Board. Budget issues, again, will dominate the new session in Annapolis. The Governor has stated that he will provide a bump to the USM, which would provide additional funds, but at this point, the amount has not been determined.

- Health benefits were recently approved for a six-month period and must be revisited in April or May. Part of the reasoning for the six-month period is to try and have health benefits coincide with the budget fiscal year. The Governor is looking at the ratio that employer/employee contribute to their health benefits. A small adjustment in this ratio can provide big money statewide.
 - This would have a tremendous impact on staff in regard to retention, recruitment of employees.
 - The Governor should understand that to maintain excellence and quality, benefits are essential to maintain excellence in staff.
 - The line of communication is open and more information on health benefits may take place the third week in January.
 - A question was raised as to what is changed this year that makes benefits so contentious? And Joe Bryce's reply was that there is a change in philosophy to balance the budget; control cost, bring budget into balance, raise revenues, reduce deficit by increasing employees' percentage for health benefit costs, and the structure of holidays (through legislative process).
- Joe Bryce appreciates the willingness of CUSS becoming involved in legislative issues that involve the staff. He feels it would be helpful if we all interact with the liaison at each representative institution. CUSS will try to provide Joe Bryce with a direct link to all the Universities' liaisons so information about issues involving staff issues occurring in Annapolis can be forwarded to staff representative so they can attend and participate in these meetings. A General Assembly website is available to seek information on when bills are being presented, mlis.state.md.us. A budget meeting is scheduled for mid-January.
- Joe Bryce stresses that CUSS must take a stand on issues; keep staff informed at each campus; communicate to leadership and to Staff Councils\Senates the direct concerns with the proper direction to follow.

Chair's Report:

Bill thanked Joe Bryce for appearing before us and providing us with valuable information.

Announcements:

- Several CUSS Representatives attended the Chancellor's Open House and Bill Crockett thanked the Chancellor for the invitation and a fine time was had by all in attendance.
- Frank Clancey from UMCP and Dan Albert from UB resigned since they left the USM and Bill Crockett formally thanked them for their service to CUSS. A new chair must be appointed for the Legislative Committee.
- The Executive Committee met with the Chancellor on 11/30/04. The Chancellor is an advocate for the Staff of the USM. He is committed to providing the 2.5% merit increase. The Substance Abuse Policy is being reviewed. Currently campuses just have guidelines to follow.
- The Finance Committee and Full Board of Regents met on 12/9 and 10 with the presentation of the Staff Awards.
- At the Chancellor's Council meeting on 12/1/04, the Chancellor stressed that the governor is offering strong support for Higher Education funding in the upcoming 2005 general session. The chair attributes this fact to the Chancellor and institution Presidents lobbying efforts put forth. The Governor has stated that USM will receive a significant "bump" in the FY06 budget and USM was not asked to cut the budget like other state agencies. Other hot topics of discussion were retention due to concerns with the health care benefit package. The chair (Bill

Crockett) emphasized that the State makes this decision, not the Institutions or USM, and to please make sure this is communicated to our staff.

Report from the Chancellor's Liaison to CUSS

- Contracts to implement the Fidelity Vendor for ORP and Supplemental Retirement Plans must be completed by 12/31/04.
- A New Dental Plan, United Concordia PPO, is being offered during open enrollment. Please complete your open enrollment information by 12/22/04.
- USM Project of Efficiency and Effectiveness has set up task forces for the following:
 - Recruitment and applicant tracking
 - Eliminate paperwork
 - On-line health benefits – USM employees' benefits on-line; access for all employees within the state.
 - Automated time-keeping
 - System wide training and development – CUSS must get involved, promote the BEST Program

The task forces will meet one to two times a month and projects will be completed by June, 2006. CUSS must get involved as soon as possible.

- Dependents up to age 23 need verification of student status to remain dependents and receive health benefits.
- Be aware and familiar with the tuition policies.

Chancellor Kirwan joined us for lunch and thanked all those in attendance at Hidden Waters. Budget issues are still at the forefront. The Budget for FY06 hasn't been released, but the Governor is mandated to release it by the end of 2004. There will be a special meeting in January of the Finance Committee followed by a BOR meeting. The merit increase of 2.5% is locked in unless a State mandate is issued to prevent it. The State recognizes and appreciates CUSS and CUSS' representation at the Annapolis is more important now than ever. Bill Crockett thanked the Chancellor for his support.

New Business:

Joe Hill, Past Chair, suggests the ranges on the salary guidelines should be wider. This could eliminate the issue we ran into last year with the merit increase. Staff at some Institutions who reached the maximum of their grade received the merit, whereas, at other Institutions staff did not receive it. Joe Hill feels that within the USM all Institutions should deal with this in the same manner. Upon completion of the market survey an adjustment to the Nonexempt Salary Structure should be made.

Old Business:

An amendment to the CUSS Constitution will take place in Section 3, Appointment of Membership, Section 3b, ...Each institution shall have a minimum of two members (one Exempt and one Nonexempt) insert new language, "In the event that no person is nominated or elected from either one of these groups, an institution may elect all members from the same group (all Exempt or all Nonexempt). This method for selecting Council members applies solely to institution where the Shared Governance structure includes members from both groups".

A motion was made to take action on this friendly amendment to insert the new language as stated above and send the CUSS Constitution membership revisions to the Board of Regents for final approval. The Question was called, all in favor, and the motion passed unanimously.

Committees Broke into Work Groups:

Committee Reports:

Community Development – Colette Becker, Chair

The CUSS BOR Staff Awards were presented at the December 2004 BOR Meeting. The presentation was very nice. The CUSS BOR Staff Award packages for 2005 have been distributed to the CUSS Representatives for evaluation and to submit ratings to the Community Development Chair by the January CUSS Meeting on 1/25/05. The CUSS Representatives were reminded to keep all information confidential.

Benefits and Compensation Committee – Andrew Rein, Chair

This committee is trying to retrieve data from the USM Institutions on the benefits packages for Contingent II Staff. They would like to see all Institutions have an equitable benefits package for Contingent II Staff.

This committee will be continuing to work with the draft of the proposed BEST Policy to determine what aspects of this document can still be used along with the work that is being done on staff training through the Efficiency & Effectiveness effort.

Communications - Mary Reed, Chair.

- The committee will work on sending CUSS information via e-mail to CUSS Representatives. This committee will post the synopsis.

Legislative – Sam Sibanda, Chair

- This Committee is compiling a list of the Legislative Liaisons at each Institution.
- This Committee will be reviewing the legislative website to get the heads-up on bills being presented before they get voted on.

A motion was made and seconded that the meeting be adjourned.

The next meeting will be at University of Maryland College Park on 1/25/05 at 9:30 a.m.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Marie L. Meehan
CUSS Secretary*