

Council of University System Staff
March 15, 2005
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, BALTIMORE

Members Present	Alternate Members
Marie Meehan - BSU	
Clacie Hubbard – SU	Janine Vienna - SU
Angie Brickhouse - TU	
Joan Doremus – TU	
Cindy Shuster – UB	
Judy Sabalauskas - UB	
Bill Crockett – UMB	John Barber – UMB
Colette Becker – UMB	Jessica Bird - UMB
Melissa Moore - UMB	
Mary Pat Armstrong – UMBC	Christine Routzahn
Jim Citro – UMBC	
Sam Sibanda – UMBI	
Queen Atterberry - UMCP	
Chenita Kollock - UMES	
Andrew Rein – UMUC	
Jim Hartsock – UMUC	
Mary Reed - USMO	
Joe Hill – UMBC – Past Chair	Chancellor’s Liaison to CUSS – Rosario I. van Daalen Guests: President, David J. Ramsey
Roy Ross – Past Chair	

Call to Order

Chair Bill Crockett called the March CUSS Meeting to order. The Chair introduced President David J. Ramsey of UMB. President Ramsey welcomed the CUSS members to the Saratoga Garage consisting of 11 floors for parking, and three top floors of beautiful office facilities overlooking the City of Baltimore. UMB is an academic health center that is funded by various sources, i.e., medicals; State Funds; Research/NIH and the clinical branch. The clinical branch entails physicians seeing patients for a fee; the doctors are employed by the University. This branch subsidized the research. A fourth link to stabilize the funding is working with businesses in clinical trials and developing a research park (public/private partnerships).

The minutes were approved as amended.

Old Business:

- The Chair thanked the Community Development Committee for their hard work in the selection process of the CUSS Staff BOR award winners. A letter to the recipients was sent on 3/11/05 by Regent Kendall, Chair BOR. Summaries of the nominees and their contributions will be posted on the CUSS Website and the CUSS Newsletter. At the June BOR meeting the CUSS BOR Staff winners will receive their awards. CUSS is trying to arrange a Chancellor’s reception for the awardees. All nominees will receive a letter from the Chancellor on their contribution to the USM.

Report from the Chancellor’s Liaison

- Due to the new regulations established by the Department of Labor, Fair Standards Act (FLSA), a few USM employees were affected and their job grouping was changed from Exempt Staff to Nonexempt Staff status. The State of MD General Assembly has now passed the bill, introduced by the USM, to grandfather the affected employees in the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) if that was the retirement plan they already belonged to before the FLSA change. Approximately 15 employees will be grandfathered into the ORP.
- The revised Nonexempt Salary Structure has been approved by the Chancellors' Council. It will move to the Finance Committee on 3/27/05 and then to the full BOR on 4/8/05. There is positive thinking that the BOR will approve it and that it will become effective 7/1/05.
- Open Enrollment is still a huge issue with no dates determined as of yet. There is a lot of hearsay and speculation. The General Assembly may reduce the COLA from 2% to perhaps 1% to cover additional costs for health benefits – still under discussion. The Legislature can cut the budget or keep as is; but cannot increase the budget. The Presidents are all very concerned over the upcoming high cost of the health benefits. The health benefits will run for the fiscal year 2006, 7/1/05-6/30/06. Vendors' rates will most likely rise creating an increase in the premium rates.

New Business

- The 2002-2004 CUSS Newsletter has received positive comments. The Chair, Bill Crockett, thanked Hermetta Hudson and Mary Pat Armstrong for their efforts in putting this newsletter together. The Communications Committee is working diligently to get the 2004-2005 Newsletter out by August 2005. CUSS Members were asked to have their HR run a Peoplesoft Query to obtain all names of excluded employees to forward to the printers so all newsletters can be preprinted.
- Committee Reports for the newsletter are to be in by the end of April with short bullets on what they have accomplished and what they hope to accomplish.
- CUSS will be sending a letter to Annapolis expressing the opposition to employee cost increases in the health benefits packages; we do not support change, but we support things as they exist. Employees have paid the price in the past through working longer hours for the same pay, layoffs, and removal of the match funds. Employees shouldn't have to supplement health costs to balance the budget. We must take a strong stand against any increases in costs or decreases in COLA or Merit to enable the USM to recruit and retain dedicated employees. We support staff members at their respective Institutions sending letters to their local representatives expressing their feelings on the health cost issues, etc.
- Scholarship funds are available through the Injured Workers Fund at www.kidschance.md.org.
- At the May CUSS meeting Melissa Moore, CUSS UMB, will lead an Ergonomics presentation dealing with risk management, occupational safety, etc.

Chair's Report

- The Chancellor's Council met and there was discussion involving part of the COLA being used to cover the cost of health care benefits.
 - The tenure process for faculty is being evaluated for potential change in the process.
 - Enrollment is projected to increase by 50,000 over the ten years. The question is will faculty and staff increase as the student population grows or will the student-staff ratio widen.
 - Capitol Hearings on the Budget will be heard on 3/17.

Committees Broke Into Work Groups

Committee Reports:

Community Development – Colette Becker, Chair

- This committee will be working on the location for our CUSS transition meeting to be held in July, 2005.

Benefits and Compensation – Andrew Rein

- A health benefits letter will be generated in support of current health benefit costs with no increased costs. This letter to be reviewed by CUSS before being sent to Annapolis. This committee believes a firm stand must be taken for the purpose of recruitment and retention of good employees.
- This committee is stressing wellness prevention measures.
- Review of the BEST Policy with recommended changes is on-going.

Communications - Mary Reed, Chair.

The CUSS Newsletter should be out in August 2005.

Legislative – Sam Sibanda, Chair

- This Committee will continue to view issues passed by the Legislature that affect the USM and its employees.

New Business:

Any Institution to renew CUSS Membership, should do this now, the new slate of members must be in place by the August 2005 meeting.

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

The next meeting will be at TU on 4/26/05 at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marie L. Meehan, CUSS Secretary