

**Council of University System Staff
May 20, 2008
University of Maryland Baltimore County**

In attendance:

	Executive Committee	Members/Alternates
Bowie State		Marie Meehan
Coppin		Linda Harvey
Frostburg		Jesse Ketterman
Salisbury		Carol Barr Jackie Eberts
Towson		Gloria Gaguski Brenda Yarema
UB	Judy Sabalauskas, Co-Secretary	
UMB	David DeLooze, Member at Large	John Barber Colette Becker Roy Ross
UMBC	Joe Hill, Member at Large	Linda Brown Deborah Geare
UMBI		Jamie Kasco
UMCP	Larry Lauer, Past Chair	Sr. Maureen Schrimpe, IHM
UMCES		
UMES		Chenita Kollock
UMUC		Scott Wibbert Ayman Abdo
USMO	John Wolfe, Chair Rosario I. van Daalen, Chancellor's Liaison to CUSS	Mary Reed

Welcome and Introductions

Linda Brown introduced UMBC President Freeman Hrawbowski who then greeted CUSS. He described the significant role Shared Governance played in addressing ROTC's offer to make UMBC a permanent site and no longer a satellite for the ROTC program housed at John Hopkins University. President Hrawbowski emphasized how the faculty, staff and student senate groups contributed to the discussion. The input from these discussions was used as feedback and input for the decision. The entire UMBC population was invited to two town meetings. When concerns were raised regarding the Army's position on items of concern, President Hrawbowski reminded the audience that it is easier to make changes from within an organization.

Call to Order

John Wolfe thanked the President for his greeting and opened the May 20, 2008 meeting. Before giving the Chair's report, John thanked Roy Ross for making legislative materials available to all CUSS members during this year's legislative session.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes for March 25, 2008 and April 22, 2008 were amended and approved.

Chair's Report - Shared Governance - Status of CUSS

Because of schedule conflicts, John announced he would have to leave the meeting early. As a member of USM's academic affairs staff, John reports directly to the Senior Vice Chancellor and is required to attend meetings sometimes on short notice. When he accepted the position as CUSS chair, he did not anticipate the level of activities that would conflict with CUSS meetings. Although he has had to miss a few monthly meetings, his dedication to CUSS and shared governance has not wavered. CUSS benefits from John's ability to address the Chancellor's Council and the BOR at their meetings.

Even though John's position as a USMO employee affects his ability to Chair CUSS meetings, there is only a perceived conflict since CUSS serves in an advisory capacity and is not recognized as a negotiating group. CUSS continues to be sensitive to this role. John mentioned that the Chancellor's Council took notice that CUSS was aware of Union activity and expresses concern when the Union is invited to discuss matters that affect Excluded Staff (not represented by the Union) and CUSS is not included in the discussion. This diminishes the purpose of CUSS as a legislated advisory group to the Chancellor and the BOR.

CUSS will continue to seek acknowledgement of its status as an advisory group. Shared Governance should not result in staff being "captured" by decisions and actions that we have not been a party to. This is precedent setting for CUSS.

Joe Hill took the opportunity to commend John Wolfe again for taking a position that supports USM staff. There is some confusion regarding the role of upper management participation in shared governance. Only two current University presidents and two Vice Presidents for Administration were in office when CUSS was established in 1992. The change in leadership has resulted in the need for CUSS to reestablish its advisory role. Union representation established a "them vs. us" mentality, which diminishes the perception of the advisory role of shared governance.

Larry Lauer asked about the proposed schedule for the president's report on shared governance. The end of the fiscal year coincides with the end of the CUSS year. New officers start in August. It would make sense for the reports to be submitted at this time.

Discussion on parking

Larry- Parking was shared Governance issue. The union negotiated an MOU for a 7.5% limit on rate increases. The fact that CUSS was not included in the discussion raises concerns about our advisory role in shared governance.

Rosario- The decision on parking fees in the past was never discussed with CUSS or most of the Staff Senate Chairs. It has always been imbedded in the institutions' budget when presented to the BOR.

Dave – At UMB, Staff Senate has been on parking committees in the past. Three years ago, the union negotiated for an MOU limiting the increase of parking fees to \$2.50 per pay. Parking is a cash cow. The State does not control an institution's fees. Each institution can raise funds through parking fees. The parking issue is an example of whether our voice is being heard at each institution. If our advice is ignored, we will need to ask the Chancellor about it. The Board of Regents is listening. Due to the pending retirement of Chancellor Kirwan in 2010, the leadership of USM is in transition. Issues are approached on the basis of his legacy. CUSS needs to know if we are part of the legacy.

Joe - The union is the only legally negotiating group recognized by the State. CUSS has an advisory role.

Linda Brown - asked if we included the faculty on parking concerns. Staff and faculty roles are perceived differently within USM

Report on May 15th BOR Finance Committee meeting

From the Capital Budget workshop there is a five year capital program that relates to the Governor's five-year capital project plan. Funding is linked to the slots referendum on the November ballot. If it does not pass, USM will fall into the chasm as it relates to funding. Revenue from Slots is slated towards new spending.

Committee on Education Policy Forum at UMBC on June 4th will discuss slots. Linda said that we don't know how much of the slot revenue would go to the state.

Roy said the HEIF Act of 2007 proposed to dedicate 6% of corporate income tax from last year.

The Bohannon Commission is to develop a vehicle for funding state appropriations. MHEC would like to expand the current higher education student ID number system to secondary education. That way, the student's ID number would start in high school and stay with the student through college and higher. The student would keep the same number within all MHEC schools. This would make it easier for the records to follow the student.

JoAnne Goedert of the Attorney General's Office – Domestic partner benefit bill does not apply to State of MD employees yet. The State Insurance Commissioner's regulations for this benefit are in place, however, the State Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has not approved the benefit yet. Civil unions could be the basis for determining domestic partners' eligibility. Maryland no longer recognizes common law marriage. The definition of "partner" needs to be defined by the legislature. There is also an issue regarding private and public employee benefits. Private industry can regulate its benefit package. Public employees' benefits are tied to state legislation.

Visitor

Andy Clark, the USM Director of Legislative Affairs at the Annapolis office, sat in on our meeting. Mr. Clark works with P J. Hogan. Andy is interested in our discussions and has asked if he could sit in on both CUSS and CUSF meetings. His role is to observe how each group works so there can be a richer, in-depth understanding of the groups which will in turn foster confidence and trust during the legislative session. Rosario would like the legislative committee to consult Andy to supplement our voice in Annapolis.

USM HR Chancellor's Liaison, Rosario's Report

Open Enrollment for health benefits is now closed and Rosario asked CUSS members if they had any comments or questions.

Brenda Yarema asked about the number of years of service required in order to qualify for the health benefits full subsidy upon retirement. In the ORP, 16 years is required for **full** subsidy for employee, 25 years for the spouse/dependents. In the ORP, if the employee retires with less than 25 years of service, the spouse and dependents can purchase the health benefits at full cost (state and employee's portion). This group rate is considerably less than the market price. Furthermore, the true benefit is having access to a group plan without having to worry about qualifying due to pre-existing conditions. In the State Pension System, 16 years is required in order to receive the full subsidy for both employee and spouse/dependents. The cost is prorated if the employee works less than 16 years.

A bill was negotiated between the Union and the State to increase the annual leave carry-over from 400 to 600 hours at the end of the calendar year. This difference of 200 hours does not qualify for payout at the time of termination. That negotiation and the bill do not apply to USM employees. At the USM we encourage employees to use the leave as intended to enjoy time off for relaxation, time with the family and well being. The DBM was against increasing the accumulated leave balance to 600 hours; the bill did pass.

The BOR Staff awards were approved and the recipients received their checks before they were officially notified by letter. The fact that one institution had five awardees was questioned. It only shows what happens when an institution truly gets involved in the process, from the President down. Colette was prepared to be challenged and had the documentation to support the review committee's decision. The importance of presidential support was underscored. It would be wonderful if other institutional presidents were as involved as President Hrabowski. In addition, UMBC has a specific mechanism in place for documenting nominations. There should be more than 36 nominations out of a possible 14,000 Staff employees; at least six, for each of the 14 institutions, for a total of 84 nominations Systemwide.

A reminder flyer was sent to alert members of the State Pension System that as of July 1st, the individual contribution will increase by one percent. The employee contribution will cap at 5%. Rosario reminded employees to put money into the SRA in order to get the \$600 match.

The Chancellor's message for the CUSS newsletter is near completion and will be submitted to the Communication's Committee within this week.

New Item for Discussion

The topic of John Wolfe's position on CUSS as a USMO Vice Chancellor was re-introduced. John's position and experience as faculty allows him to see the complete picture regarding shared governance. His views are respected. The Executive Committee would like to sit with John at the next BOR meeting on June 20th in Salisbury. This would enhance the presence of CUSS and its advisory functions when John gives his summary report on this year's CUSS activity as legislated by the constitution. The past chairs would represent the continuity of CUSS.

The group broke for lunch and committee work.

Committee Reports

Executive – at the June 20th BOR meeting, John will bring up the issue of the presidents’ reports on the role of shared governance at their institutions. There is no deadline for the yearly report. It makes sense to give the report when the current CUSS term ends in July.

Benefits- Jackie asked everyone to submit reports on any external vendor discounts made available to an institution’s employees. A system-wide clearing house would stimulate and emulate a vendor’s program and allow networking of discount programs.

Jackie also confirmed the meeting place for the first staff training session on shared governance to be held the day before the August CUSS meeting at Salisbury.

The CUSS HR-survey continues to be an instrument for comparing the implementation of the Policy on Pay Administration for Exempt Staff employees, at each institution.

Community Development – Colette thanked the BOR Staff awards committee for their work. The BOR accepted the nominations of five employees from UMBC and one from UMCP. During the summer the committee will look at the evaluation tools and how the UMBC system can be used as a model. Are the categories excluding candidates? How can motivation to nominate employees be increased?

The employees have received \$500 from the BOR and need to receive \$500 from their institution. Award letters and certificates need to be sent. Colette submitted the Committee’s report which included a one paragraph summary for each recipient. Nomination packets for the upcoming year will be distributed in September.

Communications – Marie needs the reports from two committees. Jamie is working on a new layout for the newsletter. A print copy should be available for review at the June meeting.

Legislative - Roy passed out the legislative reports for this past session. He brought new reports that focus on the State and Universities.

The cost reduction bill disbanding the Health Insurance Advisory Council was passed. The HR Liaison had a seat in the council to represent the USM’s interests. Information will need to come from DBM. Roy asked if CUSS should talk to the Chancellor to make sure we have a voice concerning health matters. As of now, the union represents all employees’ health concerns. The USM always gets what the State gets for benefits, however, CUSS members may no longer have the opportunity to be heard or participate in reviewing the RFP’s from vendors. In past years CUSS members participated with DBM in the RFP review.

New Business

Joe reminded new CUSS members that each institution should not feel obligated to provide gifts for CUSS members when hosting the monthly meeting. It is a nice gesture if promotional material is available, but money should not be spent on items.

Nominations/Election of CUSS Officers

Larry reminded us that we were coming to the end of our calendar year and are taking nominations for new officers. Self nominations are welcome. Kimberley has volunteered to continue as Secretary. Nominations are needed for Chair and Vice Chair.

The next meeting will be held on June 24th at UMES.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by
Judy Sabalauskas