

Council of University System Staff (CUSS) Meeting

September 16, 2008

University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute (UMBI)

In attendance:

Members

Cynthia Coleman	Bowie State
Victoria Kelly	Coppin
Jesse Kettermann	FSU
Jackie Eberts	SU
Brenda Yarema	CUSS Member at Large, TU
Karyn Schulz	Co-Secretary, UB
Kimberley Lynne	Co-Secretary, UB
David DeLooze	UMB
Colette Becker	Vice Chair, UMB
Deb Geare	UMBC
Jami Kosco	UMBI
Mary Stapleton	UMBI, new
Absent	UMCES
Larry Lauer	CUSS Past Chair, UMCP
Absent	UMES
Ayman Abdo	UMUC
Mary E. Reed	USMO
John T. Wolfe, Jr.	CUSS Chair, USMO

Alternates/Guests

Kathy Magruder	UMBI
Judy Sabalauskus	UB

Chancellor's Liaison	
Absent	USMO

John Wolfe called the **meeting to order**. Assistant Vice President, Human Resources, UMBI, Kathy DeShong welcomed the members on behalf of the President Jennie Hunter-Cevera. UMBI is the youngest USM institution with four research facilities. UMBI is a non-degree, research institution with no students enrolled but graduate assistants work in the labs.

August **minutes** were approved with changes.

Chairman's Report:

John Wolfe formerly announced his resignation as CUSS Chair. Since August, his work load has expanded with three additional major assignments. He apologized to the members that he can't fulfill his second term as Chair. He will still attend as many meetings as possible and work on the Executive Committee as the Past Chair.

Jackie Eberts commented that members need more support basis at their institutions. It's harder for everyone to get away for monthly CUSS meetings.

Colette Becker said that in this critical stage of CUSS, her plan as newly-elected Vice Chair was to shadow John this year, and she doesn't feel that she is currently the best person to take CUSS where it has to go as Chair. Larry Lauer, as the most immediate Past Chair, volunteered to finish out Dr. Wolfe's current term. This would provide some continuity to the process and issues under discussion. A few years ago, when Larry resigned in his second term as Chair, Past Chair Joe Hill stepped in, so there is reasonable precedence. Dave DeLooze made a motion for Larry Lauer to assume the Chair effective at the close of this meeting. The motion was seconded and the vote was unanimous.

On 8/5/08 John distributed the CUSS Shared Governance Conference packets at the **Regents Meeting**. He repeated to the board the four areas of CUSS focus:

- To stimulate continued support of and sustainable commitment to the practice of Shared Governance among staff. Administrators and Regents in the USM,
- To recommend and work with the USM on the policy review of Human Resources issues for Excluded staff to assure consistent application of existing policy and flexible areas for new policy,
- To review and recommend procedures to assure currency and equitable procedures to Exempt Staff pay administration System wide,
- To promote a System wide educational program that clarifies the distinctions and policies for Shared Governance and how it differs from union representation (via the Leadership Conferences).

He extended an invitation to the BOR for 10/20/08 FSU and 4/20/09 TU Leadership Conferences.

On the Tuesday after Labor Day, Colette met with the **Chancellor's Council (all the presidents)**. The council is an advisory board that meets with Chancellor Kirwan.

Colette reported that they discussed the following:

- the MHEC state plan for higher education,
 - The budget – O'Malley doesn't want to raise tuition, but that depends on the slot referendum decision. DBM is asking for a 3.3% overall reduction.
 - Council asked Colette, "Why did UMBC have five of the six BOR staff awards?" She answered that the award is predicated on the nominations of the president.
- Deb Geare (Community Development Committee Chair) pointed out that staff award letters were drafted with John's name and should change to Larry's name. The letters will go out Friday or Monday at the latest to the institutions. It was suggested that Deb copy each CUSS member. Deb said that Dr. Freeman Hrabowski of UMBC has already sent out the requests for nominations.
- Brenda Yarema said that at TU the administrative council partners with the VPs on question of staff awards.
- Cynthia Coleman of Bowie said that the staff council is partnering with the president and pulling a committee together to guide staff through the nomination process. Campus senates are the key to the BOR award success.
- Kimberley said that the UB Administrative Council is creating a committee to coach employees in the process.
- USMO has not sent nominations for the BOR staff awards in four years.

-Jesse Ketterman suggested simplifying the nomination process and that individual institution awards be included in the BOR staff awards ceremony so Institution Staff Awards will be recognized at the USM level.

-Brenda suggested recognizing all the nominees.

-Judy suggested honorable mentions.

-Larry suggested that the awards ceremony be more prestigious. When UMBI hosted the BOR, the room wasn't big enough. Janice Doyle in Brit's office coordinates the ceremony. Larry said his first duty as Chair would be to write a letter to the presidents' council suggesting formally to make the BOR awards more prestigious. Larry will send a draft to the CUSS Executive Committee.

-Members discussed the timing of the awards with the suggestion that the ceremony shouldn't take place during a BOR meeting. Someone suggested the night before the BOR meeting but the night before there's a big BOR dinner that's paid for by the presidents. If we move the award schedule, we'd have to adjust the timing of the notice to the institutions.

-Chair John Wolfe proposed a motion that CUSS support Larry Lauer's suggestion. It was seconded and vote was unanimous.

Budget and Hiring Freeze:

Before the meeting, Larry e-mailed the following Baltimore Sun article to the members:

"The latest tax receipts provide further proof that Maryland is not recession-proof. The slowing economy has hit sales, personal income and other taxes hard enough to open up a \$432 million gap in the state budget. That could balloon to about \$1 billion in the next fiscal year."

The complete article can be viewed at:

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/editorial/bal-ed.revenues10sep10,0,156705.story>

Before the meeting, Larry also e-mailed members a September 12, 2008 MEMORANDUM addressed to the Vice Presidents at UMCP from their President C. D. Mote, Jr. in reference to a Hiring Freeze:

>"The purpose of this memorandum is to announce that the University System of Maryland has imposed a hiring freeze for all state-supported positions. This freeze will apply to all divisions of the University, >effective immediately.

>The hiring freeze applies to all state-supported positions with the following exceptions:

>1. Lecturers;

>2. Student employees and graduate teaching assistants;

>3. Routine reappointments of incumbents on contractual appointments;

>4. Positions for which a written offer of employment has been made >before the close of business, Monday, September 15th.

>The State is preparing to announce substantial budget reductions within the next ten days and the chancellor has been informed that USM will not be exempted from these cuts. Therefore, exceptions to the freeze will be very limited as we anticipate significant funding reductions. A Vice President may request the President grant an exception only if there is evidence that the position is critical to the operation of the unit. In addition, position reclassifications and acting appointments will require approval by a Vice President.

Another article shared by email from the **TU Towerlight:**

"Slow economy leads to expected budget cuts; may impact Towson's growth

By: Kiel McLaughlin, Posted: 9/15/08

In an apparent preemptive strike against upcoming budget cuts, the University System of Maryland has imposed a hiring freeze across all state institutions. A memo from the USM went out late Thursday

afternoon to all state campuses, Towson provost James Clements said. The hiring freeze applies to all faculty, support staff and administrative positions that have not yet been filled. The USM has foreseen a significant budget cut to higher education due to the struggling economy, administrators said. It could be the largest decrease in funding since 2003 when hundreds were laid off across the system."

Full article is available via this link.

http://www.thetowerlight.com/home/index.cfm?event=displayArticlePrinterFriendly&uStory_id=f39436eb-f805-4f4e-b660-08f5e96456bf

At the meeting, Larry said that PJ Hogan told him last week that no budget changes were planned until the slots referendum was voted on in November for that would impact any revenue projections.

Any discussion of increasing the ORP employer contribution is now on the back burner. Even an increase of ½% was \$3.5M and it's now off the table. USM will be looking for other ways of cutting back besides furloughs or lay offs.

Cynthia said that at Bowie the president alerted hiring freeze yesterday; by January all budgets are frozen.

Post the UMBI meeting, Larry sent the members the link to the Board of Regents Policy on Layoffs, for your reference. USM BOR Policy VII-1.30, Policy on Layoff for Unclassified and Classified Personnel, of April 25, 1991,

<http://www.usmh.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws/SectionVII/VII130.html>

However, Rosario then e-mailed CUSS members the following policy link for Exempt Staff employees effective January 2000: USM-BOR Policy VII-1.32 POLICY ON LAYOFF AND RECALL OF REGULAR EXEMPT EMPLOYEES <http://www.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws/SectionVII/VII132.html>

Policy VII-1.30 is still in effect for Nonexempt Staff employees. The section titled "Classified" still currently applies to Nonexempt Staff employees. Look at the end of policy VII-1.32, at the "Replacement for" Section which clarifies this practice for Exempt.

Committees held working lunches:

Executive Committee

John will email Brit and the BOR to announce the Chair change. The Chancellor should contact President Mote of UMCP directly.

Larry will draft a letter to the Chancellor's Council and the BOR, making a formal CUSS statement on hiring freeze issue and request that USM adopt as humane a policy as possible. He might suggest some money saving ideas (particularly in facilities) instead of lay offs. He'll state that CUSS would prefer furloughs over lay offs and will ask to be included in the process. Larry will send the draft to the Executive Committee to review before end of September. A suggestion was also made that CUSS partner with the students on this issue.

Benefits and Compensation Committee

Jackie reported that they updated the CUSS members list. Committee members have an assignment of collecting each institution's teleworking procedures. UMBI is talking about it. BSU and TSU are considering it.

At UMBC, it works. Deb teleworks on Fridays and emails from home. It is permitted as long as the job duties allow it and the supervisor is in agreement. The employee on telework has to log the work done. The telework arrangement can be terminated by either party at any time.

Community Development Committee

The committee reviewed the award packets. Deb assigned USM internal contacts at each institution to each committee member to follow up. Letters are going to the presidents.

Exempt Staff that are not eligible and can't be nominated: manager – deans, executives. Due date for nominations is 1/9/09.

Legislative Committee

Dave reported that the push for ORP increase is now on hold because of the budget issue.

Jackie suggested reviving CUSS day in Annapolis. Dave said he'd bring it up with Roy and can ask PJ Hogan or Andy Clark. Deb offered to help as Community Development Committee chair.

Communications Committee

Mary will bring a CUSS membership list to the next meeting from current website.

Newsletter is done. Members agreed to:

- Distribute ecopies (Mary will send to Dave and Colette and they can distribute it to Excluded Exempt and Nonexempt Staff employees. Can't email it at TU because they consider the CUSS newsletter as spam.
- post the PDF on the website and send a link
- print only 1000 for employees without e-mail access, and
- Print on recycled paper.

Chancellor Liaison to HR Report

Rosario was absent but sent this email to members Monday. Kimberley read it:

"I wanted to give you this update on the proposed Policy on Teleworking. The telework policy did not go to the Chancellor's Council this month (Sept 2). For now, it is on hold and probably will not be revived until the Institutions complete their Climate Action Plans. I shared this information with the HR Directors at the Sept 11 SHRC Meeting. We discussed that, even though the USM-BOR policy may not be in place, Institutions may want to proceed in implementing the procedures they have already developed, in anticipation of the BOR policy being approved. At this point it is an internal matter for each Institution."

She also sent this item of information for Fidelity Investments, ORP/SRA provider at USM:

There is a website dedicated to the University System of Maryland Fidelity plans.

The link is: <https://www.mysavingsatwork.com/atwork/umdm.htm>

Old Business

CUSS Meeting Schedule

In an e-mail in early September, Rosario pointed out that some of the scheduled CUSS meetings were not scheduled for the fourth Tuesday of the month for months that do not have a conflict with a holiday (November, December, March, etc). For instance, September 16 is not the 4th Tuesday; it is the 3rd Tuesday. This creates conflicts for other scheduled USM meetings (that's why she was not able to attend today's meeting). The members reviewed the meeting dates.

Was	At	Notes
10/21/08	FSU	keep date b/c FSU has already coordinated 10/21 meeting & 10/20

		leadership conference
11/18/08	Bowie	3 rd Tuesday OK b/c of Thanksgiving
12/16/08	USMO	3 rd Tuesday OK because of the holidays
1/20/09	Coppin	Victoria will check if 1/27/09 is available
2/24/09	UMCP	4 th Tuesday
3/24/09	UB	4 th Tuesday - Keep that date
4/21/09	TSU	Brenda will check if 4/28 is possible
5/19/09	UMBC	3 rd Tuesday OK because of Memorial Day
6/23/09	UMES	4 th Tuesday
7/21/09	UMCES	3 rd Tuesday -- will someone at UMCES please check 7/28/09? UMCES not represented at this meeting.

Next Staff Leadership Conference will be 10/20/08 1-4pm at FSU. Invitations will be sent to the BOR and to regional institutions: FSU, the environmental lab, and the UMCP satellite in Hagerstown will be invited, and someone suggested inviting the regional legislature. Kimberley needs to send the flyer imager to Larry. FSU HR will send out time waivers to staff. Colette will scan Roy's and Larry's packets. Karyn suggested creating a one page evaluation and Colette volunteered.

Kimberley asked about **Domestic Partners** – this was a question from Carol Vaeth in the UB Administrative Council. The issue of domestic partner definition will not be addressed until the General Assembly resolves the marriage issue. USM does not control benefits, although certain benefits are campus specific.

Nonexempt Staff employees excluded from collective bargaining - issue on Policy on Salary Increases letter: Kimberley said the UB HR wanted the language clarified. The Executive Committee suggested removing sentence in third paragraph about the misuse of the policy by inflating performance ratings. UB HR said the letter impacts a limited number of employees.

Cynthia said that they'll make a few tweaks at BSU and send it to the president.

Jackie said that the SU HR director Marvin Pyle didn't like the segmentation of employees in the letter. John wondered if there was a better strategy to take than sending the letter.

Women's Forum question: the Systemwide Women's Forum that advises the Chancellor, but that is not a codified group, asked John if they could send an official representative to each CUSS meeting. CUSS policy states that any staff member can attend a CUSS meeting; they just can't vote. Larry reminded all that CUSS can close a meeting per the bylaws. Members vote to close a session.

Next meeting:

10/21/08 FSU, Pearl Ort Room on the fourth floor of the library. Jesse distributed parking passes. Parking is available at the police station or the performing arts lot.

Respectfully submitted by Kimberley Lynne, 9/28/08