

Council of University System Staff (CUSS) Meeting

April 28, 2009

Towson University

In attendance:

**Members**

Absent	Bowie State
Chris Thomas	Coppin
Jesse Ketterman	FSU
Carol Bauer	SU
Gloria Gagunski	TU
Brenda Yarema	TU
Kimberley Lynne	Co-Secretary, UB
Karyn Schulz	Co-Secretary, UB
Ronald Kasl	UMB
Colette Becker	UMB, CUSS Vice Chair
David DeLooze	UMB
Roy Ross	UMB
Deborah Geare	UMBC
Joe Hill	UMBC
Chenita Reddick	UMES
Larry Lauer	CUSS Chair, UMCP
Sister Maureen	UMCP
Willie Brown	UMCP
Absent	UMCES
Ayman Abdo	UMUC

**Alternates/Guests**

Heather Bishop	TU
Dale Schmertzler	TU
Kay Kazinsla	TU
Sharon Ayres	TU
Two other guests arrived?-	TU
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Chancellor's Liaison to CUSS:	
Rosario I. van Daalen	USMO
Ken Fonstock	UMB

Brenda Yarema called the **meeting to order** and introduced **James Sheehan, VP of Admin & Finance at TU**, who serves as the liaison between the Staff Council and the TU president's office and was integral in funding the Staff Development Day that had an attendance of 365 Staff employees this year. Mr. Sheehan said that he vets new policies via CUSS and the TUSC faculty senate and that both do valuable work. He thanked the state legislature for the approval of the USM budget: no COLA, but only .5% less of the original budget.

CUSS March **minutes** will be emailed to the group by Kimberley after the meeting and they will have to be approved in May.

**Chairman's Report:**

Larry also acknowledged and thanked the General Assembly for its approval of the **USM budget** with only a \$5.8M reduction. It was the best we could have hoped for given the economy this year. Many letters of thanks have to go to PJ Hogan, Gov. O'Malley and the budget committees from us for the great job they did this year.

Larry had sent the members a copy of the letter from Chancellor Kirwan about UMBI's Institution review by the BOR. Ken Fonstock, the UMBI chair of the Staff Senate attended the TU CUSS meeting. The Chancellor said that the Staff is allowed input on the **UMBI's review** but they can't serve on the committee, only the Regents can participate.

**Chancellor's Council Meeting via phone 4/6/09:** PJ Hogan and Andy Clark were still getting finalization of the budget so most of the conversation focused on that, but they also discussed **furloughs** and resolved to review the outcome. The Chancellor said that there are no plans for furloughs now. The budget should remain intact.

Rosario said that there have been no projections for Fiscal Year 2010 layoffs at this time.

**Willie Brown asked about stimulus** package impact on the USM system. The State used \$1B stimulus money to balance the budget. Larry reminded Willie that stimulus money comes with stipulations and regulations and is tracked differently.

#### **Bills on Union Service Fees:**

[SB264 passed Finance Committee 7 - 4 and went to the full Senate and the House.](#)

Roy said that the mandatory Union Service Fee was passed for State employees; the bill does not apply to USM employees.

Rosario discussed this bill later in her report: the bill has been introduced to each of the Legislative Sessions for the past ten years. O'Malley made a commitment in his campaign to support it. If the unions want to collect these fees, they have to negotiate it, inform represented employees and the MOU has to be ratified.

#### **Larry reported on the 4/10/09 Board of Regents (BOR) Meeting:**

The BOR presented 16 faculty awards in a big ceremony.

Larry gave the members a copy of his report to the BOR/Chancellor's Council:

- Review request for furlough program
- Thanked the Chancellor and PJ on budget approval
- BOR awards reviewing program
- Thanked them for adjusting the Minimum of the Nonexempt Salary Structure to match the Minimum of the State's Salary Structure.

Senator Francis Kelly of the Finance Committee stated that pay program management needs to be applied in accordance to these hard economic times. The BOR reviewed and approved a two-year Nonexempt Staff Salary Structure. Since 1996, it's been a regular process to keep Nonexempt Salary Structure and jobs at market.

From Larry's email to Marvin Pyle in SU: I (or the Council) did not hear any objections to adopting the State Living Wage from any of the presidents or vice presidents. They all supported it, then and the Regents approved it. Note that this letter says " ALL NONEXEMPT EMPLOYEES ON REGULAR OR CONTINGENT STATUS."

Rosario reported that the **Chancellor's 2009 Salary Guidelines** were circulated the day previous to this CUSS meeting at TU. The Nonexempt salary structure was approved; there will be no Merit increases, no COLA, no Match to the SRAs, and no bonuses. The only possible employee salary increases are:

- For retention of faculty that is actively recruited (July 1, 2009)
- Nonexempt Staff whose current pay falls below the new Minimum in Pay Ranges 1, 2 and 3 (July 1, 2009).
- Federal Minimum Wage increase from \$6.55 to \$7.25 – applies to Student Workers, General Assistant Employees, Graduate Assistants, Lecturers, etc. – Effective July 15/former BOT insts; July 19/UM insts.

Ron Kasl asked Larry if the Chancellor has requested any suggestions for **cost savings**?

Larry said that UMCES is worried of a possible consolidation with other institutions.

Joe said that utility costs and carbon footprints can provide the greatest cost savings so we should push those initiatives.

Colette pointed out: if only that saved money went back into salary lines.

Rosario suggested that CUSS members send cost savings ideas to Larry Lauer and Joe Hill or the members could also submit suggestions to each Institution Senate.

### **Chancellor's Liaison to CUSS - Report:**

Rosario said that USM autonomy is being challenged. After party shift in government from Democrat to Republican to Democrat, there have been State employee dismissals and new appointments under the new party. The USM does not have politically appointed positions. However, SBill 760/HB 735, introduced this Legislative Session, would have required the USM to report on all actions on employees' reclassifications and promotions, recruitment, hiring, terminations, grievances, performance evaluations, etc. As our Governmental Relations office has described, by Statute, the USM maintains an independent personnel system. What makes USM unique in State Government is that it is bound by a Governing Board that is vested and tasked with the rights and responsibilities of operating said personnel system. It is long-established that the Board of Regents has the authority to set policies consistent with the Systemwide mission. Chancellor Kirwan was able to defend the USM's status and the bill now exempts the USM from the reporting, but the Joint Committee of Fair Practices and State Personnel Oversight still stands. It is important to remain vigilant so that the USM's autonomy is not challenged or placed at risk.

### **OPEN ENROLLMENT:**

Rosario sent the members information the night before. There are lots of errors in the employee benefits handouts. Some rates are wrong in the table in the booklet. Packets sent from DBM via a mailing house were delayed/lost. Because of the errors, the open enrollment is extended until May 26.

The Kaiser and Dental Benefits Providers HMO contracts were not renewed. Employees with Kaiser and the dental benefit providers HMO have two choose new providers or by 7/1/09 they'll have no coverage.

IVR (interactive voice response) enrollment is back. Don't wait until the last day to use it.

Employees will be able to enroll in a PPO (preferred provider organization), POS (point of service), or EPO (exclusive provider organization) health plan. The "HMO" terminology will no longer be used and it is being replaced by the "EPO".

-Employees enrolled in the CareFirst BlueChoice HMO will automatically roll over into the CareFirst EPO;

- Employees enrolled in the Optimum Choice HMO (Mamsi) will automatically roll over into the United Healthcare EPO; and
- AETNA EPO is a new offering. Election of an AETNA EPO requires use of the IVR system to enroll.

In most cases, HMO participants will not have to change providers under an EPO plan.

**Same Sex Domestic Partners Coverage: conditional until final word from Senate**

Provided that the regulations are adopted on July 1, 2009, same sex domestic partners and their dependents who meet the criteria will be eligible for health benefits. Due to the Federal Internal Revenue Code, the State subsidy will be treated as taxable income to the employee. More detailed information will be included in the State Benefits booklet and on the State of Maryland health benefits website. The criteria are stringent for this coverage: living together for one year, mutual bank and address and paying bills together. The contributions are post tax and the contributions from the state are taxable.

**Airport Fast Park at BWI** is offering a special parking rate for University System of Maryland (USM) travelers for business and leisure travel with a Frequent Parker Card.

The Airport Fast Park program features:

- Quick enrollment with no cost
- No reservations required and guaranteed parking
- Parking rate of \$6.20 per day (excluding airport tax)
- Earn free parking when using the Frequent Parker Card
- Luggage assistance
- 24/7 shuttle service
- Complimentary bottled water and newspapers

To enroll, visit the Airport Fast Park website at

<http://www.airportfastpark.com/mailer/baltimore/universityofmaryland.html>.

**Update from Rosario on DBM's statement on "SHPS participants and loss of personal data":**

"We are diligently reviewing our processes to make sure that all information transmitted to or from us is done so in a secure manner. We also have explored the possibility of purchasing credit monitoring for the affected employees but at this time, we have decided not to pursue that option given the cost to the State and the fact that there has been **no reported** credit breach or identity theft as a result of this incident. I know that is little consolation given the stress and uncertainty you are feeling as a result of this incident."

Also, please note the following update posted on the State's DBM website:

Last month, the Department of Budget and Management became aware that a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) Fee Summary report listing the names and Social Security numbers of members in the healthcare and dependent care flexible spending accounts was lost in the mail between SHPS, the vendor who manages the accounts for the State, and the Department's Employee Benefits Division (EBD). While there is no indication that an actual privacy breach occurred, the Department of Budget and Management informed Flexible Spending Account (FSA) participants about the incident and steps they can take to protect against potential identity theft. Further, to mitigate any future potential privacy breaches, we have directed the vendor to use an alternate technology-based method for the transmission of this and similar reports that contain identifying information of members.

Please note this only affects State employees enrolled in the healthcare or dependent care spending account program and does not impact retirees as flexible spending accounts are not available as a retiree health benefit.

#### **Committee Meetings:**

Deb Geare of **Community Development** reported the committee received 43 nominations from 13 Universities. This, in and of itself, is an accomplishment. As in the past, the decision was a difficult one and the subcommittee chairs and members of the subcommittees utilized the highest standards of integrity while reviewing the nominations and formulating their decisions. It is noteworthy that in all three categories, none of the subcommittee members were from the same University as the recommended winner of that category. Furthermore, all fourteen Universities had representation in this process.

- Exceptional Contribution to the Institution and/or Unit to Which the Person Belongs – Nonexempt Staff - Nominee of Choice: Ralph Murphy – UMBC
- Exceptional Contribution to the Institution and/or Unit to Which the Person Belongs – Exempt Staff - Nominee of Choice: Vassie Hollaman - UMB
- Outstanding Service to Students in an Academic or Residential Environment – Nonexempt Staff - Nominee of Choice: Mary Leeper, Towson
- Outstanding Service to Students in an Academic or Residential Environment – Exempt Staff - Nominee of Choice: Raft Woodus, Towson
- Extraordinary Public Service to the University or the Greater Community – nonexempt Staff - Nominee of Choice: Connie Mitchell, UMB

- Extraordinary Public Service to the University or the Greater Community – Exempt Staff  
- Nominee of Choice: Marty Newman

Roy Ross reported for the **Legislative Committee**: Roy thanked the Council and constituents for their letter writing campaign that he felt further supported the Governor's budget for higher education. He drafted a follow-up letter to the Governor thanking him for his support of higher education. Roy received a letter from Governor O'Malley indicating his appreciation of our work. Roy suggested we send thank you letters to our representatives as well.

There was no report from the **Communications Committee**.

There was no report from the Benefits/**Compensation Committee**.

Larry reported for the **Executive Committee** that the names selected as nominees for the BOR Staff Awards were reviewed and will be sent formally to the Chancellor and the BOR for their review and final selection. The committee discussed the need to either add new awards or double the number recipients of the current awards.

**New Business:**

**Nominations:** new CUSS officials will be nominated in May and June meetings and elected in June.

**Next meeting: May 19 at UMBC**

*Respectfully submitted by Kimberley Lynne and Karyn Schulz*