

Council of University System Staff (CUSS) Meeting - MINUTES  
 Jan. 25, 2011  
 University of Maryland, University College  
 Largo, MD

In attendance:

**Members**

Marie Meehan	BSU
Chris Thomas	CSU
Jesse Ketterman	FSU
Kay Kazinski	TU
Brenda Yarema	TU
Giordana Segneri	UB, CUSS Co-Secretary
Colette Becker	UMB, CUSS Vice Chair
David DeLooze	UMB
Roy Ross	UMB
Lori Smith-Watson	UMBC
Joel DeWyer	UMBC
Jackie Eberts (by phone)	SU
Gus Mercanti	UMCES
Absent	UMES
Willie Brown	UMCP, CUSS Chair
Sister Maureen Schrimpe	UMCP
Delores Jackson	UMCP
Debby Mathis	UMUC
Melissa Stein	UMUC
<b>VACANT</b>	USMO

**Alternates/Guests**

Mi'Shaun Stevenson	BSU
Karen Tyler	BSU
Chenita Reddick	UMES
Meredith Levesque	UMUC
Mike Paszkiewicz	UMCP

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Chancellor's Liaison to CUSS:

Rosario I. van Daalen	USMO
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- I. Welcome and Introductions
  
- II. Approval of Minutes
  - approved as submitted
  
- III. Chair's Report
  - Chancellor's Council: lots of discussion about the budget
  - Governor is proposing no furloughs for state employees
  - Karyn Schulz and Willie Brown are on a committee to discuss voluntary separation within USM
    - there are two representatives on committee from most institutions in USM
    - CUSS and CUSF each have two representatives on the committee, too
    - first meeting is tomorrow, Jan. 26 (**NOTE: The meeting was postponed due to inclement weather.**)

- committee is seeking to devise program for USM that may not necessarily be similar to State's separation program. **The State's program is looking for 1,500 volunteers; so far, there are 1,400 volunteers.**
- Governor has given USM modest 3 percent increase
- goal is not to have any layoffs or furloughs for FY 12
- most CUSS representatives haven't heard anything about who their Institutions' representatives to the committee are

IV. Welcome: Marky Campbell, Senior VP of Partnerships and Strategic Alliances

- proud of the new the UMUC building, the Largo Academic Center (with Shared Services suite, one-stop shop for student services)
- 685 Staff work in the building
- not designed as classroom center (although four or five classes run in building at any given time)

V. Chair's Report (continued)

- discussion: What is the benefit to the System of offering the voluntary separation and losing the PINs?
- ultimate goal of voluntary separation is to avoid layoffs and furloughs
- if we don't give back money, the impression among legislators may be that USM has too much money and we can afford to be cut more
- Dave DeLooze: In 1998, State had early retirement option in which USM participated, so not sure why committee is forming now to "reinvent the wheel"
- if USM doesn't participate in the program and the state comes looking for money to be given back, it's not going to be Faculty who are laid off, it's going to be Staff
- What are specific questions or concerns that Willie Brown can take to committee?
  - Can you make it more than \$200/year for every year served? (maybe \$300-400)
  - concern is adequate, appropriate communication, especially if each campus has leeway
  - timely, transparent decision-making
  - some access point to have questions answered
  - Can the buyout be over multiple payments vs. one lump sum?
  - Will the system help us devise an FAQ?
- Willie will send notes from committee meeting out to CUSS membership after meeting
  - info can be incorporated into "news release"

- call to arms over CapWiz to let legislators know that we're working on it and that there are certain things we want and don't want to happen
- ORP: Proposal from UMCP Senate did not make it to Chancellor's Council meeting
- Board of Regents Awards: Chris Thomas
  - deadline for nominations was Friday
  - participation was pretty slow until Thursday
  - about 36 nominations (ranged from one to eight per Institution)
  - pretty mixed Exempt and Nonexempt Staff employee nominations

#### VI. Vice Chair's Report

- before we meet in Annapolis in February, goal is to provide new website template for feedback

#### VII. Governor's Letter

- group editing
  - lowercase The before Council of University System Staff
  - remove "who are" before "not covered" (second paragraph)
  - What is "the cause"? (third paragraph)
  - USM Staff is extremely talented and dedicated to higher education and the goal of providing the best for our students and for the citizens of our state.
  - reduce right margin to fit more on one page
  - Willie Brown will sign the letter
  - As representatives of the USM, there are two issues we'd like to bring to your attention:
    1. retention raises
    2. salaries up to market value
  - keep to one page
  - Willie Brown, Roy Ross and Colette Becker will rewrite letter according to agreed two-point structure; upon crafting, they'll send it to the governor (motion approved)

#### VIII. Chancellor's Liaison Report: Rosario van Daalen

- presented Biennial Nonexempt Market Salary Survey to Vice Presidents Council this morning
  - 
  - when started review in the fall, USM was already behind the market (50th percentile of pay ranges in current salary structure was already 9 percent behind market)
  - even though pay in market has gone up, State budget has crumbled

- recommendation is to adjust midpoint of structure by 3 percent, per recommendation made two years ago
- two years ago (last review), only adjustments made were in pay ranges 1, 2 and 3 so as not to pay less than what State pays
- 3 percent increase recommendation would cost the USM more than \$3 million
- eventually, it will cost millions of dollars to bring the structure to a truly competitive market level, because it's been eroded over the years
- when employees leave the USM, we won't be able to pay the newcomers the going rate for level of experience needed
- recommendation that's being considered is no change to the structure because there's not enough money to fund it
- if minimum of State structure increases because of COLA, USM would have to increase its structure, too (because USM is committed to keeping minimum level with State's)
- a lot of changes are going to be taking place in retirement and health benefits
  - benefit coordinators will be receiving training in mid-March for the FY 12 Open Enrollment
  - concerned about changes in health benefits during open enrollment
  - no federal changes to health care have impacted State/USM yet because our plan is on a fiscal year contract
- tuition remission definition of dependent: resurrected discussion because never resolved; Rosario van Daalen will keep CUSS informed.
  - in January 2005, IRS changed definition of dependent; need to know who is declaring the child as a dependent for taxes
  - there are some legal complications according to tax liabilities
  - benefit coordinators are having a hard time managing the definitions, especially since it's led to angering employees

IX. Visit to Annapolis

- UMB has a facility in Annapolis, and they have made it available for CUSS visit on Feb. 22
- parking: park at Navy Marine Corps Stadium and take the shuttle in
  - Roy Ross will look into cost of parking
  - will send e-mail out with details
  - 44 West St. is location of facility
  - meeting will start at 10 a.m.
- Scenario A: meet at UMB facility, have a two-hour meeting, break for lunch, then visit delegates and senators to hand out CUSS letter (Willie Brown will bring 192 copies)

- Scenario B: meet and go to House for recognition on the floor, then pass out letters afterward
- everyone should know their own delegates/senators (for their home addresses) and those of their Institutions
- we should touch base with our Institution government liaisons to let them know we'll be visiting our legislators
- the first staff person in the representative's suite is very important
- \$5 for CUSS-branded pins; if you weren't at the meeting, send your name to Brenda Yarema, indicating that you would like a pin; bring \$5 to February meeting when you pick up your pin
- dress professionally (or business casual)

#### X. Committee Meetings

- Executive Committee
  - Rosario van Daalen has been receiving communication from employees across the USM about how they're being treated upon being laid off
  - many of the employees who have contacted Rosario van Daalen are long-term employees (25+ years); they're being told that their departments have been eliminated and are given a short amount of time to pack up their stuff and leave—"You have 10 minutes to get out"
  - this can incite employees; they deserve to be treated with dignity
  - In previous years, USM Institutions offered outplacement services, layoff packet information on unemployment, COBRA, retirement; give them the option to retire
  - CUSS members will offer suggestions for improved behavior rather than just complaining about what's happening
  - recommendations:
    1. HR director/HR office representative should be there for every layoff
    2. outplacement services, counseling
    3. official letters with specific information about why the layoff is occurring
    4. complete termination package with information about health benefits, COBRA, unemployment insurance, outside counseling, continuation of tuition remission, retirement alternatives
    5. if employee is in good standing, give them other opportunities within the Institution
    6. priority of interview at other USM Institutions

- 7. strengthen language that separates layoffs from termination without cause
  - layoff requires 90 days of advance notice (and eliminates the position); separation without cause requires as much as a year of advance notice
  - keep in mind that it affects the morale of those who remain (they're going to question their commitment to an organization that gets rid of people who have dedicated their lives to the organization)
- Benefits Committee
  - How to compensate employees during these tough fiscal times in a budget friendly manner?
  - How to boost staff morale?
  - How to show appreciation for committed staff that have remained loyal and are hard working?
  - Are there any best practices that cover this type of topic?
  - Utilizing Vendor discretionary accounts i.e. food services, book stores, etc.
  - Proposed Examples:
    1. Free and/or discounted parking; designated special parking space
    2. Internet café for grounds crew, internal housekeeping, etc.
    3. Paid Day(s) Off
    4. Free Lunch Coupon
    5. Free Book/Community store gift certificate
    6. Lunch with President/Vice President, etc.
    7. Administrative supported, enhanced and encouraged Telework/Flexwork policy and/or or pilot program
  - was told that Nonexempt Staff could not work from home (written in MOU); Rosario van Daalen recommends checking the MOU to make sure this is correct and to discuss it with appropriate representatives (HR and union)
- Board of Regents Staff Awards Committee
  - Kay Kazinski will help post all documents to Wiggi, develop discussion board to communicate about ratings
  - Selected awardees should be available to the Board of Regents at April meeting (April 15)
  - finalize and send off recommendations at March meeting
  - needs about five additional volunteers to help review the nominations: Kay Kazinski, Colette Becker, Gus Mercanti
  - Willie Brown recommends Chris Thomas send out an e-mail with specifics
  - passing around sign-up sheet; otherwise, Chris Thomas will assign

- Communications Committee
  - working on CUSS website redesign; once site is redesigned, technology services will implement it
  - Gynene Sullivan will input content
- Legislative Committee
  - Governor's full budget is online
  - Legislative committee information should be updated over next several days
  - degree completion is USM's No. 1 priority (need to hit 55 percent)-- came out of conference call with Andy Clark
  - USM raising tuition 3 percent; even with increase, USM is 25th highest tuition in the country improvement over previous rating of sixth highest in the country.
  - <http://mlis.state.md.us>: Legislature's website
  - Rosario van Daalen: when budget bill (HB 72, SB 87) passes both House and Senate in April, it becomes the State's budget for the forthcoming fiscal year
  - Mi'Shaun: Caregivers leave?
    1. Rosario van Daalen: a proposal from the TU chapter of AAUP is being discussed by CUSF; it addresses additional leave above and beyond FMLA for child care for faculty member (arrangements already exist under collegiate leave); very unclear what will be decided
  - Colette found the proposal for contract renegotiation for State employees (including one-time \$750 bonus); will e-mail it out

XI. New Business

- UMUC: issue with low-level managers interpreting policy: requiring doctor's note for sick days? Some confusion about extending blackout periods to sick leave
  - Rosario said this is not Board of Regents policy; might be UMUC policy
- shared governance workgroup formation at UB
- Towson University president stepping down

NEXT MONTH'S MEETING: Feb. 22, 2011, Annapolis

*Respectfully submitted by Giordana Segneri, CUSS Co-Secretary*