



# COUNCIL OF UNIVERSITY SYSTEM STAFF

## CUSS: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

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### CUSS WEBSITE ADDRESS:

[usmh.usmd.edu/Leadership/  
Workgroups/SystemStaff/](http://usmh.usmd.edu/Leadership/Workgroups/SystemStaff/)

#### Editors:

*CUSS Representatives*

#### Design/Layout:

*Fran Younger*

UM Center for Environmental Science

## STANDING CUSS COMMITTEES



### Benefits Committee

*Chair: Jessica Bird, UMB*

The Benefits Committee will review current benefit plans and proposed changes in benefits --including Health Care, Retirement, Vision, Prescription, Life Insurance, Tuition Remission, Annual, Sick, and Personal Leave, and all other non-cash compensation packages.

### Communications Committee

*Chair: Lu Ann Marshall, UMB*

The Communications Committee will develop means of conveying CUSS issues to various constituents: Nonexempt and Exempt Staff, Faculty, Students, Regents, Legislators, etc. The committee will develop formal and special features for the newsletter, collect special interest columns for yearly newsletters and CUSS Words, and arrange for printing same. Included in its charge is various means of communication: print media, electronic media, phone trees, etc...

### Community Development Committee

*Chair: Huck Bothner, UMUC*

The Community Development Committee will develop and execute activities that provide for the professional and social development of staff at the University System of Maryland. This could include presenting, or co-sponsoring with other groups, professional development opportunities for staff; arranging social activities such as baseball or theme park outings; fund raising activities; brown bag lunch seminars on various campuses; supporting development of Staff Senates or Councils at system institutions; special task groups or presentations on equity or diversity issues.

### Compensation Committee

*Chair: Andrianna Stuart, UMCP*

The Compensation Committee will review compensation packages and proposals from Campus, System, and State personnel offices, for exempt and non-exempt staff. It will review and comment on System Policy on slotting or classification of employees (including contractual employees), pay levels, classification schemes, pay ranges, merit pay proposals, COLA distribution proposals, etc.

### Executive Committee

*Chair: Larry Lauer, UMCP*

The Executive Committee is charged with managing the CUSS meeting agendas, assigning people to committees, charging committees with tasks, addressing staff concerns to/with the Chancellor, Regents, Legislators, and other interested parties.



*Your CUSS Executive Committee (left to right):*

*Sandy Ratke (USMO), Jennifer Berkman (SSU), Larry Lauer (UMCP),  
Lu Ann Marshall (UMB), Janet Magruder (UMBC), Dottie Holland, (BSU)*

## ***COUNCIL OF UNIVERSITY SYSTEM STAFF MEMBERS (2000 - 2001)***

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*Bowie State University*

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*University of Baltimore*

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### ***USM LIAISONS***



Donald Tynes  
Director, Human Resources  
University System of Maryland Office

Rosario van Daalen  
Associate Director, Human Resources  
University System of Maryland Office

## A WORD FROM OUR CUSS CHAIR ....



Fellow USM Employees:

For the last several years, the Council of University System Staff (CUSS), comprised of your fellow staff members, has voted against the University Collective Bargaining bills. As Council Chair, I believe it is my duty to provide reasons why CUSS has not endorsed collective bargaining. Rather than dwelling on the negative aspects of the collective bargaining model, I believe a strong case can be made that the shared governance system has represented staff interests well. Monetary gains and policy changes that benefit staff have been secured by home-institution staff councils/senates in open dialogue with the Administration and Board of Regents. These gains exceed those which state employees received through collective bargaining, calling into serious question claims that the shared governance system is unable to provide for staff needs. For example:

- Nonexempt staff in the *state government system* receive a 2% “meets standards” increase.
- Nonexempt staff in the *USM* receive a 2.5% “meets standards” increase. This ½% per year difference, tied to base salary over a 30 year career, means that USM employees earn more than 15% more than state employees at a minimum.
- Nonexempt staff in the *state system* receive a one-time bonus for “exceeds expectations” on their evaluations, which is not applied to base salary. It is a one-time monetary award, not a salary increase.
- Nonexempt staff in the *USM* receive increases for “exceeds expectations”; however, it is a base salary increase, meaning they continue to earn money throughout their careers. CUSS has always advocated this long-term benefit.
- The *state employment system* has many contractual employees—most of whom receive NO benefits—not even leave and holiday pay. These employees are not included in the State Collective Bargaining Units.
- The *USM* has fewer Contingent II (contractual) employees—all of whom receive a Board of Regents mandated minimum benefits package (leave and holiday pay), and many have full benefit packages. Contingent employees have CUSS representation. This year, CUSS has forwarded a proposal to the USM to provide health care benefits as well.
- The *State Exempt Staff Merit Pool* is 2% of an employee’s salary.
- The *USM Exempt Staff Merit Pool* has been increased to 2.5% of an employee’s salary, up from 1.25%.
- The USM has a Regents’ policy which states that whenever the State provides a COLA, the University will provide a COLA, without diverting those funds for other efforts. Unless there is a deficit in the state treasury, COLA’s are usually provided by the General Assembly. A COLA has been provided for years before the State had collective bargaining, and will continue to be awarded to the University without collective bargaining.
- The USM Nonexempt Pay Program, developed within the shared governance system, was the model used by the State to change its Classified Staff Pay Program. USM employees were the first to have the salary cap removed that had 70% of our employees topped out.
- USM employees have tuition remission for themselves and their dependents and spouses. State employees do not enjoy this benefit. The tuition remission program is not changing. CUSS and the local staff councils have worked, and will work, to assure its availability to employees and their families for the foreseeable future.
- ANY Exempt Staff employee hired before January 1, 2000 can retain the previous seven (7) year job security provisions for AS LONG AS THEY ARE EMPLOYED AT THEIR INSTITUTION. They can change jobs and still retain the “for-cause” dismissal. Exempt Employees in other categories are now protected with a period of notice that recognizes their prior service. ALL USM Exempt employees maintained or improved their benefits under the new Exempt Staff Pay Program, which was negotiated by CUSS members.

Time after time, issue after issue, I believe evidence exists to prove that our current USM shared governance system works for the staff. I am very proud of the shared governance system, and of our fellow employees who work long hours to improve the lot of all staff members, even those in different employment classifications, without claiming exclusive representation. I am proud that we have several unions represented on CUSS, as well as non-union employees, working together for the good of the entire USM. I would be pleased to bring this information to your campus, and participate in an open discussion.

Many thanks for your support of the Council of University System Staff. We look forward to working with you on issues of importance in the coming year.

With best regards.

Larry Lauer  
Chair, CUSS 1999-2000



## CUSS AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE COMING YEAR

*Over the next year C.U.S.S. will focus on the following objectives:*

Work with the USM and the Board of Regents to revise the policy on Contingent II (contractual) employees to provide, at a minimum, health care benefits for all staff who work full time.

Follow-up the proposed USM staff training and development program, Building Excellence through Staff Training (BEST), to facilitate its initial operation.

Propose modifications to the Nonexempt Pay Program that provide flexibility to the program and allow the USM to recognize all individuals who "exceed expectations."

Review the current Performance Management Process and provide suggestions for simplified evaluation, on-line forms, standards, etc.

Revise and refine the selection and award process for the Board of Regents Staff Awards.

Lobby for increased resources for USM Personnel Offices so that current programs can be evaluated and implemented.

*The mission of the Council of University System Staff is to provide a voice for Staff Employee concerns regarding basic decisions that affect the welfare of the University System of Maryland, its constituent institutions, and its employees. CUSS functions in an informed advisory role in administrative areas and in support of academic matters.*

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHANCELLOR ....

As the 2000-01 year opens, I look forward to working with the Council of University System Staff and having the continued support of CUSS, an organization that has strengthened the University System of Maryland.



I am delighted to have such a diverse group of people, from throughout the University System, come together through CUSS on issues of mutual concern. Your ability to work collegially embodies the principles of shared governance and sets a wonderful example for inter-institutional collaboration.

During this past year, the University System has accomplished a great deal, and CUSS has played an important role in each of those victories. CUSS has also assisted in sharpening the USM position on critical issues, becoming increasingly valuable as a resource for information, a sounding board for advice on issues confronting USM staff, and a highly respected partner.

Because of your involvement, we celebrated a successful legislative session with the passage of the COLA increase; implementation of the Exempt Pay Program; development of our staff training program – Building Excellence through Staff Training (BEST); and creation of the Board of Regents' Staff Award Program.

The Board of Regents and I wish to thank Larry Lauer, Manager for Finance and Administration, University of Maryland, College Park, for his leadership of CUSS as chairperson during the past year. We wish him even greater success in the year ahead as his tenure continues. We are also pleased to welcome Dottie Holland, Judicial Affairs Officer at Bowie State University, in her new role as CUSS representative to the Board of Regents.

Based on the past performance of CUSS, we have high expectations for continued success. Each year, this organization becomes more active and more productive, and 2000-01 holds the promise of even greater achievement. Keep up the good work!

Donald N. Langenberg  
Chancellor

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



by *Lu Ann Marshall*  
University of Maryland, Baltimore

*The 2000 legislative session passed the following bills that will directly affect University System of Maryland employees:*

- *Removal of Social Security Numbers from Identification Cards:* House Bill 37 will prohibit the USM from printing social security numbers on employee's identification badges, effective July 2001.
- *Leave for Organ Donation:* Senate Bill 17 will grant USM employees up to 7 days of paid organ donation leave to serve as a bone marrow donor, and up to 30 days paid organ donation leave to serve as an organ donor (leave is granted in any 12 month period), effective October 2000.
- *Direct Deposit:* Senate Bill 448 will require all new employees to participate in a direct deposit plan. The bill excludes employees hired prior to that date, and those who request an exemption, effective October 2000.

*There were two bills that were not passed during the 2000 legislative session that are likely to be proposed during the 2001 session:*

- *Collective Bargaining:* Senate Bill 245, if passed, would have granted collective bargaining to USM employees.
- *Optional Retirement Plan (ORP):* This bill, if passed, would have increased the USM contribution to the ORP from 7¼% to 9¼%. In addition, the State of Maryland proposed a mandatory 2% contribution from the employees enrolled in the ORP.

*We encourage USM employees to monitor legislation that will have an impact on the USM, and to contact their representatives in order to share their position on any such proposed legislation. To access the Maryland Bill Tracker System, or for information on how to contact your area representatives, please visit the CUSS Website at [www.usmb.usmd.edu/Leadership/Workgroups/SystemStaff](http://www.usmb.usmd.edu/Leadership/Workgroups/SystemStaff).*

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FIRST BOARD OF REGENTS AWARD RECIPIENTS !!

<i>Service to the Institution (Nonexempt):</i>	<b>Linda Abresch</b> , Salisbury State University
<i>Service to the Institution (Exempt):</i>	<b>Leon Bivens</b> , University of Maryland Eastern Shore
<i>Service to Students (Nonexempt):</i>	<b>Beverly Comegys</b> , Towson University
<i>Service to Students (Exempt):</i>	<b>William Crockett</b> , University of Maryland, Baltimore
<i>Public Service (Nonexempt):</i>	<b>Lu Ann Marshall</b> , University of Maryland, Baltimore
<i>Public Service (Exempt):</i>	<b>Robert Miller</b> , UM Center for Environmental Science



The Board of Regents Staff Awards recognize distinguished performance on the part of staff employees of the University System of Maryland community. These awards represent the highest honor bestowed by the Board of Regents for achievements of the Exempt and Nonexempt employees from institutions within the University System of Maryland. Your fellow staff members join the Board of Regents in applauding this great honor.

# CUSS COMMITTEE REPORTS ....

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## BENEFITS COMMITTEE

By *Jessica Bird, Chair*

University of Maryland, Baltimore

The CUSS Benefits Committee was very busy this year, tackling, among other things, the issue of health benefits for USM Contingent II (Contractual) employees. At the beginning of the year, the committee was asked to look into the various benefits packages that are being offered to Contingent II employees at each institution. We discovered that there is very little consistency throughout the USM, with some institutions offering nothing in the way of health benefits for their Contingent II employees, and others offering the full range of subsidized health benefit options. In some cases we found inconsistency within the same institution, where some departments are able to afford subsidized coverage and others are not.

After reviewing the data that we gathered, the Committee solicited the recommendations of the entire Council of University System Staff, in order to address these issues with the Chancellor and the Board of Regents. A letter was then sent to the Chancellor and the BOR, proposing that a task force be established for the purpose of further investigating this concern and drafting a policy that would mandate a minimum level of health benefits be offered to all Contingent II employees throughout the USM. In addition, we recommended that the task force consider looking into the idea of converting Contingent II positions to “regular” status whenever possible. It was the committee’s concern that too many positions are established as Contingent/Contractual as a way to avoid funding a regular FTE (regular/state funded position), however, the fortunate fiscal times that we are in no longer present such a pressing need for this practice.

The committee is now waiting for a response from the Chancellor and the BOR on our proposal. It is our hope that within the next year the proposed task force will be established and we will be on our way to achieving a standard/mandatory minimum level of benefits that must be offered to all Contingent II employees in the USM.

In the year ahead, the Benefits Committee expects to be busy with new projects, as well as revisiting some old ones – such as the idea to look into Pet Insurance for USM employees!

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

by *Fran Younger*

University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Chesapeake Biological Laboratory

The crowning achievement of this committee for the year was the successful search for the first Board of Regents Staff Award winners. The committee established the procedure and timetable for recruiting and choosing nominees for this most prestigious award. The Board of Regents Staff Award Program closely mirrors the Faculty Award Program that is already in place. Each USM institution was able to nominate up to two staff members for awards in three categories:

- (1) Exceptional contribution to the institutional mission of the organization and/or unit to which the person belongs;
- (2) Outstanding service to students in an academic or residential environment;
- (3) Extraordinary public service to the campus or greater community (this includes voluntary campus citizenship and/or dedication to public good through volunteer activities with outside groups).

All regular Nonexempt and Exempt staff who have been employed for at least five years were eligible for consideration. Each award shall be the equivalent of the Regents Faculty Awards, which is currently a \$1,000 stipend, the cost of which will be split between the Board of Regents and the home institution(s) of the awardees. In addition, a plaque shall be awarded in recognition of the honor. CUSS received 46 nominations from both the Nonexempt and Exempt ranks. Choosing six staff members from this group was extremely difficult - the credentials of all nominees were most impressive.

Thanks go to the CUSS members who deliberatively read the nomination packets. A special thank-you to Huck Bothner, UMUC, for his diligence, hard work, patience, and sense of humor in guiding CUSS through the inaugural Staff Award process.

# CUSS COMMITTEE REPORTS ....

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## COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

by *Lu Ann Marshall, Chair*  
University of Maryland, Baltimore

The 1999-2000 academic year has proven to be an interesting one, and the Communications Committee has worked diligently to keep staff members informed of events (proposed legislation, possible changes to benefits, etc.) that would affect the University System of Maryland (USM) and its employees.

One of the goals of the Communications Committee this year was to increase staff awareness of the Council's activities. To this end, several issues of *CUSS Words* were produced and distributed to Council members, both in electronic form and in hard copy, as well as on the CUSS website. Council members were encouraged to distribute *CUSS Words* to their constituents by various modes, including e-mail and/or inclusion in Staff Senate/Council newsletters. In an effort to reach as many staff members as possible, copies of *CUSS Words* were hand-delivered to approximately 200 staff members employed by the College Park campus who actually work off-campus and do not have access to e-mail.

The Communications Committee continues to encourage staff attendance and participation at Staff Senate/Council meetings at individual institutions. The Council firmly believes that the success of the individual Staff Senates/Councils, as well as the success of CUSS itself, is dependent upon employees being able to participate in an open forum, sharing concerns and opinions. A memorandum was sent to Dr. Donald Langenberg, Chancellor of the USM, asking for his assistance in making it easier for staff members to participate in these meetings.

The Communications Committee has continued to update the CUSS website, hosted by the USM Office. Richard Rose - our Web Master - has done a wonderful job of creating and maintaining the website, which includes links to Maryland legislators, legislative "bill status" information, a CUSS membership directory, *CUSS Words*, and Minutes from monthly CUSS meetings.

A very special "thank you" to Rosario van Daalen, Liaison from the USM Office, who has continued to provide us with her guidance and good humor.



## COMPENSATION COMMITTEE

by *Andrianna Stuart, Chair*  
University of Maryland, College Park

The most important issue the committee worked on this past year was monitoring the development and implementation of the Exempt Pay Program. We will continue to track how the different policies of the program are implemented institutionally and work toward system-wide equity.

Our committee chair is a member of the Staff Development Program Task Force which was established to move forward the proposal that CUSS and this committee first developed two years ago. The program would include minimum curricula for personal and professional training and development for which there would be mandatory access for ALL STAFF, System-wide. The title of the plan is now "Building Excellence Through Staff Training" or "BEST." A mission statement, policy paper, and five year plan, with budget, were developed and have been presented to the Vice Presidents and the Board of Regents. The proposed plan is included in the System Strategic Plan. We are hopefully and eagerly awaiting their approval of our initiative.

The committee is still working on the following issues: the possibility of drafting a proposal for a sick leave bank/transfer system to voluntarily share leave; and a target percentile group for staff salaries similar to the 85th percentile goal set for faculty salaries.



**1999 - 2000 COUNCIL OF UNIVERSITY SYSTEM STAFF**



*Regent Chair, Nathan Chapman, Jr. (third from left) addressed the February CUSS meeting at UMBC. Pictured with Regent Chapman are: Sally Hearn, prior chair; Jennifer Berkman, past chair; Larry Lauer, chair.*

**JOY TO THE (CUSS) WORLD**

**THE ANNUAL CUSS CAROL - FOR YOUR AMUSEMENT**

*Joy to the world, both Pay Plans are done;  
 Staff will finally receive their due !  
 Dr. Langenberg, he is happy;  
 VC Joe Vivona, he is worried.  
 And Don and Rosario sing !  
 And Don and Rosario sing !  
 Let the Staff, let the Staff, let all the Staff sing !*

*Joy to the World, the Staff Award Program is coming;  
 Staff will finally receive their due !  
 The Regents, they are happy;  
 VC Joe Vivona, he's still worried.  
 And Don and Rosario sing !  
 And Don and Rosario sing !  
 Let the Staff, let the Staff, let all the Staff sing !*

*- the Executive Committee  
 December 1999*



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