

COUNCIL OF UNIVERSITY SYSTEM STAFF

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1420 North Charles Street
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520 West Lombard Street
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This Issue Contains:

*BOR Staff Awards
2005-2006 Staff Recipients
The Chancellor's Message
CUSS Chair's Message
CUSS Facts
Committees
Chairs, Representatives and
Alternates
Executive Committee*

Council of University System Staff Year in Review – 2005-2006

THE STAFF COUNCIL

We're here for you!

CUSS is comprised of Staff employees with representatives from the 13 institutions. Council membership is proportionate to the number of Staff employees at the individual institutions with a minimum of two representatives per institution. CUSS membership is comprised of over 7900 regular Exempt, Nonexempt and Contingent II Staff that are not covered under collective bargaining.

MISSION STATEMENT: The mission of CUSS is to provide a voice for USM Staff concerns in reference to 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 the functional support aspects of academic matters. The Council has been in existence since 1992 and was codified in 1994.

Some Highlights of the Council's 2005 – 2006 Term

1. Requested staff to provide short testimonials about the impact of high prescription costs, rises in physicians' co-pays and health care premiums. Provided prescription drug cost letter on the CUSS website (in living document format) for employees to submit to their representatives.
2. Letters from CUSS were sent to Annapolis reflecting the staff views regarding the health benefits and pension issues. Met with legislators to urge modification of cost of drug program and enhancement of Employees Pension System, both of which were acted on by the General Assembly.
3. Worked towards having Contingent II's recognized for their efforts on behalf of the institutions. Continued to push for conversion of Contingent II to regular positions after three years.
4. Formed ad-hoc committee to review Board of Regents Staff Awards criteria and application process with the goal to make the process more user-friendly and to encourage more participation.
5. Monitored the Maryland Legislature this past session on issues other than State Employee Health Care Benefits and the State Employees Pension System.
6. Represented the voice of System Staff at the Chancellor's Council and Board of Regents meetings, and continued to act in an advisory role on issues and BOR policies impacting staff.

We encourage you to visit the CUSS website while you are learning about USM and see the Council's numerous institution representatives who work on your behalf:

www.usmd.edu/Leadership/Workgroups/SystemStaff



Council of University System Staff at the December 2005 meeting with Chancellor Kirwan at the USM Office in Adelphi.



A Message from the Chancellor:

As the 2006-2007 academic year opens, the University System of Maryland finds itself in a much stronger position than in recent years. As you know, the 2006 Legislative Session was extremely positive for the USM: support for higher education and the USM was virtually unanimous; there was an unprecedented level of agreement on the importance of higher education in shaping Maryland's future; and we saw our operating budget increase by 15%.

The impact of this support is impressive. First and foremost, we were able to institute a tuition freeze for full-time, in-state undergraduate students. In addition, we nailed down funding for our Flagship Initiative, we reached broad consensus around the Office of Civil Rights agreement; and we were successful in achieving 20 new capital projects to increase capacity and academic excellence. I am especially pleased that the budget proposed by the Governor and approved by the Legislature included funding for cost-of-living adjustments and merit increments averaging 2.5%. Furthermore, I am pleased that the state has funded the State of Maryland's deferred compensation "match" program at a maximum level of \$600 per employee.

As you know, one of the key reasons the Governor cited when announcing his support for the USM was the impact of our Effectiveness and Efficiency Initiative. Working with the Board of Regents, the Council of Presidents, the Council of University System Faculty, the Council of University System Staff, and the USM Student Council we implemented cost savings, cost avoidance, and other efforts to streamline the USM to better meet the needs of the students we serve, while protecting the integrity of our academic and research programs and minimizing the hardship for our dedicated faculty and staff.

Throughout these efforts, I continue to be impressed with the dedication and commitment of CUSS. This diverse group of individuals—from across the University System—has stepped forward to work cooperatively and collegially for the betterment of System Institutions and System Staff. You are one of the USM's greatest assets and a driving force behind our rise to national eminence.

The Board of Regents and I commend Joe Hill for his leadership as Chair over this past year and we look forward to continuing to work with him. We also commend this year's CUSS Vice Chair Bill Crocket, Secretary Mary Reed, Members-at-Large Judy Lowe and Dale O'Neal, and the CUSS Chancellor's Liaison Rosario van Daalen.

I believe strongly that the Governor's and the General Assembly's attention to higher education will bode well for USM in the years ahead. Clearly they share our goal of providing affordable access to excellent programs and services for our students and for Marylanders. The efforts of CUSS have been a vital part of our success on every level and I look forward to our partnership continuing to yield productive and beneficial results.

Sincerely,

William E. Kirwan
Chancellor

For more information on the University of Maryland System's Office, the Chancellor's Office, and the USM Overview, go to the USM online at: www.usmd.edu



To My Fellow Employees:

Once again it has been an honor and privilege to represent the staff throughout the University System of Maryland. As Chair of the Council of University System Staff (CUSS), I have had the opportunity to communicate your thoughts and concerns to the Chancellor, Regents, University System Presidents, and our legislators in Annapolis.

On June 26, 2006, the Council concluded its fourteenth year as a partner in the shared governance process of the University System of Maryland. CUSS continues to be the vehicle through which ideas are exchanged as we work towards enhancing the goals of the USM and its staff.

This year the Council discussed several agenda items for the 2005-2006 term, narrowing our focus to include, but not limited to, the following items:

- Increased prescription health care cost to employees
- Enhancing the Optional Retirement Program and Employees Pension System for staff.

During this year's legislative session, the Chair and members of the Legislative Committee actively lobbied the Chancellor, Campus Presidents, Board of Regents and Legislators for changes in the prescription drug insurance program in addition to enhancements to both the Optional Retirement Program and Employees Pension System.

A letter of concern was presented to our legislators on September 26, 2005. The Council addressed the need for employees and retirees to have affordable health care and prescription coverage and quality benefits that will attract and retain a superior work force for the State of Maryland. The Council followed up with a letter writing campaign to our legislators, utilizing our web site and establishing a template letter of concern for USM Staff. The legislative session ended with SB430 (HB156) being passed and signed into law. The changes allow for a cap of \$20 for a ninety day mail order supply of medicine. CUSS recognizes that although this legislation gives some relief to prescription cost for employees, more work needs to be done.

To enhance the Optional Retirement Program, the Council lobbied the Chancellor, Presidents and Board of Regents to support raising the employer contributions from 7.25 percent to 9.25 percent with an employee contribution of 2 percent. We are asking the USM Office to pursue this initiative for presentation to the 2006-2007 legislative session.

The Council was also active in seeking Employee Pension Reform. We attended numerous meetings in Annapolis, seeking support from the Joint Committee on Pensions that "no state employee is left behind." On February 10, 2006, the Council presented to the Joint Committee on Pension a letter of support for a legislation plan that requires both an increase in the State payment to employees' retirement, and an increase in individual contributions. The Council again followed up with a letter writing campaign to our legislators asking for support of HB1737 and SB1019. We are pleased that HB1737 was passed and signed into law. The change incorporates a new multiplier of 1.8 retroactive to 1998, resulting in an increased salary at full retirement from 37.6 % to 54%.

In closing, I would like to express my thanks to the Chancellor, Regents, Presidents, and institutional leaders and staff, who have supported CUSS and its role within the University System of Maryland.

Sincerely,

Joe Hill
CUSS Chair 2005-2006

Board of Regents' Staff Awards

A CUSS initiative, the **Board of Regents' University System of Maryland Staff Awards** represents the highest honor bestowed by the Board of Regents for achievements of Exempt and Nonexempt employees from institutions within the University System of Maryland. The awards are presented to staff members who have demonstrated excellence in one of the following categories: (1) contribution to the institution and/or unit to which the person belongs; (2) service to students in an academic or residential environment; or (3) public service, within or outside the university. There are two awards given in each category—one Exempt and one Nonexempt—for a total of six awards. Each recipient will receive a \$1,000 stipend, and will be awarded a plaque. In addition, appropriate notices will be placed to publicize each honoree's accomplishments.

2005 – 2006 Recipients

Extraordinary Public Service to the University or to the Greater Community

Exempt Staff

Gain B. Hawkins
Vice President
Institutional Advancement
University of Maryland Eastern Shore

Nonexempt Staff

Marian C. Birkhead
Administrative Assistant
Business, Management and Accounting
University of Maryland Eastern Shore

Exceptional Contribution to the Institution and/or Unit to Which the Person Belongs

Exempt Staff

Richard Tysor
Assistant Director
Center for Marine Biotechnology
University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute

Nonexempt Staff

Cynthia Zimmerman
Executive Administrative Assistant
Student Affairs
Towson University

Outstanding Service to Students in an Academic or Residential Environment

Exempt Staff

Marylane McGlinchey
Advising Services Coordinator
Henson School of Science and Technology
Salisbury University

Nonexempt Staff

Emma Sellers
Program Management Specialist
Political Science Department
University of Maryland Baltimore County

Committee Reports

Benefits and Compensation

Chair: Angie Brickhouse
Towson University

The Benefits and Compensation committee researched and found that only four Universities in our system recognize Contingent II staff at their Service Award Ceremonies. The committee will encourage our system Presidents to include in their Service Award Ceremonies those Contingent II employees who have been converted but never formally recognized for their years of service.

Communications

Chair: Marie Meehan
Bowie State University

The Communication Committee was charged with and completed the following assignments:

- It has gathered all the articles for the newsletter, which will be completed and ready for distribution by September 2006.
- This Committee has put together the Orientation Package for the new CUSS members for 2006-2008.
- Throughout the year, this Committee has continuously updated the website to keep the CUSS Representatives' e-mail addresses, phone numbers, and university affiliations current.

Community Development

Chair: Cindy Schuster
University of Baltimore

The primary task of the Community Development Committee is to oversee the Board of Regents (BOR) Staff Awards. The BOR Staff Awards recognize exceptional performance by USM employees in three categories, with two recipients (one Exempt and one Nonexempt) in each category, for a total of six \$1,000 awards. The award categories include:

1. Outstanding service to students in an academic or residential environment
2. Exceptional contribution to the institution and/or unit to which the person belongs
3. Extraordinary public service to the university or the greater community. This includes voluntary campus citizenship and/or dedication to public good through volunteer activities with outside groups.

The BOR Staff Awards represent the highest honor bestowed by the Board of Regents to staff in the USM system.

For year 2005-2006 we are pleased to report that 12 USM institutions submitted nomination packages for this year's Awards, and that representatives from all USM institutions participated in the selection process. There were many outstanding nominees for the Board of Regents' Staff Awards and we extend congratulations to our upcoming 2006 BOR Staff Award recipients. A special "thank you" to the members of CUSS who volunteered to serve on the subcommittee and performed the difficult task of selecting Award recipients. We are working to continue to increase participation in this wonderful awards program by developing new materials for campus awareness and working with all campuses shared governance groups in further promotion of the BOR Staff Awards.

Legislative

Chair: Larry Lauer
(University of Maryland, College Park)

Early in the academic year the Council decided it would actively advocate for two specific issues at the USM and State levels. The first issue was for a change in the state prescription drug plan and the second issue was for a change in the employee's pension system.

When the new state health plan was implemented on July 1, 2005, most employees expected there would be an increase in cost of the premiums. However, no one anticipated such large premium increases PLUS the substantial alterations in the prescription drug plan coverage. These combined changes created new and significant out-of-pocket expenses for employees.

The Council actively lobbied for changes in the prescription drug plan within the University System of Maryland, making concerns known to the Chancellor, campus Presidents and members of the Board of Regents. The CUSS Chair and members of the Legislative Committee visited Annapolis to discuss this issue with delegates. The Committee provided a template letter regarding the prescription drug plan for concerned USM employees to send to state legislators. The legislature did produce a bill, HB156, which addressed some of the issues, creating the ability to get a 90-day mail order prescription and reducing the co-pay of other prescriptions. While HB156 did not correct all the problems with the prescription drug plan, it provided some relief from the multiple payments for employees' prescriptions. CUSS was pleased to have supported this bill.

The second issue the Council wished to address was the Employees' Pension System. The Council endorsed a plan that required an increase in the State payment to the employees' retirement and an increase in the employee's contribution. The Council lobbied the Joint Committee on Pensions in Annapolis, ensuring that "no state employee is left behind" as the State went forward with pension reform. It was our desire that the Joint Committee on Pensions would propose and support legislation during this session that would enhance the Employees' Pension System and Optional Retirement Program.

We were successful in our efforts. The General Assembly passed Employee Pension Reform HB1737, which increased the employee pension from 37.6% of salary to 54% of salary on a full retirement. The change was made retroactive to 1998 and involves a graduated increase in employee contributions up to 5% of salary. This was a major accomplishment that will positively affect the lives of employees of the University for a generation. CUSS was pleased to have supported this bill.

The Optional Retirement Program did not have any enhancements this year and now lags behind the other University retirement systems. Although CUSS and the Council of University System Faculty both met with the USM office regarding this issue, it was too late to have legislation introduced this year. The Council plans to actively pursue enhancement in this program for next year.



2005 – 2006
Council of University System Staff

Representatives

John Barber
University of Maryland, Baltimore

Bernedette Bell
Coppin State University

Angie Brickhouse
Towson University

Bill Crockett
University of Maryland, Baltimore

David DeLooze
University of Maryland, Baltimore

Joan Doremus
Towson University

Gloria Gaguski
Towson University

Jim Hartsock
University of Maryland
University College

Jay Hegeman
Frostburg State University

Joe Hill (Chair)
University of Maryland,
Baltimore County

Clacie Hubbard
Salisbury University

Heather Johnson
University of Maryland
Center for Environmental Science

Chenita Kollock
University of Maryland
Eastern Shore

Larry Lauer
University of Maryland,
College Park

Judy Lowe (Member-at-Large)
Salisbury University

Marie Meehan
Bowie State University

Thomas Noyes
University of Maryland,
College Park

Dale O'Neal
Bowie State University

Mary E. Reed (Secretary)
University System of Maryland Office

Roy Ross (Past Chair)
University of Maryland, Baltimore

Judy Sabalauskas
University of Baltimore

Lidia Schechter
University of Maryland
Baltimore County

Cindy Schuster
University of Baltimore

Sam Sibanda
University of Maryland
Biotechnology Institute

Robert Smith
Frostburg State University

Donna M. Taylor
University of Maryland
Biotechnology Institute

Rosario van Daalen
Chancellor's Liaison to CUSS
University System of Maryland Office

Scott Wibbert
University of Maryland
University College

Alternates

Jessica L. Bird
University of Maryland, Baltimore

Lauren Fusillo
University of Maryland, Baltimore

Dottie Holland
Bowie State University

Loretta Hollifield
Towson University

Jesse Ketterman
Frostburg State University

Bobbie H. Lee
University of Maryland
Biotechnology Institute

Starrla Levine
University of Baltimore

Cassandra Lewis
University of Maryland
University College

Christine Routzahn
University of Maryland,
Baltimore County

Lisa Schuetz
University of Maryland,
College Park

Rick Tysor
University of Maryland
Biotechnology Institute

Janine M. Vienna
Salisbury University

**Council Members represent the thirteen (13) institutions and the Systems Office (USMO) for the USM.
For more information on the Council of University System Staff contact your Institution Representative
or visit: www.usmd.edu/Leadership/Workgroups/SystemStaff**



2005-2006 Executive Committee

(l to r): Rosario van Daalen, USM; Mary Reed, USM; Joe Hill, UMBC; Chancellor William E. Kirwan; Bill Crockett, UMB; Roy Ross, UMB; Judy Lowe, SU; Dale O'Neal, BSU.

