



COUNCIL of UNIVERSITY  
SYSTEM FACULTY

**Report by the  
Council of University System Faculty (CUSF)  
to the USM BOR Meeting at UMBC**

**Friday, October 20, 2017**

The last report was submitted in September. Since that report, CUSF has had an ExCom meeting on September 11<sup>th</sup> and a Council meeting on September 20<sup>th</sup>. This is a report on those meetings and on the activities of CUSF.

**MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES:** As noted, there were two meeting. These are noted below along with the significant activities that occurred at the meetings.

- **ExCom Meeting** – ExCom met on September 11<sup>th</sup> after the Chancellor’s Council at USM in Adelphi. The main purpose of the meeting was to prepare the agenda for the September 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of Council to be held at USG (Universities at Shady Grove).
- **Council Meeting at USG** – The Council met at USG (Universities at Shady Grove) on September 20<sup>th</sup>. This was a historic event since it was the first time the Council met at one of the Centers. We thank Dr. Stewart Edelstein, Executive Director of the Universities at Shady Grove and Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at USM, and Robyn Dinicola, Student Affairs Officer, for their hospitality. There were four significant topics that are expanded upon below as separate topics: Highlighting USC, TURFA, Ombudsperson Resolution, and DACA motion.
- **Highlighting USC** – As noted in the September commentary, there were two purposes for holding the meeting at Shady Grove. The first was to place the issue of the Centers on faculty radar, and second, to encourage faculty to work with their presidents on the issues associated with the Centers, including faculty representation at the Centers. At the beginning of the typical CUSF meeting, there is a segment titled “Greetings from Campus” where the president or his or her representative greets the Council. Dr. Stewart Edelstein, Executive Director of the Universities at Shady Grove and Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at USM provided an excellent overview of the Center and how it operates. In addition, Robyn Dinicola, Student Affairs Officer, provided a good overview of student life and activities on campus. Normally, this session is 15 minutes. We expanded the session to over one-half hour. It was an informative session.
- **TURFA** – Martha Siegel, Professor Emerita, Towson University spoke to the Council on the Towson University Retired Faculty Association (TURFA) and how it could serve as a model for other campuses. The Council referred the matter to the Faculty Concerns Committee to determine guidelines and to add it as an action item for the year. As a sidebar note, this topic was discussed by the Provosts at the recent AAAC meeting on Friday, October 6<sup>th</sup>.
- **Ombudsperson Resolution** – As noted in my September commentary submitted with my last report to the Council, CUSF needed to pass the joint resolution at its September 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. It has done so and the joint resolution passed by the student, staff and faculty has been moved

forward to the Chancellor's Council for review and possible endorsement by the President's Council. As part of the program, we invited Ellin Scholnick, Ombudsperson for the Faculty at UMCP and Laurelyn Irving, Ombudsperson at UMB to address the Council and answer questions on what ombudspersons do on campus. They did an excellent job and we thank Presidents Loh and Perman for making them available. The joint resolution was passed by CUSF and is provided below. See also the third commentary which provides an update on the progress of the resolution.

Be it resolved that:

- 1) Each USM institution will make available to the students, staff and faculty ombudsperson services.
- 2) Where possible these services will be consistent with the recommended policies and practices of the International Ombudsman Association or a similar association.
- 3) Each USM institution will develop an implementation plan. The development of the implementation plan should be done in consultation with constituent groups including shared governance. The plan will be reviewed by the Chancellor or his designated appointee. The Chancellor will review the ombudsperson services provided as part of his yearly evaluation of the Presidents as specified under Section III of BOR policy: VII - 5.00.

- **DACA Resolution** – Upon the recommendation of ExCom, the Council made and passed the following resolution. It indicates CUSF's support for legislation to maintain and extend the DACA program as expressed by the Chancellor. The motion reaffirms his actions on this matter.

**MOTION:** As the leaders of Maryland's public system of higher education, CUSF supports the recent letters and appeals by the Chancellor that would support legislation to maintain and extend the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

**COMMENTARIES:** Three commentaries are provided this month. The first is on academic dishonesty in the digital age. There is growing concern for this issue. The second commentary is a simple thank you for the work done by three of our members on reviewing the FLMA and Family Leave policies. The third commentary is an update on the Joint Resolution on the Ombudsperson.

Respectfully Submitted: October 8, 2017  
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Chair, Council of University System Faculty

## **Chair's Commentary 1710.1: Academic Dishonesty in the Digital Age**

In the classic 1986 comedy, *Back to School*, starring Rodney Dangerfield, the main character is a rich and successful entrepreneur who returns to school to finish his degree. Although it portrays academic dishonesty as humorous, it was prophetic in predicting academic dishonesty in the digital age. Tutors who are surrogates for the student and paper mills that write papers for students were depicted humorously in the movie and unfortunately, they are a staple on the internet today. More on this in later commentaries.

The EdPolicy Committee of CUSF has raised the issue of academic dishonesty in the digital age. The issue has been identified for inclusion as an action item by CUSF this year. The purpose of this commentary is to introduce the problem and to begin addressing the issue by increasing awareness of the problem. Increasing awareness is the first step toward determining solutions. It didn't take much of an internet search to gain an insight regarding the problem. Unlike the comedy, *Back to School*, academic dishonesty in the digital age is a serious issue.

The first question is whether there is a problem and whether it is pervasive. In her study, Dorothy Jones of Norfolk State University asked the question whether more students are cheating today? In the abstract to her study, her summary of the literature suggests that academic dishonesty in the digital age is more pervasive.

Academic Dishonesty, with Internet plagiarism as one of the most common forms, is a concern on college and university campuses more than ever before. A review of the literature validates these concerns. According to a 2003 nationwide research study of 23 public and private colleges and universities conducted by Donald L. McCabe, Internet plagiarism is on the rise. Thirty-eight percent of the undergraduate students surveyed indicated that they had engaged in Internet plagiarism (as cited in Rimer, 2003). Brown, Weible, and Olmosk (2010) found that 49% of the students in undergraduate marketing classes admitted cheating in 1988 versus 100% of the students in an undergraduate management class in 2008; a national survey published in *Education Week* found that 54% of the students surveyed admitted to Internet plagiarism and 76% admitted to cheating; and the Center for Academic Integrity found almost 80% of the college students surveyed admitted to cheating at least once (“Facts About Plagiarism,” 2011). In May 2006, Ohio University’s Department of Mechanical Engineering plagiarism scandal garnered national attention when a review panel found “rampant and flagrant” forms of plagiarism in 34 master’s theses (Grose, 2006); and in November 2010, more than 200 of the 600 students in a University of Central Florida business class confessed that they benefited from accessing online test questions prior to taking their mid-term exam (The Ticker, 2010). These findings help corroborate the assertion that academic dishonesty – cheating and Internet plagiarism – is on the rise; consequently, these concerns have sparked numerous debates about academic dishonesty at institutions of higher education throughout the United States. (Source: Dorothy Jones, Academic Dishonesty: Are More Students Cheating? *Business Communication Quarterly*, Volume 74, Number 2, June 2011)

It is not difficult finding studies supporting the conclusion that there is academic dishonesty in the digital age. Conducting a two year study at a small liberal arts university, Kidwell, et.al. (2003) found that “*Over seventy percent of the students surveyed reported that they were habitual cheaters, i.e., they had cheated on exams, plagiarized papers, or committed other forms of academic dishonesty on multiple occasions.*” It is hard not to conclude that academic dishonesty is pervasive.

Academic dishonesty may be more prevalent in the digital age. In a survey of 1,262 students at a large state-funded university Mark Lanier (2006) examined the differences between cheating between traditional lecture courses and online courses. He found that cheating was much more prevalent in the online courses. However, not all studies support this conclusion. Analyzing 368 dissertations, Ison (2014) studied the differences between brick-and-mortar institutions and those attending online programs. He found no significant differences in plagiarism between the two types of institutions.

Complicating the issue is that faculty and administrators may not perceive that there is pervasive academic dishonesty. Writing in the *JLNA*, Kelly and Bonner (2005) found that “*When we examined question four (i.e., in your opinion, how pervasive is academic dishonesty among students at your institution?) for the entire sample, 62.6% of respondents [faculty and administrators] reported that academic dishonesty was either not pervasive or only somewhat pervasive (p.47).*” This may suggest a disconnect between the actual pervasiveness of the problem and the faculty and administration’s perception that there is a problem. It may also suggest the need to bring this issue to the forefront with faculty and administrators.

In addition, Kelly and Bonner found that there were differences between faculty and administrators who perceived academic dishonesty as pervasive and those who didn’t. The following is from the conclusion of their study. It suggests that it may be necessary to change the perception and norms of faculty and administrators. Personally, I found the third point “*3) consider the procedures or policies for pursuing formal charges of academic dishonesty to be overly time consuming,*” most interesting and perhaps problematic.

The majority of our respondents [faculty and administrators] did not perceive academic dishonesty to be a pervasive problem. In view of this, it is not surprising that the majority of faculty and administrators also reported that they tend to handle academic dishonesty issues with the student individually, and they do not pursue the issue further through formal channels. At the same time, we found that when faculty and administrators perceive that academic dishonesty is pervasive, they have significantly different attitudes about and responses to the problem. Those faculty and administrators who perceived academic dishonesty to be a pervasive problem were significantly more likely to: 1) perceive that the availability of digital text was a problem, 2) have used a detection device, 3) consider the procedures or policies for pursuing formal charges of academic dishonesty to be overly time consuming, and 4) report that academic dishonesty was a serious problem in their classes. These findings suggest that once a faculty member perceives the problem is significant, he/she changes his/her behavior and takes a more proactive stance toward deterring academic dishonesty. (Source: Kimberly Kelly and Kimberly Bonner, Digital Text, Distance Education and Academic Dishonesty: Faculty and Administrator Perceptions and Responses, JALN, Volume 9, Issue 1, March 2005, p.49)

The purpose of this commentary was to suggest that there may be a problem and to raise consciousness regarding the issue. A preliminary survey suggests that the problem is pervasive. Compounding the problem, one study suggests that faculty and administrators may be downplaying the pervasiveness of the issue. I don't profess that this is a comprehensive review of the problem. It isn't. However, my brief review suggests that there is a plethora of information on the topic and that it is an issue.

This is the first of a series of commentaries on this topic. CUSF has taken the initiative on this issue and at the recent AAAC meeting of Provosts, CUSF's role in taking the initiative was reinforced. CUSF is planning to invite several faculty members familiar with the topic to speak on the topic at the December CUSF meeting. This is an issue affecting all institutions with online courses and programs. It is an issue affecting traditional brick and mortar schools too. The internet provides easy access to information including cut and paste plagiarism as well as hiring ghost writers to write papers. Also, it is an issue that will need the collaboration and support of the student, staff and even the President's Councils. *Back to School* was a humorous and entertaining movie. Unfortunately, academic dishonesty in the digital age is not a laughing matter.

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#### References:

- Jones, D., (2011). Academic Dishonesty: Are More Students Cheating? *Business Communication Quarterly*, Volume 74, Number 2, June.
- Ison, D., (2014). Does the Online Environment Promote Plagiarism? A Comparative Study of Dissertations from Brick-and-Mortar versus Online Institutions. *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, Volume 10, No. 2, June.
- Kelly, K., and Bonner, K., (2005). Digital Text, Distance Education and Academic Dishonesty: Faculty and Administrator Perceptions and Responses, *JALN*, Volume 9, Issue 1, March 2005.
- Kidwell, L., Wozniak, K., and Laurel, J., (2003). Student Reports and Faculty Perceptions on Academic Dishonesty, *Teaching Business Ethics*, Volume 7, Issue 3, August.
- Lanier, M., (2006). Academic Integrity and Distant Learning. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, Volume 17, 2006 - Issue 2.

## Chair's Commentary 1710.2: A Thank You

In the 11:00 a.m. time slot at the Frostburg meeting on October 16<sup>th</sup>, there will be a presentation on the proposed amendments to the FMLA and Parental Leave Policies. The presentation will be represented by the Attorney General's office by Elena Langrill, Emily Bolyard, Katherine Levy and from System by Carolyn Skolnik. Three members of CUSF volunteered their time to review the policy. These were Jay

Zimmerman from Towson University, Bobbie Adams from Salisbury University, and Stephanie Gibson from the University of Baltimore. Along with Joann Boughman from System the group spent over 20 hours in a marathon review of the policies line by line. It was a tedious task. My understanding is that there were significant changes and improvements made in the revisions. I know all three people and there is no question in my mind that the faculty was well represented in the review. On behalf of the faculty, I would like to thank Jay, Bobbie and Stephanie for their contribution on this project and on a job well done.

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### **Chair's Commentary 1710.3: Update on Ombudsperson Joint Resolution**

The following is an update on the progress of the joint resolution on the ombudsperson. The joint resolution has been approved by the Student, Staff and Faculty Councils. CUSF approved it at its September meeting. The resolution was discussed by the Presidents at the Chancellor's Council on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. The consensus of the Presidents was that the resolution was needed and they suggested that the Provosts discuss the implementation of the resolution on their individual campuses at the AAAC on Friday, October 6<sup>th</sup>. This was done.

In their advisory capacity, all four Councils agreed that providing ombudsperson services on the campuses is needed and the services need to be provided for students, staff and faculty. It was also agreed that since the campuses are diverse, there could be multiple approaches to providing this service. The diversity includes the differences in addressing the needs of large and small campuses, comprehensives and research campuses, and brick and mortar and online campuses. The diversity of approaches was very evident from the ombudsperson panel discussions at the AAAC and CUSF meetings.

The resolution was designed to address this diversity. Working with their constituent groups on campus, the Presidents are directed to develop a plan that provides ombudsperson services for students, staff and faculty. Where possible these services will be consistent with the recommended policies and practices of the International Ombudsman Association or a similar association. The Presidents are the problem solvers and the resolution enables them to tailor the services to the unique situations found on their campuses.

The third section of the joint resolution focuses on monitoring the implementation of the ombudsperson services. Monitoring of the implementation occurs four ways. First, the Presidents work with Chancellor who monitors the implementation of the plan as part of the President's yearly evaluation. Second, feedback on the plan and its implementation will be provided directly to the Councils from their members. Third, the Chancellor can provide updates on the progress of the implementation when he visits with the Councils. Fourth, the Chairman of the Board can review with the Chancellor the progress of implementation as part of his workload report. On behalf of the three Councils and the Presidents, let's implement the resolution and provide this valuable service.

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