

January 2009

Council of University System Staff (CUSS) Meeting

January 27, 2009

Coppin State University – Baltimore, MD

In attendance:

Members	Institution	Alternates/Guests
Linda Parker-Ford	BSU	
Victoria Kelly	CSU	Interim Member
Chris Thomas	CSU	
Abby Bynes	CSU	Alternate
Jesse Ketterman	FSU	
Bernard Wynder	FSU	
Absent	SU	
Absent	TU	
Brenda Yarema	TU	
Absent	UB	
Karyn Schulz	Co-Secretary, UB	
Ronald Kasl	UMB	Alternate
Colette Becker	UMB, Vice Chair	
Absent	UMB	
Absent	UMB	
Absent	UMBC	
Deborah Geare	UMBC	
Absent	UMBI	
Absent	UMBI	
Gus Mercanti	UMCES	
Larry Lauer	CUSS Chair, UMCP	
Absent	UMCP	
Absent	UMCP	
Absent	UMES	
Ayman Abdo	UMUC	
Michael Hughes	UMUC	Alternate
Jessica McCarty	UMUC	
Absent	UMUC	
Absent	USMO	

Larry Lauer called the **meeting to order**.

Dr. Reginald Avery, President of Coppin State University welcomed the members to his campus. He shared his belief of the importance of shared governance and hoped we had a productive meeting. He

January 2009

joked with us about the inclement weather and the hard decision that, as a president, he has weather to close or not to close, since someone will always disagree with his decision.

December **minutes** were approved with changes.

Chairman's Report:

Larry hoped everyone had a safe drive in and mentioned the email he had sent on Monday indicating that safety should be our first concern when deciding whether or not to attend. He told the committee that we would adjourn early so everyone can get on the road before the weather worsens.

From the Chancellor's Council meeting (1/12/09): The Council discussed furloughs, the budget but could not get into specifics about the budget until it was released on January 21, 2009. Larry indicated that the Chancellor believes that USM may fair well with the Governor's budget (not yet released) because of his public support for higher education.

The Council discussed the potential legislative agenda and PJ Hogan indicated that any new budget requests would be "dead on arrival." There will be support for the current operating and capital budgets but no new funding.

Service fees by the union were also discussed at the Chancellor's Council. A service charge is being requested by the union since members don't pay dues. Currently, this is not allowed by law but the union feels that it "played ball" with the governor when it came to the furlough plans and VC Vivona indicated that this suggestion was "promised" to the unions. Because of the lack of any COLAs or raises this year or next, Larry feels that the legislature will not support a change to this law. Colette asked if we think the unions will push the governor and the legislature on this concept with the exception to freeze it for one year but when the economy improves, allow the service fees to be taken from those represented by the union.

Textbook affordability was also discussed by the Chancellor's Council. There is a move to modify the cost of textbooks system wide. There is a concern that faculty are not being proactive when ordering books, not considering ordering older or recent editions but going with the latest editions, which are usually more costly. The Chancellor has asked that the campus presidents talk with their faculty to be mindful when ordering textbooks. There is also an UM Bookstore Resolution to encourage a conversation with campus bookstore managers regarding textbook affordability.

MHEC is investigating the allowance of out of state "bandit" institutions (i.e. Phoenix) who set up in Maryland without following MHEC regulations in regards to number of faculty and space (of location). MHEC is seeking to tighten its regulations for these institutions, if possible in some cases, to forbid their existence in Maryland.

January 2009

Budget: The state budget was released on January 21, 2009 and USM fared very well with a nearly \$30M refund to the system and a 3% increase overall. The stability of the USM budget warrants, as Larry suggested, the need for CUSS members and others to contact their legislators to encourage them to adopt this budget. Larry sent Chancellor Kirwan an email thanking him for his hard work on the state budget and how it favored the system. Roy Ross sent an email to CUSS with information about legislators in our districts. Larry will work with Roy to develop a form letter that can be sent to the legislators to encourage their support for higher education in Maryland.

Questions arose from the members in regards to next year's budget, despite looking positive when released on 1/21/09. Ron Kasl asked if we are "safe" or should we be planning for more cuts (personnel and/or programs)? Larry responded with the belief that although things seem bleak economically, it is not as bad as it was during a previous recession when Governor Schaeffer specifically requested layoffs in higher education. Jesse Ketterman replied that although the governor's budget may seem like USM will not be affected; it will be up to the legislature to make cuts to the budget so cuts may still be forthcoming. Brenda Yarema shared that Dr. Caret, president at TU, informed staff that there will be no program cuts, it is a flat budget.

Larry discussed the Spending Affordability Cap was determined to be at 1.7% (increase in revenue) but the governor's budget is below that cap.

Furloughs: Each campus created their furlough plans and Larry believed that in most cases, shared governance worked in preparation of these furlough plans.

- TSU indicated that their shared governance bodies were involved
- UB indicated that input was received by its shared governance groups
- Coppin used the MLK holiday as a furlough day and gave it to staff to use as a floating holiday. They will also use one day during spring break.
- UMB did not have input from their shared governance groups when creating their furlough plan. This information was shared with the Chancellor.
- Bowie also determined specific days and all need to be completed by mid-May.

Larry discussed that although there are many unhappy staff regarding furloughs but it is what it is and it prevented layoffs. Some campuses are requiring furloughs be taken by all employees, regardless of their funding (operating or grant) while others exempted grant-funded positions from this plan.

Meeting with Chancellor Kirwan, Joe Vivona, USM Attorney General (?) and (?) on 1/15/09: Larry arranged for the Executive Council to meet with the Chancellor to discuss shared governance. Larry presented the shared governance paper he wrote to the Chancellor for the basis of the discussion. The Chancellor indicated immediately that he had some difficulty with some of the wording used in the paper. For example, the first category included the term mandatory, which the Chancellor felt was too strong to use, although it is a BOR policy. The Chancellor also did not like the use of the word peripheral in reference to the role of CUSS when policies are discussed and/or created by the BOR. The Chancellor

January 2009

challenged Larry to identify examples when this occurred, which, on the spot, he could not. The discussion continued with the concern that now that we are in a unionized environment on most campuses, there is more energy placed on working with the unions on policies prior to working with staff. VC Vivona indicated that this is how it is since USM is now unionized. Larry tried repeatedly to redirect the conversation to the concern about better communication between all parties as well as if BOR policies are being enforced consistently at each institution. For example, the PRE process at UMCP seems to be arbitrarily enforced when working with non-unionized staff. Altogether, it was believed that the meeting was not as productive as the Executive Council had hoped it would be.

Larry sent an email to Chancellor Kirwan and VC Vivona thanking them for meeting with the Executive Council. The Chancellor responded and hopes to continue to meet and have a productive partnership. There was no response from VC Vivona.

Ideas for long term budget solutions: Larry asked CUSS members to share their ideas, generated by each campus shared governance group, regarding ideas to be presented to the Chancellor as possible long term budget solutions:

- Colette: move to reduce salaries by returning to a 37.5 hour work week
 - This can be a temporary (FY10) or a permanent change
- Larry: place more staff on 9.5 month schedule versus a 12 month schedule
- Karyn: salary reduction of 1% across USM
- Gus: system-wide purchasing capabilities (buy in bulk, establish a consortium for procurement purchases)
- Jesse: shut down buildings at certain times of year when not in use (January/summer)
- Brenda: furlough days over spring break, close buildings, OTS to review plans to refresh technology, change from a 5-year plan to a 6-year plan

Chancellor Liaison to HR Report: Due to the inclement weather, Rosario was unable to attend today's meeting and therefore there was no report.

No Committee Meetings were held but Deb Geare indicated she needed volunteer reviewers for the BOR Awards.

Next meeting: February 24 at UMCP

Respectfully submitted by Karyn Schulz, 1/29/09