

Council of University System Staff (CUSS) Meeting

March 24, 2009

University of Baltimore

In attendance:

Members

Linda Parker Ford	Bowie State
Chris Thomas	Coppin
Jesse Ketterman	FSU
Bernard Wynder	FSU
Jackie Eberts	SU
(Absent)	TU
Kimberley Lynne	UB, Co-Secretary
Karyn Schulz	UB, Co-Secretary
Ronald Kasl	UMB
Colette Becker	UMB, CUSS Vice Chair
David DeLooze	UMB
Roy Ross	UMB
Deb Geare	UMBC
Joe Hill	UMBC
Jami Kasco	UMBI
Chenita Reddick	UMES
Larry Lauer	UMCP, CUSS Chair
Sister Maureen Schrimpe	UMCP
Gus Mercanti	UMCES
Ayman Abdo	UMUC
Michael Hughes	UMUC
Jessica McCarty	UMUC
(Absent)	USMO

Alternates/Guests

Giordana Segneri	UB
John Chapin	UB

Chancellor's Liaison to CUSS:	
Rosario I. van Daalen	USMO

Karyn Schulz called the **meeting to order** and introduced Miriam King, Senior Vice President of Enrollment **Management** and Student Affairs. **Miriam King welcomed** the members to the University of Baltimore. New to UB, she compared higher education to her private sector experience. She said she is learning that Shared Governance is a great resource of shared expertise. There is not its equal in private business or international education.

January and February **minutes** were approved with changes.

Chairman's Report:

Larry had joined the Chancellor's Council meeting via phone on snow day March 2, 2009. He reported to the CUSS members that it was mostly a **budgetary discussion**. Maryland had a shortfall this fiscal year of \$500M due to the worse tax revenues in years. This shortfall will not impact this year but next fiscal year. The presidents discussed the potential of federal government stimulus monies and how to prepare the Staff and Faculty employees to receive those funds. The government is promising that stimulus money already.

Before the CUSS meeting, Larry distributed, via email to the members, the USM Government Relations Legislative Newsletter and referred to its mention of the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) recommendation to cut the Higher Education Investment Fund (HEIF) by \$5.6M that was discussed at the Chancellor's Council. HEIF projected to generate \$5.5M and USM projected \$3.5M but the recommended cut will be its second reduction since the shortfall that was built into the Governor's base budget for USM. This double cut will impact financial aid and student services.

The presidents also discussed another section of the newsletter: proposed repeal of the current Edward T. Conroy Scholarship that offers tuition remission to widows of soldiers in Iraq. Due to estimated loss revenue of \$566K, eligible students were placed on a waiting list until the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) had the funds to award.

DLS is beginning to cut the budget but they say from places that won't require a raise in tuition. There is a projected \$16M cut from the USM general fund. The House cut \$21M from the USM budget per UMCP's newspaper, *The Diamondback*. That budget is now being considered by the Senate. Andy Clark asked CUSS members to send letters to the Senate Budget and Tax Committees, to Senate President Thomas Mike Miller and/or Mike Busch.

Karyn Schulz had heard some scary rumors from Annapolis about the USM budget for next year: a projected 10% cut in department budgets, a 1% salary cut for everyone and furloughs. She had heard this from an UB VP who heard it in Annapolis from legislatures. The 1% potential salary cut is mentioned in the newsletter: the Appropriations Committee rejected a 1% across the board salary reduction for state employees. Miller and Busch are against the salary cut because it impacts the state retirement contributions.

Rosario said it is best for all to keep the salary base constant and to have furloughs. There have been ten layoffs so far at one institution: five state lines and five were part of a program that was cut.

Larry reported on The UMCP Staff Council meeting of Tuesday, February 24, 2009: The Council members continued to discuss the implementation of the furloughs and how the process was proceeding now that some people have taken furlough days. Since this process has several approval levels it was advised that individuals monitor pay advices very closely to assure accurate recording of their furlough time. The Governor projects furloughs next year.

The Legislative Affairs Committee was tasked with developing a template for people to use for writing members of the General Assembly supporting the Governor's budget allocation for Higher Education. This template would be placed on the CUSS website for all Staff to access. Communication by email with

General Assembly members was encouraged. The Council is open to suggestions for other activities to support the USM proposed budget.

An effort will be made to update and maintain the CUSS website. In particular meeting minutes, resolutions, and council membership need to be regularly refreshed.

Update on the BOR Awards: (Deb Geare joined Larry in updating the members):

The Council has received 46 BOR Staff Award nominations from the USM Institutions. This is an increase of 10 over last year. The Community Development Committee is now reviewing those packets and recommendations will be coming forward in April. The Council will work with the Chancellor and Regents to hold the Staff Award ceremony at Hidden Waters during the holiday reception in December. The Community Development Committee was assigned to review the entire BOR Staff Awards Program to suggest both ways to simplify and enhance the program so more outstanding USM Staff is recognized.

The Staff and Faculty Awards are the highest recognition award provided by the Regents to USM employees. It is a state-wide award that has intense competition from almost all Institutions. There has not been a change in the BOR Staff Award program since its inception. At that time it was modeled after the Regents Faculty Awards. The Faculty Award Program has had several changes over the years, including expansion of the number of awards. A comparison and recommendation on the types and numbers of Staff categories should be part of the review. This and other recommendations to streamline the process should be returned to Council for review by the August 2009 meeting. This will allow time to implement changes by the next academic year.

Email exchange from Larry to Janice Doyle on March 9: The reason this issue was first raised is because Council members thought presenting the awards as part of the scheduled full Board of Regents meeting, (sandwiched between approval of the minutes and the Council reports) did not do justice to the awardees or their families. This Systemwide USM-BOR Staff Award has less presence than many of the Institutions' Staff Awards when it is presented that way. It compares poorly to even department Staff Awards at many of the USM Institutions. Continuing to have the award ceremony at the September BOR meeting without any other changes does not address that concern. The environment for the award is often a crowded room with people anxious for other BOR agenda items. Some families travel long distances to attend the award ceremony and don't even get lunch or a chance to meet with the Regents and other awardees because of the pressure of other business. Very seldom do CUSS or CUSF members attend to see the awards presentation.

The CUSS recognizes that the award is a USM-BOR Award and that some of the Regents rightfully want to take part in the presentation. This would argue to keep the award ceremony at the BOR meetings. We have advocated for improving award ceremony, and doing it at the Chancellor's Holiday Reception was one option that did not increase expenses. Perhaps some changes in the timing of the presentation, more attention to the environment for the award when scheduling the BOR meeting or a breakfast reception for the awardees and the Regents could be considered.

From Janice to Larry Lauer, March 5: We are happy to invite the CUSS BOR awardees to the holiday event and recognize them that day. However, we would like to continue to have an awards ceremony at the September BOR meeting for the CUSS awardees. The award is a Board of Regents award; therefore we think it is appropriate to have the awardees publically announced at a BOR meeting. Furthermore, a BOR meeting would guarantee the participation all of the regents and presidents. I would also add that the regents and presidents greatly enjoy the recognition of the very capable Staff at their meeting. As mentioned to you earlier, there is no guarantee that regents and presidents will be in attendance at the holiday party. In summary I hope that CUSS will find that holding an award ceremony at the September BOR meeting along with an invitation to and recognition at the Chancellor's holiday open house acceptable. I have discussed this with Bill Chapin and he has agreed to this approach for the BOR CUSF awards. We can also discuss other enhancements such as posting pictures of awardees on our website.

Larry or Deb will work with Janice to work the awards into the BOR agenda. Colette agreed to call Janice. Deb said that results of the winners will be announced by April 1.

Larry next reported to the members a Shared Governance issue at UMBI:

Clifford Kendall, chairman of the University System of Maryland (USM) Board of Regents, announced (2/27/09) that he will appoint a special committee of regents to review the mission and organization of the University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute (UMBI). Given USM's critical role in advancing state priorities, Kendall will charge the group with developing recommendations for maximizing the return on the state's investment in UMBI and its component centers.

Kendall said, "Earlier this week, Jennie C. Hunter-Cevera announced her decision to step down from the UMBI presidency June 30, 2009. This period of transition offers an opportunity to carefully study the advantages of UMBI's current structure, as well as consider alternative organizational options, including distribution of the UMBI centers to other USM institutions."

Kendall plans to appoint the members of the special committee within the next few weeks. Once the members convene, they will develop the scope and an expedited timeframe for their work.

Letter from Larry to Mr. Cliff Kendell and Dr. Brit Kirwan

The Council of University System Staff has been monitoring the unfolding events at the University of Maryland Bioscience Institute (UMBI) over the last several months. Since UMBI staff members are not represented by a bargaining unit, the Staff Council feels a particular responsibility to advocate for the staff of this Institution and its Centers. Many of the staff of UMBI have been members of this Council and we have regularly met at UMBI facilities over the years. With the recent resignation of Dr. Hunter-Cevera, we would ask that staff members from UMBI and its component centers be included on the recently announced Special Study Committee. If there is a search for a new President of UMBI we would hope that members of the UMBI staff would also be included on the Search Committee, as is the procedure at all USM Institutions. Staff working for UMBI have a perspective of the organization that can benefit the deliberations, particularly if outside participants are included who do not know the inner workings of UMBI. Some staff members, exempt and non-exempt, have been with UMBI for many years,

allowing the research and educational outreach activities to advance and operate at a very high level. The dedication and professionalism of these staff members to UMBI and, as a consequence to the USM, should not be overlooked in the study of the current structure and alternative organizational options. In times of transition the knowhow and institutional memory of staff can smooth change and assist in keeping complex organizations functioning. We would urge that all consideration be given to the dedicated staff of UMBI and its component centers at this time of transition.

Jami Kasco from UMBI asked the members to write a letter since the Central Administrative Staff at UMBI is threatened. The BOR committee is external and an outside reviewer. The Staff should be involved so its interest and the best interest of the employees are not overlooked. CUSS is involved in an advisory role. The Chancellor met with UMBI Shared Governance group, its campus senate. The CUSS Executive Committee will craft a letter and copy Frank Robb at UMBI.

Chancellor's Liaison to CUSS - Report:

Tax tables have changed for one to two years so State employees will have more expendable income but Rosario warned that we watch to be sure that enough taxes are withheld in order to meet the required amount at the end of the year. Please note that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 has been implemented for State employees and the new tax tables are now in effect. For the "UM" Institutions it is already reflected in today's paycheck (3/20/09. The amount of your Federal Tax withholding has been reduced; thus, more money to take home. Single individual will receive a tax credit in the form of reduced withholding up to \$400 and a married individual will receive up to \$800 per tax year. An employee with multiple jobs or married couples whose combined incomes place them in a higher tax bracket may elect to submit a revised W-4 Form to ensure enough withholding is held to cover the tax for his or her combined income.

OPEN ENROLLMENT APRIL 20 TO MAY 1, 2009

Rosario reported that no rate increases have been posted yet and that Kaiser Permanente and Dental Benefits Providers will no longer be offered. The premium rates for Fiscal Year 2010 have not been established at this time. The Open Enrollment information has not been posted on the State's DBM website yet. Keep checking because the information will be posted as soon as it is available.

Voluntary Open Enrollment: Open enrollment will be voluntary and IVR (interactive voice response) will be used. If you do not want to make changes, you do not have to take action, UNLESS you are a current member of Kaiser Permanente and Dental Benefits Providers (contracts not renewed by State), or you wish to renew or enroll in a Health or Dependent Care Spending Account. Spending accounts must be renewed annually.

Changes in Health Plans: The health plans that will be offered will have nationwide networks (Aetna, United HealthCare, and BCBS).

Employees will be able to enroll in a PPO (preferred provider organization), POS (point of service), or EPO (exclusive provider organization) health plan. The "HMO" terminology will no longer be used and it is being replaced by the "EPO".

- Employees enrolled in the CareFirst BlueChoice HMO will automatically roll over into the CareFirst EPO;
- Employees enrolled in the Optimum Choice HMO (Mamsi) will automatically roll over into the United Healthcare EPO; and
- AETNA EPO is a new offering. Election of an AETNA EPO requires use of the IVR system to enroll.

In most cases, HMO participants will not have to change providers under an EPO plan. Current HMO-Kaiser Permanente participants **must** choose a new plan or end up with no coverage on July 1.

Changes in Dental Plans:

The Dental Benefits Providers HMO will not be offered.

If an employee currently enrolled in Dental Benefits Providers does not enroll in a United Concordia PPO or HMO, the employee will have to wait until the next open enrollment to enroll in a dental plan. New to United Concordia-implants and composite/resin fillings will be covered; preventive services will not be applied to the \$1500 annual maximum; and pregnant women have an additional cleaning during pregnancy.

Same Sex Domestic Partners Coverage:

Provided that the regulations are adopted on July 1, 2009, **same sex** domestic partners and their dependents who meet the criteria will be eligible for health benefits. Due to the federal Internal Revenue Code, the State subsidy will be treated as taxable income to the employee. More detailed information will be included in the State Benefits booklet and on the State of Maryland health benefits website. The criteria are stringent for this coverage: living together for one year, mutual bank and address and paying bills together. The contributions are post tax and the contributions from the state are taxable.

Correction Period: *(State has made changes to information on this paragraph subsequent to this meeting)*

The period for making corrections is May 11 to May 18, 2009. It will be to your advantage to make changes early as Health Benefits will be mailing confirmation notices to the Institutions' HR Office. The HR Office will forward the confirmation notices as soon as possible. If there is a mistake, it should be corrected using the IVR system during the May 11 to May 18, 2009 time period.

Important Message from SHPS and the Department of Budget and Management

The Department of Budget and Management recently learned that some employee names and Social Security numbers may have inadvertently been disclosed. Earlier this month, a Flexible Spending

Account (FSA) Fee Summary report listing the names and Social Security numbers of members in the healthcare and dependent care flexible spending accounts was lost in the mail between SHPS, the vendor who manages the accounts for the State, and the Department's Employee Benefits Division (EBD). The EBD office received a torn envelope with a notice from the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) expressing their apologies for the damage that occurred during handling of the package. In the past, these reports have been mailed to the Division in a sealed-secured envelope via the USPS without incident. However, no other identifying information was listed on the report, such as address, date of birth, or direct deposit information. At this time, we do not have any indication that the information in the report has been used improperly.

Please be assured that the Department of Budget and Management, in collaboration with SHPS, is making a concerted effort to communicate with those members who may have been affected. To mitigate any future potential privacy breaches, we are making arrangements to use an alternate technology-based method for the transmission of this and similar reports that contain identifying information of members. For your protection, you may want to contact the national credit reporting agencies to place a fraud alert in your file and to receive a free copy of your credit report. The website <https://www.annualcreditreport.com> is the official site through which you can contact all three credit reporting agencies to request a credit report. In addition, the names of the credit reporting agencies and their contact information are provided below if you wish to contact each directly:

Equifax 1-800-525-6285; www.equifax.com

Experian 1-888-397-3742; www.experian.com

TransUnion 1-800-680-7289; www.transunion.com

You may also seek additional information on the prevention of identity theft by going to the Federal Trade Commission's website, www.ftc.gov or call the FTC at (877) IDTHEFT (877-438-4338). If fraudulent charges appear on your account, you can call the Consumer Credit Counseling Service at 800-388-2227 for help in clearing false claims from your credit report.

Rosario reported that whether you received a letter in the mail or not, your data was also compromised if you have a flexible spending account. The above email is legitimate. If you filed a claim this year or not it is still unclear if your data was included. *(Subsequent to this meeting, it was announced that all SHPS participants were included in the report that was lost).*

Rosario also reported that **MSRP-Nationwide made a change** in their record keeping platform in the end of December. That change impacted in January 136 USM employees with incorrect deduction errors to their 401(k), 403(b), 457(b) supplemental retirement plan contributions. Usually the corrections have been made through the State Central Payroll Bureau but MSRP-Nationwide is correcting the errors via cash and providing a 1099 Form. Employees will have to file the 1099 Form with their tax return next year.

Committee Meetings:

Executive Committee:

March 2009 Final

- Larry will email the Blue Ribbon Commission – their report is due 12/31/09. Their last meeting of 3/2/09 was re-scheduled due to snow.
- The Executive Committee drafted a letter for university support of the budget and will circulate via email. Different letters for staff senates and individuals.
- Larry will write a letter to the Chancellor about UMBI.

Roy Ross reported for the **Legislative Committee**: budget is a priority in Annapolis. Freeze on hiring and promotions/reclassifications? Have not heard.

Jamie reported for the **Communications Committee**: will update tent cards. Updated newsletter and member lists are on the webpage.

Deb Geare of **Community Development** reported that BOR Award winners have been selected from four institutions. Summaries will be completed by the end of the week. Larry suggested a future online staff submission. Deb cannot serve in CUSS past June or July and either Jesse or Ayman will take over the responsibility of head of the committee.

Jackie of **Compensation Committee** reported that she finalized the report on each institution's discounts but she has no place to verify the information. Jackie will email the report to Rosario. Jackie suggested that CUSS compile a chart on each institution's treatment/procedures of furlough days. Larry suggested that Joe Vivona should compile that report.

New Business:

Nominations: new CUSS officials will be nominated in April, May and June meetings and elected in June. Larry discussed, first in the Executive Committee meeting and then with all the members, his suggestion of splitting some of the Chairman's meeting responsibilities. He suggested that previous chairs not only mentor but take some of the Chair's responsibility of the three meetings per month. Other Executive Committee members were then concerned about the projection of CUSS' point of contact. The group referred to the job description in the bylaws.

CUSS on Facebook: Colette suggested creating a Facebook page for CUSS. She is attending a meeting of the UMB senate to discuss establishing a Facebook page and will report back on the legalities. Facebook could provide another tool of distributing information to the members. The group did not decide on ownership but agreed that it made the most sense that the Communications Committee would administer the page.

Next meeting: April 28 at TSU

Respectfully submitted by Kimberley Lynne