

Council of University System Staff (CUSS) Meeting - MINUTES

Sept. 22, 2009

University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute (UMBI)
Baltimore, MD

In attendance:

Members

Linda Parker-Ford	BSU
Chris Thomas	CSU
Absent	FSU
Jackie Eberts	SU
Brenda Yarema	TU, Member at Large
Karyn Schulz	UB, CUSS Co-Secretary
Giordana Segneri	UB, CUSS Co-Secretary
Colette Becker	UMB, CUSS Vice Chair
Dave DeLooze	UMB
Deb Geare	UMBC
Joe Hill	UMBC
Lori Smith-Watson	UMBC, Member at Large
Mary Stapleton	UMBI
Absent	UMCES
Willie Brown	UMCP, CUSS Chair
Larry Lauer	UMCP, CUSS Past Chair
Sister Maureen Schrimpe	UMCP
Absent	UMES
Ayman Abdo	UMUC
Mary Reed	USMO

Alternates/Guests

Ronald Kasl	UMB
Joel DeWyer	UMBC
Kathy Miller	UMBC
Chenita Reddick	UMES
Shelia Murray	SU
Renee Burrell	UMBI

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

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

- Mary Stapleton welcomed CUSS to UMBI and introduced Candace Rettie, Vice President of Education, Professional Advancement and Training. Ms. Rettie talked about the structure of UMBI and about how the Institution is being "disaggregated". She said there are about 40 central Staff employees who will no longer have positions at UMBI; Kathy DeShong, Assistant Vice President of Human Resources at UMBI, will be joining us at lunch.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- August minutes, taken by Larry Lauer in the absence of the co-secretaries, will be approved via e-mail

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

- a. Chancellor's Council convened Sept. 14; nothing to report
- b. Board of Regents meeting held Sept. 18

- Willie Brown, CUSS Chair, summarized his written report regarding CUSS' recommendations for furloughs and budget cuts
- He thanked the Regents for the compliments they made about the contributions CUSS makes to the University System of Maryland
- He said there is a perception, real or perceived, that there is tension between the Chancellor's Council (USM Presidents) and CUSS
- He presented his ideas for improvement and reminder of past CUSS practices:
 - CUSS should reach out to Institutions' Staff Councils and send the minutes from CUSS meetings to the Staff Councils on a monthly basis
 - The CUSS Chair will share with CUSS membership everything he submits to or shares with the Chancellor and the Board of Regents
 - CUSS should consider issuing its newsletter on a semester or quarter basis
 - If CUSS has nothing to do, we are not looking in the right place or at the right issues
 - We need to increase exposure of CUSS
 - CUSS should work together with the Chancellor's Council
- Mary Stapleton: CUSS should gather best practices to share with the Institutions that are struggling with Shared Governance
- Karyn Schulz: Those same best practices should be shared with the Board of Regents and the Chancellor's Council
- Dave DeLooze: Many of the Presidents and Vice Presidents throughout the USM are new; maybe they have not been trained or oriented about Shared Governance
- Larry Lauer:
 - We need to strengthen Shared Governance at Institutions with less strong traditions
 - Largest gap is with echelons below the Presidents: Vice Presidents, Directors, etc.
 - Chancellor needs to put pressure on upper administration to include Shared Governance
- Jackie Eberts: CUSS is less involved in planning; problem is with passive and apathetic Staff employees
- Willie Brown:
 - CUSS should reach out *to* Institutions and solicit feedback *from* them
 - Make sure Staff employees understand why they are taking the hit for the budget
 - Create ad hoc committee to be ambassadors to various Institutions, Vice Presidents and Presidents
 - Wants CUSS' working committees to self-review: Should they be revamped? Do they have the right mission? Should they be reformulated to address other issues?

- Sister Maureen Schrimpe: Suggested one of two At-Large Members should chair the ad hoc committee: CUSS Members agreed that both, Brenda Yarema and Lori Smith-Watson, will chair the committee; they will brainstorm and share ideas via e-mail
- Goal is not so much communication but how do we increase the prestige/awareness of CUSS?
- Mary Reed: Circulated a hard copy of CUSS' membership list at the meeting and asked that information be verified and corrected
- Jackie Eberts: Benefits and Compensation Committee has not had much to sink its teeth into during the past two years
- Giordana Segneri: At the July meeting, there was discussion about requesting a review of family-related policies through USM

4. REPORT FROM THE CHANCELLOR'S LIAISON TO CUSS - Rosario van Daalen

- The state is facing another \$300 million shortage in September; so far, USM has approximately \$95 million total (about 4 percent of its budget); no information on the impact of possible upcoming cuts
- Flu shots: clinics and schedules of when the state is offering regular flu shots for only \$10; info was sent out electronically to the Institutions and to CUSS Members
- Be aware of Rosario Van Daalen's indications when she sends information to CUSS membership, as it is often the responsibility of the Institution's Benefits Coordinator to disseminate the information, not of CUSS Members
- No news on any activity or scheduled meetings of the Blue Ribbon Commission (retiree health benefits); everyone in Annapolis is too involved with budget crisis or concerned of the impact this topic will have during re-elections; Commission's report to General Assembly is due December 2009
 - Jackie Eberts: concerned that the wait will allow them to push their report through and it will be seen as a cost-cutting measure to pass costs on to retirees; can we be more involved?
 - Joe Hill: show up at meetings to make the CUSS presence known (Legislative Committee); there have been no meetings scheduled since January 2009

5. COMMITTEE MEETINGS

a. Executive Committee

- CUSS Members agreed that Willie Brown will send letters to Institutions' Presidents stating who the Institutions' CUSS representatives are; welcoming new CUSS representatives to the Council and thanking the Presidents for their support of Shared Governance; the letters will be sent and signed by the CUSS Chair each year in August/September
 - Letter will explain that CUSS is a body created by the USM-BOR in 1992 and codified into law in 1995 by the Maryland General Assembly
 - Emphasize Shared Governance and that CUSS representatives are advisers to Institution Presidents, the Chancellor and the Board of Regents; as such, the Institution President and the CUSS representatives need to have an

- established communication path for access and dialogue without unnecessary barriers
 - Budget for CUSS expenses comes from the President's Office budget
 - Letter should be personalized for each Institution President; Alternate CUSS Members will be listed too
 - CUSS Members should provide the name and address of their President and Supervisor; CUSS Members will be copied on the letter
- The Communications Committee should send the CUSS Newsletter out in a more timely manner as "hot topics" and allow room for Institution personalization (what's going on at your Institution)
 - CUSS Co-Secretaries could put together an executive summary of the CUSS meetings for inclusion
- Executive Committee could visit Staff Council meetings at various institutions or CUSS could host an inter-Institution Staff Council meeting (perhaps regional)
 - Or CUSS could host a meeting for the Staff Council at the host Institution during the hour after the CUSS meeting
- Make updates to CUSS Web site more accessible to CUSS; however, all postings need to be sent directly to USM Office for posting
 - Link Institutions' Staff Council info to the CUSS Web site; all postings need to be sent to Mary Reed
- CUSS's operating procedures have to be documented to facilitate work and direction for present and future CUSS members

7. NEW BUSINESS

- Kathy DeShong, UMBI Assistant Vice President for Human Resources, also joined CUSS for a working lunch
 - USM has instituted "priority of interview" initiative for UMBI Staff
 - Kathy DeShong can be contacted at deshong@umbi.umd.edu for a list of Staff employees who still need to be placed; she is concerned about losing Staff during the transition but understands that no one should turn down an offer waiting for the final transition date of June 30, 2010
- Joanne Goedert, Assistant Vice Chancellor (to Joe Vivona) for Administration and Finance, USM Office, joined CUSS for a working lunch
 - Last fiscal year's furloughs happened very suddenly in a very short window; there is more time to plan this fiscal year
 - FAQs evolved from a meeting with the CUSS Executive Members and Vice Chancellor Joe Vivona
 - Furlough plans are based on a Board of Regents policy and resolution/guidelines set by each Institutions' administration
 - Plans are consistent with federal labor laws
 - This year's plan allows a temporary salary reduction across the remaining fiscal year
 - The plan does not affect retirement or health/leave benefits

- With only one exception, Institutions will be closing for one or more days, clustered around holidays primarily in December and during Spring Break
- Board of Regents passed the furlough resolution on Friday, Sept. 18; now Institutions are free to finalize their plans with input from Shared Governance and Unions; the plans will then be approved by the Chancellor, who has approved about half of the Institutions' plans so far
- FAQs need (as revisions):
 - Explanation of combination of furlough and temporary salary reduction; Joanne Goedert: the USM is unaware of any Institution that plans to do a combination
 - What about essential personnel? Each Institution will address its needs
 - Issue of Exempt Staff employees who are expected to get work done, no matter the number of furlough days, needs to be addressed
 - Grant-funded employees? Joanne Goedert: decision left up to the Institution, but an overwhelming majority have chosen not to furlough 100-percent grant-funded positions
 - Some institutions are furloughing public safety employees, some are not
 - During Institutions' closings, employees who need to take fewer days than the closings will need to use their own accrued personal, annual or comp-time leave; employees can take unpaid leave if they do not have accrued leave; on Jan. 1 of each year employees accrue three days of personal leave.
 - Accrued comp time can be used by Nonexempt Staff employees, but it does not exist for Exempt Staff employees
 - USM Foundation-paid employees may be subjected to furlough days; Institution-specific Foundation employees should be subject to furloughs
 - Board of Regents guiding principles for furlough days are public and can be distributed
- Joe Hill: USM needs to have standing policy in place for when furloughs and cuts are necessary, so there is consistency across Institutions; inconsistency creates animosity among Institutions
 - Rosario van Daalen: There cannot be consistency across Institutions because of the different missions and needs of different Institutions
 - State funds budgeted for each Institution differ, as does whether an Institution can close completely (funds may come from grants and contracts, self-support)
 - Former Board of Trustees schools have a different schedule and payroll system
- Dave DeLooze: furlough deduction should be based on a percentage of salary and should not be a lower percentage for lower-paid employees and a higher percentage for higher-paid employees
 - Joanne Goedert: the USM took this into consideration and made a decision to look out for lower-paid employees

- Staff Councils should ask their Presidents about how the Institutions are cutting costs; the Chancellor should suggest to Presidents that they make a statement (via Web or e-mail) on how the Institution has reduced expenses
- Larry Lauer: How can USM eliminate Faculty employee related expenses and positions?
It cannot continue to balance the budget on the backs of Staff employees.
 - Value of Staff employees is not being recognized
 - Transparency of expenditures and savings is needed
 - Examine travel expenses

NEXT MONTH'S CUSS MEETING: Oct. 27, 2009, Frostburg State University

Respectfully submitted by Karyn Schulz and Giordana Segneri, CUSS Co-Secretaries