

Council of University System Staff
April 21, 2020, 2020 Minutes
Virtual Meeting

1. **Call Meeting to Order**
2. **Approval of Minutes:** January minutes were approved via WebEx polling
March minutes were approved via WebEx polling
3. **Chancellor's Liaison Report**

Town Hall

The Chancellor is meeting with Institution leaders, Board of Regents and state leaders and sharing how proud he is leading the USM at this time.

During a University System Office staff virtual Town Hall he discussed the virus, actions undertaken to protect the USM, and about the future of higher education. The Maryland Comptroller offered a sobering forecast of the state's potential revenue losses, and Gov. Hogan announced hiring and spending freezes across all state agencies. The University System won't be immune to cost-cutting, and we should anticipate, at the state level, tougher measures to come. The Department of Budget and Management will give direction in terms of a budget reduction target that the USM will need to hit, and we'll work with the universities to implement cuts that will get us to that number. As in the past, that process will involve some very hard decisions. Aside from questions about job impacts, the USM Office staff primarily wanted to know when we could expect this crisis to be over—when they could return to the office, when students could return to campus. We don't know. He also thanked employees across the System for stepping up in heroic ways to advance the work and fulfill the mission.

ASSESSING STUDENT, FACULTY & STAFF NEEDS

Several presidents are soliciting feedback from staff to get a pulse on the challenges they're encountering, so that attention can be focused on fixing identified gaps and bottlenecks. These assessments can help institutions deploy the targeted support their employee needs and determine issues down the line should we find ourselves in a remote environment for a while.

MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Several university leaders shared their concerns about the mental health and well-being should social distancing requirements persist for months. We must start developing and sharing ways to build resilience against isolation, fatigue, stress, and burn-out. Many universities have expanded their telehealth and tele-counseling services. They're sharing stress-reduction strategies online. They're streaming guided meditations and restorative physical workouts. These tools will become ever more important as we see this crisis take a brutal toll on our mental and emotional well-being.

What else can we do?

What do you want me to share during this meeting?

Questions?

Chevonie and Laila will collect specific questions but you can also reach out to Chevonie directly via email.

4. Chair's Report (See Executive Committee Report)

5. Committee Reports

Executive Committee

In Attendance: Carol, Antoinne, Susan, Lisa, Trish, Laila, Kalia

- Shared governance surveys - have been sent out to the Presidents and Chancellor. Received responses from some Presidents and the Chancellor already. Will send whole report to the whole committee - if members want the reports for their campus, just ask and we will send it. Presentations to the Chancellor/Presidents and the Board of Regents will happen over the next couple months.
- Discussion about how to involve CUSS in the decisions at the System level during the Pandemic - how is the Chancellor utilizing shared governance in decision making right now and how is he keeping the Councils updated?
- Preparing for the next cycle of CUSS - nominations for executive board will need to happen in the coming months. Several Exec members are up for reelection on their campuses.

Benefits and Compensation

In Attendance: LaVel Jones, Sis. Maureen, Mike Walsh, Amy Nightengale, Collette Beaulieu, Latoya Lewis

- Teleworking- Was any consideration done about having your children at home, having to homeschool them and all the other things going on?
- How is the working being recorded to say the person that's teleworking is actually doing the work?
- How is the work being divided up?
- Parking: Are all universities giving refunds for parking for the remainder of the current school year because it seems that some Universities are doing this and some are not?
- Budget: How will CUSS be affected by travelling to the different universities for meetings?
- Questions about furloughs and layoffs in the future to help balance the budget.
- Human Resource Question: How are the Exempt and Non-Exempt employee hours on campus being logged?

- The Exempt staff wanted to know how they are being captured to say that they are actually working on campus since all they put is D for a workday at some institutions.
- Will they be offering any type of free group therapy regarding everything that's taking place around the Corona Virus?

Board of Regents Staff Awards & Recognition

In Attendance: Darrell Claiborne, Sheryl Gibbs, Michelle Prentice, Deniz Erman, Linda Kuligowski, and Teri Herberger.

- During the Staff Award grading process, there were several packets that needed committee discussion and decisions. That discussion took place virtually a few weeks ago. Today, we discussed the process and the results of those discussions. Of the four packets discussed, two were unanimous to go forward, one was unanimous NOT to go forward, and one was undecided. That packet was sent to the CUSS Chair for input.
- The committee also discussed whether or not to share the final results with the committee only. Since each committee member only reviews a few packets, and does not see the scores of others, they do not know the final standings. I would like to "reward" their hard work by sharing results. Deniz suggested we get CUSS Chair approval first. Prior chairs had differing opinions. An e-mail was sent to Laila and we're awaiting her decision.

Communications & Marketing

In attendance: April L. Lewis – UMCES – Chair ,Francesca Kerby – UMGC, Dawn Stoute – UMBC – Co-Chair, Rubin Stevenson – Frostburg,LaVern Chapman – Towson – Co-Chair, Thomas Penniston – UMBC, Sheila Chase – Coppin,Paul Gasior – Salisbury

- Discussion was about our next newsletter scheduled for distribution on May 15th. Would like to do a "Special COVID – 19 Edition" instead of traditional newsletter. We heard some staff are concerned with how long we will get paid and will there be furloughs, layoff, etc. Our newsletter focuses on the needs and concerns of staff so we thought we should focus on best practices, how are we working, how are we staying mentally well, how are we keeping everyone engaged, and would like to have some happy stories and how we keep moving as a Council during this pandemic. Spotlight was supposed to be on the Benefits Committee but feel we only need to have issues related to COVID-19 and spotlight Benefits in the next newsletter. Question was asked if the CUSS information sheet was sent out and it was sent to all points of contact to send to their Staff Senate groups. Suggested it may be a good time to send out with elections and things going on right now. It was also suggested to post questions to staff about COVID-19 on the CUSS website. We will do a form to send out to send to CUSS members for inspirational stories.

Legislative Affairs & Policy

_____ In attendance: Vanessa Collins, SU, Lori Stepp, UMCES, Sara Wilhem, FSU, Kevin Joseph, UMBC, Melanie Barner, UMGC

- The committee met briefly. Everyone in attendance agreed the minutes from our last virtual meeting were comprehensive. At this time, we did not feel we had much to discuss regarding a review of Advocacy Day in 2020 or planning for Advocacy in 2021. We briefly touched that next year's Advocacy Day could have a lot to do with the economic recovery and relief due to COVID-19. Therefore, since our committee is not tasked with review of CUSS policies this term, we felt our meeting could adjourn early.
- We are looking forward to meeting with the larger CUSS group and will be happy to discuss our committee meeting minutes from March.

6. Final comments

- Laila will meet with BOR on May 1 and Chancellor on May 4.
- Things to think about:
 - Are you returning Yes or No?
 - If you are the current leader for your committee what will the next person need to know.
 - What were the accomplishments on the committee?
 - What are the new items you would like to move forward as a committee for the new group to work on next year?

Meeting Adjourned 12:00