

Council of University System Staff

Towson University

September 10, 2024

Welcome Remarks

Mr. Andrew Rosenblum, Vice Chair of TU Staff Senate, and Mr. Steve Jones, Senior Vice President of Campus Operations and Chief Human Resources Officer

Andrew thanked CUSS for meeting at Towson University. He thanked CUSS for the advocacy and shared Governance it promotes throughout the USM system. He then went on to introduce Steve Jones, the Senior Vice President of Campus and Operations and Chief Human Resources Officer at Towson University.

Steve Jones thanked CUSS for being at our campus. He spoke to the committee about some fun facts about TU which are:

- TU is celebrating the opening of its new health professions building on Thursday, 9/12/24.
- TU is the largest producer of undergraduate health professionals in the State of Maryland.
- TU welcomed nearly 5300 new students to its campus this fall. 3000 freshmen, 1300 transfer students, and about 1000 graduate students.
- TU is home to more than 3,000 employees which is split almost evenly between TU's exceptional staff and TU's talented faculty. TU is very proud of its staff employees who go above and beyond to support student success.
- TU is recognized as a top-tier student outcome institution; with outcomes that are inclusive to all backgrounds.
- Only a handful of universities in the nation where minority students hold six-year graduation rates that are equivalent to the entire student body.
- The Wall Street Journal ranked TU number forty in the country of all public and private four-year institutions primarily driven by our student outcomes.
- TU is proud of the accomplishments they have and believes that this is a testament to the passion and dedication of their staff employees and the talented faculty employed by TU.

The role of shared governance at TU is incredibly important and they believe it is important to any successful university. It is highly valued at TU. It is a priority that TU shares across their entire administration. They are very grateful for everyone in the USM who steps up in a leadership role and advocates for their colleagues.

Shared governance plays a huge role in making sure that higher education in Maryland is going to be the best that it can be for the students who come to our universities.

Questions:

Kalia:

- Curious about Steve's role as Liaison the staff senate- what changes has he seen over the past few years that are impacting staff on TU's campus? Where is he seeing areas of struggle and areas of growth and success on campus in terms of the staff experience?

Steve:

- The way TU staffs the institution and how the staff must pick up changing roles shows the flexibility of our staff which is incredible. It has not been easy, it is trying to make sure everyone has the same information so that when a decision is made or needs to be made, it's with eyes wide open and everybody understands the why behind the what. The way TU staff work is one of the single biggest changes and the other is the work-life balance that has been mentioned. It is the stress and the pressure that we all put on ourselves because we want to do a good job, and we want to feel like we have the resources to do what we need to do. We sometimes get frustrated because we either don't have the resources whether it is time, money, or positions, and trying to be candid about how to get work done or how we may not get work done in terms of prioritization. One of the things Steve likes to say is "Just because it is important does not mean it is urgent and sometimes the things that are urgent are not important and we have to strike the balance." TUSS' leadership helps TU's leadership keep the balance and perspective because it may be easy when you don't hear how a particular decision is going to resonate when it hits the ground so to speak. It's hard to understand some of the ripple effects and the leadership's collaboration with TUSS helps them to understand how changes may affect staff. How can we remain flexible in an ever-changing environment, and how can we make sure that the staff keeps that balance between the work life, the inside of work, and the outside of work because it all matters.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order.

Approval of the Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was made. The agenda was approved.

Approval of Minutes

The members of CUSS reviewed the minutes. A motion was made through a poll and was seconded. The August 2024 minutes were approved.

Chancellor's Liaison Report- George Samuel

- The universities should start hearing about open enrollment health fairs from the HR departments on campuses. October 15th – November 8th is open enrollment. Right now, there is no final word on the rates being changed or staying the same.
- USM sponsored the EAP (Employee Assistance Program) programmed through Comp Psych. This contract is on a year-to-year renewal now. The USM has put out an RFP (Request for Proposal) for this business. Soon, hopefully, we will get bids from other EAP vendors, and we will see

which of the vendors respond. USM is looking for an EAP vendor with strong mental/behavioral health type of support, and a very strong presence in Maryland.

- Professional Development Week is the week of September 21st.
- The USM and AFSCME contract is in place. USM is evaluating some of the differences, especially around leave, and working on policy adjustments that have been shared with the SHRC (Senior Human Resource Council). They are on target to present this to the VPAFs (Vice Presidents of Administration and Finance) on September 17th and then hopefully to the Board of Regents.
- The leave policy adjustments are to strike a balance and equity for administrative concerns. These adjustments are being made so the USM can have one set of rules for annual, holiday, and personal leave.
- Now the USM is getting ready for the legislative season which will be busy.

Chair's Report – Dr. Kalia Patricio

- Chancellor's Council meeting which was held in Baltimore. This is a meeting held with Chancellor Perman, the USM Presidents, and the three Shared Governance Leaders which are the Council of University System Faculty, Council of University System Staff (Kalia), and the University System of Maryland Student Council. This meeting is held once a month in person or virtually.
- Secretary Montero joined the meeting. He now leads the newly formed Maryland Department of Service and Civic Innovation. This is an interesting department that seeks to have recently graduated high school students or people who just got their GED to do a year of service in the state where they are paid and connected with resources and receive support and health care services. To get them work experience, or to prepare them for college and give them some time to earn some money.
- Secretary Montero asked the USM Presidents if there was any interest in partnering with this program.
- Chancellor Perman is being awarded CEO of the year for the State of Maryland. He credits all of the USM employees for the award.
- Kalia introduced CUSS' full Executive Committee to the council, shared updates on duplicate fees, and gave a shout-out to UBalt and the savings that were present there. Chancellor Perman was happy to hear this.
- Shared training concerns relating to new and changing policies. Kalia feels that staff are not kept up to date, involved, or given the training that is needed to succeed. Allison Wren (Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs) was grateful for this feedback. She said it is easy to create things but often forget how it is implemented and translated into the system.
- Kalia gave an update on the Shared Governance Awareness Survey. She is trying to get a meeting with the Chancellor and will be meeting with him at the end of October. Kalia is trying to decide whether to release the report before then or wait until after she meets with the Chancellor.
- Allison Wren asked for the three shared governance leaders to share updates on free expression issues, election prep., and reactions to how AI affects the lives of staff.

- Kalia talked about the non-exempt packet review for the Board of Regents Staff Awards and Denise (Chancellor's Chief of Staff) said she still owes us this. Hoping to receive the okay to use the packet very soon.
- The joint council meeting is November 19th at UMBC. Please RSVP to the email when it comes out. Chancellor Perman will be at the meeting and joining will be a vice Chair Regent, and hopefully a panel of regents.
- The first Board of Regents meeting for the year will be hosted on 9/13/24 by Umces (University of Maryland Environmental Science).

Points of Contact (Campus Report Out)

Bowie State University

- Three weeks ago, Bowie opened the new MLK Building. It has a 1500-seat theater, two 150 seats tiered classrooms, home to the Department of Language, Literature and Cultural Studies, History, and Government Department, Communications Department, and Military Science Department, and a two-story likeness of Bowie's fallen bulldog, the first Lieutenant Richard Collins.
- Bowie State has received a \$50,000 grant from the Spencer Educational Foundation and will be using the money to develop a new College of Business and Undergraduate Program for risk management and insurance. They are in the process of developing the classes with the hope of developing a degree program for risk management and insurance.

Coppin State University

- Highest enrollment numbers in a while. Coppin had 488 new students and 191 transfer students for a total of 649 new students this year.
- They had their convocation, and it was a week full of activities. All the students and the cabinet were out together playing games, chatting with each other, and having a good time.
- Coppins Golf Classic will be held on October 3rd at Turf Valley Resort. Coppin is looking to raise at least one hundred thousand dollars for their students.

Frostburg State University

- Frostburg's Staff Senate worked with the Office of the President, the Office of Student Affairs, Athletics, and the AFSCME group for a Staff Recognition Day for staff and their families on September 21st. It includes food, music, giveaways, activities for kids, and then admission to the football game being played on this day. They tried to do this every year.
- Frostburg is in support of the FFU strategic initiatives. The Staff Senate has adopted the 15 principles from the principles of civility as one of our Staff Senate initiatives for 24-25.
- The Staff Senate has worked with Human Resources to give a presentation to new hires about FSU's Staff Senate and what it does for the staff.
- Moving forward with looking for an Ombudsman and getting the training set up.

Salisbury State University

- SU's Staff Senate had its first Staff Senate Retreat on August 15th. They did team-building activities and talked about more ways to have staff engagement and staff recognition.
- SU admitted the largest freshman class over 1400 students.
- Rachael Faust, a Staff Senator, opened the first Sami's Stash Secondhand Shop with funds from SU's Innovative Achievement Fund.
- SU added men's and Women's golf teams as NCAA athletes.

Towson University

- TU's Staff senate completed a special election to seat new senators from additional campus divisions.
- TU is gearing up for family and homecoming weekend in October
- TUSS (Towson University Staff Senate) Is going to host the Homecoming Office Decorating Contest again this year.
- TU's student-athletes are performing well in their respective sports. TU's women's soccer team scored a one-to-one draw in each of their last four games against significant opponents from four of the top conferences in the US.
- Wall Street Journal recently named TU the number one public institution in Maryland, number 15 public institutions nationwide, and number 40 among all higher education institutions nationwide.
- The new College of Health Professions building will be officially dedicated on campus this week.
- TU's enrollment numbers remain strong.
- **Question:** How are your campuses handling the current and preparing for any additional state budget cuts and what communications have you received as staff regarding the state budget cuts?
- TU has a Time, Place, and Manner policy that groups must follow. TU also has a Tiger Advocacy Advisory Team under the leadership of Student Affairs and the Office of Inclusion and Institutional Equity. This team is responsible for educating and supporting students on activism on and off campus, coordinating the appropriate level of response for different events, and serving as the primary liaison between administrators, TU's police department, and students.
- **Question:** What policies or practices related to expressive activities such as protest die-ins, etc. are in place on your campuses and how are you preparing for this semester?
- TU is considering returning to a performance-based merit model for all employees.
- **Question:** What do each of your campuses use as the instrument for your evaluating merit when funds are available and what are the specific metrics?

University of Baltimore

- UBalt is gearing up for its centennial which is next year. You will be seeing a lot of promotions and activities surrounding what UBalt is going to do to bring to the centennial.
- Lavonda Reed, the new Law school dean, was hired in July.
- Autumn Reed is now the provost for faculty affairs

- Over 3200 students enrolled in U Belt which is an increase of 100 students from last year.
- Renovations will start on-campus facilities.
- UBalt is also preparing for a 2026 Middle States.
- The Staff Senate passed a resolution to improve the performance management process to ensure that supervisors are trained and know how to evaluate employees to move towards a more equitable evaluation process.

UMCES (University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science)

- In the past, the Staff Senate membership has been based on the lab representation. Two members from each lab, one primary, and one alternate. The labs are spread across the state so they do not have one central campus. Because some of the labs were small, the staff who were representing the Senate were always the same.
- The Senate proposed instead of stratifying across the campuses, they would stratify across staff functionalities so they will have Communications, IT, Maintenance, etc. department representation. Two staff would represent each department. The senate asked staff to volunteer. Doing it this way reduces the number of representatives because staff have true volunteer options versus being told to be on the Senate. Eight staff are on the UMCES Staff Senate.
- Also focusing on shared governance with policy review which they have already started. They reviewed a policy for out-of-state employees.
- Not having a staff appreciation day instead they will have a retreat in the spring. The retreat will be for two days so all staff can attend.
- They are also looking into doing 360 reviews.

UMB (University of Maryland, Baltimore)

- UMB had an academic week with activities involving students and faculty.
- They are having a supply drive for students.
- BMore for Baltimore which happens annually. BMore for Baltimore helps to bridge the gap with the community. This is the start for the Staff Senate to do a lot of activities within the community.
- September 21 is UMB's Patients Day which focuses on physical and mental health. It is a big health fair.
- October 10 will be UMB's 7th annual vaccination day. Offering vaccination services for the community.
- UMB's Founders Week will be from October 14th to the 17th. UMB's 217 years of history they will be celebrating. There are five Founder Week awards given to, students, staff members, and faculty.

UMBC (University of Maryland, Baltimore County)

- Mid August UMBC had a staff picnic for all exempt and non-exempt staff.

- As of July, they appointed a new Provost and a new Athletic Director. In late spring a new Chief Diversity Officer and Vice President for Institutional Equity were appointed. With all of the leadership changes, they have not been able to start their strategic planning since the new president joined UMBC in late 2022. Now that the leadership is more stable, the strategic planning may begin and the Staff Senate is looking forward to being engaged in the process.
- Some staff feel like the campus is split into two due to a construction project happening in Sherman Hall which houses smaller academic departments and administrative offices. A lot of staff have been displaced and it seems like they will be displaced until 2026
- This year had our largest freshman class, 3050 students.

UMCP (University of Maryland, College Park)

- UMCP is ranked on the Forbes College list as number twelve among public universities.
- UMCP and the UMB are partnering to be the first in the state to join a national emergency management network. This is an initiative between higher education and institutions to facilitate aid and support if there is an emergency.
- On September 10th, UMBC will be planting 2977 flags on the main mall to honor and remember the lives lost on September 11, 2001.
- UMBC has received some grants for clean Hydrogen Fuel Technology.
- The nuclear reactor on campus has half a century of fission.
- Staff Awards for all of the campus for innovation and the MVP awards will be launched in the next month. The celebration will happen in February 2025.
- Faculty and staff will get together in October for a symposium where they will discuss inclusive leadership.
- Items being discussed in the Senate in terms of legal updates to UMCP's Maryland Non-discrimination Policy and Procedure: Sexual harassment and other sexual misconducts, revising the policy concerning telephone bills.
- Translation support for non-speaking staff for the workday launch, and getting a next-gen energy system for the campus.

Old business

- Schedule of 2024-2025 Meetings (Kalia)
- AFSCME MoU - Any policy impacts we'd like to see? (Kalia)
- If you happen to see any changes in the MOU, or you feel it will affect non-bargaining staff, please email your changes to Kalia.

New business

- Communication plan and strategy are something that CUSS should dive into which can be more of an October conversation.
- Please look at the committee and leadership roster so you know which committee you are assigned to.
- If you want to have a special speaker come to speak to CUSS, let Kalia and Roy know.
- The joint Council meeting is on November 19th. Please send your RSVP.
- Kalia has a couple of requests for the committee meetings:

- Work on a committee action plan and complete the committee notes forms so we can attach them to the minutes.
- The communication plan and strategy: The Shared Governance Survey has made clear people do not know what CUSS is or what CUSS does. Kalia thinks CUSS needs to have a variety of contact points to try to reach the non-gaining USM staff. If the subcommittee for communications can flush out their strategy and plan it would be great.

Committee Reports

Awards & Outreach

- Finalized some of the items on the grading rubric. We will keep working on it.
- Spoke about changing the points given for the President's letter. Someone suggested scoring it lower but the group decided to keep the scoring the same.
- The committee decided to remove the optional materials section from the packet this year.
- The subgroup for communications wants to organize its communication planning mostly for Social media.
- They will work on creating a timeline for the communications.
- How do we have the plan to regulate both institutional shared governance bodies whether it is a council or senate and CUSS?
- One of the ways to promote CUSS is by getting the universities to promote us during their onboarding.

Legislative Affairs Committee

- Talked about advocacy day. They came up with a timeline for Advocacy Day. The committee asked Kalia to try to get in touch with the legislative Affairs Chairs of the faculty and student groups to set up a meeting for some time in October to discuss how Advocacy Day is going to look.
- Talked about getting back to the PreCovid advocacy day format. Want to explore but will talk about it more at the November meeting.
- Going to start meeting outside of the CUSS meetings. Probably once a month to make sure that the committee is not skipping anything.
- Reviewing constitution and bylaws and setting a time frame for it.

Staff Resources & Special Projects Committee

The committee discussed two of the questions that Towson University had asked earlier in the meeting.

1. The instruments for evaluating Merit –
All of the schools, except UMES and UMGC (no representatives present) mostly everyone is doing PMP (Performance Management Process). UBalt calls their performance review the Professional Development Plan. UMCP is called the Professional Development and Review everyone else is PMP. As long as staff meet expectations they are eligible to receive merit.
2. How are the universities preparing for the state budget cuts-
 - Salisbury has a hiring freeze and reclassifications are on hold unless necessary.
 - UMCES has to justify its spending justification. Except if the position is deemed critical

- CSU is holding steady- no changes have been made.
- TU is in a hiring freeze unless deemed critical.
- UMCP, UBalt, and UMB's cuts are based on department. Each department is managing these decisions or budget cuts.
- UMBC has not received any announcements.
- Dave is the new co-chair taking over for Meredith.

Good of the Order

Professional Development Week Conference, September 23-27th. It is free and virtual.

President Ginsberg from TU and President Lepre from Salisbury will be the keynote speakers for this event.

Please forward the slides to the staff on your campuses to help promote this conference.

Roy wants to talk about the possibility of deferring committee meetings just like out-of-band meetings and just having the reports during CUSS. Do you think this would be a reasonable move to save some time during big meetings?

Meeting Adjourned