

**Council of University System Staff (CUSS)
Monthly Business Meeting – Minutes**

Date: 12-09-2025

Time: 10:00 a.m. – ~12:00 p.m.

Location: USM Office (Adelphi/Baltimore) via Zoom

Agenda: https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1LESHxdxa94RG-mxBj_fSBmm7QUL3sK6r

1. Call to Order & Welcome

- Informal welcome and small talk led by **Chair Roy Prouty** beginning ~10:00 a.m. (weather, pets, holiday decorations).
 - Reminder that meeting is being recorded **for internal use only** to generate a transcript for the Secretary.
 - After minutes are approved at the following meeting, the transcript is deleted.
 - **Agenda link** shared in Zoom chat by **Meredith Carpenter (UMCP)**.
 - Noted correction: the agenda file listed **December 12**, but this is the correct meeting; attendees are in the right place.
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2. Guest Presentation – USM Financial Overview

Presenter: **Ellen Herbst**, Senior Vice Chancellor for Finance & Administration, USM

Ellen provided a high-level financial overview of the University System of Maryland and context for the upcoming legislative session.

Key points:

- **Overall Budget & Funding Sources**
 - USM annual operating budget is **~\$8+ billion**.
 - Four main funding categories; three major buckets:

- **Enrollment-driven revenue** (tuition, fees, housing, dining, auxiliaries): ~46–47%.
 - **Grants & contracts**: ~26%.
 - **State appropriations**: ~27–28%.
- Message to Annapolis: **USM funding is an investment**, not just an expense, given USM's role in producing a degreed workforce.
- **Enrollment & Student Outcomes**
 - Fall enrollment: ~**176,000 students** systemwide (one of highest ever).
 - Record ~**45,000 degrees** awarded last spring (bachelor's, graduate, professional, doctoral).
 - Several institutions saw record freshman or transfer classes; others held steady or declined due to broader macroeconomic forces.
 - USM is the **largest contributor to Maryland's degreed workforce**.
- **Expense Profile & Compensation**
 - **60–62%** of USM operating expenses are **personnel** (salaries, benefits).
 - Over the last ~6 years, wages systemwide have increased ~**30%** (COLAs, merits, etc.) on average.
 - Inflation has significantly eroded purchasing power for individuals and institutions; **non-personnel costs** have also increased.
- **Risks to the Three Major Funding Sources**
 - **Enrollment / Student Aid**
 - Concerns about federal **financial aid changes**, particularly affecting graduate and professional students:
 - Approximately **8,000 USM students** used federal programs that were reduced or eliminated (about **2,000 undergrad**, **6,000 grad/professional**).

- These students and incoming cohorts will need **alternative funding sources**.
- **International students:**
 - About **12,000** current students self-identify as international.
 - Slight overall decline (~1%) in total international students.
 - **New international enrollments** dropped around **17% year-over-year**, mirroring national trends.
 - Top countries of origin: **China and India**.
 - Federal policy and political climate are making the U.S. feel **less welcoming**, raising concern for future cohorts.
- **Economic headwinds:**
 - Students “on the margin” of affordability may be impacted by national/global economic slowdown, continued inflation, and Maryland-specific economic conditions.
 - These pressures may push some prospective students away from USM institutions or higher ed entirely.
- **Grants & Contracts**
 - USM **spends >\$1B/year** on externally funded research.
 - Historically **~99.9%** of that funding has come from the **federal government** (especially NIH).
 - Major research campuses: **UMCP, UMB**, followed by **UMBC, UMES, UMCES**, and others.
 - Recent federal changes:
 - Some grants terminated or not renewed based on evolving definitions of “illegal DEI,” resulting in **\$60M+ in lost or terminated grant funding** year-over-year.
 - The **flow rate of new awards has slowed**, especially at **NIH**, creating serious issues for campuses heavily dependent on those

funds (notably UMB).

- **Indirect Cost (IDC/F&A) Proposal:**
 - Federal proposal to cap IDC at a **flat 15%**.
 - Current negotiated rates range from **35–60+%** depending on research type (wet labs, animal research, etc.), reflecting actual support costs.
 - Reduced IDC would **not** eliminate those costs; universities would need to cover the gap.
 - USM leadership and campus leaders are working on strategies to mitigate and advocate on this issue.
- USM is exploring **non-federal research funding** (corporate, foundation) to diversify, but federal funding remains central.
- **State Appropriations & Maryland Fiscal Outlook**
 - In the current operating year (**FY 2026**), USM took a **7% year-over-year cut** in state appropriations.
 - USM is working with the **Department of Budget & Management (DBM)** on the **FY 2027** budget.
 - **Union wage negotiations (e.g., AFSCME):**
 - State negotiates wages annually with unions; any agreed COLA must be reflected in the Governor’s budget request.
 - USM doesn’t have visibility into negotiations but is required to implement negotiated increases.
 - **Maryland’s projected deficit:**
 - Recent public estimate: **~\$1.4B deficit**, projected to grow to **~\$4B by 2030**.
 - That estimate **does not yet include** tax impacts from **~15,000 Marylanders** who resigned/retired from federal positions effective September 30.

- Tax receipt data in December and March will reveal more; deficit is likely to **worsen**.
 - **Budget Constraints & Higher Ed**
 - More than **30% of the state budget is federally funded**, largely for mandated social programs (Medicaid, etc.).
 - **K–12 and certain benefits** are not discretionary.
 - **Higher ed is the largest discretionary line item** in the operating budget, making USM a frequent target for cuts.
 - Ellen stressed: further appropriation cuts will **inevitably translate into job losses**, as “the couch cushions have already been overturned.”
- **Credit Strength & Outlook**
 - USM retains an **AA+ credit rating** from all major agencies.
 - AAA is not possible without taxing authority; AA+ is highest likely rating.
 - Strong rating reflects long-term enrolment demand and perception that USM is well managed financially.
- **Closing Themes**
 - Two watchwords: **uncertainty** and **planning**.
 - USM has successfully navigated previous crises (e.g., 2008 recession, COVID-19) and will do so again, albeit with **difficult decisions**.
 - Planning includes robust **scenario analyses** for further cuts and federal funding changes.

Q&A Highlights

- **Question (Kalia R. Patricio):** In election years, staff often ask whether **non-bargaining staff** can receive the **same increases** as bargaining staff (COLA/merit/longevity) if campuses can afford it.
 - **Answer (Ellen):**

- State funding for wage increases only covers staff paid on **state-funded lines**.
 - Does **not** cover auxiliary-funded positions or the grant-funded portions of salaries.
 - Across **FY 2024–2026**, USM institutions collectively absorbed **~\$160M** in mandated salary increases **not covered by the state**, while also sustaining a **10% base cut** (~\$222M).
 - This combination creates severe **affordability constraints**.
 - USM issues annual **salary guidelines** via the Chancellor’s office after consulting HR and leadership across campuses.
 - Guidelines aim for **equity and consistency**, but campuses retain flexibility within their financial capacity.
 - Historically, goal was to avoid split treatment of bargaining vs non-bargaining staff, but **recent pressures** have forced some institutions to diverge.
 - Campuses **may** extend increases to non-bargaining staff, **if they can afford it** and within system guidelines.
- Ellen underscored that further large state cuts will likely result in **job losses**. The system will continue to work with campus VPAFs and budget officers on scenario planning and advocacy.

Ellen concluded by thanking CUSS, noting the noon **Senate Budget & Taxation Committee** hearing on federal impacts (similar themes), and then departed for Annapolis.

3. Quorum & Formal Call to Order

- After Ellen’s departure, Roy checked **quorum**:
 - **Kevin Bruce (UMCES)** confirmed at least **7 institutions** were represented (12 institutions total; quorum is **50% + 1** institutions).
- Roy **officially called the meeting to order** and re-shared the agenda link in chat.

4. Approval of Agenda

- Members were invited to suggest additions, deletions, or clarifications.
- **Motion** to approve agenda by **Shannon James (SU)**.
- **Second** by **Kelly Cowger (SU)**.
- **No dissent** noted; **agenda approved by unanimous consent**.

5. Approval of October Meeting Minutes

- October meeting was a **virtual meeting at the University of Baltimore**.
- No business meeting occurred in November due to the **Joint Councils Meeting**.
- Members were asked to review October minutes (linked from agenda).
- **Motion** to approve October minutes by **Brian Jara**.
- **Second** by **Namrata Ram Andriessens (UMCP)**.
- **No dissent; October minutes approved**.
- **Action:** Kevin and Meredith to finalize October minutes and submit to USM Office for posting on the CUSS webpage.

6. Short Break

- Roy called for a **5-minute break** (~10:50–10:55 a.m.) to stretch and reset after the lengthy financial presentation.
- Members were asked not to close the Zoom window.
- Recording briefly stopped and was restarted at ~11:13 a.m.

- **April Parvzian** confirmed the recording was restarted.
 - Roy noted that the transcript may exist in **two parts** as a result.
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7. Standing Committee Reports

7.1 Awards & Outreach

- The Fall issue of the CUSS newsletter was released just before Thanksgiving.
- Grading for BoRSA packets is underway. We're having difficulty getting ahold of the USMO to update the grading site. George Samuels will assist.

7.2 Staff Resources & Special Projects (SRSP) – Kevin Bruce (MDSG/UMCES)

- SRSP has circulated a **shared file/list** documenting which campuses are participating in various staff resources and special projects.
- Some members experienced **access difficulties** with the link.
 - **Action:** Link will be **resent** with meeting recap/minutes.
 - **Dave** is the main keeper of that list and will re-issue access.
- The list will help:
 - Track where campuses stand on specific initiatives.
 - Identify who has what (e.g., policies, programs) to support cross-campus learning and collaboration.

7.3 Legislative Affairs & Policy – Shannon James (SU) & Lisa Gray (SU)

- **Bylaw changes:**
 - Draft **CUSS bylaw revisions** were sent to the Executive Committee and shared with full CUSS at least **20 days** prior.
 - One question was received and answered by **Lisa**; a dedicated bylaw discussion and vote were scheduled under Business.

- **Advocacy Day Planning:**
 - **Co-chairs: Kim Prosperi** and **Shannon James** (Kim doing the majority of logistical work).
 - Held a lunch meeting at the **Joint Councils** to discuss Advocacy Day.
 - Follow-up meeting on the Monday after Joint Councils; only **one faculty member** attended, but planning staff participation is strong; student involvement remains limited.
 - Another planning meeting scheduled **this afternoon**.
 - The **Advocacy Day agenda** is largely finalized and will look **somewhat different from last year**:
 - Increased emphasis on **bringing legislators to a central meeting room** for discussions with staff.
 - Continued use of targeted **small-group office meetings** with lawmakers, supported by USM Office of Government Relations (e.g., Susan).
 - **RSVP/Survey:**
 - Online RSVP form for Advocacy Day has been created.
 - **5 RSVPs** received thus far; total attendance is capped at **55 people**.
 - Not yet clear if the survey has been broadly sent to all CUSS representatives.
 - **Action:** Roy asked **Kevin and Meredith** to ensure the RSVP link is distributed with the minutes and that access issues are addressed.

7.3 Chancellor's Liaison – George Samuel (USMO)

- Introduced **Dan Chanen** for a compensation project update.
- **Benefits Open Enrollment:**
 - Open enrollment has concluded; conversations with campus benefits coordinators indicate it went **smoothly**, with **no major reported issues**.

- **Catch-up Contributions Reminder:**
 - For employees making **\$150,000 or more**, **catch-up contributions to 403(b)** and **457** are now required to be made on a **Roth (after-tax)** basis, not pre-tax.
 - Employees should have been notified by their local benefits offices.
- No additional major announcements; George expressed appreciation for the opportunity to join CUSS meetings.

7.4 USM Staff Compensation Project – Daniel Chanen (Assoc. Vice Chancellor for Human Resources)

- Dan provided a **high-level overview** of the ongoing **systemwide staff compensation assessment** being conducted by **Segal** (consulting firm).

Project Scope & Timeline:

- **Current Phase (Fall–Winter):**
 - **Assessment of current state:**
 - How each of the **13 institutions** administers staff compensation (policies, pay bands, classification systems for exempt and non-exempt staff).
 - Alignment with **Board policies**, current job classifications, and practices.
 - Comparison with practices at **peer systems** nationally.
- **Next Phase (Spring):**
 - Segal will present **recommendations** and a **potential roadmap** for improving/modernizing the compensation structure and administration.

Important Clarifications:

- This is **not** currently a **benchmarking study**:
 - Segal is **not** reclassifying individual jobs.
 - They are **not** updating specific salary ranges at this stage.

- There is **no direct immediate budget impact** from Phase 1 (no systemwide pay adjustments).
- Project focuses on **staff**, not faculty.

Potential Phase 2:

- If recommendations are accepted by:
 - Vice Presidents for Administration & Finance, and
 - Campus Presidents,
- A multi-year **Phase 2** could include:
 - Market benchmarking of roles.
 - Redesign of job families, classifications, and salary structures.
 - Implementation of new systems and processes, resources permitting.

Context & Rationale:

- A comprehensive review of this nature **has not occurred for ~30 years** at USM.
 - Although finances are tight, Dan argued that **now is precisely the time** to examine and reform the **structure**, so that when more resources are available, there are **clear pathways** and consistent practices to support staff progression and equity.
 - Dan committed to:
 - Returning to future CUSS meetings as recommendations are finalized.
 - Sharing the [slide deck](#) via links for inclusion with the minutes.
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8. Chancellor's Liaison Follow-Up

- After Dan's update, George reiterated:

- Appreciation for CUSS input and collaboration.
 - Willingness to continue joining meetings to share system-level HR/benefits updates.
 - No further major announcements.
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9. Campus Reports (Action-Focused)

Roy reminded members that campus reports should focus on **staff-related issues and successes with potential system-level implications** (best practices, inequities, advocacy needs).

9.1 Bowie State University (BSU) – Trish Johnson

- BSU received a **second major philanthropic gift** from **MacKenzie Scott**, totaling **\$50 million**.
- The campus is exploring whether a **portion of the gift can support staff**, particularly given staff did **not receive a merit award** this past summer.
- The staff body plans to **formally request** that some funds be directed toward staff support.

9.2 Frostburg State University (FSU) – Amy Nightengale & Sara Wilhelm

- Persistent staff concern around **salary compression** due to:
 - Increases given to **bargaining-unit staff** and
 - Lack of parallel adjustments for **non-bargaining staff and supervisors**.
- Some supervisors now earn **less or nearly equal** to those they supervise.
- Administration has indicated they **do not currently have the funds** to address compression beyond what the state provides.
- Sara thanked CUSS Executive Board for continuing to **push these issues** with the Governor's office and USM leadership.

9.3 Salisbury University (SU) – Lisa Gray & Kelly Cowger

- **New Recognition Program – “Staff Usure”:**
 - Replaces the “Employee of the Month” model.
 - Allows recognition of **multiple staff members** for outstanding contributions, rather than a single individual per month.
 - Includes campus visits/celebrations for honorees.
- **Viva Engage (Microsoft Teams app):**
 - Being launched as an internal channel for **day-to-day recognition**, sharing accomplishments, and building community.
- **Holiday “Candygrams”:**
 - Staff can send small candygrams to colleagues.
 - All proceeds support the **Employee Emergency Assistance Fund**.
 - Candygrams priced **\$2–\$5**.
- **Presidential Winter Reception:**
 - Held for staff, faculty, and students.
 - Attendees encouraged to donate to “**Food for the Flock**” campus food pantry.

9.4 Towson University (TU) – Ben Crull

- **University Store Transition:**
 - University store is transitioning to an **outsourced partner**; staff are monitoring implications.
- **Title II Digital Accessibility Requirements:**
 - Staff Senate received a presentation on **new DOJ digital accessibility rules**.
 - TU is seeking **ongoing guidance** on implementation and would like to learn what other campuses are doing to support staff (training, tools, expectations).

- **Bylaws & CUSS Delegation Structure:**
 - TU working on **bylaws revisions** to strengthen internal structure related to CUSS representation:
 - Clarifying differentiation between **voting representatives and alternates**.
 - Clarifying term lengths and staggering.
 - Seeking confirmation on how many representatives TU should seat and how that aligns with CUSS bylaws.

- **Joint Shared Governance Meetings:**
 - TU holds **four joint meetings annually** among shared governance leaders (staff, faculty, student governance) to promote coordination.
 - Interested in whether **other campuses have similar joint governance summits**.

- **Fall Staff Town Hall:**
 - Annual fall town hall with the President had **~250 staff** in attendance.
 - **State budget deficit** and its implications were a major topic of concern.

9.5 University of Baltimore (UB) – Kara Kauffman

- UB is in a **transition period** regarding how **Staff Senate** and **CUSS representation** interact:
 - Working out which roles/responsibilities belong to Staff Senate vs CUSS.

- **Communication Challenge:**
 - CUSS reps currently cannot email constituents directly; they must go through **Staff Senate's listserv**.
 - This complicates direct communication with all staff.

- **Ex Officio Questions:**

- Seeking clarity on what it means for a CUSS representative to serve as an **ex officio member** of Staff Senate:

- Should that person attend **Senate meetings, Executive Committee meetings**, or both?

- **Centennial Gala:**

- UB recently held a **centennial gala** to conclude its 100th anniversary year.
- Event was reportedly well attended and well received.

9.6 University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) – Anthony Weldon

- **Thanksgiving Drive:**

- UMB community Thanksgiving drive was successful and received media coverage (**WBAL**).

- **Staff Pantry:**

- In response to impacts of the recent **federal government shutdown**, staff quickly organized a **staff pantry**.
- Modeled after the student food pantry, it serves staff experiencing financial hardship.
- Highlighted as an example of **rapid, staff-led response** to emerging needs.

9.7 University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) – Michael Walsh

- **Digital Accessibility Implementation:**

- UMBC is making a **concerted effort** to meet DOJ digital accessibility requirements by **mid-to-late April**.
- Expect changes to campus websites and digital resources to improve accessibility and inclusivity.

- **AI Committees & Planning:**

- Multiple committees and subcommittees have formed to explore **artificial intelligence**:
 - Uses in research, teaching, and administrative work.
 - Governance frameworks and policies.
- Goal is to use AI in a **responsible, proactive** manner that aligns with institutional values.

9.8 UMCES (Maryland Center for Environmental Science) – Kevin Bruce

- **Accessibility Review:**

- UMCES is conducting an accessibility review across:
 - System-wide obligations, and
 - Lab-level implementations.
- Notably, the current cycle extends accessibility requirements to **internal documents**, not just websites.

- **Onboarding/Off-boarding Processes:**

- At both UMCES and lab level, work is underway to **standardize and strengthen onboarding and off-boarding**.
- Effort aims to **close identified gaps**, particularly around off-boarding (e.g., access, assets, knowledge transfer).

- **AI Policy:**

- UMCES is developing **local AI usage policies**, addressing appropriate and secure use in research and administrative contexts.

9.9 University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP) – Namrata Ram Andriessens

- **CUSS Representation on University Senate:**

- Proposal submitted to **UMCP University Senate Executive Committee (SEC)** requesting a CUSS representative serve on the Senate, as outlined by USM

bylaws.

- Awaiting SEC response on implementation.

- **Staff Positions & Funding:**

- Some **hearsay** of staff jobs being affected by funding shortfalls; not yet formally documented but on staff radar.

- **Staff Emerita/Emeritus Policy Exploration:**

- **Staff Affairs Committee** is exploring creating a **Staff Emerita/Emeritus status**.
- First step: benchmarking policies at **other institutions (including outside USM)** to form recommendations for UMCP Senate consideration.

9.10 UMES – No Report

- Representative from UMES had to leave for another meeting; no report provided.

9.11 UMGC – Kathleen Hebbel

- **Winter Grad Walk:**

- UMGC is hosting **Grad Walk** at the convention center this week.
- Event has expanded to an **additional day** to accommodate a **record-breaking Fall 2025 graduating class**.
- Grad Walk provides a full experience (photo stations, family celebrations, name recognition).

10. USM Diversity & Inclusion Working Group Report – Jennifer Walsh

- The USM Diversity & Inclusion working group meets regularly with **broad campus representation** and rich dialogue.
- **Campus Highlights:**

- **Towson University:**
 - Hosted an **Inclusive Summit** featuring **Nikole Hannah-Jones** as keynote speaker.
 - Jennifer noted she is a potential speaker for other campuses seeking strong DEI programming.
 - **Salisbury University:**
 - Implemented a “**Know Your Rights**” campaign to inform campus community members about their rights in various contexts.
 - Materials and approach can be shared upon request.
 - **International Students & Immigration-Related Concerns:**
 - Many campuses shared updates on how they are supporting international students in light of **changing immigration policies and federal actions**.
 - **UMBC Dialogue Symposium (January 29):**
 - Upcoming **Dialogue Symposium** at UMBC.
 - Designed to be **affordable**, with additional options to further reduce cost for student groups.
 - Jennifer will share a **link** for inclusion in minutes and campus communications.
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11. Business Items

11.1 Motion to Table Selected Agenda Items

- Due to time constraints, Roy requested that several business items be **tabled** to prioritize:
 - Bylaws changes (Item C), and
 - Constitution changes discussion (Item F), plus allow time for **committee breakouts**.

- **Motion** to table Items **A, B, D, E, and G**: **April Parvizian**.
- **Second**: **Vince Fields**.
- **Motion carried** with no dissent; tabled items will **return on a future agenda**.

11.2 CUSS Bylaws Amendments – Representation & Voting Structure

Background:

- Legislative Affairs & Policy Committee (Lisa & Shannon) prepared two **proposals** to clarify and update CUSS bylaw language about **campus representation and voting**.
- Document was previously distributed and linked in the agenda.

Proposals:

- **Proposal 1**:
 - Clean-up language to confirm **6 members per institution**:
 - **3 primary (voting)** members.
 - **3 alternates (non-voting)**.
- **Proposal 2**:
 - All **6 representatives per institution** are **voting members**.

Motion:

- **Motion** to adopt **Proposal 2** (all six as voting members) made by **April Parvizian**.
- **Second** by **Brian Jara**.

Discussion:

- **Concerns about weighted influence**:
 - **Kalia R. Patricio**:

- Noted that campuses like UMCP recently lost long-serving members to reclassification (e.g., “Sister” now bargaining-unit).
 - Without alternates, there’s less backup if seats become vacant.
 - Expressed concern that **larger campuses** (UMCP, UMB, etc.), able to seat six representatives, might **dominate voting** on contentious issues (e.g., management unionization), leaving smaller campuses relatively underpowered.
- **Perspectives from smaller campuses:**
 - **Kevin Bruce (UMCES):**
 - As the only representative for a small institution, he is aware of representation inequities but encourages staff: “If you want to have a voice, you need to join.”
 - Supports Proposal 2 despite limited local capacity; sees it as an incentive for campuses to recruit more members.
 - **Sara Wilhelm (FSU):**
 - Frostburg, though small, has been able to fill all 6 seats (not all attend every meeting).
 - Appreciates broader representation and supports **Option 2**.
- **Clarification on Quorum (Question from Trish Johnson):**
 - Trish asked whether adopting Proposal 2 would change **quorum calculations**.
 - Roy responded that **quorum** is defined in a **separate section** of the bylaws and is **not changed** by this amendment:
 - Quorum remains: **majority of constituent institutions represented**, and **majority of council members (or designated alternates) present**.
- **Committee Perspective:**
 - Lisa and Shannon (Legislative Affairs & Policy) emphasized:
 - The committee has worked on these proposals for **~8 months**.

- They are **not in favor** of a “one vote per campus” model.
- If CUSS desires a **third option**, Legislative Affairs & Policy would like the **Executive Committee** to draft it; their committee is done with this particular work stream.

Vote:

- A **Zoom poll** was used for voting; hosts and certain representatives who could not vote through the poll sent their votes via chat to the Secretary.
- Voting limited to **current voting members** (3 primaries per campus under existing rules).
- **Result:** Motion to adopt **Proposal 2 passed**.
 - All six CUSS representatives from each institution will be **voting members**, once bylaws are updated and implemented.
- **Action:** Secretary to record final vote tally from poll and chat and update official CUSS bylaws accordingly.

11.3 CUSS Constitution Changes – Implementation Clarification (Informational Only)

- Roy reviewed the **Board of Regents-approved amendments** to the **CUSS Constitution** from the prior academic year (AY 2025), focusing on two key changes:

1. Election from All Staff

- CUSS representatives must be elected **from among all eligible non-bargaining staff** at their institution.
- Representatives are no longer drawn solely from Staff Senate membership; elections should be open to **all staff in the CUSS-eligible category**.

2. Ex Officio Membership on Campus Staff Governance Body

- At least **one elected CUSS representative** must serve as an **ex officio member** on their campus’s **primary staff shared governance body** (e.g., Staff Senate).
- “Ex officio” means **“by virtue of office”**:

- The seat is tied to the **role** (designated CUSS representative), not a named individual.
- If that representative changes, the **seat continues** with the new office holder.

Implementation Flexibility:

- Campuses can choose **how** to implement this requirement:
 - Example (UMBC): All CUSS reps serve as members of the **Exempt Staff Senate**, satisfying the ex officio requirement.
 - Other model: Only **one designated CUSS representative** serves as an ex officio member of Staff Senate, with or without full voting rights depending on local bylaws.
- Objective is to:
 - Ensure **two-way communication** between campus Staff Senate and CUSS.
 - Align system-level advocacy with campus-level staff governance perspectives.

Questions & Clarifications:

- **Towson (Ben Crull):**
 - Raised a question about language referencing “**two-year staggered terms**”, reportedly seen in a USM document.
 - Roy did not locate this phrasing in current CUSS bylaws or amendments.
 - **Action:** Ben to **email** the exact reference to the CUSS Executive Board (CUSM Gmail) for follow-up clarification to all institutions.
- **UMB (Danielle Hill & team):**
 - Confirmed that all UMB CUSS reps already serve on Staff Senate, so UMB is **already in compliance** with the new constitutional language.
- **Implementation Timeline:**

- Campuses are expected to **align local practices** (Staff Senate bylaws, election procedures) with the new constitutional requirements **by the next CUSS cycle (Fall)**.

12. Standing Committee Breakouts & Adjournment

- With bylaws and constitutional matters addressed and certain items tabled, Roy indicated the meeting would transition to **standing committee breakout sessions** (details not captured in transcript excerpt).
- Time of final adjournment **not specified** in transcript; meeting concluded after breakout reports and any remaining business.

Committee Notes:

Staff Resources & Special Projects (SRSP)

The Staff Resources & Special Projects subcommittee breakout focused largely on the worsening budget climate across USM and how campuses are responding. Members discussed a shared spreadsheet created by David to track campus-level actions such as hiring freezes, salary cuts, COLA/merit decisions, layoffs, and furloughs. Several institutions, including UMD, Towson, Bowie, Coppin, UMES, and UMGC, still need to complete their entries, and Kevin agreed to work with David to fix access issues and circulate the link more broadly. The group also referenced Chancellor Perman's recent remarks at the Joint Councils meeting, noting his candid acknowledgement that, after cutting everything else, some level of personnel reductions appears unavoidable over the next three years, especially given federal job losses and their downstream impact on state revenue.

The conversation then shifted to digital accessibility and how different campuses are approaching web and document remediation. FSU and UMBC described phased plans to clean up hundreds of websites, with dashboards and priority tiers guiding the work, while Towson is framing its January faculty conference around digital accessibility. Kevin highlighted that accessibility must apply to internal employee-facing documents as well as public-facing websites, especially as institutions hire staff with disabilities. Additional updates included FSU's decision to adopt a two-day student fall break in future calendars and the expectation that this subcommittee will meet between regular CUSS meetings once there is more substantive work to tackle, with January floated as a possible window for an interim session.

Legislative Affairs & Policy – Shannon James (SU) & Lisa Gray (SU)

Advocacy day conversation and a cheer that the bylaws were passed!

Awards & Outreach

Checked on BOR Award packets.

13. Action Items Summary

1. **SRSP list link** to be resent with minutes (**Kevin / Dave / Meredith**).
2. **Advocacy Day RSVP link** to be shared in meeting recap/minutes and access issues resolved (**Kevin & Meredith**).
3. **October minutes** to be finalized and submitted to USM for posting (**Kevin & Meredith**).
4. **Segal compensation slide deck** link to be included with minutes (**Dan / Meredith**).
5. **UMBC Dialogue Symposium** link and **Salisbury “Know Your Rights”** materials to be shared (**Jennifer**).
6. **Bowie staff request** regarding MacKenzie Scott gift to proceed through local governance channels (**BSU reps**).
7. **Towson “two-year staggered terms” language** to be emailed to CUSS Exec for clarification and system-wide guidance (**Ben / TU Staff Senate**).
8. **Campuses** to review and adjust:
 - CUSS elections (open to all non-bargaining staff).
 - Appointment of at least one CUSS rep as ex officio member of campus Staff Senate, in line with new constitutional language (**All institutions**).
9. **Secretary** to update official CUSS bylaws to reflect adoption of **Proposal 2** and record vote tally.