

Council of University System Staff Meeting

University of Maryland Global Campus

June 17, 2025

Call to Order – Full Council & Agenda Review

Welcome: UMGC's President Fowler

President Fowler discussed UMGC's unique role and its global impact in higher education.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes approved.

Chancellor's Liaison Report: (George)

The Board of Regents met on June 13th and updated several policies, which should have been communicated to University Staff and Faculty by the HR departments at each university.

The policies that have been revised include:

- Policy on Leave
- Disaster Service Leave
- Parental Bereavement Leave (new leave)
- Organ Donation Leave

You can find these updated policies on the USM Policy Page.

CUSS Chair's Report:

Kalia attended the June Chancellor's meeting and the Board of Regents meeting.

Most of the updates are related to the budget.

USM is monitoring the following areas for potential changes:

- Federal Aid (Pell Grants, Work-Study, FSEOG - Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant)
- Fall enrollment statistics
- Research funding
- Increases in state and local taxes

The fall student enrollment numbers across the USM seem stable, which will be welcome news if they remain steady.

Research funding continues to be a significant issue across the USM, with some campuses being particularly affected. The lawsuits regarding Financial Need Analysis (FNA) funding have intensified the responses, prompting professional associations throughout the higher education sector to increase their commentary and file amicus briefs in support of the campuses challenging the FNA funding cuts. It is encouraging to see such solidarity.

The USM is monitoring state and local taxes. It is concerned about families' ability to pay for tuition if job losses continue.

The Reconciliation Bill is currently receiving the most attention in relation to taxes and spending. However, there is another process known as annual appropriations that the USM is monitoring closely. The USM is particularly concerned about a third process called rescission, which allows Congress to cut funds from an already approved budget. An example of this is the recent reduction of nine billion dollars from International Aid, as well as funding for PBS and NPR.

The University System of Maryland (USM) is in a strong position regarding cash flow and liquidity, maintaining a positive outlook. However, there is some uncertainty surrounding the possibility of a special legislative session in September, which the Maryland Legislature may convene. This session aims to fully assess the impact of changes to the federal budget, allowing the state to make the necessary adjustments. This plan is dependent on receiving relevant information from the federal government by that time.

The USM budget was approved on Friday during the Board of Regents meeting in Hagerstown, Maryland.

The Board of Regents approved an average 3% tuition increase for the fall semester. The increases and corresponding fees vary by campus. In the past, tuition would only increase by 2%.

New Business:

Chancellor's Compensation Memo and Shared Governance

Kalia wants to know what involvement your campuses had in the development of your university's budget or in the decision to award merit and longevity to your campuses.

Kalia drafted a letter to Governor Wes Moore. In the letter, she expresses that it is irresponsible to grant pay increases at a time when layoffs are occurring. She believes that doing so is fiscally irresponsible.

Kalia will collaborate with USM's Vice Chancellor for Government Relations, Susan Lawrence, and the Senior Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance, Ellen Herbst, while drafting this letter.

Meetings with legislators will be scheduled throughout the year, beginning in the July-August timeframe. Kalia, Roy, and the CUSS Chair of Legislative Affairs will meet with legislators to increase awareness of non-bargaining staff among them. Kalia believes that non-bargaining staff are currently not on the legislators' radar. Susan Lawrence and Ellen Herbst will assist CUSS in coordinating visits to the legislators, an important aspect of our approach.

Advocacy Day is the third component of this strategy. We want to shift our focus back to staff involvement, encouraging more advocacy efforts. This will involve increased coordination with our team to enhance our overall effectiveness.

End of Year Reports

Please work on your end-of-year committee reports while your committee meets today. The reports should be done by the next meeting on July 15th. Please try to download the report

Old Business:

Final nominations and consent vote for elections

Kalia called for the final nominations for the positions of Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary on CUSS. There would be no further nominations.

Roy Prouty was nominated for Chair, Meredith Carpenter for Vice Chair, and Kevin Bruce for Secretary. All three nominees accepted their nominations.

Since there was only one nomination for each position, the Council conducted a consent vote. Kalia called for a motion to vote; Kathleen approved of it, and Sister provided a second.

A poll was taken, and all nominees were elected to their positions.

CUSS Committee Meeting Highlights:

Awards and Outreach Committee:

Discussion: review of BOR Award rubric, Suggestions/questions:

Things to try to avoid in the future.

- Having to redo the evaluation because it wasn't submitted the first time.
- After completing your assigned packets, you have to go back later and change a point (because of a scoring error).

Application Format:

- What about shifting from PDF packets to an online portal?
- Reference letters would be limited to a word count. Avoid issues with margins, font, and letterhead.
- A cover sheet won't need to be graded, and a position description wouldn't need to be graded.
- Late/ Incomplete packets: refused or deducted?

Grading Scale:

- The revised scale is good, but more updates are needed
- Disagreement over awarding "points" for a cover sheet and for a job description. Is the application still being rated, or is the applicant's institution's staff governance group's committee being evaluated?
- How do we keep the process focused on evaluating applicant contributions, not evaluating an award committee's handling of applications?
- Request for a larger/wider scale for grading of the reference letters.

Grading Process:

- Stress to graders: whether you print and grade or grade on-screen, KEEP A COPY of your scores and feedback until the process has concluded.

Newsletter: Still waiting on the anniversary story from Coppin.

Legislative Affairs Committee:

- Bylaw discussion: recommend changes to the bylaw. Will send Roy to distribute to the group. Checking in with other committee chairs.

Staff Resources Committee:

Duplicative fees: Research which systems schools have followed through on reducing duplicative fees for MD employees enrolled in coursework. Take next steps to remind those institutions not complying of the 2023-2024 BOR letter to eliminate duplicative fees for MD university employees.

New Staff Onboarding: Discuss the benefits of having a staff senate and or CUSS representative involved at some point in all university onboarding of new employees.

Leave Bank: Gather leave bank policies across institutions to explore consistency equity amongst schools. Consider creating a system leave bank policy to propose if appropriate.

Budget Advocacy: Gather information from MD institutions of the creative FY 2026 budget efficiencies decisions to meet the system cuts levied to the individual universities.

Campus updates:

BSU:

- Senator Angela Alsobrooks was the commencement speaker at Bowie State's Spring commencement ceremony. Over 700 graduates were commended on this day.
- This is the first year that over 30 doctoral candidates have been conferred.
- The Nursing Department received a grant from the Maryland Higher Education Commission to increase the number of PhD faculty members.
- The Annual Five Bulldog 5K walk and run took place in May.

CSU:

- No Report

FSU:

- Western Maryland experienced significant flooding from a storm, which led to the closure of Westport Elementary for the remainder of the school year due to extensive water damage. In response, FSU collaborated with the community to provide staff and students from Westport Elementary with a suitable space on FSU's campus to complete their school year.
- FSU has a new service provider, Aladdin.

SU:

SU held its Employees Appreciation Day on June 10th. SU had Dan Quinn, the coach of the Commanders and a SU alum, speak at its spring commencement.

TU:

- TU hosted its Staff Appreciation series of events this year. Staff Appreciation Day was approached differently to allow groups that could not previously participate to join in. Each day for a week, there was one event offered: breakfast, lunch, happy hour, and a late-night option.

UBalt:

- First Lady Dawn Moore served as the commencement speaker at one of UBalt's ceremonies, while artist Joyce J. Scott spoke at the other.
- UBalt has launched a new website, which is still being refined to address some existing issues and fix errors.
- Faculty and staff received updates about the budget, and President Schmoke provided further information on the action plan moving forward in response to the upcoming cuts, which will be voted on next week.

UMB:

- The updates UMB has are budget updates.
- 1.4 million dollars were allocated to the Rural Health, Equity, and Excess Longitudinal Effective Scholarship Program, which aims to support health equity.
- 1 million was allocated to establish an emergency dental clinic at the School of Dentistry.
- 42.9 million went to the School of Social Work.
- 12.4 million dollars was awarded to the School of Medicine from the cigarette restitution fund, which supports the Cancer Center.
- \$3.3 million was allocated to the School of Medicine's Health Sciences and Research facility.
- Two of UMB's School of Law colleagues were instrumental in some policy legislation that was pushed through, while some were voted down.

UMBC:

- The Provost is eliminating the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs position and is instead creating a new role called the Cyber AI Leader, which will be situated within the Provost's Office. This new position will be filled by a current staff member at UMBC.
- The Interim Vice Provost for Administration and Finance addressed the Exempt Staff Senate and provided a budget update. It was highlighted that UMBC is ultimately in a stable position, but there is an expectation of budget cuts in the coming years. As a result, every administrative unit is being asked to tighten its budgets, not only for fiscal year 2026 but also for future years.

UMCES:

- Kalia spoke with President Morales Wilhelm, and UMCES is facing the same financial struggles as other USM institutions, given that it is a large research institution.

UMCP:

- The University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP) had a highly successful commencement ceremony. It was a high-profile event featuring collaboration with Disney and Kermit the Frog. Disney imposed numerous legal requirements regarding the use of photos. This commencement also had the highest attendance in the university's history.
- College Park is negotiating teleworking agreements with AFSCME.
- On Friday, the President sent a budget email apologizing for not providing merit and longevity increases to non-bargaining staff. This was the only announcement regarding COLA and merit that UMCP has received.

UMES:

- UMES's spring commencement took place on May 16th, featuring Governor Wes Moore as the commencement speaker, which attracted a significant audience.
- Approximately 900 students received achievement awards at the Honors Convocation.
- Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, a prominent figure, visited the campus to give a lecture that marked the beginning of the Presidential Lecture series.
- UMES held its first HULK Con. Attendees dressed up as comic book characters and explored comic exhibits. It was a very successful event.
- All employees who can telework will do so every Friday until the end of August.
- There has not been any word about the budget.

UMGC:

- UMGH held its Grad Walk, which featured the largest graduating class to date.
- UMGH hosted a career expo for displaced federal employees. Twenty-five employers were present, with 760 people signing up and 450 attending.