

Council of University System Staff

University of Maryland, Baltimore

March 11, 2025

Executive Summary

The CUSS committee discussed their recent Advocacy Day at the Maryland State Legislature, with members reporting positive experiences and good participation. They also discussed the timeline for starting a new newsletter format, updates from the Chancellor's Council meeting, and potential federal funding cuts. Additionally, Dr. Georgina Dodge shared initiatives at the University of Maryland College Park to support staff, and Kalia presented proposed changes to the constitution. The Council also discussed changes to the Board of Regents awards timeline and the creation of a July newsletter.

Next steps / Action Items

- Points of contact to ensure their campus Staff Senate chairs distribute the shared governance survey.
- Roy to forward the shared governance survey link to Kevin and others who requested it.
- Awards and Outreach Committee to implement a new timeline for the Board of Regents staff awards process.
- Awards and Outreach Committee to begin work on the July newsletter.
- Committee chairs to report on current committee activities for the newsletter.
- Denise to send Kevin the link for the Board of Regents packet grading training meeting.
- Legislative Affairs Committee to review and suggest changes to bylaws regarding member voting rights over the next month.
- Kelly to follow up on digital literacy law information and provide an update at the April meeting.
- Denise to send email to Board of Regents Committees on each campus about changes to the award timeline.
- Denise to send updated Board of Regents award timeline to all CUSS members.
- Kalia to inform Presidents about approved constitutional changes.
- Roy will follow up with Kevin next meeting at UMES.
- Kalia and Roy to respond to shared governance survey results in early April.

1000: Meeting was called to order (Kalia)

1005: Kalia introduced Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources Dan Chanen

1010: Kalia sought motion to approve the January 2025 CUSS Meeting Minutes

Minutes were approved by unanimous consent

1012: Old Business (Kalia)

CUSS Advocacy Day

The summary discusses CUSS's recent Advocacy Day at the Maryland State Legislature. Members report positive experiences meeting with legislators, who were generally receptive to their concerns about the budget and research funding. The group had good student participation

this year, with at least two students in most meetings. Areas for improvement include getting more meetings scheduled, which may require additional support from system government relations staff. There is consideration of holding a separate advocacy day just for CUSS and students in the future.

Newsletter Timeline

The group also agreed on implementing a newsletter communication strategy, with issues planned for September, February, and July to introduce members, provide updates, and summarize the year's accomplishments. The group discusses the timeline for starting a new newsletter format, with Kalia suggesting July as a reasonable start date.

1030: CUSS Chair Report

Kalia spoke about the shared governance survey that needs to be completed by the end of March, with Roy offering to resend it to those who haven't received it. Kalia then provides updates from the Chancellor's Council meeting, including discussions on DEI initiatives and budget concerns. Several members share updates on hiring freezes and budget impacts at their institutions. The conversation then turns to potential federal funding cuts and their implications for research and staffing across the system. Kalia mentions she has contacted Ellen Herbst about staff pay increases and compression issues between bargaining and non-bargaining staff. Lisa asks if there has been any discussion about using the system's contingency fund to help alleviate budget situations at campuses. Kalia also mentioned that she sent a welcome note to the interim President of Frostburg and that she is still monitoring the pharmacy benefits.

- Chancellor's Council Meeting: Discussions about uncertainty on campus - how it is affecting staff, general operations. Staff appreciate guidance. Suggested that when able, involve staff in the decision making process. Appreciation to leaders for calmness. Thanks from Chancellor Perman. Sense of how things are going in Annapolis - understatement to say these are difficult times. The MD General Assembly is doing the best they can for us. They seem sensitive with the challenge they have to manage the budget cuts we already know about.
 - What is a burden we can do without? Redundancy and inefficiencies.
Are we going to hear anything from the chancellor and not just presidents?
How are the campuses working together?
- Communication strategy: (newsletters: September, February, July)
- No updates on prescription plan - more to come likely after the 90 day holdover
- Shared governance survey - sent to staff senates for those involved in shared governance to respond - please share the word - for your peers on the staff shared governance committees only.
- Interim President welcome letter sent yesterday to FSU. She responded with kind thanks and enthusiasm for working together.

Finally, Kalia welcomed a new member, Catherine Fu from UMBC, to the CUSS ranks.

1045: Welcome from Dr. Georgina Dodge, VP for Diversity & Inclusion at UMCP

Dr. Georgina Dodge discusses several initiatives at the University of Maryland College Park to support staff, including new recognition awards, supervisory training programs, career pathways development, and compensation equity reviews. She acknowledges the challenges facing higher education, including budget cuts and political attacks on diversity efforts. Dr. Dodge expresses frustration with what she sees as racist attacks on DEI work, but affirms the university's commitment to supporting all students, faculty and staff regardless of identity, even if approaches need to be adjusted due to federal pressures. Dr. Dodge also emphasized the importance of recognizing the freedoms they have and the ones that are disappearing. Kalia then thanked Dr. Dodge for her honesty and thanked her for joining the meeting.

1100 Chancellor's Liaison Report (George Samuel)

George mentioned that the USMO is still trying to get an official communication out about the switch from Caremark to Medimpact. Neena then gave an update on the Performance Review Preparation Mini Conference and the upcoming Professional Development Week.

1105: CUSS Constitution Updates

Kalia presented proposed changes to the CUSS constitution, including updating the names of campuses and ensuring fair representation in the election of CUSS representatives. She also discussed the need for a feedback mechanism between CUSS and individual campuses. The changes were well-received by the team, with suggestions for communication and implementation. Kalia will present the changes to the Board of Regents and the Presidents for feedback and approval. The effective date of the changes is likely to be for the next CUS administration, with understanding for campuses needing additional time to implement the process.

Kalia sought a motion to approve of the changes.

Motion approved 25/25 in favor.

1115: Committee Meetings and Awards Discussion

The meeting then proceeded to breakout rooms for further discussions. New CUSS Member Catherine Fu joined the awards and outreach committee to select the Board of Regents staff awards winners and work on the newsletter.

1145: CUSS Committee Updates

Awards and Outreach Committee

The committee discusses changes to the Board of Regents awards timeline, with nominations now due on November 15th and grading to be completed in December. They plan to create a July newsletter featuring a message from Kalia, highlights on CUSS members and campuses, and updates from committees.

Legislative Affairs and Policy Committee

The Legislative Affairs and Policy committee is reviewing bylaws regarding institutional membership and voting rights for alternates.

Staff Resources and Special Projects Committee

The Staff Resources and Special Projects committee touched on various topics including digital literacy laws, insurance options, and snow day policies across campuses. Denise requests that members inform their Staff Senates about the changes to the Board of Regents timeline.

1155: Good of the Order

Review of next steps and action items, see above.

Next meeting in-person on April 15 at UMCES Horn Point.

1200: Meeting Adjourned