



COUNCIL OF UNIVERSITY SYSTEM STAFF

CUSS Newsletter

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In This Issue



Chair's Update

Feature - 2025 BoR Awardees

USM Staff Resource Share

Contact Us

Letter from CUSS Chair Roy Prouty

It's easy to look at the structure of shared governance (your home campus staff senate, one of four hundred committees, our Council of University System Staff, and other system-wide bodies) and feel a sense of frustration. We know that at the end of the day that staff governance doesn't hold the authority to enact policy or mandate change to the myriad of issues facing ourselves and fellow campus community members. That ability and agency resides within the offices of our campus senior leadership, system leadership, and the Board of Regents. This reality can sometimes lead to a feeling of disconnect, or even cynicism, about the value of spending our limited time and energy at the table.

So, why should we continue to show up? Why should we encourage our colleagues to remain actively involved?

The answer is that shared governance is not about the final 'yes' or 'no'; it's about understanding that we're working within a system where our decision-making is limited and shaping the conversation long before that decision is made. Shared governance is the most powerful platform we have at the moment to ensure that staff perspective is visible, understood, and considered at the highest levels of our home institutions and the system. **Without our collective, persistent voice, key decisions are made in an information vacuum.**

Our involvement ensures that senior leaders are not only informed about the unintended consequences of a policy before it's implemented, but also the operational reality on the ground. When we are present, we can suggest modifications, flag inequities, and provide data that fundamentally changes the direction of a proposal. Every time we present a thoughtful resolution, every time we bring forward a solution-oriented critique, we are building a record of credibility. We are demonstrating that staff are essential thought partners in our campus communities. This persistent engagement creates a cultural expectation that senior leaders should consult with staff. Over time, that consultation becomes a difficult practice to break. **We are defining the value of our own input through consistent participation.**

Beyond high-level policy, shared governance is an invaluable tool for internal accountability and connection. Our committees can push for greater clarity on budget decisions, highlight disparities in benefits, and advocate for campus resources like employee crisis funds or Ombuds services. These are tangible, ground-level improvements that we can and do affect through a unified staff voice. **Involvement is an investment in our professional community.**

This year, the Council of University System Staff will endeavor to identify and implement communication best practices with senior leadership to foster a more collaborative and consultative relationship. Through this enhanced relationship, our objectives are to (1) establish a mechanism for staff to address concerns with a campus ombuds officer, (2) eliminate duplicative fees that impede staff career advancement, and (3) assess the effectiveness of existing crisis funding programs for staff throughout the university system. Furthermore, we commit to keeping all staff apprised of significant decision-making and encourage all staff to provide input on matters affecting their campus life and livelihood. We encourage all of you to follow along with the business items CUSS brings to its meetings and start conversations with us and on your campus early and often.



Feature - Board of Regents Award Winners 2025



A Council of University System Staff (CUSS) initiative, the University System of Maryland Board of Regents Staff Awards represent the highest honor for achievements of staff employees from institutions within the system who demonstrate extraordinary achievements in various categories. The CUSS Awards & Outreach Committee manages the awards process and, after years in the planning, the 2024-2025 year was the first to present five new award categories tailored to non-exempt employees.

We are excited to highlight in this issue the 2025 Board of Regents Staff Award Winners and, in aligning with the revised Staff Awards timeline, look forward to celebrating BOR Staff Awardees annually in the summer issue of this newsletter.

As this newsletter is released, USM institutions are working diligently to submit their nominations for the 2026 Staff Awards. Our committee will spend the rest of the fall semester evaluating nominations. We must acknowledge the hard work that every institution's shared governance body and staff awards committee for the additional work required this fall to adjust to the new timeline. We also want to recognize former Awards & Outreach Co-Chair Deniz Erman, CUSS Past Chair Kalia Patricio, and CUSS Chair Roy Prouty, for their leadership and dedication over the past year as we have managed the transition.

Brian Jara (TU) and Cathy Fu (UMBC)

Co-Chairs, Awards & Outreach Committee

Dr. Anisha Campbell, University of Maryland College Park

Associate Director, Terrapin Teachers

11 years of service to the institution - 11 years in current role

Awarded for ***Exceptional Contribution***

As Associate Director of Terrapin Teachers, Dr. Anisha Campbell has spent the last decade developing the next generation of STEM teachers for our state. Terrapin Teachers began in 2014 as a collaboration between the UMCP College of Computer, Mathematical, and Natural Sciences and the College of Education to find and prepare K-12 STEM teachers in areas of shortage. In her position, Dr. Campbell has taken the lead on fostering relationships between school districts, departments and colleges to ensure the program is successful. She hires tutors, ensures students know about scholarships and financial aid, and has even spearheaded the use of radio ads and community college partnerships to reach historically underrepresented students.

Dr. Campbell has led several innovative initiatives that elevate the program's visibility, status, and success. She has leveraged relationships across and beyond campus to secure major grants, facilitated two innovative positions, and helped develop a new program to support new teachers. In addition to this, Dr. Campbell's impact during her tenure can be found in her successfully recruiting more than 1,200 students to take an introductory teaching course, and graduating more than 100 certified secondary STEM teachers.

President Pines States: "Higher education must be devoted to serving the state through fostering the next generation of teachers that can continue our advancement of new knowledge. Because of her success in building and supporting such a critical program, I enthusiastically endorse Anisha Campbell's nomination for this award."

Laura Schraven, University of Maryland, Baltimore County



Director of Student Affairs, Communications & Marketing

25 years of service to the institution - 3 years in current position

Awarded for ***Outstanding Service to Students***

As Director of Student Affairs, Communications and Marketing, Laura Schraven approaches her role with a mission to foster a deeply involved and engaged student body. Through her exceptional leadership and innovative ideas, she has more than achieved her vision. Her initiatives make a powerful difference to elevate how the university promotes events and campus life. Students working with her enter a rich, close-knit community where they are encouraged to develop their artistic potential, hone professional skills in a safe working environment, and engage with a thriving network of students and alumni.

The most powerful way Laura has transformed student life is through her creation and ongoing leadership of Commonvision, the UMBC student design and print center. Laura created Commonvision with a mission centered on three objectives: to elevate the vibrancy of campus life with professional-quality digital and print materials; to provide an applied learning experience where students could gain real-world experience within the supportive framework of a campus environment; and to support and communicate the resources available through student affairs, showcasing the breadth of connection opportunities, from mental health

services to social connection. Laura started Commonvision with only the assistance of a single part-time student worker, and she has built what it is today – a robust center with 20-25 undergraduate students on staff, multiple graduate student workers, and four full-time staff.

Laura's genuine care for students and respect for their perspectives shines throughout other aspects of her work as well. In her role on the Student Affairs Leadership Team, Laura recognized a need for Student Affairs to take a more proactive approach in information-sharing. Reaching students with critical support for mental health and

community building required "having conversations divisionally, not individually, and adopting shared language," Laura explains. She sought to standardize language to make it clear to all students how to access key

resources, which has contributed significantly to the leadership team's ability to connect effectively with students.

President Ashby says: "Laura consistently inspires students to pursue their artistic development and build meaningful teams with peers and mentors. The power of Laura's impact on students extends beyond their graduation from UMBC, and beyond the students she serves."

Carla Hopkins, Bowie State University

Director, Alumni Engagement and Stewardship

6 years of service to the institution - 6 years in current position

Awarded for *Extraordinary Public Service*

Guided by a deep sense of purpose, Carla Hopkins maintains a commitment to community service. Her record of educational board service has been uninterrupted for 25 years. During her six-year tenure at Bowie State University, Carla's workplace initiatives and community involvement often overlap, creating ripples of positive change for this university and beyond.

Ms. Hopkins serves on numerous boards across the Washington, DC and Baltimore metropolitan areas. However, she has been most impactful on BSU as a Baltimore City College (BCC) Alumni Board member and as the Chair of the Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women (BLSYW) Board of Directors. In this role, Ms. Hopkins collaborated with BSU's admissions team to facilitate the university becoming a more viable option for BLSYW and BCC students, ensuring the university's presence at these two prestigious Baltimore high schools. She also assisted and hosted Baltimore City College and BLSYW students on BSU's campus. As a result, over twenty-five students have applied, attended, and/ or graduated from Bowie State University to date.

As a known and respected colleague among her University System of Maryland analogues, Ms. Hopkins is also a high performer at her place of work, recognized for her enthusiasm, collaboration, and to advance the alumni relations profession. On the campus of Bowie State, Ms. Hopkins embodies the spirit of collaboration and mentorship for fellow employees and students alike.

President Breaux says: “Ms. Henry Hopkins is an invaluable asset to the campus of Bowie State University. Her commitment and dedication to our faculty, staff, students and alumni continue to make a huge impact at our institution.”

Mary Beth Nibley, University of Baltimore, Maryland

Director, Development Research and Prospect Management

28 years of service to the institution - 18 years in current position



Awarded for ***Effectiveness and Efficiency***

As an encouraging and responsive leader, aware of lingering pandemic-related issues for her staff, Mary Beth Nibley developed a flexible and accommodating work environment for her staff that has had positive fiscal impact. With a supportive, hybrid approach to work, her staff performed extremely well and saw a 70% increase in productivity compared to pre-pandemic, non-hybrid times. For example, her staff were able to research and update donor and potential constituent addresses, an important and underappreciated aspect of philanthropic operations,

saving resources and preventing the outsourcing of services. This change alone annually saves UMB \$5,000-\$10,000, not to mention the possible increase in philanthropic outcomes. Beyond the clear financial savings, Mary Beth's leadership has supported employee retention during a time of rapid resignation. Mary Beth's innovative approach to the hybrid model has improved the team's productivity and set a standard for excellence within the institution. Her strategic thinking and commitment to a positive work culture has impacted UMB for the better, giving her staff opportunities to adapt and thrive during challenging times and increasing their commitment to the work and each other.

President Jarrell says: “[Mary Beth’s] contributions to creating opportunities for efficiencies that lead to cost-savings while helping to build important constituencies who provide essential philanthropic support for UMB have been and continue to be vital to the growth of our institution and the communities we serve.”

Lauren Meredith, Towson University

Professional Development Partner

5 years of service to the institution - 5 years in current position



Awarded for ***Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging***

Lauren Meredith has been with Towson University since June 2019. Lauren has excelled in her role as an advisor for students in the College of Business and Economics (CBE) by establishing a

strong support system and implementing process improvements that have become a model for other advisors. In September 2019, Lauren took on the responsibility to oversee the CBE's MentHER mentorship program. By October 2020, she added CBE's other mentorship program, Mentoring to Advance Professional Development (MAPD). Although Lauren was not hired to take on the responsibility of these programs, yet she stepped in with enthusiasm, has grown both programs, and has created an award-winning program with MentHER. The MAPD program in particular has gained interest among first gen students as they recognize support is needed to enter the business world. This academic year, the program includes 30 students, 42% of whom identify as a first-generation college student. Most participants are female (57% identify as she/her/hers), and 71% identify as an underrepresented minority. According to student feedback in MAPD, 80% of participants became more confident in their ability to build relationships within their network as a result of this program.

Lauren's dedication to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging is prominent in the work she has done with MentHER and MAPD but also in her everyday endeavors at Towson University. She is a strong advocate for promoting a diverse workforce, providing equitable opportunities for all individuals and growing a community of business professionals from all over the area.

President Ginsberg says: "As home to a minority majority student body—one that reflects the state population which we serve—Towson University is deeply committed to inclusive excellence. Lauren helps us achieve this standard by going "above and beyond" each day."

[Andrew Rosenblum, Towson University](#)

Technology Support Specialist

13 years of service to the institution - 5 years in current position



Awarded for *Excellence in Performance*

Over the years, Andrew Rosenblum has become an impactful and indispensable member of the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) community. He is constantly on the move, tablet in hand, assisting faculty, staff and students, with whatever they need. Whether he's rearranging furniture for an event, setting up technology for guest speakers, or troubleshooting technical issues, Andrew is always willing to lend a hand—and always with a smile or a well-timed joke that lightens the mood, even if it's not part of his every duties. This makes CLA run in a more effective and efficient manner, which results in significant increased productivity for all eleven departments in the College. Andrew's technical expertise and initiative have had a profound impact on CLA's ability to operate efficiently. He has played a pivotal role in modernizing processes, such as converting paper forms to DocuSign and assisting departments with website updates. These innovations have impacted the college by saving time, increasing productivity, and allowing our departments to better achieve their goals. Without hesitation, faculty and staff know they can count on Andrew to find solutions tailored to their specific needs, whether it involves new equipment, troubleshooting, or strategic advice.

Andrew's contributions extend beyond his technical expertise. As the Vice Chair of the TU Staff Senate, he has leveraged his knowledge of university governance to clarify procedures and bridge communication gaps for administrative staff. Andrew had the foresight of talking about inclement weather during the summer and that communication needed to be clear and concise ahead of an inclement weather event. His suggestion was brought to the President's Cabinet. The President's Cabinet agreed a definitive stance should be implemented and it was.

Everyone who interacts with Andrew walks away better for it—whether it’s through a solved problem, a new perspective, or simply an uplifting interaction. His mentorship of faculty and staff has been equally impactful, providing guidance and setting a standard of excellence for faculty and staff to aspire. This can include assisting with website design, event marketing & planning and ordering technology. Andrew’s knowledge of University policies and procedures ensures that new staff receive correct and current guidelines.

President Ginsberg says: “Andrew’s ability to take on new challenges, his meticulous approach to his work, and his unwavering commitment to the TU community make him an outstanding candidate for this award. His contributions not only enhance the efficiency of his department, but also strengthen the overall success of the university.”

Conrad Wilson, University of Maryland, College Park

IT Telecommunications Specialist

28 years of service to the institution - 9 years in current position

Awarded for ***Making a Difference to the Campus***

When you meet Conrad Wilson, it is obvious that he truly loves his work and is on a mission to keep the Campus occupants safe and secure. He not only wants them to be safe and secure, he wants them to feel safe and secure. He accomplishes that through excellent workmanship and communication with the customer, which always includes follow up.

Conrad spends most of his time these days managing the thousands of security cameras on campus providing service and maintenance to assist UMPD in keeping the campus as safe as possible. Conrad has provided training to every Building Security technician to help him with this endeavor. This may be where his legacy will be felt the most. When a case is solved by UMPD or a crime is prevented with the assistance of the camera system, it's not Conrad getting the awards and compliments, because he works in the background. Without his contributions, it wouldn't be possible. Conrad loves providing this service to UMPD and is thankful that this helps them in their mission to keep the Campus safe.

President Pines says: “In order for our students, faculty and staff to learn, innovate and achieve, they must first feel safe—something that Mr. Wilson has spent his career doing diligently and completely.”

Michelle Lambert, Salisbury University

Executive Administrative Assistant I

17 years of service to the institution - 14 years in current position

Awarded for *Acting as a Role Model*

The Perdue School at Salisbury hosts a small subset of students known as Student Business Leaders (SBLs). This group of 10-12 students serve as ambassadors for the Perdue School; they are bright, talented, and motivated students who vie, through a series of interviews, for the coveted title of SBL. Over the course of the last 10+ years, Michelle Lambert has spearheaded the development and shaping of the SBL program. Michelle champions this effort from beginning to end. She oversees the recruitment and selection of each and every SBL; she chairs the weekly SBL meetings; she cultivates professional development opportunities; she oversees all SBL initiatives and she works with each student to make sure that he or she develops to his or her fullest potential, both personally and professionally. Michelle is the key to the success of the program.

Michelle holds the SBLs to the highest of standards. She expects them to serve the school in a professional manner and to uphold the values of the Perdue School at all times. She is demanding in her expectations, and at the same time serves as a second mother to many of them. She is their confidant, their mentor, their biggest cheerleader and, importantly, their role model. Not surprisingly, many of these students go on to successful careers in big four accounting firms and with major corporations. Additionally, through Michelle, the larger Purdue School community becomes role models to all Perdue students and work collectively to create a successful environment in the Perdue School.

President Lepre says: "Michelle has become a role model for her colleagues. She upholds the highest standards of professionalism and embodies the values of Salisbury University. Michelle leads by example and demonstrates an exceptional level of kindness and respect that inspires those around her."

Aricelda Munoz, University of Maryland, College Park

Food Services Specialist - Sous Chef

32 years of service to the institution - 3 years in current position

Awarded for *Excellence as a Team Player*

After 32 years of commitment to Dining Services at UMD, Varicella Munoz is currently the Sous Chef at Mulligan's Grill & Pub. Her duties include leading a modest team of kitchen staff in the planning and preparation of both restaurant and catering meals. Her meals are delicious! She sets a high standard and the staff hold her in the highest regard. She assists at all positions and can frequently be found mopping the floor or doing the dishes to help her crew. Last summer, she assisted in the training of staff members from the Market Grill as part of a program to cross train them in a restaurant setting. She also coaches our student waitstaff, many of whom have never worked as servers before. She can frequently be seen outside the kitchen helping other members of the staff. She volunteers regularly to come in early or stay late for catering events or other busy days.

Aricelda's bright attitude is infectious, lifting the spirit of her co-workers. She takes the time necessary to teach new skills to the crew. At the end of a long day, she displays the same energy as in the morning, lightening the load of those around her. She is the backbone of Mulligan's and a joy to work with. She has volunteered to assist in many other operations in Dining Services, including Good Tidings Catering, Training Table, Yahentamitsi Dining Hall, and Concessions. She has even worked in a food truck at Rigg's Alumni Center during football games. Everyone is always delighted when she shows up to help!

President Pines says: "Students, faculty, staff and guests rely on someone like Ms. Munoz to make them feel welcome and at home, in ways both big and small, on our campus."

Natasha (Tasha) Sweitzer, Towson University

Evening Circulation Supervisor

5 years of service to the institution - 5 years in current position



Awarded for *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging*

During her five-year tenure as Evening Circulation Supervisor in Albert S. Cook Library, Natasha (Tasha) Sweitzer consistently demonstrates her dedication to supporting the library, its people, and the wider Towson University community. Through her efforts in the Library, Tasha goes above and beyond her regular responsibilities to build, nurture, and advance inclusion, multiculturalism, and social justice practices that strengthen the Library and Towson University community. In addition to the energy she brings to her work each day, this commitment to inclusive practices is evident in her work with Cook Library's award-winning Anti-Racism Action Plan, her stewardship of Cook Library's Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility

(IDEA) Committee, her dedication to uplifting the voices of her peers via her role as Library Assembly facilitator, and her elected staff representative position on Cook Library's Leadership Council.

A prime example of Tasha's commitment is when she co-led the development of Cook Library's Indigenous Research Guide, a thoughtfully curated resource supporting research and education on local Indigenous topics. She also worked collaboratively with Cook Library leadership to facilitate the library's first organizational equity audit conducted by an external consultant in 2023. Tasha provided key assistance that ensured all library workers participated in a thorough and meaningful assessment of the library's equity practices.

President Ginsberg says: "Natasha's thoughtful leadership and commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility make her a truly deserving candidate for this award."

USM Staff Resources Highlight: Parental Bereavement Leave

The Board of Regents Approved a USM Policy on Parental Bereavement Leave (PBL)¹ on June 13, 2025 for employees in the University System of Maryland, including temporary employees.

1. PBL is a standalone type of paid leave provided to USM employees, under the following circumstances:
 - a. Within 60 days following the death of the employee's child, the employee may use up to ten (10) days of paid PBL, only after notifying their institution's Human Resources department of their intention to use PBL.
 - b. Within 60 days following the employee experiencing a stillbirth, or the death of their infant, the the employee may use up to sixty (60) days of paid PBL, only after notifying their institution's Human Resources department of their intention to use PBL.
2. An employee is required to provide documentation to support their need for PBL within 15 days of notifying Human Resources, or as soon as practicable.
3. An employee who uses PBL shall not be required to use any other type of paid leave that may be available to them.

You can review the policy online² and direct questions to your Human Resources Office.

¹<https://www.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws/SectionVII/VII727.pdf>

²<https://www.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws/SectionVII/VII727.pdf>

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