

# Council of University System Staff

Quarterly Newsletter / Winter 2021 Edition



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## Find us on the web:

Website: <http://bit.ly/1yc1prc>  
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## Update from the Chair

I hope that everyone has had a wonderful start to the spring semester! It may not feel like it these past few weeks but before we know it, longer days and warmer weather will be back! As the Chair of the Council of University System Staff (CUSS), I want to share some exciting updates on behalf of the Council:

### USM Advocacy Day 2021

This year's USM Advocacy Day was unlike any other thanks to the current circumstances. The Councils were able to move the entire event online. The Council of University System Faculty (CUSF), the Council of University System Staff (CUSS), and the USM Student Council (USMSC) in partnership with the USM Women's Forum joined together to host this annual event on Wednesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>. A quick note of thanks to everyone who was able to participate. This newsletter includes a special feature about Advocacy Day – I encourage you to check it out to learn more about the day.

### Board of Regents Staff Awards Update

The Council received 38 nominations from 11 institutions for this cycle of the Board of Regents Staff Awards nominations process. The Board of Regents Staff Awards & Recognition Committee looks forward to reviewing these nominations in the next month and putting forward recommendations to the Executive Committee regarding the results for each category. The results will then be submitted to the Board of Regents for final approval.

As always, I want to thank all of the members of our Council for all of their hard work! Please take a moment to extend your appreciation to your campus' representatives and alternates and reach out to them if you have any concerns or questions. Our Council is still actively meeting online on a monthly basis. I look forward to sharing additional updates at the close of the academic year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Dr. Laila M. Shishineh'.

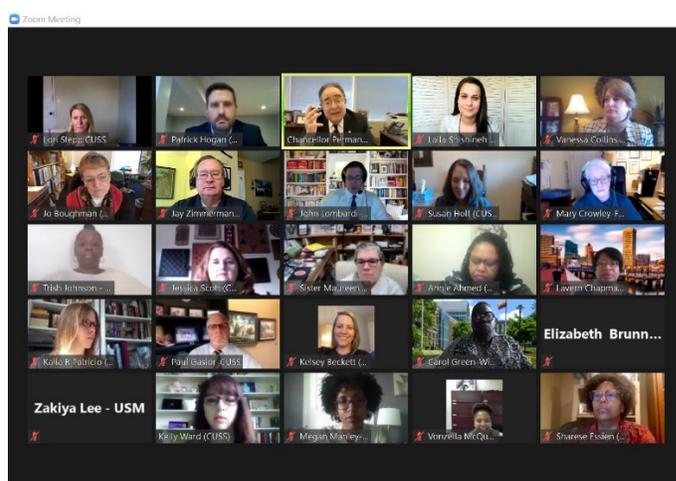
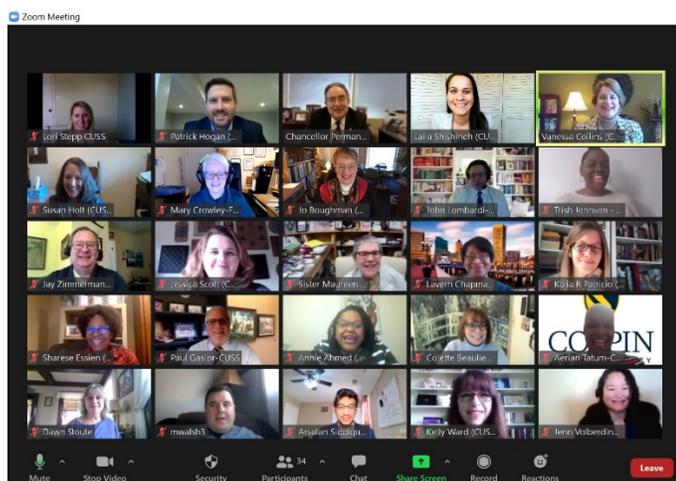
Dr. Laila M. Shishineh  
Council of University System Staff

# CUSS SPOTLIGHT: LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS & POLICY COMMITTEE – ADVOCACY DAY

This was an Advocacy Day unlike any other. On Wednesday, February 17, 2021, the Council of University System Faculty (CUSF), the Council of University System Staff (CUSS), and the University System of Maryland Student Council in partnership with the University System of Maryland Women’s Form hosted the first ever virtual Advocacy Day online via Zoom. Prior to the actual event, Patrick Hogan (USM Vice Chancellor for Government Relations) was able to send a message to all of the legislators on behalf of the three Councils and the USM Women’s Forum to share a preview video and the USM Points of Excellence handout.

The Councils started the day with a virtual kick-off meeting where they were greeted by Chancellor Perman, who encouraged the groups to do their best to advocate for the USM while also sharing their own stories and experiences from this unique past year. Vice Chancellor for Government Relations, Patrick Hogan, then shared some tips and strategies for groups to consider prior to their individual meetings with legislators. CUSS Legislative Affairs & Policy Co-Chairs, Vanessa Collins and Lori Stepp, then shared some details about what to expect for individual meetings and a few final tips. Over the course of the day, participants hosted a series of individual meetings with delegates and senators via Zoom to share data from the USM Points of Excellence document.

While hosting Advocacy Day virtually for the first time ever was not without challenges, overall the day was very productive and went very well! Many thanks to everyone who participated across the Councils and the USM Women’s Forum. A special thanks to Vanessa Collins, Salisbury University, and Lori Stepp, UMCES, for co-chairing the Legislative Affairs and Policy Committee and taking the lead on all of the logistics to make Advocacy Day 2021 such a success despite the unique circumstances!



## USM INSTITUTIONAL UPDATES

### Bowie State University

A new program at Bowie State University hopes to bring diversity to stop motion animation industry. Stop motion animation is one of cinema’s oldest techniques that give characters, like those in the 2009 film “Coraline”, a unique look. “It’s small, mostly small physical characters’ sculptures. Someone is physically moving it frame by frame,” Tewodross M. Williams, Bowie State University Chair of Department of Fine and Performing Arts, said. Like a lot of the animation industry, there hasn’t been much diversity in stop motion filmmaking, Williams said. The university and the Golden

Globe award-winning animation studio Laika are soon starting a new program that could help change that. They’re now partnering to create the nation’s first stop motion animation studio at a historically black college. The program should start in Spring 2022, but Laika is getting involved now and is trying to meet with students in classes this semester to talk to them about stop motion animation.

### Coppin State University

Coppin State University has launched two new master’s degree programs for fall semester 2021: MS in Applied Molecular Biology and

Biochemistry (AMBB) and MS in Polymer and Materials Science (PMS). Both programs will create exciting new opportunities for students to pursue degrees in science and high technology fields. The AMBB program leads to careers in medical, food, drug and other research fields. The PMS program leads to careers in chemistry, teaching, materials research and development, manufacturing, cosmetics industry, physics and engineering. Coppin State University was recently named as one of the nation’s best public colleges for psychology majors for 2021. This Forbes article reported on the study conducted by BrokeScholar.com, which analyzed more than 100 colleges in the United States. The study

found a variety of colleges, both public and private, that effectively combine affordability and solid education, with large numbers or percentages of students completing a bachelor's degree in psychology.

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#### Frostburg State University

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To guide our decisions for a safer campus, Frostburg State University is implementing an intensive COVID-19 testing strategy for the spring semester. All students, faculty and staff who are regularly on campus will be tested twice every week using the BinaxNOW rapid antigen test. If your antigen test returns a positive result, you will be informed quickly and must follow up with Brady Health (for students) or your healthcare provider (for faculty and staff). Results will also be uploaded to your COVID-19 Check-in Portal approximately 20 minutes after your test. A portion of our community is exempt from testing. You may be exempt if: you are an employee who is mostly teleworking/teaching fully online; all of your classes are fully online AND you are living off campus; you are a student-athlete (and being tested through Athletics); you previously tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days and have uploaded the result to the COVID Check-In Portal; you've submitted a complete COVID-19 vaccination record via the COVID Check-In Portal; and for a reason not listed above, you've submitted an approved exemption request via the COVID Check-In Portal.

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#### Salisbury University

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Salisbury University's partnership with Wicomico County Public Schools has been recognized by the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) as an Exemplary PDS Achievement Award recipient. The NAPDS is the pre-eminent national organization supporting the critical linkage between higher education and public schools in the clinical preparation of teachers. Salisbury University is one of just four institutions recognized with the honor this year, along with Bowie State University, California Lutheran University and the University of North Carolina Charlotte. Since the inception of the NAPDS in 2005 just 28 programs have been recognized for their work. This is SU's fourth time receiving the accolade – second most of any institution. This year's winners will be recognized and have an opportunity to present about their program during the NAPDS virtual conference in March.

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#### Towson University

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President Biden taps Towson University alum as Acting Surgeon General. Towson University alumna Rear Admiral Susan Orsega '90 was appointed as acting surgeon general, making her one of the first nurses to hold the position. "Our College of Health Professions and its alumni continue to prove essential to our state and our nation," President Kim Schatzel says. Orsega, who was a member of the track and field team

as a student, spoke to a TU Nursing Leadership and Management class in 2016. Towson University, she said, prepared her for this moment.



The National Collegiate Athletic Association/Minority Opportunities Athletics Association (NCAA/MOAA) Award recognizes TU's athletic department's initiatives and policies that embrace diversity and inclusion. In 2020, TU was the only higher education institution in the state of Maryland and one of just 90 across the nation to receive the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award. "The Towson University athletics staff and student-athletes have demonstrated a consistent pattern of developing instrumental programming and activities that put a spotlight on the importance of inclusivity and diversity, ..." said Derrick Gragg, senior vice president for inclusion, education and community engagement at the NCAA.



For more information, on these stories, go to <https://www.towson.edu/news/>

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#### University of Baltimore

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A new, extensive report by The Chronicle of Higher Education on the changing perceptions of post-secondary educational opportunities for incarcerated persons features an interview with Thomas Anderson, a Baltimore native who was released in 2019 from Jessup Correctional Institution, and is now continuing his education in business and real estate as part of The University of Baltimore's Second Chance College Program. Anderson, who began in the program while still at Jessup, had earlier taken classes there through another college. But that program ended in 2000, and he waited years until, through meeting Andrea Cantora, Associate Professor in The University of

Baltimore's College of Public Affairs and the Director of the Second Chance initiative at the University, he was able to start classes again. Anderson started tutoring other incarcerated men, including those who couldn't read or write. Anderson said his interactions with Professor Cantora and the students from the University was life changing—for him and them. Prof. Cantora and her colleagues eventually piloted a program through which those serving time in prison could take classes, then progress on toward a degree from The University of Baltimore. With the recently announced reestablishment of the Pell Grant program as a way to support these students along their journey, Anderson and other incarcerated individuals are able to plan for a post-prison future that includes gainful employment, social connections, and more.

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#### University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB)

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Angela Hall, former Staff Senator and CUSS member of many years, was awarded the UMB Champions of Excellence Award. The Champions of Excellence campaign is a multiyear branding campaign at UMB that highlight individuals and teams that exemplify extraordinary accomplishment and represent excellence at the University. Angela Hall, MBA, Director of the University of Maryland, Baltimore's (UMB) Office of Parking and Transportation Services (PTS), has taken customer service to a new level during the COVID-19 pandemic, even moving cashier operations into her own office when the SMC Campus Center closed in the spring. Hall, who was initially one of three office employees in PTS who continued to work on campus, had to process a large number of student refunds when many classes moved online and some garages were closed. Hall "excelled at addressing the high demand for student refunds with a quick response and continued follow-up," said her supervisor, Robert Milner, MS, executive Director, Auxiliary Services. "She redeveloped the PTS cashier's office to accommodate the various onboarding schedules during the pandemic, while limiting the number of staff on campus." For more information, visit: <https://www.umaryland.edu/champions/angel-a-hall-mba/>

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**University of Maryland,  
Baltimore County (UMBC)**

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UMBC's Professional Staff Senate (PSS) is hosting a monthly Self-Care series in Spring 2021 during their meetings that will feature five Campus Community Members as guests including Freeman Hrabowski, UMBC President; Greg Simmons, Vice President for Institutional Advancement; Kim Leisey, PhD, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs; Jack Seuss, Vice President of Information Technology and CIO; and Yvette Mozie-Ross, PhD, Vice Provost for Enrollment Management and Planning. This initiative is to help inform our community about how leadership across campus is supporting staff in this virtual world. These sessions will be recorded and shared with the UMBC community. PSS is busy as it nears its next election cycle in April and will continue to recruit their next cohort of the PSS Mentoring Program which will officially launch this summer. UMBC continues to be mostly virtual for Spring 2021 and plans to remain mostly virtual for Summer 2021 as well.

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**University of Maryland Center for  
Environmental Science (UMCES)**

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UMCES held its first open Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Collaborative meeting on Friday, February 12. All members of the UMCES community were invited to discuss goals and priorities for DEI initiatives, including a Campus Climate survey and implementation of a Campus Ombuds program. UMCES also launched its first professional certificate program in Environmental Management for Sustainability on the edX online education platform on February 15.

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**University of Maryland  
College Park (UMCP)**

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Nominated by then President-Elect Joe Biden, UMD Alumna Kathleen Hicks has been confirmed as Deputy Secretary of Defense, making her the first woman in history to hold the position, the second-highest in the Pentagon. Hicks will be responsible for the advancement of the administration's defense strategy, the logistics of the COVID-19 vaccine distribution, and work to restore alliances and modernize the armed forces. Previously, Hicks served in the Obama administration as principal deputy under secretary of defense for policy as well as the deputy under secretary of defense for strategy, plans and forces.

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**University of Maryland  
Eastern Shore (UMES)**

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The University of Maryland Eastern Shore received a transformational \$20 million donation in mid-December from philanthropist and novelist MacKenzie Scott. This was the largest gift in the school's 134 year history. UMES was among 384 organizations, including 17 historically black institutions, that collectively will benefit from \$4.15 billion in the latest round

of donations from the ex-wife of Amazon co-founder Jeff Bezos. Scott wrote in an online statement Dec. 15 that the "384 carefully selected teams have dedicated their lives to helping others, working and volunteering and serving real people face-to-face at bedsides and tables, in prisons and courtrooms and classrooms, on streets and hospital wards and hotlines and frontlines of all types and sizes, day after day Philanthropist MacKenzie Scott donates \$20 million to UMES after day." UMES plans to use Scott's donation to make strategic investments to benefit students short- and long-term. Among the university's top priorities is financial assistance for students, many of whom face challenges finding ways to pay for their college education. The University of Maryland Eastern Shore bid farewell to some 230 graduates at its December Class of 2020 with a 36-minute commencement celebration video in lieu of a traditional ceremony typically held in front of thousands at the William P. Hytche Athletic Center. The UMES administration produced an online tribute in May featuring recorded remarks from President Heidi M. Anderson, Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan in addition to voluntary testimonial videos from seniors and a robust carousel of campus life photos set to music.

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**University of Maryland  
Global Campus (UMGC)**

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UMGC announces their partnership with Study.com. The alliance with Study.com, a leading online and mobile learning platform, provides an affordable transfer pathway for students to earn a degree by taking courses through Study.com's College Accelerator and UMGC. More than 150,000 college credits were earned through Study.com. in the past year.



## 2020 – 2021 CUSS REPRESENTATIVES

### **Bowie State University (BSU)**

Robert Alicea  
Trish Johnson  
LaVel Jones  
Vonzella McQueen

### **Coppin State University (CSU)**

Sandra Battle  
Sheila Chase  
Yvonne Oliver

### **Frostburg State University (FSU)**

Heather Killeen  
Amy Nightengale  
Rubin Stevenson  
Sara Wilhelm

### **Salisbury University (SU)**

Vanessa Collins  
Paul Gasior  
Lisa Gray  
Jessica Scott

### **Towson University (TU)**

LaVern Chapman  
Deniz Erman  
Kelly Ward  
Carol Green-Willis

### **University of Baltimore (UB)**

Tony DuLaney  
Megan Manley  
Christine Marconi  
Suzanne Tabor

### **University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB)**

Ayamba Ayuk-Brown  
Colette Beaulieu  
Sharese Essien  
Susan Holt  
Jenn Volberding

### **University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC)**

Sheryl Gibbs  
Kevin Joseph  
Thomas Penniston  
Laila Shishineh, Chair  
Dawn Stoute  
Michael Walsh

### **University of Maryland, Center for Environmental Sciences (UMCES)**

April Lewis  
Michelle Prentice  
Rhonda Schwinabart  
Lori Stepp

### **University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP)**

Meredith Carpenter  
Elizabeth Hinson  
Dolores Jackson  
Jerry Lewis  
Kalia Patricio  
Sister Maureen Schrimpe

### **University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES)**

Chenita Reddick

### **University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC)**

Melanie Barner  
Antoinne Beidleman  
Kathleen Hebbel  
Francesca Kerby  
Linda Kuligowski  
Karolina Nash

### **University System of Maryland Office (USMO)**

Chevonie Oyegoke

For a full listing of all minutes regarding the USM Council of University System Staff (CUSS), institution photographs, and other pertinent information, visit <http://www.usmd.edu/usm/workgroups/SystemStaff/>.

The Council of University System Staff (CUSS) was established in 1992 by request of the Board of Regents to advise on matters relating to the development and maintenance of a new USM Pay Program for Staff employees. CUSS is comprised of System-wide Staff employees with representatives from each of its 12 institutions and the System office.

