Council of University System Staff (CUSS) Meeting - MINUTES

Dec. 15, 2009

University System of Maryland Main Office
Adelphi, MD

In attendance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Alternates/Guests</th>
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<tr>
<td>Linda Parker-Ford BSU</td>
<td>Cynthia Coleman BSU</td>
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<td>Chris Thomas CSU</td>
<td>Michael Hughes UMUC</td>
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<td>Absent FSU</td>
<td>Joel DeWyer UMBC</td>
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<td>Absent SU</td>
<td>Chenita Reddick UMES</td>
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<td>Brenda Yarema TU, Member at Large</td>
<td>Andy Clark, guest USMO</td>
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<td>Karyn Schulz UB, CUSS Co-Secretary</td>
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<td>Giordana Segneri UB, CUSS Co-Secretary</td>
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<td>Colette Becker UMB, CUSS Vice Chair</td>
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<td>Dave DeLooze UMB</td>
<td>Chancellor’s Liaison to CUSS:</td>
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<td>Joe Hill UMBC</td>
<td>Rosario I. van Daalen USMO</td>
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<td>Lori Smith-Watson UMBC, Member at Large</td>
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<td>Mary Stapleton UMBI</td>
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<td>Gus Mercanti UMCES</td>
<td>Chancellor Brit Kirwan USMO</td>
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<td>Willie Brown UMCP, CUSS Chair</td>
<td>COO/VCAF Joseph Vivona USMO</td>
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<td>Sister Maureen Schrimpe UMCP</td>
<td>COO/VCAF Joseph Vivona USMO</td>
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<td>Larry Lauer UMCP</td>
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<td>Absent UMES</td>
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<td>Jessica McCarty UMUC</td>
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<td>Ayman Abdo UMUC</td>
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<td>Mary Reed USMO</td>
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<td>John Wolfe USMO</td>
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1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
   - Chief Operating Officer and Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance (COO/VCAF) Joe Vivona welcomed CUSS to the University System of Maryland Office and explained his position.
   - Andy Clark, Director of Legislative Affairs, introduced himself.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
   - November minutes were approved.

3. CHAIR’S REPORT
   a. Chancellor’s Council meeting
      - No expectations of further budget reductions before the Legislature convenes.
      - No clear picture for the next fiscal year.
   b. USM Strategic Plan.
• 20-year plan, update of plan presented five or six years ago
• We should be involved in update

d. Binge drinking
• Frostburg State University program is willing to speak at the Institutions and to CUSS about FSU’s actions against binge drinking
• Do we want them to come speak to CUSS? YES. Chair Willie Brown will e-mail President Gibralter, FSU, who is leading the initiative.
• Important to involve Staff and Faculty employees in combating binge drinking among students

e. Report on Graduate Assistant/Adjunct Faculty
• Institutions are all over the map with what benefits they offer to Graduate Assistants and Adjunct Faculty; effort to develop consistent methods to improve their status
• Joe Vivona chaired a workgroup to analyze the situation; John Wolfe was a member of the workgroup
  o American Federation of Teachers (AFT) union is interested in organizing both groups, but they didn’t get enough votes for a hearing
  o Looked at circumstances of Contingent II employees
  o About half of the courses across the System are taught by adjuncts
• Graduate assistants have grievances, too
• Work through Shared Governance groups to help improve their status and deal with compensation issues
• Larry Lauer: This is a grassroots issue, brought up at UMCP’s Campus Senate meeting related to maternity leave
  o Question of unionization

f. Meeting to Review the Extra Merit Increases Policy, with committee appointed by USM Office, as requested by CUSS
• No more than five CUSS representatives: Joe Hill, Roy Ross, Dave DeLooze, Brenda Yarema, Willie Brown
• Either Monday, Jan. 11, or Wednesday, Jan. 13

4. VICE CHAIR’S REPORT: Board of Regents Meeting
• Update on University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES)
• Joe Vivona gave an update on Dashboard Indicators, comparison of Institutions based on students, faculty, alumni satisfaction and funding
• Vice Chair Colette Becker talked about CUSS legislative update: CUSS Legislative Committee will keep CUSS apprised of bills to keep an eye on
• Colette Becker discussed Board of Regents Staff Awards
• Board of Regents loved the Frequently Asked Questions that CUSS distributed in its Quarterly Report regarding furloughs and USM’s cost-cutting measures
• Regent Thomas Slater asked if CUSS could update and add more information to the FAQs and cost-cutting measures, to keep it as a living document
Willie Brown: At the Chancellor’s Council meeting, the Chancellor reiterated how great the document is; the Presidents also really liked it.

Colette Becker: told the Board of Regents that the more knowledge that USM Staff have, the more accepting they’ll be of budget-cutting decisions.

Rosario van Daalen: Use this article for the newsletter this year, this is a perfect example of Shared Governance at work.

Willie Brown: CUSF Chair William Stuart regrets not having a chance to meet before the break; Willie Brown to attend the December CUSF meeting Dec. 16; planning a meeting with CUSF and the USM Student Council at the end of January or mid-February.

Larry Lauer: If we’re going to be effective at all in influencing the budget process, we need to have the meeting as early as possible; tuition increase will be a big issue.

Willie Brown: We can work on our own and with the other groups; Shared Governance needs to be united before we go to Annapolis; we need to meet before bringing recommendations to the Legislature because we can’t bring multiple differing views; often, CUSS writes a letter, and CUSF will endorse it.

Gus Mercanti: concerned about CUSS taking a backseat to other groups.

Rosario van Daalen: we shouldn’t second-guess students about them supporting the tuition increase because they see the value of the USM having funds to support Student’s programs and needs.

Willie Brown: proposed 5 percent increase in tuition was included in the budget sent to the Legislature; Student Council Chair Brady Walker has already stated he endorses the increase; we’re much stronger if we work together and endorse proposals together; we’ll get the other groups on board, but we won’t wait for them to put forth our proposals.

5.  WELCOME FROM USMO CUSS MEMBER TO THE SYSTEM OFFICE - Mary Reed

- Chancellor will join us for lunch, and we will take a group photo with him; USM Office houses Advancement, Academic Affairs (Faculty and Student program), Administration and Finance and the USM Foundation.

6.  REPORT FROM THE CHANCELLOR’S LIAISON TO CUSS - Rosario van Daalen

- Revisions to supplemental retirement plans approved by Board of Regents
  - No longer restricting employees under 403(b) plan to just one loan at a time (hardship withdrawals).
  - No limits on loans as long as employees meet IRS criteria.

- Employee benefits
  - United Concordia will be sending notices about dependents reaching age 19; our employees can ignore these notices because our State Health Benefits cover dependents until age 25.

- Health Benefits application forms for Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) retirees - mandate from DBM-EBD:
  - If employees are in the ORP, any prospective retiree, as of Feb. 1, 2010, must fill out these new forms to find out if she/he will have retirement health benefit coverage and receive a State subsidy; the process can be very
complicated and time consuming if the employee worked at multiple State agencies because each agency has to sign off on the form

- **The ORP is a State of Maryland retirement plan, so years at any State of Maryland agency count as years of service** for purposes of calculating the eligibility for the health benefit
- All employees in the ORP should read the ORP booklet; it has examples of combinations of service/State of Maryland Retirement/Pension/ORP and coverage according to years worked. The booklet and forms may be obtained from the employee’s Institution Benefits Coordinator or look on the following websites:

- **Same-sex domestic partner benefits**
  - Question came up as to why same-sex domestic partners are not covered under USM policies if they are eligible for health benefits
  - The Systemwide Human Resources Committee (SHRC) has identified four policies that would be impacted:
    - Tuition remission
    - Nepotism
    - FMLA
    - Sick leave (death of a relative; UMCP has separate policy)
  - Action on moving policies forward is postponed until after the Legislative Session, because of focus on budget
  - Not many people are taking advantage of the current domestic-partner benefits because there are lots of hoops to jump through, require lots of proof; plus, benefits are paid as post-tax and the premium is taxable as added income on paychecks
  - Same criteria used for Health Benefits eligibility must be met to be eligible for inclusion under USM policies

- **Biennial Exempt Market Salary Survey Report – July 2010-June 2012**
  - Two USM Exempt Salary Structures: Traditional Pay Ranges (UMB and UMUC) and Wide Pay Ranges (rest of USM Institutions)
  - Requirement is that the minimum and maximum of both structures must be equal; what happens in between can differ
  - Committee surveyed the market:
    - Concern about overlapping of Exempt and Nonexempt pay structures: USM is still 10.74 percent below where it would like to be for Exempt structure minimum to reduce impact of compression
• Exempt minimum is $29,149, which is parallel to pay range 8 of Nonexempt structure, when USM would prefer it to be parallel to pay range 10 of Nonexempt structure ($32,280)
  o By the time we can recuperate from the budget cuts and constraints, we’ll be way behind this goal
  o Three recommendations:
    • Increase minimums of the Exempt Salary Structures by 10.74 percent and Increase the rest of the Pay Ranges minimums by 5 percent (five Pay Ranges in the Wide; 10 pay Ranges in the Traditional)
      a. Not accepted because Institutions can’t afford the increases, would cost USM more than $700,000 at a time that we are facing serious budget cuts.
    • Second option: Raise the just the minimums of the Exempt Salary Structures by 8 percent, which would cost the USM $114,000
    • Third option: The SHRC recommended no action at this time and freeze the current Salary Structures; the report will be presented to the Admin VPs on Thursday, Dec. 16, 2009.

7. AD-HOC COMMITTEE REPORT

• Lori Smith-Watson and Brenda Yarema have to work through the many ideas that were brainstormed and will have more information for the January CUSS meeting

• Idea about communicating more publicly how broadly we represent Staff at Institutions
  o Concern: titles can be misunderstood, might not represent good split of Exempt vs. Nonexempt, might seem to represent more administrative Staff
  o Some people are afraid to speak up when upper administrative Staff is present
  o Recommendation: communicate more broad areas (departments) in which we work

• Larry Lauer: Council and constituents have changed since collective bargaining; Nonexempt staff in CUSS are mostly supervisors or confidential, thus not represented by the union

• Important to demonstrate broadness of CUSS representation to Legislature, communicate areas of Institutions from which we cull constituents

• All titles nevertheless are available via online directories at each Institution

• John Wolfe: We still represent larger constituency than collective bargaining; issue is perception of who we are

• Willie Brown: we take interest in the lives of all Staff, not just excluded (from collective bargaining) Staff

• Mary Stapleton: CUSS should work harder at recruiting representatives who aren’t senior administration

• Willie Brown: Let’s send out a holiday card from CUSS with representatives’ names and institutions (with group photo taken at lunch)

• Motion to send out season’s greetings card with our mission statement, including list of CUSS representatives with institutions: APPROVED
• Motion to allow Brenda Yarema and Lori Smith-Watson develop a proposal for communicating the range of Staff that CUSS represents and report back in January: APPROVED

8. LUNCH
• Introduction of Chancellor
  o Chancellor Brit Kirwan: thanked CUSS, puts great stock in Shared Governance, appreciates the time we give to raising and thinking about issues, commends CUSS for its leadership.
  o Has been inspired by determination and spirit of USM Faculty and Staff
  o Maryland budget affected profoundly by unemployment because of loss of income tax revenue; USM is blessed that State administration appreciate importance of Higher Education; never before has USM been seen as such a priority
  o All in USM Main Office feel the State is treating the System as a priority
• Brit Kirwan: strategic plan produced in 2004 (for 2004-10); working to revise plan for new realities of next decade; document will go to Board of Regents for the last meeting of the year in late June
  o Important to Institutions because budget requests must be driven by the plan, and individual Institution strategic plans have to be in line with the USM plan
  o College completion vs. access
  o Role of higher education in economic and workforce development
  o Emerging ideas about new themes appear in the fourth column of the document
  o Very helpful if CUSS would provide feedback, look at proposed new themes and strategies
    • Mission, vision, core values, goals
    • Can take back to respective Institutions
• Update on UMBI: MOUs progressing; one signed, two about to be signed; work has begun on the CARB MOU, and it will be completed in the early part of the year

9. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (Karyn Schulz)
• State employees have reduced public transportation rates through MTA; USM employees should have the benefit, too
• Karyn Schulz developed a letter regarding public transportation for USM employees and requests feedback from CUSS
• Legislation that would have protected USM rights to parity of benefits was dropped when collective bargaining was adopted. However, a commitment was made by the Governor, the BOR and the Chancellor’s /Presidents’ Council that the USM would maintain that parity – to provide “no less than” the State.
• UMB Staff Council has negotiated its own program for lower rates with MTA
• Willie Brown: What are the legal and political ramifications?
• Rosario van Daalen: There are no political ramifications, but the difficulty is getting a hold of someone to help us. She tried in past years but did not get cooperation from the State; was told it was only available to a small group under a pilot program.
  o CUSS will get detailed report from UMB to follow the same path they did

10. OLD BUSINESS
• Legislative Day
  o Joe Hill: CUSS should go to Annapolis to introduce CUSS to Legislators; try to go at beginning of session, in the middle of the session and at the end; important to keep up our visibility
  o Andy Clark – Upcoming session:
    • Dealing with fallout of larger economic downfall
    • Choose three or four specific issues; keep them tailored to issues of the Board of Regents, Chancellor and Presidents
    • Tuition will be an issue; Gov. Martin O’Malley is a friend of Higher Education, and the freeze is one of the governor’s initiatives that has really worked
    • Keep issues clear and concise
    • Manageable advocacy strategy
    • Weekly call-ins (Mondays at 9 a.m.) with Andy Clark: rundown of what happened the week before, what to look forward to in the next week
    • Testimonies by presidents to be done differently this year
• Rosario van Daalen: The Blue Ribbon Commission, assigned to address the State’s current cost liability of retirees’ health benefits, has filed for an extension in submitting its report until December 2010; next year is an election year which might affect decisions made by this Commission; governor waiting to see what happens at the national level regarding health care which might have an impact on health care for active employees and retirees.

NEXT MONTH’S CUSS MEETING: Jan. 26, 2009, University of Maryland University College (UMUC)
• Willie Brown would like to spend a good portion of the next meeting discussing the strategic plan, so CUSS representatives should share it with and request feedback from constituents
• Legislative Day

Respectfully submitted by Karyn Schulz and Giordana Segneri, CUSS Co-Secretaries