



## COUNCIL of UNIVERSITY SYSTEM FACULTY

### Board of Regents Report December 9, 2022

The Council of University System Faculty has had three larger/general meetings since my last report, of different kinds. The regular CUSF General meeting met on November 23. We met in joint session with the Staff and Student Councils on November 16. In addition, we met solely with the chairs of the various faculty senates from all twelve USM campuses on December 2. The executive committee also met on December 5. In addition, we have continued to gather a great deal of information about issues of concern for this year, both from individual members and from committees.

### Executive Committee

The executive committee met on December 5. We are working on some bylaw amendments with regard to electronic meetings. We briefly reviewed status of all aspects of our draft strategic plan/issues of concern and noted progress on all fronts except the Brand/marketing question, which we are now following up on. Committees have taken up all issues, and two of the original seventeen issues (election day resolution, academic integrity proposal) are completed, the latter awaiting only a vote from the full Board of Regents. We discussed whether the BOR bylaws allow the appointment of an extra faculty “advisor” to the BOR.

### General Body Meetings

The most important initiative coming out of these meetings is that **we would like to set up a taskforce on faculty status and faculty’s role in shared governance across the institutions.** One larger concern is about ratios of non-tenure track versus tenure track faculty and what that means for the quality of education as well as for shared governance. Both Regent Attman and Chancellor Perman agreed to support an effort to gather information about NTT/TTK faculty ratios at all 12 universities and the regional programs)—about what’s going on in terms of faculty/how ratios are changing/ what this means for institutions & faculty governance & student success. But this is just a beginning. We will discuss this issue at our full general body CUSF meeting in December.

**On November 16, the faculty, staff, and student councils met in joint session.** We were very pleased to have Regent Attman and Chancellor Perman join us, as well as both Patrick Hogan and Andy Clark, Vice Chancellor for Legislative affairs and Associate Vice Chancellor, respectively.

We focused on issues of common concern, especially issues that we might raise during Annapolis day, which is our day to consult with the legislature, on February 15. These issues included engaging with the some of the issues raised by the Regents committee on the **relation between the prison**

**system and USM**, including, but not limited to, increasing prisoner access to classes, internships, and the entire strange relationship between one prison manufacturing site (of furniture) and the state law that requires USM (as well as other state agencies) to purchase such furniture (with few exceptions). Many issues came up with regard to classes and the furniture issue. Many USM institutions already provide some access. How can we increase access as well as opportunities for inmates to access the internet and resources? How can we increase internships? Does the current law requiring furniture purchase work as intended? Are prisoners in the program fairly paid and treated? How does it work from the perspective of USM? **We also addressed whether to make recommendations about collective bargaining policy to the legislature**, and if so whether it should just be to suggest removing such restrictions on only one group (graduate students) or on other groups as well (e.g. faculty, & staff currently excluded). The final issue from this joint council **was mental health and how the pandemic and its aftereffects have created issues for all groups, faculty, staff, & students**. Faculty and staff have often had to assume extra burdens, as colleagues have quit and retired. Mental health is an ongoing crisis for students because of the isolation of the pandemic. One issue that arose is the extra stress because of difficulties finding childcare.

**On November 23**, the general body of CUSF met in our regular session. We heard from the Chancellor and also discussed the implications of open access for faculty, especially in the wake of President Biden's new directive that all federally funded research should be open access from the beginning by 2026. The larger issue is that so many academic publications are CLOSED access, or difficult to access without paying high fees, that it is not only consuming library budgets but also limiting what both students and the general public have access to. The particular discussion that day was on how faculty can respond to these issues, including in terms of promotion and tenure. Our committees continue to meet and deliberate on many issues, including most of those mentioned in our draft strategic plan.

On December 2, we met with the chairs of all faculty senates of all twelve campuses. We heard a variety of concerns from them, especially about **the lack of staff support for shared governance**, which seemed to be a common theme across all institutions. Some universities are dealing with questions of identity, how they contribute to the USM as a whole, and enrollment issues. Some faculty senates are already considering how they can contribute to the upcoming accreditation cycle. Many are also dealing with concerns about how to treat and address concerns surrounding non-tenure track faculty, including whether they should be hired on longer term contracts (vs. at will), promotion, and pay (including raises). Another frequent issue of concern was about student absences, which have increased since the pandemic began, even though everything is now supposedly back to normal. .

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Professor Holly Brewer**

**Chair, Council of University System Faculty**