

Council of University System Staff (CUSS) Meeting

July 22, 2008

UMCES – Chesapeake Biological Laboratory - Solomon’s Island, MD

In attendance:

Members		Alternates	
Linda Parker Ford	Bowie State		
Marie Meehan	Bowie State		
Victoria Kelly	Coppin	Ronald Kasl	UMB
Absent	FSU		
Absent	SU		
Brenda Yarema	TU		
Gloria Gaguski	TU		
Judy Sabalauskas	CUSS Co-Secretary, UB		
Kimberley Lynne	CUSS Co-Secretary, UB		
David DeLooze	UMB CUSS Member at Large		
Roy Ross	UMB		
Colette Becker	UMB		
Joe Hill	UMBC CUSS Member at Large		
Deb Geare	UMBC		
Jami Kasco	UMBI	*****	
Gus Mercanti	UMCES	Special Guest: Assoc	USMO
Willie Brown	UMCP	Vice Chancellor James	
Larry Lauer	CUSS Past Chair, UMCP	Sansbury	
Scott Wibbert	UMUC	*****	
Ayman Abdo	UMUC	Chancellor’s Liaison to	USMO
Mary Reed	USMO	CUSS: Rosario I.	
John T. Wolfe, Jr.	CUSS Chair, USMO	van Daalen	

John Wolfe called the **meeting to order**. It was the last meeting of the 2007/2008 year.

Gus Mercanti welcomed the members to the Chesapeake Biological Laboratory that was established in 1925 and is one of the components of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science. UMCES has two other research labs: Horn Point in Cambridge and the Appalachian Laboratory in Frostburg, plus it is also responsible for the administration of the Maryland Sea Grant College. UMCES Students aren’t charged tuition; the labs run on grants and contracts and state money. The labs focus on fishery science, global warming, and stream restoration.

Special Guest: Associate Vice Chancellor James Sansbury from the USMO office visited CUSS to share the results of the USM’s Tuition Remission Survey Results to be used in defining **dependent(s) in regard to tuition remission**.

History: in 2005, the IRS changed its definition of dependent and that lead USM to consider how it defined dependent for purposes of the Policy on Tuition Remission. The Attorney General stated the Regents' definition was ambiguous and need to be more specific. The USM drafted a definition tying eligibility to the IRS definition of a dependent because the institutions felt it most closely resembled current practice. However, that recommendation was never submitted to the Board because the Chancellor's advisory councils said it did not resemble current practice and there would be a major loss of benefits. To reconcile the different viewpoints, the AG's Office surveyed the practices at the institutions

Jim distributed copies of the Tuition Remission Survey Results regarding Dependents, generated by the Attorney General's office. The AG surveyed the practice at all the USM institutions. From the survey: "In all cases, when a child is 24 or over, all institutions ask for a copy of the tax return, or have an employee sign an affidavit that the child is a dependent on the tax return and will provide a copy of the tax return if asked."

"Employee, spouse and dependent tuition remission cost for FY 2007 was \$15.9 million."

"Current definition: the term dependent child shall mean son or daughter, stepson/stepdaughter, legally adopted son/daughter; who is financially dependent as that term is defined by the Internal Revenue Service."

"Draft Revised Definition: The term "dependent child" shall mean a son/daughter, stepson/stepdaughter, or legally adopted son/daughter who is the employee's "dependent," as that term is defined by the Internal Revenue Code Section 152 (Dependent Defined). For Purposes of this determination, an employee's son/daughter or legally adopted son/daughter to whom Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 152(e) (Special Rules for Divorced Parents) applies shall be treated as a dependent of the employee, so long as that child is the "dependent", as that term is defined by the IRC Section 152, of such child's other parent."

David DeLooze asked about divorced parents. Children of divorced employees are dependents of only one parent on the tax form.

Jim responded that the children would receive tuition remission under the new definition if the children are dependents on the ex-spouse's tax return in accordance with IRC Section 152.

Gus questioned why is tuition remission linked to the IRS?

Jim said originally the link is that the undergraduate degree tuition remission is tax- free to the employee and that grad school is tax-free up to \$5,250. Now, the rationale is that linking it to the IRS definition emulates current practice and that no one loses benefits and the there are no increased costs.

Larry calculated that if out of the 135,000 total USM students, only 3,088 are attending at a tuition remission reduced rate and tuition remission = upward mobility, then not really \$15.9M spent.

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Jim said that most USM institutions are at 100% capacity and by turning away paying students for tuition remission student, USM is losing potential revenue.

Dave pointed out that if we eliminate tuition remission, we lose staff and faculty; and what is that number?

Jim made clear that USMO is not considering eliminating tuition remission but controlling the costs and careful about any expansion. Jim has discussed this issue with CUSF who named tuition remission an “inherent right” and doesn’t think that it should be tied to the IRS on principle.

Joe Hill said that the age-25 break, which was under prior guide lines, allowed for dependent tuition remission of four years undergraduate and three years graduate. This was a benefit for pre-1990 employees. With the age-24 break, the third year of graduate school for dependent tuition remission would be lost for those employees hired prior to 1990. Since graduate school has been eliminated for employee dependents hired after 1990, and the number of pre-1990 employees using this benefit is decreasing every year, what is the harm in keeping the age at 25 for dependents?

Jim said pre 1990 Hires higher level benefit is fading away because 85% of employees of current were hired after 1990. It is a valid point to raise the age limit because of the decreased number of pre 1990 employees.

Larry asked Jim about the **extra pay for extra merit for above standards and outstanding performance for Nonexempt Staff**. He wants the phrase eliminated from the Chancellor’s memo. Jim said that there has been no movement on this issue since the February meeting with Joe Vivona and suggested that CUSS make a formal recommendation after checking with its constituents.

The members thanked Jim for joining the meeting.

June Minutes were amended and approved. Kimberley will make changes and send the final copy to Fred Hayes.

Chairman’s Report

John distributed **Chair’s 2007-2008 Year-end Report** and the members reviewed.

John will talk live with the Chancellor on the repeat issues in the report. He’ll ask the Chancellor for a formalized review process to appraise MOU policies. Should the process be a report from each institution’s representative to CUSS?

CUSS presenters will stress at the Staff Leadership Conferences the opportunity to report information. CUSS is a conduit from staff up, not management down.

Gus requested that the discussion of Shared Governance continue to another meeting.

John will make the members' edits to the Report and distribute it again. John will meet with the Chancellor on how to convey this publicly. He will attach the attorney general opinion and the chancellor memo.

Judy is still collecting the reports from each Institution on the state of their Shared Governance. Members need to ask their councils and senates to report to Judy ASAP.

CUSS 2008/2009 Schedule

John distributed copies of a schedule of all USM meetings. Kimberley asked for an e-copy. John will talk with CUSF chair Bill Chapin about a joint meeting in January.

Date	Campus	Notes
August 19, 2008	SU	Confirmed, with Leadership Conference afternoon of Monday, August 18, 1-5PM
September 16, 2008	UMBI	Columbus Center
October 21, 2008	FSU	No Frostburg reps at the June or July meetings
November 18, 2008	Bowie	Confirmed
December 16, 2008	USMO	Confirmed
January 20, 2009	Coppin	Possibly joint CUSF meeting
February 24, 2009	UMCP	Larry will ask for Shady Grove
March 25, 2009	UB	Confirmed
April 21, 2009	TU	Confirmed
May 19, 2009	UMBC	Confirmed
June 23, 2009	UMES	Confirmed
July 21, 2009	UMCES	at one of the research labs

Report of the USM-HR Chancellor's Liaison to CUSS

- **Teleworking policy** will be discussed at the August 4th meeting. The policy will be reviewed first by the finance committee and then the full BOR.
- Continuing to work on **403(b) Plan document under IRS regulations.**

- **Medical Plan Coverage Update** - As of July 1, 2008, DBM is pleased to announce that all medical plans will cover the shingles vaccine for employees and retirees age 60 and older (or younger if recommended by their physician).
- MetLife is the new Voluntary Life Insurance vendor effective July 1st, 2008. At no additional cost **Preparation of Wills** is available to all State of Maryland employees and retirees **who participate** in the Voluntary Life Insurance plan. All employees and retirees who are enrolled will be receiving a mailing at their homes shortly. Will Preparation Service covers the participating plan attorney's fees for employees and their spouses for the following services: Telephone and office consultations to discuss the preparation or updating of the employee's and/or spouse's Will; Preparation of the Will(s); Updating of Will(s) and Preparation of codicils
Should you have questions or need assistance, please contact Dee Jackson, MetLife Account Services Manager at 866-733-4182. Marie called and got the number for a legal group and a code number and a local attorney.
- **UNUM website** link through the USM HR page. For employees/spouse/ dependents covered by UNUM Life Insurance, UNUM has help for survivors with estate, will, and funeral arrangements.

John distributed the annual CUSS certificates to all its members.

Nominations: Members at large will be elected during the September meeting.

- Victoria Kelly dropped her nomination.
- Colette nominated Brenda Yarema of TU.
- Sister Maureen's decision on her June nomination is still pending.

Committee Meetings

Committee membership was the same at this last meeting of the year. Next meeting, new members (Linda Parker Ford for example) will volunteer for committee assignments.

Executive Committee

Discussed the Staff Leadership Conference - Monday, August 18, 1-4PM SU – John encouraged all to attend.

John will ask the Chancellor to grant release times to the SU, UMES and UMCES presidents for staff to attend the SU Staff Leadership Conference.

Larry shared with the committee his updates to the handbook. The committee assigned roles and times. Agenda:

1pm	John	Introduction
1:05/1:10	Larry	History of Shared Governance and Universities
1:20/1:30	Rosario	Organization and Structure of USM and recent changes
1:40pm	Larry	The Staff in the Academic World: Changing Roles and Responsibilities
1:50/2:10pm	Joe and Roy	The Council of University System Staff: History and Organization – role in the unionized environment
2:20/2:55pm	Joe, Roy and Larry	The University as a Political System: Accomplishing Goals within the System
3:40pm		Open the floor for questions

Legislation: Roy reported that the committee discussed the legislative process with the new members. Budget is usually the most important matter, along with issues between CUSS and the MOU.

Benefits Compensation did not meet.

Communications – Marie - last report as chair.

- Newsletter changes were offline.
- New members to add to the email list.

Kimberley distributed a CUSS members' contact list to the group for changes and emailed those to Mary Reed.

Community Development – Colette - last report as chair.

As the new chair, Deb will contact the staff senates.

Old Business:

Larry asked if anything is moving forward on enhancing the ORP employee contribution. CUSS was to write to the Chancellor. John added that issue to the letter to the Chancellor.

New Business:

Larry proposed the following resolution: CUSS recommends elimination of the reference to the “**additional merit pay language**” for Nonexempt Staff from the Chancellor’s Salary Guidelines

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(page three, item 3.a. and page four, item 4.) and accompanies purging of the extra merit pay from the USM-BOR policy.

Dave moved and Colette seconded that the proposal draft be discussed at the August meeting. There was one Nay vote.

Joe discussed the issue of **carryover annual time**. Employees can only carry over 400 annual hours. The General Assembly approved the State's Union negotiated MOU for its State represented employees the carryover of 600 hours and signed by the Governor. If USM employee terminates by January 1, only get paid 400 hours. If the employee terminates by December 31, they are paid the earned time. In principle, there is parity to state employees. Larry suggested that this issue be referred to the Benefits Compensation Committee.

Next meeting:

Staff Leadership Conference, Monday, August 18, 1-4pm at SU

CUSS meeting Tuesday, August 19 at SU

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kimberley Lynne, UB, 8/22/08