

Council of University System Staff (CUSS) Meeting - MINUTES

Dec. 14, 2010

University System of Maryland Main Office

Adelphi, MD

In attendance:

Members

Cynthia Coleman	BSU
Absent	CSU
Absent	FSU
Kay Kazinski	TU
Brenda Yarema	TU
Karyn Schulz	UB, CUSS Co-Secretary
Giordana Segneri	UB, CUSS Co-Secretary
Colette Becker	UMB, CUSS Vice Chair
David DeLooze	UMB
Roy Ross	UMB
Lori Smith-Watson	UMBC
Joel DeWyer	UMBC
Jackie Eberts	SU
Absent	UMCES
Chenita Reddick	UMES
Willie Brown	UMCP, CUSS Chair
Sister Maureen Schrimpe	UMCP
Debbie Mathis	UMUC
Melissa Stein	UMUC
VACANT	USMO

Alternates/Guests

Mi'Shaun Stevenson	BSU
Abby Byrnes	CSU
Meredith Levesque	UMUC
Mike Paszkiewicz	UMCP

Chancellor's Liaison to CUSS:

Rosario I. van Daalen	USMO
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- I. Welcome and Introductions
 - Welcome from Rosario van Daalen, Chancellor's Liaison to CUSS. There is no CUSS representative for the University System of Maryland Office (USMO) at present.
 - provided history of USM, Presidents/Chancellors and Main Office

- II. Cynthia Shaw, UMCP Senate Staff Affairs Chair: Optional Retirement Plan (ORP)
 - Staff and Faculty Affairs Committees at UMCP were charged with looking at retirement plans selection process for Faculty and Exempt Staff at UMCP
 - USM is significantly below peer institutions in employer ORP contributions; underfunded in comparison to higher education nationwide
 - approved by UMCP Senate last week to go forward to UMCP President Wallace Loh; if President Loh approves the recommendation, it would then go to Presidents' Council for review and voting (or kick it back to CUSS and CUSF), then on to the Board of Regents

- let Maryland General Assembly know we're serious by requiring employee contribution
- CUSS should review the proposal to determine if changes should be made
- could be advantageous for Institution Staff Councils to endorse and bring to various Presidents
- proposal indicates 12 percent total ORP contribution, including 10 percent Employer contribution and 2 percent Employee contribution
- Jackie Eberts: all groups should give support in advance; Cynthia Shaw: understanding is there is a time issue
- Employee contribution would go into OR- 403(b)
- would have to tie in with the Governor's budget; hope is that it would be included in the FY 12 budget
- Rosario van Daalen: should be presented in anticipation of better times, but realistically, budget will probably preclude inclusion of ORP increase.
 - would go to Board of Regents Finance Committee at Jan. 27 meeting, then to full Board at Feb. 11 meeting, which is already halfway through legislative session—timing is very tight
 - right now, Legislature is looking to cut back on various employee/retiree benefits for health and retirement plans; look at “Public Employees’ and Retirees’ Benefit Sustainability Commission”: <http://mlis.state.md.us/other/BenefitsSustainabilityCommission>; and [Commission Recommendations](#)
- Cynthia Shaw: retirement plan has to be chosen on first day of employment, which is high pressure and confusing
- Rosario van Daalen: if an Employee doesn't choose a plan on the first day of employment, he or she is defaulted into State Pension System; Institutions provide retirement plan information to new hires when offer letter is sent
 - enrollment in ORP is a lifetime decision; enrollment in pension plan until 2007 had option to switch to ORP, but window closed after that
- **ACTION: CUSS and CUSF, as representatives of all USM institutions, can review and tweak or endorse as a plan for better financial times; PUT ON AGENDA FOR JANUARY MEETING**

III. Cindi Hale, founding chair of CUSS (from UMCP)

- the early days of CUSS: legislation that created USM brought together former Board of Trustees and UM Institutions in 1988. In June 1992 BOR mandated that a Systemwide Staff Council be created; representatives were assigned, not elected
- Shared Governance was a new concept
- lots of hostility from various Institutions that Staff was organizing; some members were worried about retaliation (sentiment that "our Staff are lucky to have jobs")
- did all communicating by written letters and phone calls (because no e-mail at the time)
- tremendous amount of support from Don Langenberg, Chancellor at the time
- CUSS has garnered huge support across the System since then
- CUSS constitution and bylaws were written under Cindi Hale's leadership, required buy-in from all Institutions
- USM Pay Program initiated CUSS—long line of testifiers were against rolling COLA into merit increase (June 1992)
- got seat at Chancellor's Council

- had to stand down some of the Institutions that were unwilling to treat Staff according to standard set at other Institutions
- big positive changes in compensation and other benefits for Staff
- developed Contingent policy—had no benefits or security; pressed that they needed to have some measure of protection
- USM has one of lowest ratios of Staff to Faculty in country
- effective Staff needs to be retained; loss of resources in training someone that leaves is a drain on the budget
- any opportunity to help Faculty (especially Faculty) and Students understand and remind them what the USM would be without Staff
- at Towson, there is a Staff representative on the Faculty Council; resolution to make Staff representative a voting member of the Faculty Council (!)
- **ACTION: CUSS will present a plaque of appreciation to Cindi Hale at the January meeting**

IV. Approval of minutes and new member introductions

- Mike Paszkiewicz, UMCP (alternate)
- Meredith Levesque, UMUC (alternate)
- October minutes approved with no changes
- November minutes: remove Paul Flexner; Rosario van Daalen still has to review; approval contingent upon her review by COB tomorrow

V. Chair's Report

- meeting last Tuesday at USM Office (USMO) with several members of IT department and Rosario van Daalen regarding website updates and e-mailing list
- Gynene Sullivan and Colette Becker were given a couple of choices: can use current website template (unexciting) or design an alternate site
- Gynene Sullivan will be responsible for content; Colette Becker will be responsible for design
- will build notification system into Web pages for website updates
- **ACTION: designs will be presented at January meeting**
- leaning toward design like Women's Forum website
- building digital archive of history of CUSS (scanning documents)

VI. Board of Regents meeting: Faculty reiterated support of Staff inclusion in “retention raise”

- USM Strategic Plan: renewed and passed
- on behalf of CUSS, Willie Brown thanked the Board for its support of Staff
- Willie Brown invited Valerie Street, Chair of USM Student Council, to attend any CUSS meeting
- want to continue working with CUSF; haven't heard from Chair since joint meeting
- Karyn Schulz: we need to continue sharing stories with Faculty and seek out opportunities for collaboration
- **ACTION: bring ideas to January meeting for collaborative opportunities**
 - CUSS sends rep to CUSF, and vice versa; could be representative for Institution where meeting is held, so it's easier
- **ACTION: Willie will develop CUSS Standard Operating Procedures and present them at January meeting; encourages committee chairs to do the same**

VII. Chancellor's Liaison Report

- Annapolis hearing: State Employees and Retirees Benefits Sustainability Commission
<http://mlis.state.md.us/other/BenefitsSustainabilityCommission>
 - Commission working on report (due Dec. 15, tomorrow)
 - keep eye on postings
 - there are going to be major changes
 - cost in the billions for health insurance, looking to cut everywhere they can
 - looking at both health and retirement benefits (e.g., change vesting at five years in pension, change pension contribution/calculation formula, change 16-year full health premium)
 - current retirees are under a contract to receive health benefits, but benefits can be tweaked (premiums, level of coverage, etc.)
- work of Compensation Classification Committee: Biennial Market Salary Survey (Nonexempt salary structures); already presented to HR Directors on Dec. 2, then going to Vice Presidents; market has increased by 3 percent; if we had money, this is what we should be doing, but we understand we have no money (probably will remain status quo)
 - if salary structure were to be increased, the only increases provided would be for those employees who fall below minimum of structure, but just doing this would cost more than \$1 million
- as of Jan. 1, IRS no longer permitting over-the-counter purchases with FSA funds; read carefully because some items still apply such as products related to contact lenses
 - remember to keep your receipts, even if you use the FSA debit card; if employees cannot produce receipts, in some cases card has been discontinued

VIII. New Business

- news release: resolution from joint meeting, website with link to Benefits Sustainability Commission, letter to the governor, canned letters (CapWiz); **ACTION: send out right after next meeting, after legislative session starts (second Wednesday of January)**
- **AGENDA ITEM FOR JANUARY: CapWiz**

IX. Governor's letter

- Karyn Schulz: Roy Ross' letter has immediate impact
- Colette Becker: we need to say who CUSS is
- Willie Brown: letter has to come from all of CUSS, signatures of all primary representatives
- letters should be combined and come back with new draft
- language can be stronger: we were *somewhat* dismayed, we ask instead of *we would ask*
- Willie Brown: use wording from CUSF resolution; shows collaboration with CUSF; students also endorsed resolution
- Cynthia Coleman: combine "We understand that you have hard financial decisions, but as you craft legislation and the budget ..."
- Dave DeLooze: keep it short and sweet, get to the point
- Abby Byrnes: Take out first sentence of last paragraph
- Lori Smith-Watson: questions use of word "disastrous"

- Kay Kazinski: don't confuse the issues, keep it to Senate Bill topic
- Rosario Van Daalen: need to use the bill number and the year "2010"
- Chancellor Brit Kirwan: bullet the letter for stronger emphasis on both points
- **ACTION ITEM: present combined letter via e-mail; approve at January meeting**

X. Chancellor: Introductions

- expressed appreciation for time commitment to CUSS—always on top of issues, ready at the right time to give advice on crucial issues
- thanked CUSS for input on USM Strategic Plan
- Voluntary Program to Reduce Costs: Governor's executive order on voluntary separation
 - \$15,000 plus \$200 for each year served, health benefits for two years
 - has spoken with Eloise Foster at DBM: 1,000 hits on website, but only about 10 volunteers, as of one week ago
 - have some flexibility in terms of time to respond to the order, will be speaking with Presidents and then Board of Regents
 - line is captured by the state (not like retirement)--would USM lose the positions?
 - in years past, have had early retirement plans
 - Willie Brown: is it possible to have someone from the USM Office (USMO) come to Jan. 25 meeting to discuss? Chancellor: won't move forward on anything without CUSS input
 - population that would take advantage of this is probably pretty limited
 - Jackie Eberts: surprising that USM exempted from this but furloughs mandated
 - Chancellor: Board of Regents chose to institute furloughs in USM because State required return of \$28 million
 - USM working hard to avoid furloughs, but USM wouldn't be exempted from dollar commitment if it didn't institute furloughs
 - not having furloughs would definitely increase chance of layoffs
- Chancellor says he's been sobered by mood in Annapolis; we now have a \$1.2 billion deficit
 - Governor has said that every agency, including higher ed, is going to have to help (participate) in closing this \$1.2 billion gap
 - no State agency will get more in FY 12 than it had in FY 11
 - there is going to be a shortfall in the USM, but we don't know what it will be
 - definitely raising tuition next year, but we don't know by how much
 - goal is to get as much money as we can from the State, but to get the budget as whole as it can be and not have furloughs
 - Willie Brown: how can CUSS be of assistance? Chancellor: writing the letter is a help
 - in Maryland, it's a two-part system: first you work on the governor, then you work on the Legislature
 - if we don't do furloughs, we have to find money elsewhere (maybe a tuition increase could help); could also result in layoffs because a complication is eliminating filled positions; Legislators may remark "the system has so much money that they don't have to do furloughs" could lead to the impression that

we can stand additional cuts in addition to money given back in lieu of furloughs

- ORP: USM is very much on record about wanting to boost the ORP contribution/benefits with expectation of contribution by Employees; have worked on proposal twice this decade but budget constraints did not permit any changes
 - mood is not how to expand benefits but how to constrain them
 - have tried to stress how inequitable it is and what a strain it is for the USM

XI. Old Business

- goals for discussion of visit to Annapolis:
 - need to keep up momentum on any of these issues
 - once budget is out in January, we'll have a better idea of specific issues (need two or three)
 - Legislative Committee can work through PJ Hogan and Andy Clark for assistance on being introduced in chamber: Roy Ross will contact PJ Hogan, Legislative Committee will support (motion approved to do it)
 - itinerary, logistics, transportation, just a.m. or a.m. and p.m.?
 - can get schedule for committees
 - after Dave DeLooze and Roy Ross discussed with PJ Hogan and Andy Clark:
 1. call PJ Hogan and/or Andy Clark about two weeks before our visit to Annapolis and they will actually get us a sponsor and have the proclamation issued
 2. due to the size of the conference room where Andy Clark and PJ Hogan are located, Roy Ross or Dave DeLooze will talk with Sue Gladhill about using the conference room at 44 West St., which is UMB's Lobby headquarters and they have a larger conference room if it's available
- Karyn Schulz: update on Shared Governance issues at UB (presented at October meeting)
 - students came back with laws and presented to President's Council
 - four chairs (Faculty, Staff, Students, University Council) met with President: President said Shared Governance not a forum to air complaints; instead, it's a forum to discuss ideas to move the Institution forward; looking at revamping Shared Governance, developing information about who the correct contact is for various issues (instead of black hole of communication)

XII. New Business

- Newsletter
- Happy holidays!

NEXT MONTH'S MEETING: Jan. 25, 2011, University of Maryland, University College

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