

**Council of University System Staff  
November 18, 2003  
Bowie State University**

**Members Present**

**Alternate Members**

best health/dental benefits possible. The dental plan has serious problems. There aren't sufficient dentists participating in the plan in many areas. Additionally, CUSS has offered to participate once more with the State's review of the RFPs next spring for the health and dental plans for FY 2005.

There is no Memorandum of Understanding ratified in the System at this time.

USM Policy review is an on-going process.

### **Chair's Report**

- BOR Finance Committee did not meet.
- The full BOR did not meet this month.
- FY 2005 will be a flat year. Any future budget cuts to the USM are at the bottom of the State's list for further cuts.
- On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, our CUSS Chair had a one-on-one with Chancellor Kirwan. The Chair discussed the importance of CUSS and its role within the USM. The Chair stated the meeting was another example of shared governance.
- The CUSS Executive Committee met with the Chancellor Kirwan and Joe Vivona on November 4<sup>th</sup>. Agenda issues discussed were:
  - The economic forecast for the USM is not all doom and gloom. The Governor is proposing a 2.5% merit raise for "meets standards", but we have to wait and see what the General Assembly approves. Joe Hill requested that the salary guidelines for Exempt employees be revisited. A benchmark, (similar to what is done for Nonexempt at 2 ½%) should be established for merit pay. It should be the same across the board for Exempt employees rather than some receive 1 % while others may receive 5%. This issue will be discussed with the Vice Chancellor.
  - The Substance Abuse Policy draft was discussed. The need to move this policy forward was addressed.
  - Many of the Institutions in the System do not have functional Employee Assistance Programs (EAP). CUSS is looking to have all Institutions have in-house resources for employees who may need this program. The Chancellor is planning to take this back to the Presidents' Council.
  - The Chair suggested that tuition remission continue for employees who have longevity with the USM and have been laid off. They had planned for their children's education through the tuition remission policy and have not prepared financially to send their children to college. The Chancellor stated he would look into this further.
  - The Chair suggested we move the Building Excellence through Staff Training (BEST) program forward. Vice Chancellor, Joe Vivona, asked that CUSS review the current draft and resubmit.

### **Committees broke into Work Groups:**

#### **Committee Reports:**

##### **Benefits and Compensation Committee:**

Health and dental benefits are an issue.

This committee is also working on calculating the student/faculty/staff ratios on all the Institutions in the System.

**Community Development Committee:**