

Council of University System Staff (CUSS) Meeting

November 18, 2008

Bowie State University – Bowie, Maryland

In attendance:

Members

Linda Parker Ford BSU
 Cynthia Coleman BSU
 Marie Meehan BSU
 Absent CSU
 Absent FSU
 Jackie Eberts SU
 Carol Barr SU
 Sheila Murray SU
 Brenda Yarema TU
 Absent TU
 Karyn Schulz CUSS Co Secretary, UB
 Absent UB
 David DeLooze UMB CUSS Member at Large
 Roy Ross UMB
 Colette Becker UMB
 Ronald Kasl UMB
 Mary Stapleton UMBI
 Joe Hill UMBC CUSS Member at Large
 Deb Geare UMBC
 Jami Kasco UMBI
 Gus Mercanti UMCES
 Willie Brown UMCP absent
 Larry Lauer CUSS Chair, UMCP
 Absent UMES
 Scott Wibbert UMUC
 Absent UMUC

Alternates

Ronald Kasl UMB

Guest: Kevin Pothier,
Chair, Staff Council, BSU

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 Mickey Burnim, President of Bowie State University who has
 Chancellor at BSU, since his arrival to BSU, just two

years ago. Dr. Burnim shared the strength of shared governance at BSU and how very active its members have been in CUSS over

the years. BSU has four shared governance groups that include Staff Council, Faculty Senate, Undergraduate and Graduate Associations and they all work together via the University Council. Dr. Burnim proudly discussed his vision for BSU to become involved with all constituents of the university's community. A recent fundraiser was held to raise monies for BSU and Dr. Burnim indicated it was a huge success. In his final words, Dr. Burnim informed the members that it was also Cynthia Coleman's birthday and wished her a

Larry shared the list of members sitting on the **Bohanan Commission**. This commission is charged to determining how to create new funding model for higher education. A public meeting was held UMCP on **11/12/08** and while there was no representation from **CUSF**, there was representation from **AAUP** among others. Larry submitted testimony for CUSS that has been distributed to the members. The **Commission** discussed the following items:

- Make law to funding of higher education mandatory
- Equal access to higher education for all Maryland citizens
 - Affordability/accessibility
 - Education community should assist with internal funding support and partnerships with the state
- Stability of funding needs to be mandated
- Autonomy and accountability needs to be considered

The decision document by the Bohanan Commission is located on

There is also a state plan for higher education located on the website. Larry sent the draft of this document to CUSS members and is requesting each to review and submit issues of agreement or disagreement.

The **BOR Staff Awards** were discussed regarding how to enhance them and encourage more institutions to submit applications. The idea of creating a separate awards event is unlikely because of funding. A suggestion to include this during the Chancellor's Holiday party was discussed with support from the members. Other suggestions included putting the picture of the awardees on the website and/or in the Board Room. It was also suggested that the cycle of when someone is nominated and awarded be changed for next year. The timeline from nomination (fall) to when winners are announced (following September) is long and it was suggested to be shortened so the momentum is not lost. Members also agreed that there was no need to include faculty as a part of this process if the faculty did not want to join.

Report of the Chancellor's Liaison to CUSS

- **Rosario van Daalen** received an email from **Brenda Yarema** from **Towson University** indicating that health benefits for retirees may be in jeopardy.

- Rosario reported that there is an unfunded liability for health care in Maryland and a budget deficit of \$16 billion. She reminded the council that a Blue Ribbon Commission was established by the General Assembly to address this matter; USM has a seat at the table; a report is due on December 2010. The legislature is trying to figure out how to control the deficit and it is hoped that, in an ideal world, they won't touch the benefit for those who were "made the promise" of benefit coverage at retirement. There have been no comments, decisions or announcements made yet by the Commission.
- Rosario shared that most institutions have already scheduled a Holiday or institution closing on Friday, January 2, 2009. The calendar setting and decisions are made by each institution according to its business needs. Rosario told members that she sent a brief survey to the HR directors seeking information for their plans for January 2, 2009. Most will be using a holiday (Election Day) to close their institution; others will close, but employees will be required to use annual leave, yet others will be open on the 2nd since their Winter session begins on that day
- Rosario updated the council on the development of the 403(b) plan document according to the IRS requirement, due on January 1, 2009. She shared that the IRS has realized it needed to regulate the 403(b) plans (as it does for other plans) for issues such as assuring the correct amount was being deposited and not exceeding the maximum for the year. If the amount deposited exceeds the maximum per year then the overage would need to be returned to the employee which would affect her/his taxes. Rosario indicated that the employee/ vendor/USM are

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that there are staff concerns for merit pay. **Larry** said he would use the Nonexempt evaluation form during his discussion with the Chancellor as an example of the lack of shared governance.

Committee Meetings

The **Teleworking Policy** is still not formalized and procedures exist individually at each institution. The drafted USM policy is created to provide flexibility for each institution. It is temporarily on hold until the institutions submit their plan to decrease their carbon footprint. There is still a fear from middle management that if employees work from home they will be less productive, with less accountability. It was agreed that more often than not, employees who work from home are more productive due to a decrease in interruptions. **Rosario** shared that the Chancellor has discussed the policy with the presidents; she has also asked HR offices to continue to develop their own procedures. Guidelines are available from some of the USM institutions and also on the State of Maryland policy. **Joe Hill** voiced his concern that a policy does not need to be in place in order to move forward and if institutions want to move towards decreasing their carbon footprint, a teleworking policy would have a positive impact.

: The Executive Committee will review the newsletter and **Colette** will work with **Jami Kasco** to finalize the newsletter. **Larry** will make copies for distribution once the newsletter is complete. **Jami** will check with **Kimberley Lynne** for an updated CUSS membership list. All other updates to the website are to be submitted to the USMO Webmaster.

– did not meet.

Old Business:

The newsletter was discussed and will be finalized and distributed shortly.

New Business:

Larry encouraged as many CUSS members to attend the Chancellor's Holiday Open House being held on Sunday, December 18, 2008 at 1:00 PM in the Chancellor's Office.