



COUNCIL *of* UNIVERSITY SYSTEM FACULTY

Regents Report February 16, 2024

This is a summary report of The Council of University System Faculty (CUSF) activities since our last submission in December 2023. The legislative session is in full swing and CUSF members are keeping up to date on issues that pertain to higher education and faculty. One way in which members are staying informed is through participating in Andy Clark's Joint Councils Weekly Legislative Update Calls on Monday mornings. The council is also preparing for Advocacy Day, which will take place on February 21, 2024.

Since my last report, CUSF and the CUSF Executive Committee have both met. The CUSF General Body Meeting was held on January 23, 2024 at the USM Adelphi Office. In the remainder of the report, I will highlight a few of the initiatives that are happening within our various committees.

CUSF Meetings

CUSF General Body Meeting: January 23, 2024

A CUSF General Body Meeting was held on January 23, 2024. The meeting was held in person (with a virtual option) at the USM Adelphi Office. One highlight of this meeting was having Chancellor Perman join us and share USM updates and answer questions. Dr. Heather Haverback and Dr. Zakiya Lee also gave brief updates.

The Legislative Affairs Committee presented three resolutions (shared in this report) on the topics of Collective Bargaining Faculty, Collective Bargaining Students, and Retiree Drug Benefits. Discussion was held for each resolution. The Collective Bargaining Faculty and Collective Bargaining Students resolutions were voted on at the meeting. The Retiree Drug Benefits resolution was voted on via email at a later date. All resolutions passed.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met on January 3, 2024 and February 7, 2023. At these meetings, we discussed the work being done in committees, as well as current topics of interest to USM faculty. Heather Haverback, Alison Wrynn, and Zakiya Lee shared updates/reports with the committee. The Executive Committee discussed issues and ideas brought forth by faculty, the faculty survey, and advocacy day. The Rules Committee presented an update to the constitution that will be shared with the GB for a first read at our next meeting.

Awards Committee

Chairperson- Dr. Ben Arah, Bowie State University

Recommendations have been received by the board and are making their way through the process.

Education Policy Committee

Chairperson- Dr. Mary Crowley-Farrell, University of Maryland Global Campus

The Education Policy Committee has been busy sending out the second round of reminders for the AI Conference's Call for Presentation Proposals. More specifically, they are currently circulating the Call for Presentation Proposals on all USM campuses. Session proposals are due by 11:59 pm ET on February 12, 2024.

The conference, *Incorporating Generative AI into Learning Experiences: A Virtual Showcase*, will take place via Zoom on Friday, April 26, 2024, from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm ET. The event is being organized by the Kirwan Center, CUSF, MarylandOnline, and Montgomery College. It will focus on how college and university faculty across the state are adapting their assignments and learning activities to meet the challenges of generative AI. The presenters will be selected from two-year, four-year, public, and independent colleges and universities in the state.

Volunteers from the Education Policy Committee and the co-sponsoring organizations will review submissions and selections will be announced by mid-March. The committee is also involved with finding a keynote speaker. The suggestions made before CUSF became involved have now been abandoned in favor of our recommendation to ask Ethan Mollick (as mentioned in a previous report). We have also provided the organizers a new backup choice: James Lang of Cheating Lessons fame. Lang has been doing podcasts and webinars on how to adapt the book's ideas to curriculum design that meets the challenges of AI.

Our other conference work is on-going: updating the annotated AI resources list. Committee members are researching potential resources for this list from the perspective of their disciplines. The next full meeting of the Organizing Committee is March 7, 2024.

Faculty Affairs Committee

Chairperson- Dr. Doris Santamaria-Makang, Frostburg State University

The committee continues to work on the broad topics of Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DEI) and Academic Support Personnel. In the last Faculty Concerns Committee meeting, the committee worked on issues to be explored by their subcommittees. The three subcommittees/groups are Campus Safety, Affirmative Action, and Adjunct Faculty and GAs. Each group has been charged with working on each of three issues previously identified for this committee. More specifically, each group is performing an assessment of policies and practices currently in place on campuses across the system. Each subcommittee would use the information collected to present recommendations to CUSF.

Legislative Affairs Committee

Chairperson- Dr. Holly Brewer, University of Maryland, College Park

The Legislative Affairs Committee wrote and presented the three resolutions mentioned above (Collective Bargaining Faculty, Collective Bargaining Students, and Retiree Drug Benefits), which are shared in this report. The committee has also been working on organizing the 2024 Annapolis Day.

Rules and Membership Committee

Chairpersons- Dr. Jay Zimmerman , Towson University and Dr. Nagaraj Neerchal, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

The committee is working on proposed changes to the CUSF Constitution, which will be an update to USM institution names. This document is under review with the OGC.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Heather Rogers Haverback

CUSF Chair

Resolution A

Reaffirming the CUSF Affirmative Position for Collective Bargaining Rights for University System of Maryland Faculty for this year (2024).

Motion”: To pass the following motion which was passed every year by CUSF between 2010 and 2017. The part in bold is what we would be passing.

Collective Bargaining Motion

"Resolution Reaffirming the CUSF Affirmative Position for Collective Bargaining Rights for University System of Maryland Faculty

Whereas, the Council of University System Faculty (CUSF) serves as the faculty advisory body for the University System of Maryland (USM); and

Whereas, CUSF Council passed 23-3 the following resolution on November 16, 2010 which was and still is the current position of CUSF regarding collective bargaining.

CUSF urges the Chancellor and the Board of Regents to support legislation extending the right to consider the alternative of collective bargaining to USM faculty. This is not an endorsement of collective bargaining. Rather CUSF would like each campus to have the right to consider collective bargaining if it chooses based on its circumstances, as other public sector employees, even on some of our campuses, already have done. (CUSF CB Resolution passed by 23-3 on 11/16/10).

Be It Resolved, that CUSF again reaffirms its existing policy position stated in November 16, 2010 motion.

Submitted by: CUSF Legislative Affairs Committee

Passed on: December 14, 2017"

Submitted by Legislative Affairs Committee, 2023/2024

The link to the 2017 minutes is here.

<https://www.usmd.edu/usm/workgroups/SystemFaculty/meetings/gen20171214.pdf>

Resolution B
CUSF Resolution in Favor of Graduate Student Collective Bargaining
Passed at CUSF General Meeting on February 24, 2023

Motion: Move that we reaffirm our Commitment to this Resolution for this Year (2024)

Whereas the Council of University System Faculty (the Council) consists of faculty representatives elected by the faculties of the constituent institutions of the University System of Maryland (USM) to represent USM faculty; and

Whereas it is the Council's responsibility to consider and make recommendations on matters of System wide professional and educational concern to USM faculty; and

Whereas the Council advises the USM Chancellor and reports regularly to the USM Board of Regents on matters of interest to USM faculty; and

Whereas CUSF members and their constituents are committed to supporting graduate students at USM institutions, who represent the next generation of higher education teachers, researchers, and scholars; and

Whereas support for graduate students at USM universities is an excellent investment in the growth of the Maryland economy because USM graduate students contribute substantially to the next generation of Maryland leaders in education, business, health care, and research; and

Whereas pursuing a graduate education is inherently challenging, and unnecessary additional challenges related to financial support and compensation, health care benefits and working conditions create barriers to recruitment to and completion of graduate programs; and

Whereas CUSF members and their constituents have observed that students pursuing graduate studies at USM institutions face significant challenges relating to working conditions, financial support, compensation, and benefits; and

Whereas CUSF members and their constituents believe that these challenges have a deleterious effect on the education and research mission at USM institutions; and

Whereas USM graduate students have consistently expressed a desire to address these challenges by engaging in collective bargaining; and

Whereas bills proposed in the Maryland General Assembly in each of the last five years that would allow graduate students at USM institutions to engage in collective bargaining have earned consistent, overwhelming support from graduate students and USM faculty and staff; and

Whereas graduate students at many top research universities have formed collective bargaining units in recent years; and

Whereas graduate students are transitory employees with no direct, sustained professional ties to state government; and

Whereas graduate students at USM institutions do not have supervisory or managerial control over their institutions or working conditions; and

Whereas individual graduate students at USM institutions with a collective bargaining unit will have the option not to join or financially support a union;

Be it here resolved that the Council supports the amendment of Maryland law to allow graduate students at USM institutions to engage in collective bargaining.

Submitted by the Legislative Affairs Committee.

Retiree Drug Benefits Resolution (*draft 1/16/2024*)

CUSF is concerned about the impact of the termination of Prescription Drug Benefits for Maryland State Retirees scheduled to occur on January 1, 2025. We recommend extending the current benefit until at least January 2026. This will provide the opportunity to conduct a systematic and thorough evaluation of the financial impact on retirees of the loss of this promised benefit. Moreover, an accurate calculation of the State's annual cost for this supplemental benefit is essential.

CUSF believes that when they retire, all State employees should be provided with the Maryland Prescription Drug Benefit, which functions as a wrap-around plan that supplements a retiree's Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Insurance Plan. This current benefit provides coverage of prescription drugs for retirees that is equivalent to the drug benefit for active employees.

Why?

First, the majority of these retirees are Maryland voters, almost 50,000 senior citizens, and include many of our colleagues. The number of voters is substantially greater when one considers family members, who can be covered under this benefit.

Second, the State promised prescription drug benefit coverage for retirees to all employees hired before July 2011. Employees who devoted their careers in service to Maryland, working the required number of years to earn retirement benefits, deserve to have the State's promised benefits honored. Employees have fulfilled their part of the bargain. The termination of this promised benefit violates the commitment that the State had made to its long-term employees, whether or not the courts consider this a binding contract.

Third, we are concerned the termination of this benefit will compromise the financial stability of many long-term state employees because their out-of-pocket costs will increase substantially.

We have carefully reviewed multiple analyses of this Prescription Drug Benefit, in conversation with retirees. The actuarial calculations done by the State of Maryland appear to be cursory, and overestimate the State's actual cost because they neglect to include a number of essential factors. Various analyses suggest that the annual cost of this wrap-around prescription drug benefit is relatively modest, especially compared to what it would cost the retirees to pay for drugs themselves. It appears that the State has failed to comprehend the true costs for retirees of the loss of this benefit.

These calculations are complex because the impact of the supplemental prescription drug benefit depends upon the coverage of specific prescription drugs on each selected Medicare Part D Insurance Plan. Importantly, in the absence of the wrap-around prescription drug benefit, drugs must be on the formulary of the Medicare Part D plan in which the retiree is enrolled; if a drug is **not** on the formulary and there is no supplemental plan, "the retiree must pay the full cost and this cost **will not** count toward the out-of-pocket cap." Thus, for drugs not on the Medicare Part D plan formulary, the Maryland State wrap around plan becomes even more crucial for retirees.