

Council of University System Staff

Quarterly Newsletter / Spring 2020 / Special COVID19 Edition



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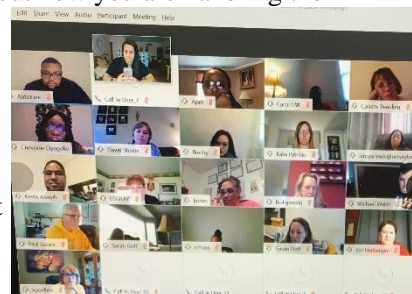
Find us on the web:

Website: <http://bit.ly/1yc1pre>
Facebook: @CussMaryland
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Update from the Chair

As we all navigate a truly unusual and challenging spring semester, I hope that everyone is staying safe and healthy despite the current circumstances. As the Chair of the Council of University System Staff (CUSS), I want to remind all staff at each of our campuses that our Council is here for you if there is any way we are able to help. Please feel free to reach out to me directly on behalf of the Council to share questions, concerns, or challenges you may be experiencing. I would also love to hear from you about how you are handling the transition to remote work, particularly success stories.

I am happy to report that despite all that we are facing right now, the Council has been able to mostly resume business as usual by moving our monthly meetings to a virtual environment and continuing to work on action items in each of our standing committees. I want to share a few updates from the last couple of months:



Board of Regents Staff Awards Update

Upon review of the 28 nominations for this cycle of the Board of Regents Staff Awards nomination process, I am happy to report that we have submitted our recommendations for 9 staff members to receive Board of Regent Staff Awards. This report will be reviewed by the Board of Regents in June, and we look forward to sharing results after the next step in the process. I would like to formally thank our Board of Regents Staff Awards & Recognition Committee Chair, Teri Herberger, from Salisbury University, and the entire committee plus reviewers from the Council for all of their hard work and dedication to the review process.

Annual Shared Governance Survey

We are happy to share that the results of our third annual Shared Governance Survey have been compiled and distributed. We received 126 responses, including responses from representatives at all 12 institutions. A full report of the findings was shared with Chancellor Perman last month, and individual reports from each campus were shared with the President of each institution as well as with Chancellor Perman. We were able to present a broad overview of these findings to the Board of Regents during their May meeting earlier this month. If you are involved in staff senate at your institution and your staff senate would like access to these results, please let us know.

USM Return to Campus Advisory Group

USM Chancellor Perman recently announced the formation of the USM Return to Campus Advisory Group to start to develop a comprehensive proposal for the return of students, staff, and faculty to each of our institutions looking towards the fall semester. The Chancellor has asked leaders for each of the USM shared governance groups to participate in this group and as the Chair of CUSS, I look forward to representing staff in this work. Additional information about this initiative can be found at usmd.edu/newsroom/news/2020.

As always, I want to thank all of the members of our Council for all of their hard work, especially during these difficult times! Please reach out to the Council Representatives and Alternates at each of your campuses or reach out to me directly on behalf of our Executive Committee if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Dr. Laila M. Shishineh
Council of University System Staff

CUSS COVID19 COMMENTS:

A brief [questionnaire](#) was sent to all the CUSS representatives to provide an opportunity to share some challenges and inspirations they discovered during this COVID19 quarantine. Feel free to submit responses to the questionnaire noting that it is open for public viewing. We appreciate receiving the following responses that made it in time for this newsletter:

Paul Gasior, SU: **Challenge:** It can be hard to turn work off. The first week, when everything was chaotic, I found myself on e-mail for hours on the weekend. Thankfully, my Dean told all of the Seidel School of Education employees to remember to stop working and enjoy our families. **Inspiration:** Our Ocean City community has really stepped up to try and help folks who need someone to shop for them, to run errands or to just lend an ear.

Elizabeth Hinson, UMCP: **Challenge:** I have a good friend whose husband was sick in March and so she drove him to the ER when he started experiencing breathing problems. What she hadn't realized was that when he was checked in, they would send her home. He was in the ICU and on a ventilator for almost a week and she couldn't be with him through any of that. He is now home and recovering and she is grateful but still traumatized at being separated during that terrifying week. **Inspiration:** I have four college kids back at home and although it has been a stretch for each of us to find our rhythm and space during the quarantine, it has also been interesting to do this together. With six adults in a small townhouse, we have had to carve out schedules, patterns, and ways to work with and around each other in a whole new way. Sometimes it feels like advanced choreography. But it also has given us a reason to be thankful and remember what makes us family.

Casey Jackson, UMB: **Challenge:** The biggest challenge I have experienced during telecommuting is managing to work while caring for my 15 month old son. I set him up in a highchair next to me during videoconference meetings and often had to cut the meetings short because people don't want to hear a baby screaming while trying to work. It's been comical and challenging at the same time. **Inspiration:** The most inspiring thing I have discovered during the stay at home order/telecommute period is that I really do not have to commute in order to do my job. I am very efficient in my role while working from home. I hope policies become more open-minded regarding teleworking after all of this is over.



USM INSTITUTIONAL UPDATES

Bowie State University

The U.S. Department of Education selected Bowie State University as a Second Chance Pell Experiment site to help expand postsecondary educational access for incarcerated students, reducing the likelihood that they would return to prison once released. Maryland's first historically black college or university (HBCU), Bowie State University is one of 67 colleges or universities invited to participate in the program's expansion. Originally created in 2015, the Second Chance Pell Experiment enables individuals incarcerated in federal and state prisons to use need-based Federal Pell Grants at 130 schools in 42 states and the District of Columbia. Out of the 67 new institutions, one-third are minority-serving institutions. More than 4,000 credentials—including post-secondary certificates, associate degrees, and bachelor's degrees—have been awarded to Second Chance Pell students over the past three years, according to the Vera Institute of Justice. Incarcerated people who participate in educational programs are 43 percent less likely

to return to prison than those who do not, according to the Rand Corporation. "Bowie State is making sure that we invest in our communities and in the future, giving hope to the hopeless," said Dr. Adams. "This is an opportunity to turn people into productive citizens and to allow them to accomplish their dreams and mission. I truly believe we're talking about generational change."

Coppin State University

One of the main goals for this year has been to build our enrollment. We have worked to ensure that the decisions made are focused on improving enrollment and retaining students. As a result, our admissions and registration numbers are up, in spite of the challenges imposed by the pandemic, and all recruitment, admission, and registration activities being moved online. The number of students registered for Fall 2020 is significantly more than the number of students who registered by the same time, last year. New student registrations are also above last year's numbers. Congrats to

our Enrollment Management Division and everyone who plays a part in gaining and retaining students! We were also very pleased to see that the university has been ranked number 17 in the country for Best Value by College Consensus, and the 4th best HBCU. Interim President Dr. Mickey L. Burnim's tenure is slated to end on May 26, 2020. Dr. Burnim assumed the position of Interim President with the intention of staying with the University for just six months and providing stability through transition, but ended up staying for a year. We would like to sincerely thank Dr. Burnim for his leadership and sharing his tremendous breadth of knowledge as a President with the University and for fully committing to being a leader.

Frostburg State University

Staff were recognized as Caring Bobcats. Sewing masks were Missy Martz, graphic artist & social media, sewing over 265 for hospitals, nursing homes, truckers, stores, a hospice, and the immuno-compromised; Lee Ann Nightingale, Benefits & Wellness, sewing over 150 for her

husband's co-workers, dispatchers, University Police and C3I detectives; Joel Hoover, CES production services, sewing over 200 and making 40 face shields for medical staff, PAWS Pantry and businesses; Danielle Dabrowski, Veterans Services, with FSU's Student Veterans of America sewing over 670 for campus, veterans and families, nursing and assisted living centers, hospices, human service agencies, and discharged hospital patients; and Tammy Ringler, administrative assistant II, Residence Life, sewing hundreds for businesses, Residence Life staff and military in Colorado and New Jersey. Tammy also dressed up to deliver an Easter cake to a special needs child. Rita Thomas, Instructional Design & Tech, supported the transition to online instruction. Patrick O'Brien and Ashley Daniels, Civic Engagement, kept PAWS food pantry open and safe.



Salisbury University

SU's staff in ID&D was instrumental in helping faculty adjust to delivering content in a remote format. SU quickly transitioned to telework to allow as many staff as possible to work from the safety of their homes. SU's Cashier's Office issued credits to student accounts for nearly 54% of their housing costs. Meal plans, parking permits and certain mandatory fees also had similar refunds. SU was lauded for the speed at which 95% of its credits and refunds were processed. Students were the first in the USM to see refunds. The Housing & Res Life Office scheduled only a few students at a time to vacate their dorms. With the help of some staff volunteers, 90% of dorm rooms in 10 residence halls were cleared out in just 3 weeks. Sea Gulls collected, constructed and donated PPE for Peninsula Regional Medical Center (PRMC) including 20 acrylic intubation cubes to protect health care workers. PRMC & SU collaborated to help patients ready for discharge but requiring isolation with dorm space for up to 100 COVID-19 patients to complete their recovery. Read more at SU COVID-19.

Towson University

TU's Department of Nursing loaned or donated 19 hospital beds, 18 hospital bed tables and dozens of other pieces of equipment including meters, regulators and thermometers to the Greater Baltimore Medical Center (GBMC) to assist with the creation of a COVID-19 surge unit. Additionally, faculty, students and staff from in the Department of Occupational Therapy & Occupational Science have been sewing facemasks to donate to local hospitals that take on TU students for fieldwork. Read more at [Towson.edu/news/2020/nursing-or-donation-covid.html](https://www.towson.edu/news/2020/nursing-or-donation-covid.html)



TU Donations Help Local Emergency Preparedness

Tyrin Tyson '18, and Baltimore native, never expected that his first travel assignment would be in the epicenter of one of the largest pandemics in American history. Tyson says, "It's kind of like a warzone". Read more and view his video experience at [Towson.edu/news/2020/tyrin-tyson.html](https://www.towson.edu/news/2020/tyrin-tyson.html)



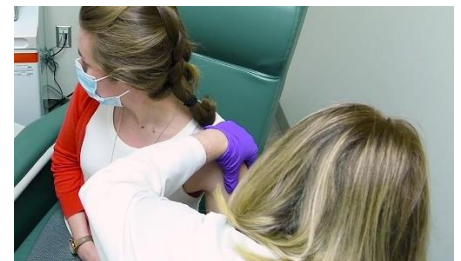
TU Nursing Alumnus Shares His Experience as a Travel Nurse in New York City during COVID-19

University of Baltimore

University of Baltimore President Kurt L. Schmoke represented the city's institutions of higher learning in a recent public service announcement encouraging Baltimore-area voters to participate in the April 28 special

election to replace the late Congressman Elijah Cummings by voting by mail. The resulting ["Baltimore Votes By Mail"](#) video and radio spot was aired last month on more than a dozen media outlets in the greater metropolitan area. The video, which consisted of individual clips shot remotely in the homes or offices of each participant, strongly encourages area voters to fill out their ballots and send it through the mail. President Schmoke was featured in the PSA alongside Maryland House of Delegates Speaker Adrienne Jones and former Maryland Lieutenant Gov. Michael Steele. The vote-by-mail effort was prompted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to a sharp curtailing of nearly all public activities, including in-person voting. Election officials invited voters to send their ballots via mail. It is expected that forthcoming elections will be handled in a similar fashion. Schmoke, the former mayor of Baltimore, joins his colleagues in reminding voters that they can meet their civic responsibilities while remaining safe at home. "We're all in this together," he says.

University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB)



In a significant development in the global effort to discover a safe and effective vaccine for COVID-19, researchers at the University of Maryland School of Medicine (UMSOM) became the first in the U.S. to begin testing experimental COVID-19 vaccine candidates developed by Pfizer and BioNTech. The research, funded by Pfizer Inc., will study the safety, efficacy, and dosing of an experimental mRNA -based vaccine. At present, there are no licensed vaccines or therapies for COVID-19, a serious respiratory disease detected in December 2019 in the Wuhan, Hubei Province, in China that has now spread across the globe as a pandemic resulting in some 70,000 deaths in the U.S. alone. The vaccine research is being conducted in the UMSOM Center for Vaccine Development and Global Health (CVD), and it is part of a multicenter study in the U.S. and in Germany that will include up to 360 participants in this initial stage. In Baltimore, the clinical trial includes up to 90 healthy adult participants, between 18 and 85 years of age. [For full story:](https://www.medschool.umaryland.edu/news/2020/UM-School-of-Medicine-is-First-in-US-to-Test-Unique-RNA-Vaccine-Candidate-for-COVID-19.html) <https://www.medschool.umaryland.edu/news/2020/UM-School-of-Medicine-is-First-in-US-to-Test-Unique-RNA-Vaccine-Candidate-for-COVID-19.html>

**University of Maryland,
Baltimore County (UMBC)**

UMBC conducted a virtual Town Hall on April 1st, bringing the full campus together to share information related to COVID-19. Updates were provided by the President, Provost, several Vice-Presidents, and Shared Governance leaders. In April, the Professional Staff Senate (PSS) and Non-Exempt Staff Senates held virtual meetings and are currently holding elections to fill Senate and CUSS positions for the 2020-21 year. On April 17th & May 8th, UMBC held virtual Town Hall Research and Creative Achievements under COVID-19 presentations with discussions centered on current research maintenance, operations, and funding during the pandemic. UMBC held its 24th annual Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement (URCAD) online during the week of April 22-29. The event was expanded from one day to an entire week this year to accommodate online access, presentation, and discussion. UMBC will also offer an online Class of 2020 celebration on May 20th for graduate students and May 21st for undergraduate students in lieu of in-person commencement exercises. Hosted by President Hrabowski and campus leaders, these events will include speaker remarks, campus photos, and individual slides recognizing each graduate UMBC's website for all COVID-19 information is <https://covid19.umbc.edu/>

**University of Maryland Center for
Environmental Science (UMCES)**



UMCES is conducting virtual meetings with President Goodwin and leadership on an as-needed basis for all-hands updates and sector discussions with faculty, staff, and students about the issues most important to employees during the transition to a new way of operating. Our director for Graduate Certificate Programs and Extended Learning is hosting weekly virtual meetings for the UMCES community to offer helpful ways of thinking and engaging in everyday life. Some labs are participating in

weekly virtual seminar series, enabling all the labs to join together in virtual learning and an opportunity for continued communication. UMCES graduate students (pictured) continue to study together via Zoom, even while we are unable to meet in person.

**University of Maryland
College Park (UMCP)**

These are extraordinary times. Our world has changed. Yet the University of Maryland continues to advance in carrying out its mission of education, research, innovation and service to our state and the world. Terps are separated by distance, but connected in spirit. By supporting each other, we will emerge from this pandemic with strength, pride and #ShellsUnited. The COVID-19 pandemic and stay-at-home orders that followed have dumped our domestic, academic and work lives together into a blender during this time of crisis, pureeing everything into a smoothie of stress and anxiety. A variety of resources from the University of Maryland are available to make these challenges easier to swallow. From online fitness instruction to virtual workshops on managing stress, students, faculty and staff can help stay emotionally and physically healthy during this period. Now that the state and USM have provided the green light to begin planning for reopening, the university leadership team is making plans for a safe and gradual process for the resumption of in-person operations. There will not be a single date for the full reopening of the physical campus. Like the statewide plan, our transition will be guided by public health expertise. UMD's framework for planning the reopening is informed by four principles: 1) Prioritize the health and safety of every member of our campus community; 2) Protect and support the educational and research missions to maintain academic excellence ; 3) Make decisions grounded in our values of equity and inclusion; 4) Provide timely and transparent communication and obtain input from internal and external stakeholders about the proposed reopening plans.

**University of Maryland
Eastern Shore (UMES)**

President Heidi M. Anderson announced during spring break that UMES would join other University System of Maryland institutions by foregoing in-person classes for the remainder of the spring semester. Students living on campus were asked to return at a scheduled time to retrieve belongings. The university set March 30 as the date classes would resume online to fill

the breach. The decision is following a recommendation from Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan, who took a series of steps aimed at slowing the spread of the coronavirus that included activation of the state National Guard and mandatory telework for nonessential state employees. All regularly scheduled social and academic events were cancelled, including the honors convocation in April, campus tours and spring commencement. Assisting with COVID-19 needs: 1) The School of Pharmacy is collaborating with two departments (Engineering & Aviation Sciences and Technology) in the School of Business and Technology who are printing headbands for face shields using 3D printers. They have partnered with a manufacturer who is supplying the clear visor for the face covering. They currently have orders for four hospitals (Staten Island, NJ, Long Island, NJ, Central NJ, and Egg Harbor Township, NJ) and one nursing home in Central NJ with a total of 185 pieces. 2) The Department of Human Ecology in the School of Agriculture and Natural Sciences is also gearing up to produce fabric face masks for the local community. Special thanks to those in our community, including our alumni, who have stepped up and given to our Hawks In Need Emergency Fund. Distance learning has created some special challenges for some of our students. Every dollar donated will go to a student in need.

**University of Maryland
Global Campus (UMGC)**

The global spread of coronavirus disease and guidance from health officials to avoid groups and gatherings have disrupted routines on many college campuses and driven a shift to “online” classes. Fortunately, this new environment is not as unfamiliar as it might have been for many faculty members and students only five years ago. Institutions like University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC)—the largest public university in Maryland—have been teaching online for decades and are now being called on to assist other schools’ transition to an instructional modality that has evolved dramatically since the Internet spawned the virtual classroom in the mid-1990s. Advancements in education technology and the sophistication of learning management systems encourage and support dynamic collaboration and interaction with instructors and fellow students alike. UMGC has been able to partner with several USM institutions to add courses for students who were graduating in May.



2019 - 2020 CUSS REPRESENTATIVES

Bowie State University (BSU)

Trenita Johnson
Trish Johnson
LaVel Jones

Coppin State University (CSU)

Sheila Chase
Anthony Littlejohn
Yvonne Oliver

Frostburg State University (FSU)

Amy Nightengale
Lacey Shillingburg
Rubin Stevenson
Sara Wilhelm

Salisbury University (SU)

Vanessa Collins
Paul Gasior
Lisa Gray
Teri Herberger

Towson University (TU)

Ashley Arnold
LaVern Chapman
Mary Cowles
Deniz Erman
Carol Green-Willis

University of Baltimore (UB)

Keiver Jordan
Suzanne Tabor

University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB)

Ayamba Ayuk-Brown
Colette Beaulieu
Susan Holt
Casey Jackson
LaToya Lewis
Jenn Volberding

University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC)

Sheryl Gibbs
Kevin Joseph
Thomas Penniston
Laila Shishineh, Chair
Dawn Stoute
Michael Walsh

University of Maryland, Center for Environmental Sciences (UMCES)

Julia Bliss
April Lewis
Michelle Prentice
Lori Stepp

University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP)

Darrell Claiborne
Sarah Goff
Elizabeth Hinson
Kalia Patricio
Sister Maureen Schrimpe

University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES)

Chenita Reddick

University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC)

Melanie Barner
Antoinne Beidleman
Francesca Kerby
Chantelle Smith

University System of Maryland Office (USMO)

Chevonie Oyegoke

For a full listing of all minutes regarding the USM Council of University System Staff (CUSS), institution photographs, and other pertinent information, visit <http://www.usmd.edu/usm/workgroups/SystemStaff/>.

The Council of University System Staff (CUSS) was established in 1992 by request of the Board of Regents to advise on matters relating to the development and maintenance of a new USM Pay Program for Staff employees. CUSS is comprised of System-wide Staff employees with representatives from each of its 12 institutions and the System office.

