



## Salisbury University – Staff Senate

Thursday, January 14, 2020

Zoom

**Members In attendance:** Joe Benyish, Steve Blankenship, Donna Carey, Vanessa Collins, Lisa Gray, Sara Heim, Matt Hill, Tabitha Pilchard, Belinda Poole, Safaa Said, and Jessica Scott

**Members Absent:** Paul Gasior & Amy Waters

**Executive Staff:** President Wight & Dr. Janet Wormack

Chair, Tabitha Pilchard, opened the meeting at 10:00 am

### I. Reports

#### a. President Wight

- i. I deeply appreciate the hard work and dedication that everyone has displayed. We've been remarkably successful and the reason has been the faculty, staff, and students complying with the requirements. As a result, the positivity rate has remained around 1% while the state continues to increase.
- ii. Spring semester starts Jan. 25<sup>th</sup> with a mix of in person and hybrid. Occupancy will be about the same as fall semester. Hoping to maintain the 1% rate. We've already shown that we can do this.
- iii. Vaccine is on the horizon. The state is starting to go in to phase 1B, which includes people who live in congregate living facilities – we're trying very hard to get students included in that group. SU has been asked to prepare new lists of employees who are essential to the operation of the institution – those on campus who we can't do without them in person. We're anticipating, at some point, that we'll be approached to send people over to become vaccinated.
- iv. USM has strongly asked us to modify our testing process to move away from PCR test and more toward a rapid antigen test called Abbot. It's a good test – very sensitive, some incidents of false-positive almost no incidents of false-negative. So, we feel confident about the test. The delivery of these tests has been slow. We should be getting the first batch of 10,000 here soon. There is a barcode on each test, individuals will have a barcode to scan on their phone through an app and then the test kit will be scanned linking the two. In order for SU to administer the test, we need a certain certification. For staff and faculty, we will be relying on the PCR – the test we've been doing but will increase the frequency to twice monthly. Students will be asked to test twice weekly. The new virus strain that has developed means we need to test more often.
- v. There is a new executive order on state travel from the Governor, you need to test 72 hours before you return to MD and test when you return or quarantine for 10 days. We offer testing of course, so if you know of someone at SU who has left the area please encourage them to get tested.
- vi. We don't know if people who have been vaccinated can spread the disease, so even if someone is vaccinated they will still be required to mask wear.
- vii. The county is very pleased with what we've been doing. We've been in collaboration to develop the plan for the spring semester and have approval from the county.
- viii. The USM system is rolling out a PR campaign to encourage people to get vaccinated. I'm cautiously optimistic that the vaccination rate will accelerate through the spring. I think we'll have good availability of the vaccine in March and April. I'm afraid that a significant part of our community, the wider Eastern Shore community will decline to be vaccinated. A lot of untrue statements are floating around.
- ix. Regional health care information system, if large numbers give permission for SU to give access, we'll have email soon.

- x. A senator asked: Any movement from the state requiring the immunization? The State's Attorney has been consistent in saying no. SU requires other vaccinations, there is a state law in place that allows us to do so, but the law does not cover the COVID vaccine.

b. Dr. Janet Wormack

- i. Gave introduction of her background and expressed support for shared governance and her support on making sure voices are heard.
- ii. Inclement weather email will be sent out by Kevin Vedder, its proactive and supportive of teleworking.
- iii. Budget – We're holding steady, we budgeted 182 million and we're coming in at 176 million. We'll have to manage and do some cost containment. When Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> comes we'll look very closely at student enrollment numbers and we'll be able to give more concrete numbers at the next meeting.
- iv. Fall 2021 is being monitored very closely, we are down in terms of applicants for the fall.
- v. Waiting for the Governor to issue his budget.
- vi. Overall, we're feeling optimistic.

c. CUSS Updates

- i. Hasn't met since the last meeting; no new updates

d. Standing Committees – Updates

- i. Human Resources – Trying to get a meeting in before the semester starts
- ii. Communications/Snack & Chat Sessions –
  - 1. Discussed potential topics for the spring:
    - a. COVID town hall session will try for the first week of February
    - b. Budget update session for March
    - c. Disability Awareness and Sensitivity training
    - d. IT sessions
    - e. PACE - staff engagement and civic engagement with the community
- e. Branding Exercise- No updates, next meeting is on the 29<sup>th</sup>

II. New Business:

- a. Staff Senate Suggestion Box – N/A
- b. Cultural Diversity & Inclusion Committee – Need to refill the two vacant positions. Joe Benyish volunteered. An email will go out to all staff senate to ask for volunteers.

I. Approval of the December Meeting Minutes

- a. Motion to approve: Joe Benyish
- b. Motion to Second: Matt Hill

III. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned: 11:40 pm

Next Meeting – February 11, Zoom

Respectfully submitted,  
Sara Heim