



Thursday, December 12, 2024  
GAC 401

## STAFF SENATE

### Minutes

Attending: Joe Benyish, Steven Blankenship, Tabitha Pilchard, JJ Remo, Donna Knopf, Bella Chow, Megan Raymond, Frank Bowen, Dave Gutoskey, Lisa Gray, Keaton Burke, Shannon James, Tony Sampson, Kelly Cowger,

Guests: Carolyn Lepre, Aurora Edenhart-Pepe, Allen Koehler, Lynn Adkins, Nancy Foster

- I. Call to Order - 10:03am
- II. Approval of November Meeting Minutes - Motioned JJ, Second Tabitha
- III. Staff Senate Reports
  - a. Staff Senate Chair – Joe
    - i. Consortium Committee Update – Faculty Senate insisting on keeping committees despite not meeting/functioning. Staff Senate will provide a representative to attend if/when any of these committees ever meet.
    - ii. Fall Break – Discussions ongoing with administration
    - iii. Holiday Break Schedule – Shared feedback about calendar year 25 holiday schedule and Labor Day concerns with late semester start. Need clarification around the 60-day annual carry-over.
    - iv. Middle States – Full site visit March 2<sup>nd</sup> thru 5<sup>th</sup> meeting schedule coming soon.
    - v. HR AVP Interviews – Please attend if possible
    - vi. UARA/Staff Senate joint survey sent out to collect data both for Carnegie classification and staff professional development. Board of Regents award winners suggested to be contacted.
  - b. CUSS Update
    - i. Budget update from Ellen, MD blueprint for education and medicaid driving most budget concerns and overruns affecting allocation to USM. FY26 anticipating a cut in operating budget year over year going forward to USM of ~5%. State has not funded the Cola/Merit raises to USM yet.
    - ii. Four new policies passed at BoR all active now:
      1. 60 Day carry-over of annual leave
        - a. <https://www.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws/SectionVII/VII-7.00.pdf>
      2. 2 Additional Holidays (16 days per year or 17 in general election year), 4 Personal in Leap Year
        - a. <https://www.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws/SectionVII/VII-7.30.pdf>
        - b. <https://www.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws/SectionVII/VII-7.10.pdf>
      3. Bereavement Policy – 60 days for loss of child <3 years, 30 days if 26 years old or younger
        - a. [https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2024RS/Chapters\\_noln/CH\\_420\\_sb0109e.pdf](https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2024RS/Chapters_noln/CH_420_sb0109e.pdf)
      4. Leave Donation Program guidance provided, each institution is allowed to create their own.
        - a. <https://www.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws/SectionVII/VII-7.45.pdf>
    - iii. Supplemental Retirement form is now available online
- IV. Old Business
  - a. Staff Senate Outreach Plan – Joe/Candace

- i. Talking Points meeting with each document shared, plan initial contact of your respective areas starting in January.
    - ii. Need to be clear when meeting with areas that we are NOT allowed to meet with employees covered by collective bargaining.
  - b. Snack & Chats – Tabitha/Candace
    - i. Scheduling AI Snack for Spring
  - c. Staff Senate Newsletter
- V. New Business
  - a. Staff Senate By-Laws – Steve
    - i. Will Draft two options to vote on in February Meeting, Steve, Lisa, Kelly, Donna will meet
  - b. Carnegie Classification – Kelly
    - i. Covered when discussing the UARA/Senate survey
  - c. Employee of the Month – Dave
    - i. Archaic process now with long lead times between nomination and award leading to disconnect
    - ii. EOM should be extraordinary effort not just doing your job well. Going above & beyond job
    - iii. EOM selection criteria and process is opaque and not understood by campus
    - iv. Asking for a review and options to modernize and improve employee recognition program
    - v. Lack of feedback when a nomination is not selected discourages participation due to lack of definition of scoring rubric/criteria for selection
    - vi. Recommend spending the remainder of this fiscal year working with Aurora & HR to improve recognition programs for the upcoming fiscal year.
- VI. Staff Concerns & Staff Senate Suggestion Box
  - a. Only received questions regarding the Annual leave carryover change, sent to HR
- VII. 10:40am – Presentations
  - a. Enrollment Update – Allen Koehler
    - i. Now includes graduate and marketing
    - ii. Anticipate flat enrollment compared to spring 24 for undergrad, up 22 grad compared to last year
    - iii. Overall enrollment is up 5.9% FTE
    - iv. Applications are up for Fall with good early indicators of deposits
    - v. Goal is 1600 first year, 520 transfer students for Fall25. No change in academic standards.
  - b. Budget Update – Lynn Adkins & Aurora Edenhart-Pepe
    - i. Need January's numbers before we can do a good prediction of revenue.
    - ii. DBM released working funds last fiscal year in June that were needed to cover operational cost for the prior 11 months. Left us in terrible position to get PO's cut in less than 30 days right before workday cutover.
    - iii. Hiring Freeze has generated 2m in savings. 1072 Pins allocated between the VPs. Will re-evaluate lifting freeze in late January.
- VIII. 11am - Special Guests
  - a. President's Office Report
    - i. Performing Arts Center – Moving forward without hitting any obstacles so far, next big step is to go before the MD Board of Public Works for approval to move forward. Received approval from BoR to move forward already. Summer 2025 hope to complete transfer to Wicomico County.
    - ii. Approximately 12 million has already been raised in philanthropy toward this project as well as a grant proposal for another 2 million. Goal is to raise 20 million toward this project which greatly increases the likelihood of the state funding the program.

- iii. Maggs-CHHS – multiple building      Project estimated 250 million, combines renovations. Continuing to advocate to get state funding. Hoping to begin in 2027 after Blackwell completes Fall26.
- iv. Campus Incident updates – continuing to monitor closely, some charges have been changed/reduced by MD District Attorney's office. As a campus community we won't lose sight of goal to make everyone here feel safe and included. Zebediah has formed a task force that will continue to move university forward. Facilitating safe spaces on campus for students/faculty/staff, his office will take over the Safe Spaces training. Task force is formed with a diverse group representing people from various backgrounds all over campus.
- v. Strategic Planning underway starting in January. Lots of opportunities for campus participation this Spring.
- vi. Centennial Update – Centennial branding mark being finalized to be released in February as well as Centennial Website. Fun Day in the Nest on Sept 7<sup>th</sup> which is founders day with Gala night before. Historical exhibits, keepsake coffee table book of history, banners will be updated on lightposts, social room renovations in HH, community parade, alumni events, speaker series, etc.
- vii. Legislative Priorities – met with Eastern Shore representatives to discuss capital project initiatives. Put in proposal for 1.75million to support small business and entrepreneur development to minority and veteran owned businesses. Seeking funding to support center for healthy communities and create more initiatives for rural health care partnering with Tidal Health.
- viii. Commencement Update – Maggs most likely location for spring grad student ceremony.
- b. Staff Senate Liaison Report – Aurora Edenhart-Pepe
  - i. Covered under Budget & HR sections
- c. Human Resources Report
  - i. Onboarding & Management Training update – programs being tweaked and will launch in Feb
    - 1. Orientation training will happen first, manager training will require more time with Mike's departure.
    - 2. Manager training needs much more development before it will be ready but is being worked on.
  - ii. Telework Policy – still moving forward in final review stages, exception process and union review
  - iii. Workday Action Initiator training will be rolling out in Spring.
- IX. Other Topics
- X. Adjournment 12:24

