University of Baltimore Staff Senate  
Accomplishments and Challenges, 2013-14  
as compiled at the UBSS annual retreat, June 12, 2014

Accomplishments by Month

June 2013
- **held first annual retreat**, which invited all incoming and outgoing Senators and committee representatives to reflect on the past year’s accomplishments and challenges, to develop an action plan for the coming year and to finalize the Senate Meeting and Communication procedures; products included a document that outlined the year’s accomplishments/challenges, an official written action plan for the coming year and a Meeting and Communication Procedures document, all of which were shared with the entire Senate membership and with the Senate’s ex officio members.

August 2013
- **conducted the UB Staff Senate priorities survey** (also a product of the retreat), which went to 326 members; 118 members accessed the survey (a 36 percent cooperation rate) and 100 members completed the survey (a 31 percent completion rate)
  - The indicated No. 1 priority for the Senate, based on responses, was “Lend a voice to whether UB has enough staff for previous/current/future enrollment growth and to support ongoing faculty growth.”
  - The No. 2 priority was “Support flexible work schedules as a means of staff retention.”
- **solicited nominations for staff University committee representatives**; we received enough nominations to ensure election of one representative (two-year term) for each committee and to make available four alternate slots.

September 2013
- **developed action plan items for each University committee** and forwarded them, as requested, to the GSC for distribution to the committees.
- **implemented monthly committee reports** (bulleted progress reports solicited from committee representatives), shared with the agenda for each monthly meeting.

October 2013
- **regular meeting guests indicate that the Senate has become the go-to entity for addressing/communicating with staff**; this month’s guests: Mary Maher and Sally Reed on forthcoming COLA/merit increases and proposed exempt salary study.
- **met with Chancellor Brit Kirwan to discuss the characteristics the Staff Senate would like to see in the new president**; prepared a one-pager for the chancellor outlining presidential qualities related to: commitment to staff hiring/development and shared governance; commitment to preferred workplace; commitment to academic excellence; leadership qualities and characteristics.
- Senator Sasha Hudson asked to serve on presidential search committee as UB Staff Senate representative
- held special session of Senate (open to all members) to solicit feedback and compile a unified Senate response to the draft UB strategic plan; submitted a memo outlining goal-by-goal feedback to Peter Toran and the strategic planning committee, Oct. 13

November 2013
- meeting guest: Sean Carton on UB’s digital initiative
- jointly hosted a strategic plan town hall with the University Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association; Governance Steering Council members, including the Staff Senate chair and vice chair, served as panelists, Nov. 7
- amended the UB Staff Senate bylaws (ratified Nov. 22) to:
  o provide structure for electing a CUSS alternate
  o outline the alternate’s responsibilities
  o provide a first-year implementation structure for the alternate
  o adjust the term limit for regular CUSS representatives and provide a first-year implementation structure to allow for staggered terms
- passed two resolutions:
  o Resolution #1
    Whereas staff recognition is an issue concerning members of the UBSS and whereas the University president announces UB Staff Awards during convocation, the UBSS hereby resolves to request that the University president mention the reason or accomplishments for which a staff member is receiving the award in addition to the name of the award, and that such awards be celebrated commensurate with faculty award recognitions.
  o Resolution #2
    Whereas the University of Baltimore Staff Senate Bylaws state that an ad hoc committee may be authorized by a vote of the senate and whereas staff recognition is an issue concerning members of the UBSS, the UBSS hereby resolves to establish a Committee on Staff Recognition, to be established and staffed under Article X.8 of the UBSS Bylaws.
- provided coverage for a UB Staff Senate rep to attend all new employee orientations as requested by the Office of Human Resources
- developed a “welcome” email template for new hires; the Office of Human Resources forwards a list of new employees to the chair, and the appropriate Senator (per constituent area) sends the welcome

December 2013
- meeting guest: Mary Maher on the UB’s new EAP provider
- formed ad hoc committee on staff recognition; received six nomination for five slots and created a six-person committee that has grown to eight members
- appointed Ron Vickers as CUSS alternate

January 2014
- meeting guest: Judith McDonald on The Work Number, UB’s employment verification service
- solicited via survey and compiled staff-related budget priorities in response to a call by the University Budget Committee
- invited UBPD Chief Sam Tress to attend Senate executive board meeting to discuss how the Senate could support UBPD efforts to communicate more effectively emergency responsiveness procedures
- ad hoc committee on staff recognition researched, compiled and one nomination in each of three categories, including a nonexempt staff member, to CUSS for consideration for the Board of Regents Staff Awards
  - committee created a Web form that allowed campus community members to submit nominations electronically
  - campus community members nominated their colleagues in other departments
  - while previously, the nominator had to do a majority of the work, the committee now supports the process, reinforcing that we are working on this initiative as a team
  - committee instituted a “packet chair” for each nominating packet; that person (not the nominator) was responsible for gathering all of the relevant documentation

February 2014
- compiled and forwarded responses to the presidential search firm's questions about what makes UB distinctive and where we think the University is headed
- undertook an emergency preparedness campaign in collaboration with the UBPD, oriented toward staff members; this included:
  - push for 100 percent staff participation in UB’s E2Campus text messaging system
  - information about and encouragement to download UB’s LiveSafe app
  - individual emails to administrative department heads, asking them to host UBPD active shooter presentations for the staff in their departments; a large number of units followed through on this and continue to do so

March 2014
- meeting guest: Lakeisha Mathews on Center for Career and Professional Development initiatives
- executive board reviewed and provided feedback on UB's draft mission statement for submission to the University System of Maryland
- appointed a nominating committee, led by secretary Stacey Marriott, to coordinate the Senate’s general elections

April 2014
- meeting guest: Mary Maher on the PMP tool
- received 10 nomination for six Senate seats (a very competitive election!); received more than 85 votes from membership, electing Senators for the 2014-15 year
- filled all six executive board seats without begging
- learned that UBPD Police Chief Sam Tress will offer active shooter training at new employee orientations and once a semester to the campus community

May 2014
• **meeting guests**: Catherine Andersen on UB’s upcoming Middle States accreditation process; Suzanne Tabor on the legislative session

• **worked to plan the second annual UB Staff Senate retreat**

• **established a T drive folder** to archive important materials centrally, enhancing accessibility of our communications

**Challenges**

• communicating to the University community and to University leadership the content of the *Plan of Organization* and that of the Governance Steering Council bylaws and how these documents govern communication protocols
  
  o Senate can support the GSC in communicating this; something should go out to all campus explaining process of communication

• collaboration with University units: Senate wants to be utilized appropriately as a resource in its role of representing constituents

• vetting communications with Senators vs. the timeliness of that communication

• Senators, committee representatives and meeting attendees may not feel comfortable providing uncensored opinions because of who’s in attendance

• constituents’ perceived lack of representation and that Senators are acting on their personal opinions

**Committee-Related Challenges**

• lack of participation, especially from faculty and students

• lack of Governance Steering Council follow-up and oversight

• What is quorum? Is quorum even necessary for committees?

• empowering committees to have a voice that’s taken seriously and providing avenues to ensure their work is respected and appreciated

• committees waiting for issues to come to them to take action, but there really weren’t any

• lack of funding for committee initiatives

• no forum to elevate ideas that come out of the committees

**Suggestions**

• Senate guest speakers should receive questions in advance and should provide written responses in advance

• need to track requests/issues that come into the Senate and that come to committees: date issue submitted, when issue will be discussed at a meeting, status, resolution

• more transparency with constituents in acknowledging what occurs when there is an issue with the Senate

• consider submitting a Fund for Excellence grant on behalf of the Senate