University of Baltimore Staff Senate Accomplishments and Challenges, 2012-13

as compiled at the UBSS annual retreat, June 21, 2013

Accomplishments

- For the first time in recent history, the UB Staff Senate chair was invited to participate in Commencement exercises at the same level as is the chair of the University Faculty Senate.
- UBSS received ongoing financial support for its meetings and annual retreat.
- The Office of the President supported UBSS meetings with office representation at nearly all meetings.
- The UBSS chair, for the first time in recent history, received a stipend recognizing the significance of her service.
- UBSS developed constituent area-specific distribution lists to assist Senators in communicating with their constituent groups.
- UBSS contributed to a highly successful Budget Process and Priorities Town Hall, April 10, as a member group of the Governance Steering Council.
- UBSS enjoyed significant participation (more than one-third of all constituents) in its annual Senatorial election in April.
- This year's enhanced organization encouraged participation by many staff members new to shared governance.

University Budget Committee

- The committee had regular meetings—having met its quorum—with agendas; set up a T drive; hosted two meetings per month in April and May.
- UBSS representatives to the committee worked very closely together, had a great partnership; were able to find a substitute staff representative during the key budget season.
- Faculty on the committee recognized the need for more staff to support growing faculty.

University Culture and Diversity Committee

- The committee enjoyed productive meetings and developed a Sakai site for its work.
- It drafted a strategic goal that has been forwarded for consideration for inclusion in the University's strategic plan.
- USM report on cultural diversity: contributed institutional activities and outcomes related to diversity and inclusive education
- Diversity Plan: working on revisions to USM-mandated five-year plan that expires in 2014
- Closing the achievement gap: working on how to implement assessment strategies outlined in the report

Challenges

- UBSS needs to capitalize on opportunities to make purposeful changes.
- It needs to track issues brought forth to the Senate and can't let constituent issues fall by the wayside (e.g., C2 benefits issue). To that end, it should set a date by which progress is reported upon. If the Senate defers an issue to a committee, the Senate needs to intervene if the committee doesn't respond.
- Communication strategies: Did we send too many emails? UBSS needs to enhance communication with constituents.
- UBSS needs to focus on increasing constituent participation.

- UBSS needs to develop a plan to transition its representatives onto and off of GSC University committees.

University Budget Committee

- This was a new committee without real training; it was initiated at beginning of the budget call process, which created timeline problems.
- The committee was bringing issues back to UBSS rather than vice versa because UBSS was new, too. The University Faculty Senate, on the other hand, has had a budget committee for years and was much more ready to participate.
- The committee was unable to provide input regarding the FY 2014 budget submission due to a lack of consensus.
- Lack of administrative support: The committee would be more productive with a person dedicated to liaison data requests while administrative staff are working through the budget call process.
- August-May schedule makes it difficult for UBC to report back to UBSS—should the Senate be a 12-month body?
- What is the role of ex officio members?
- Confusion on the definition of certain terms, such as "transparency"; UBSS should put forward what its definition is/expectations are.

University Culture and Diversity Committee

- There is no diversity plan/initiative for staff, but this is an important contributing factor to a "Preferred Workplace."
- UB has no LGBT office, and there's no staff and faculty collaboration for safe spaces.

Suggestions

- Make strategic budget priorities available in the fall for discussion.
- The GSC bylaws should define the role and rights of ex officio members (related to committeees).
- How can we formalize requests for information?
- Focus on Preferred Workplace initiative.
- Develop a structure for UBSS alternates to GSC University committees.