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## **UVM and Office of Student and Community Relations (OSCR) Neighborhood Initiatives, Programs, and Services 2016 - 2017**

- (1) **Community Coalition:** The Coalition meets monthly throughout the academic year. At these meetings, students, neighbors, landlords, city officials and staff, UVM and Champlain College staff and administrators discuss neighborhood concerns; opportunities to develop community; and ways to take action that will result in systemic change. Some Coalition initiatives: our Street Strategy utilizing community development to make positive change; the Off Campus Living Survival Guide; Off Campus Living Workshops; and letters to parents of first and second year students providing background about the community their student is moving into, expectations of citizens, and identifying local safety nets. The Coalition is co-chaired by the Student Government Association (SGA) and the OSCR.
- (2) **Off Campus Living Workshops:** Students participate in the workshops (in the Fall and Spring) learn about rights and responsibilities as a tenant and a citizen of Burlington. Attendees of the 2-hour workshop receive a UVM Preferred Renters Card to share with potential landlords. Panelists include representatives from the Code Enforcement Office; Burlington Police Department; Vermont Tenants; Vermont Apartment Owners Association; City Council; Community Support Program; OSCR; and UVM Police Services, as well as off-campus students, and landlords. Survey comments from participants about what they learned included “what to look for to get safe housing;” “the concerns that non-college student neighbors have;” “that I have a safety net besides my family if I have problems with my off campus housing;” “communication with house mates and neighbors is the key to happy experience off campus;” “what landlords expect and how to advocate for tenant rights;” and “that there are fair housing laws.”
- (3) **Student-Neighbor Liaison Program:** Each year between 10 to 20 student and non-student liaisons are recruited to work on their streets to develop community and to provide a link to the university. Liaisons have access to Neighborhood Grants for community development projects. Some liaison projects: Welcome Bags for new student residents; Hyde Street Triangle O.N.E. der Dome; neighborhood clean-ups; “Meet Your Neighbor Day” at the Davis Center with Burlington families; and Isham Street Green Belt Gardens and Blueberry and Herbal Community Garden.
- (4) **Conflict Resolution Services:** These services are provided by the OSCR for our students, neighbors, and landlords. Generally, sessions take place at the Pearl House. Recent sessions involved several fraternities and a local business regarding behavior and property maintenance; a local landlord and tenants whose activity was disruptive to the neighborhood; and a group of neighbors, a City Councilor, and a landlord who rented primarily to students whose property was causing a nuisance to the neighborhood. All of these sessions had successful outcomes according to the individuals involved.
- (5) **Spring Move Out Project (SMOP):** Every year, this event diverts from 11 to 20 tons of goods from city green belts and the landfill. Students leaving the city receive “The Seven Spring Move Out Tips”

brochure, which helps them to plan how to properly dispose of their stuff. In addition, the SMOP team (Burlington Code Enforcement Office, Chittenden Solid Waste District, UVM, Burlington Community and Economic Development Office, ReSOURCE, and Champlain College) holds a recycling event on Loomis St. for students to drop off unwanted items in good shape for community members and local non-profits to pick up to re-use. Students can also get rid of their trash on-site for a small fee. Working with neighbors in the West Hill Neighborhood Association, we added a second event in 2011 on Bradley St., which the neighbors reported was a “huge success.”

(6) **Response to Problem Houses:** The OSCR visits problem properties that have UVM student tenants when a call or email with a specific address has been received. OSCR has also been working in a coordinated way with Code Enforcement, the Burlington Police Department, and landlords to address problem houses in the City based on the number of calls for service. We have had success especially with landlords taking actions that change the behavior of their tenants.

(7) **Welcome Bag Canvassing:** Each Fall, the OSCR staff, SGA Senators, and neighbors deliver Welcome Bags to about 500 households and have conversations with the off-campus student residents about living successfully in the community as a tenant and a neighbor. The bags include UVM’s Off Campus Living Survival Guide and Vermont Tenants’ Renting in VT brochure, as well as CCTA guides, Resource Magnet; Bicycling Map; and the Guide to Sustainable Living in Burlington.

(8) **OSCR Appointments:** OSCR staff meets with students, families, faculty, and staff to answer questions and to provide resources regarding finding off-campus housing and navigating life off-campus.

(9) **Fraternity and Sorority Life Neighbor Relations Sessions:** In the Fall and Spring semesters our office provides these sessions to Chapters as part of their efforts to educate new members about responsibilities expected of Burlington residents; opportunities to get involved in neighborhoods; and how to think and act strategically to create positive relationships and safer and healthier neighborhoods.

(10) **Have a Heart Events:** Fall and Spring events include SGA members, Fraternity and Sorority Life members, and UVM administrators and staff. Volunteers hand out to students Lake Champlain chocolate hearts and fliers created by local children reminding them that neighbors live “just a wall away” and to be aware of the impact of walk-by noise and disruptions on our neighborhoods. Information is also provided about the off-campus late night shuttle and taxi cab companies accepting CatScratch.

(11) **Landlord Workshop:** The OSCR sponsored this workshop with the Burlington Code Enforcement Office and the Vermont Apartment Owners Association. UVM also presented on the resources landlords can utilize, such as our office’s conflict resolution services; the university’s outreach and education efforts and materials, like the Off Campus Living Workshops and the UVM Preferred Renters Card; and the messages we share with students around creating good relationships with their landlords and neighbors.

(12) **Letters to Landlords of Tenants Who Receive Party-Social Event Noise Violations:** Our office provided student worker assistance to the Burlington Police Department to do the mailings of the letters. The City’s Parallel Justice Program is now sending the letters.

(13) **Parent Letters and Workshops:** Letters about expectations of residents of Burlington are sent to parents of first- and second-year students. Parents of second-year students also receive information to assist their student in making a smooth transition to off-campus living. During Homecoming and Family Weekend, the OSCR held a workshop at the Pearl House about living off campus. Parents were

encouraged to talk with their student about the responsibilities that come with being a Burlington citizen and neighbor. Parents received the Off Campus Living Survival Guide and other resources.

(14) **Neighborhood Clean-Ups:** OSCAR partners with the SGA to do clean-ups several times each semester on City streets, including around Halloween.

(15) **Meet Your Neighbor Day:** Held in the Fall, kids and parents tour the Davis Center and meet students to raise awareness about the community and who lives there, and to foster relationships.

(16) **Leadership Trek Neighborhood Canvass:** Student leaders work with the OSCAR to deliver letters to neighbors about the university's Week of Welcome activities and to survey residents about neighborhood concerns and ways to build community between students and neighbors. (Note: This experience increases the awareness of students about the community they are joining and provides guidance to the Community Coalition members as they plan their work for the academic year)

(17) **Babysitter Mingler:** This Fall and Spring event enables parents and kids in need of babysitters to meet UVM students that want to babysit. Over 400 students, parents, and children participate.

(18) **Marketing and Outreach:** Messages from schoolchildren to UVM students have been effective in communicating the impact of late-night activity on families, and in building positive relationships.

(19) **Catamount Classes:** OSCAR and Student Life offer classes to off-campus students and neighbors. They've included: "Cooking Healthy on the Cheap" with City Market," "Doctor Your Bike" with the Bike Users Group and Bike Recycle Vermont, "Green Your Cleaning" with Purple Shutter Herbs, and "Weatherize Your Off Campus Home - Save Some \$\$\$" with Button Up Vermont.

(20) **Letter to Students from the Dean of Students; Student Government Association President, and Burlington Police Chief:** OSCAR coordinates this letter in the Fall and Spring including expectations for living off campus; city ordinances; and getting involved in positive change in the community. The letter goes to students via the SGA President's weekly video message and the Residential Life listserv, and is sent as a press release from the Burlington Police Department to local media.

(21) **Transfer Student Socials:** OSCAR, Student Life, Admissions, the College of Arts and Sciences Transfer Advisor, and Student Financial Services offer annual Transfer Student Socials in the Fall and Spring. Hosted at the Pearl House, they provide an opportunity for transfer students to meet each other and learn about UVM resources and how to get involved on and off campus.

(22) **UVM Service Network:** The OSCAR partners with this group of UVM members representing community-service-related offices and programs on campus. These members serve as advocates/ambassadors for a broad range of community engagement activities and offerings.

(23) **Town Gown Group:** This group's mission is to enhance the quality of life in neighborhoods for UVM students and their neighbors. Quality of life is diminished by noise, aggression, alcohol and drug use and abuse, and other disruptive behaviors. Quality of life is enhanced for persons, properties, and neighborhoods by awareness, knowledge, respect, dialogue, diversity, safety, and healthy community-building activities. The group's membership is composed of representatives from UVM departments and organizations whose work can impact the community: the Dean of Students Office, Student Life, Fraternity and Sorority Life, Student Government Association, Police Services, University Relations, Campus Planning Services, Residential Life, OSCAR, and the Center for Student Conduct.

## **Other UVM-Burlington Initiatives:**

**Joint UVM and Burlington Police Department (BPD) Patrols:** Patrols take place in the Fall and Spring semesters and focus on quality of life issues. Fall patrols begin in August and end after Halloween. Spring patrols begin on St. Patrick's Day and end in May. Contacts: Lt. Matt Sullivan of the Burlington Police Dept. (msullivan@bpdvt.org) and Deputy Chief Tim Bilodeau of UVM Police Services (656-2027).

**UVM-Funded BPD Neighborhood Patrols:** UVM funds patrols by BPD officers to address noise and other quality-of-life concerns, in the places and times when they are needed. These additional patrols take place in the early fall and late spring when the majority of problems have tended to occur. The program allows BPD to assign up to six additional police officers to neighborhoods on weekend nights. Contact: BPD Lt. Matt Sullivan (msullivan@bpdvt.org).

**Accountability:** BPD sends the university a list of municipal and criminal violations between the ages of 18 and 24. UVM identifies individuals who are our students and our Center for Student Conduct responds according to the severity of the incident. Intervening early works, as few students have additional violations.

**UVM Mapping Group:** In an effort to intervene early when incidents arise off campus, since 2012 the BPD, UVM, and Code Enforcement began mapping calls for service related to alcohol misuse and noise and subsequently worked together to respond to houses with higher numbers of calls for service. Actions by the group include:

- Visits by a University and city representative (a BPD Lt. or the Director of the Office of Code Enforcement) to rentals with three or more calls for service and one noise violation.
- Landlords engaged by Code Enforcement, and contacted by Parallel Justice when tickets are issued.
- Joint meetings are held to discuss trends in data (e.g. calls for service, violations) near campus.
- Identification in behavior trends (days of the week, beginning or end of the academic year, holidays, ...) and underlying causes (alcohol use, inexperience managing households, ...)
- Focusing resources where they are needed when community members report incidents.

**Off Campus Late-Night Shuttle:** To decrease late-night student foot traffic on city streets and to keep students safe, the shuttle runs Sun.-Thurs. until midnight and Fri. and Sat. nights until 3 AM.

**Fraternity and Sorority Life Relations:** Includes the Fraternity and Sorority Life Adopt-A-Cop Program. Advisor: Kim Monteaux DeFreitas; 656-2060.

**Residence Hall Meetings:** Staff discussions with students about expectations for behavior off campus; the impact of late-night noise and disruption on neighbors; city and state laws governing noise and alcohol use; and UVM repercussions when students receive municipal and state violations.

**On-Campus Educational Programs and Social Activities:** UVM continues to make a concerted effort to engage new students in programs and activities on-campus year round, and during Opening Weekend.

**New Housing:** The new Central Campus Residence Hall (Aug. 2017) resulted in 309 additional beds. Redstone Lofts (2012) provided 400 beds for juniors, seniors, and graduate students.

**Housing Master Plan:** Assessment and planning for the future direction of student and faculty/staff housing. More information at: <http://www.uvm.edu/~plan/housingmasterplanconcepts.pdf>.