A Brief Summary of the Work of the Staff Council’s Compensation, Benefits and Budget Committee

Our focus this year has been on education and relationship-building. Since our purview is broader than that of the committees that we replaced when the Staff Council committees were reorganized, we chose to invest significant time this year in understanding as much as possible about the full expanse of our responsibility.

The former salary and budget committee was in the habit of making a salary recommendation to the administration each year, but there has long been concern over the timing of that recommendation. To submit it early means working without access to important data that is not ready until spring, but to wait for the data is to submit the recommendation too late to be useful in the present year’s planning process. We have been questioning whether there is a way of thinking about our responsibilities that would help us to work around these challenges and serve us well moving forward.

In December when the administration chose to communicate its intention to offer non-represented staff an across-the-board 2% pay hike for FY2013, it made sense that this year was the appropriate time to slow down our recommendation process and work at developing a longer-range perspective. Keeping the bigger picture in mind, we are considering the possibility that future communication with the administration may be more about keeping the salary and benefit needs of staff before them on a regular basis, and less about finding the perfect time to push for a particular percentage increase for a given fiscal year.

We have met with Ginnie Gude, Human Resource Services Research and Analysis Team Lead, to get a broad and historical perspective on the salary structure at UVM. We have met with Barbara Johnson, AVP of Human Resource Services and discussed benefits and a variety of other issues, including the opportunity to work with other groups and committees to cooperate on projects and issues of interest to staff. We have met on a regular basis with Richard Cate, Vice President of Finance and Administration and been apprised of progress related to the budget. Each of these meetings has presented opportunities to build relationships, to hear about what’s going on and to share our thoughts related to the needs and interests of staff.

We have been extremely pleased at the administration’s availability to us and openness with us. We have learned a great deal, and have had the opportunity to develop our understanding of many of the important areas before the committee. It is a challenge to represent the varied needs of non-represented staff and to think about how best to act on their behalf going forward, but we are excited about the reality we have been experiencing in our conversations with administration: improved relationships, greater openness, a desire to listen and a willingness to answer the difficult questions. We look forward to the challenges and opportunities that the future is bringing and are grateful for the opportunity to serve our colleagues in this important way.

Respectfully Submitted
Rodman Cory, Chair of the CBB Committee