

The Future of UVM: A Campus Forum on the UVM Budget and the Student Experience

Staff Council Office Question and Answer Summary

*** This is not a Transcript ***

Q1: Why have executive bonuses been given a higher priority than the School of Nursing and healthcare around Vermont?

A: The question around bonuses was addressed in President's Fogel's opening comments.

The sum total of bonuses for this year represents about \$200,000 this year. This doesn't begin to address the expected 28 million shortfall. We haven't prioritized bonuses over the School of Nursing. In fact we have returned about \$200,000 to the School of Nursing from original planned cuts.

Q2: According to President Fogel, I will not be receiving a pay increase this year as a non-represented faculty member of the College of Medicine. I'm okay with this, given current economic times, and the need for us (as a community) to be participants in a solution. My questions is why are represented faculty not proposing a renegotiation of their contract, a 5% increase each year for the next three years? Isn't this the same argument they are making about bonuses?

A: President Fogel replied, while Robyn Warhol wants more information, I have not and would not ask the faculty union to renegotiate their contract. Their increases represent over 3 million this year or a total of 11 million in the next 3 years. It took a long time to get faculty salaries to the point of being nationally competitive; I don't believe we should reverse this effort. The COM faculty are not included in the AE contracts because they operate entirely separately from the rest of the university.

A2: Shiman replied that he UA suggested a lower percentage increase for faculty contracts, but their recommendation was rejected by the administration.

Q3: What alternatives were considered before the decision was made to lay off faculty and staff?

A: As we faced a \$28 million shortfall, and we asked for input from all the deans. Of the \$10 million in Phase I cuts last week, far less than 25% represents lay-offs. We worked with many people across campus, and across the playing field, to make these tough decisions.

Q4: In researching other HE institutions, it's common for those with large endowments to use as much as 5% toward their operating budgets. Since UVM currently only uses 4.5% toward its general budget, why can't we access just 2% of the endowment? Please explain.

A: Currently 5% of our endowment is being used to offset our general budget. 4.5% is used toward our general fund and .5% is to help offset the cost of fundraising and management fee of DAR, to limit the cost of fundraising activities charged to the general fund budget. Ninety-nine percent or the majority of the endowment fund's use is restricted. We're limited

to about 1% of our endowment, or about 1 million in funds we may access. Much of our endowment is also under water as a result of the downturn in the stock market.

Q5: Carmyn (Carmyn Stanko of UE), if we turned down the heat in all the buildings by 3 degrees, could we save enough money to save some of the recent job cuts?

A: Yes, I believe we would. I additional want to say, the UE does not have bonuses and we do not support the UA opening up their contracts.

Q6: President Fogel, in your television interview last week, you indicated the university would not be considered salary reductions as a means to reduce our shortfall. However, the Staff Council Office received several inquiries about staff whose FTE has been reduced. Can you tell us how many staff have been affected by reductions in their FTE and isn't this the same as a pay cut?

A: Yes. About 25 out of 2100 FTE positions have been reduced from full time positions to 80%. This was done as a cost-saving measure in several departments. The impact on earnings is real, and clearly many more than those are affected by the actions taken in budget reductions.

Q7: How can you say you care about the student experience; the money saved by the loss of Baseball and Softball is almost \$400,000, but you neglect to acknowledge the loss of scholarship dollars for these athletes? Is this fair when these athletes were recruited to come here and given scholarships you will now take away? I am a senior. I can't imagine how stressful it must be for students being faced with the decision of whether or stay at UVM or leave.

A: We are making these decisions based on the long-term interests of UVM's intercollegiate athletics and athletic programs. I am deeply saddened by the loss of these programs as well. It was a very hard decision, but focus was the best strategy, supporting less athletics while maintaining national competitiveness in the sports we retain. I support the Athletic Director in this decision.

Q8: What steps are being taken to continue the University's efforts to maintain and improve the student experience including services that affect our diversity efforts including ALANA, the Women's Center and LGBTQA services?

A: We will continue to invest and maintain the many student support services and agencies. We are working to stimulate dialog on campus to improve student advising, student retention and the overall student experience. We're very interested in supporting the services to students on campus. We are investing in 150-700 new beds. We have invested in financial aid with an increase of \$10 million in financial aid, in the Center for Health and Wellbeing and in maintaining the quality of student services.

Q9: President Fogel, I heard you say you support Bob Corran 100%. I was told by Bob Corran just yesterday, "I support winning teams first and foremost." This was in part some of the

reasoning he provided in support of the decision to discontinue UVM Baseball and Softball. Do you support this?

A: I wish Dr. Corran were here to speak for himself, but I can say that it has always been our goal to improve the competitive metabolism across the board at UVM. Opportunities for student participation come in many forms and they can't all come at the level of Division One athletics - in the world of limited resources. The year before I arrived here there were 28 varsity sports, and this was too many for our school to support. This includes salaries, recruiting highly motivated and successful students, and successful teams. Again I am very sorry for the loss of these two programs, but I liken it to the thought of the return of football to UVM. As much as most of us love the return of football, none of us would want to see spending 11 million dollars a year, at a minimum, for the return of Division One football. However, there's a wonderful opportunity for people to participate in club football. And I guess that's going to have to be the opportunity for baseball and softball for the near-term.

Q10: Next year, UVM will have 26 vice-president positions, but only 24 FTE English professors in the department and teaching; next year UVM will have 38 administrators (no UA faculty) who earn above \$150,000, but only six FTE professors in Environmental Studies serving more than 400 majors; next year there will be two vice presidents in the Department of Athletics earning more than \$150,000 but we're going to have two fewer sports teams for our students. Why do we need an administration of this size and scope and can't you see you are starving programs on the ground?

A: As I've said before we will be examining every area where we can reduce costs, including administrative costs and I can promise you there will be fewer people with those titles that cause such provocation to so many of the members of our community. However, I am not aware of any functions that do not need to be carried out, and in some cases carried out at higher levels than they were done in the past. The count will be lower, but I can't tell you that we are not intent on managing this very complex enterprise for your benefit as ably as we can, and certainly better than in the past, we hope.

Q11: How are we improving the quality of the student experience with increasing the classroom size? (Several numbers quoted here that Fogel questioned)

A: Eighty percent of the class sections are 39 or fewer students scheduled for next fall. We led the nation last year among all the Publics in US News, ranking 7th, with classes of 19 or fewer students. I believe we will continue to be ranked at the top of the list nationally for small classrooms even with the few changes that have been made. There are many measurements of academic excellence and certainly we value smaller class sizes and we are pleased to have 80% of them are in these lower brackets for next fall. We really weren't viable when I got here and we were at a 13.8:1 ratio. During 2002 and 2003 I worked with and sought input from Faculty Senate and the Board of Trustees to develop a more viable ratio of 16:1.

Q12: There have been numerous reports of increases in payroll for administrators over the last several years as reported on the blog. For those earning over \$150,000 a year, their salary pool increased (2002 to today) from more than \$600,000 to more than \$6,000,000. What is this

money going toward and why can't we tap it to address our budget? Also, why shouldn't staff get extra money for the extra work they put in, in overtime benefits?

A: First of all, the numbers you see on the blog sites about the changes in payroll for administrators are not accurate. There is the same number of administrative positions today. We have not had position creep, we've had title creep. All of these functions have to be performed. Since I arrived, there has been a 41.9% gain for all deans' salaries and a 41.2% gain for all vice presidents' salaries. These gains are about the same for faculty. Our compensation philosophy for administrators is the same as for the entire university.

Q13: You can compare us to other schools. However, we're the Social Justice University. How is laying off people socially just?

A: We have pursued these plans with enormous empathy and care. The pool of employees grew over six years, or from 2002 to 2008, by about 400. We have made some modest financial gains, but not enough to support this many new employees. Now is the time for us to focus on equity, competitiveness and attention to basic needs. These are hard, hard times. But, we cannot be the University we want to be, and face the challenges ahead without a reduction in number of new positions we have added since I arrived over six years ago.

Q14: How do more students add to improving the overall student experience when students will continue to have to live in forced triples, even with the addition of a renovated McAuley Hall? Why more students, beyond the obvious need for more money?

A: We are aiming to improve the overall experience and mission when it comes to increasing our student population. I assure you, we thought about the increase in the number of students, the costs associated. And one of the considerations is the 5 million that we will net, even with the increase in scholarship dollars. The budget cuts would be even more severe if not for our decision to increase our student population.

Q15: How can we keep students in the classroom when we don't have enough faculty to teach in the classroom? As a senior, with scheduling priority, I was unable to get in classes this semester. Also, why do we have large buildings that are empty of students such as the Davis Center and beautiful buildings such as Billings?

A: The overall student experience has been one we've focused on since my arrival at UVM. I took up the mission of my predecessor, Ed Colodny, to build a new Student Center. Traffic studies indicated that only 15 percent of our student body went into Billings Student Center, yet in other places such as U of Colorado at Denver, which was one of our benchmarks, had traffic at about 60 percent. Then SGA President Bill Tickner said it was a top priority to get a new Student Center. I too up this priority along with and several others, as we aimed to improve the student experience. When I arrived our application pool was 9,000 and we increased it to 22,000. This number is attributed to many of the changes we've made to our physical plant. And once we have the money, most likely from private donors, we look forward to renovating the Billings Library to house a wonderful rare book collection, to house Holocaust studies and Vermont studies, and as a result free up lots of great social studies space in Bailey Howe Library.