Summary of Staff Council Meeting: February 3, 2009

Today’s meeting included the discussion and approval of several By-law changes affecting Staff Council elections, the introduction of new Council policy statements, several staff-related announcements, and an informational presentation on UVM’s Reaccreditation Process by the Accreditation co-chairs.

Past elections for Council representatives and officers took place in the month of May, perhaps the busiest month on UVM’s campus. Elections have been shifted forward in time, in an attempt to alleviate the majority of problems and inconvenience experienced by some units. Elections for Council Representatives will now take place in April and explicit language now states that the Staff Council President and Vice President elections will take place in May.

A new mechanism for selecting a committee chair was introduced and approved as a By-law change. New Committee Chairs for each standing committee will now be elected in the last meeting of the current term, to take effect at the beginning of the new term, or July 1.

The Council approved a new Conflict of Interest Policy Statement and an Election Policy Statement. The Rules & Elections Committee is responsible for generating and maintaining an Election Policy Statement. The content of this statement, for the most part, previously existed in the body of old By-laws. The creation of this Policy Statement is in accordance with Council By-laws that reference several policy statements.

Staff announcements included the Staffline submission deadline, February 14th; the extension of the registration deadline for the President’s Day trip to the Montreal Casino to Friday, February 5th (there are only a few seats left); lift tickets for Smugglers’ Notch and Jay Peak, and discount coupons for Bolton Valley continue to be available in the Staff Council Office.

Council President Beth Walsh announced that the Staff Council Office responded to President Fogel’s call and put forth several names of staff to serve on a “Transforming UVM” Work Group that will focus on developing options for academic restructuring at UVM. We expect to hear back shortly regarding the names of staff selected.

The co-chairs of Accreditation: Jill Tarule, Associate Provost and Mara Saule, Dean of Libraries, explained the self-study being done in preparation for UVM’s Reaccreditation Visit by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) on April 19-22. A draft of the report has been posted for the community to comment on and may be found at http://www.uvm.edu/~accredit/. The final report will be sent to the NEASC and the visiting team members at the beginning of March 2009. Tarule explained that although Staff are not included in the eleven standards used in the NEASC’s evaluation process, the role of UVM Staff are woven into the report.

Under other business, Beth Walsh explained that (in accordance with our Bylaws) a nominating committee must be formed for the purpose of vetting future nominees for Council president and vice-president. In the event that either the president or vice-president steps down, Council By-laws require a committee be in place to address the situation. This matter was tabled for further discussion at the March meeting.

Catherine Symans and Kyle Sowles are the co-chairs of this year’s MAZE event, scheduled for Thursday, March 12th. The focus this year will be on professional development and practical training. A brochure of workshops will be available in the next week or so. Registration for workshops will be available online later this month.
The next Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 3rd, 12:05 to 1:30 p.m. in the Livak Ballrooms of the Davis Student Center. The agenda is available online at http://www.uvm.edu/~stffcncl/ on the Tuesday prior to each Council meeting.