SUMMARY OF THE STAFF COUNCIL MEETING

April 5, 2011

March’s meeting included two guest presentations: Undergraduate students from VSTEP spoke to the Council about a Sustainable Beverage System and Chris Lucier, Vice President for Enrollment Management, discussed UVM’s Internationalization efforts. The Council discussed its response to recent events and announcements, the Staff Council’s Survey underway, the Staff Council Standing Committee Restructuring Initiative, the approval of the Council’s March 1, 2011 minutes, along with several announcements by Ida Russin, Council President and Jeff Bukowski, Council Administrator.

STUDENTS FOR A SUSTAINABLE BEVERAGE SYSTEM

Undergraduate students from Vermont Students Toward Environmental Protection (VSTEP) spoke with the Council about their recent work (focused on taking an active role in UVM’s beverage contract discussions. This initiative, Students for a Sustainable Beverage System (SSBS) is working to increase awareness about UVM’s Contract with Coke that expires in 2012. The Student Government Association passed a resolution, the Bottled Water Consumption Deterrence Act that recognizes the environmental consequences of bottled water distribution and holds UVM’s administration accountable for its commitment to environmental protection, and asks that when they renegotiate their contract with Coke, that they discontinue the sale of bottled water.

VSTEP and SSBS are hosting a ‘Speak Out’ on Thursday, April 7th (5:30 -7pm) in Billings North Lounge, to talk about UVM’s new beverage contract. VSTEP wants UVM’s administration to incorporate student values in the next beverage contract. These values are: reduce waste with reusable beverage containers wherever possible; continue to educate the community to become responsible global citizens; have business partners for UVM who are socially and ecologically responsible; and provide a more equitable share of marketing and shelf space for local companies.

INTERNATIONALIZATION

Vice President Chris Lucier (on behalf of Provost Jane Knodell) provided a brief overview of Internationalization at UVM. He began by asking the question: “Should Internationalization (a.k.a. globalization or global engagement) be a more prominent method of our strategic direction as we move forward – increasing the percentage of undergraduate and graduate students enrolled at the University of Vermont?”

In 1981, the first committee on Internationalization was formed at UVM. Since then, fifteen separate committees and their reports have focused on this topic and effort. The culmination of these efforts in 2008 was a report to then Provost John Hughes titled, “Internationalization: the time is now.” The report said it was time for UVM to internationalize, and position itself on the international stage through increased global engagement by UVM’s students, faculty and staff. UVM’s International Advisory Council was created as a result (see uvm.edu.internationalization).

The purpose of internationalization, beyond enrollment, is the scholarly exchange, research partnerships, study-abroad opportunities, multi-cultural events and curricular integration. To be fully successful,
internationalization must involve active and responsible engagement of the academic community, global networks and partnerships. Vice President Lucier assured Council members that increasing the percentage of international enrollment at UVM would not impact the Vermont student enrollment numbers, or be at the expense of domestic diversity. Several concerns were expressed by Council members regarding the necessary resources to accommodate additional international students and specifically questioned how UVM will house these students when it is currently at capacity.

Chris explained that recent census reports and demographic studies indicate our region will experience a significant drop in the number of students graduating from high school over the next several years. And currently, 83% of students will travel 500 miles or less to attend college. These are but a couple of the reasons why internationalization is vital to UVM’s future (financially and otherwise).

Chris Lucier invited more questions via email: Chris.Lucier@uvm.edu

STAFF COUNCIL’S CAMPUS SURVEY

Eric Hoefel, chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Staff Council Survey reported the preliminary participation results represent almost 24% of all non-represented staff, or 464 surveys have been completed thus far. A survey reminder will be sent Thursday, April 7th to those who have yet to take the survey. This will hopefully increase the participation rate to about 30%. The survey will close Friday, April 15th.

Council President Ida Russin asked everyone to encourage staff to also take time to complete the Campus Climate Survey, noting both surveys are important.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jeff Bukowski, Council Administrator, announced the submissions deadline for the May edition of Staffline is Friday, April 15, 2011. Discounted ski vouchers are no longer for sale. The Social Committee’s annual Golf Outing is scheduled for Friday, August 5th. Discounted season passes to Great Escape will be available for a limited amount of time, or until June 10th through the Staff Council Office. The cost is $72.00 and it pays for itself in less than three visits. Day tickets to Great Escape will be available in late May.

Staff Council Representative Elections are underway. A list of all Units/Division holding elections is available on page five of the April issue of Staffline and on the Staff Council’s website. A university-wide letter encouraging staff to serve as Staff Council Representatives was sent earlier this week by President Fogel; notices have been sent to all 13 Units/Divisions holding elections, asking them to promote this opportunity among non-represented staff; and we have met with staff in both the College of Medicine and the Student and Campus Life Division, as they each have the greatest number of representative seats to fill. Self-nomination forms will be accepted through 12 Noon Wednesday, April 13th and are available on the Staff Council’s website and in the Staff Council Office. Actual elections will commence the week of April 25th and conclude April 29th. Election outcomes will be reported at the May 3rd Council meeting. Jeff both welcomed and encouraged those Representatives whose terms are concluding to consider serving again. If interested, they also need to complete and submit the self-nomination form.

PRESIDENT’S UPDATE
Ida reported the Council Office has received several applications so far, from staff interested in serving on the Presidential Search Committee. Nomination forms are available through the Staff Council’s website and the deadline for submission is 3:30 p.m. Thursday, April 14th. The Council will forward a list of at least six names with their nomination forms to the Board of Trustees Chair Robert Cioffi for his consideration. At least one person will be chosen to serve on the search committee as a staff representative.

Ida also reported receiving another request from Board Chair Robert Cioffi, asking each governance group to submit a document that addresses the following five questions (as part of the Presidential Search Committee’s preparation process):

1) What opportunities do you see facing the University of Vermont in the next 10 years?
2) What challenges do you see facing the University of Vermont in the next 10 years?
3) What professional qualifications or experiences should the next president possess?
4) What personal leadership characteristics should the next president possess?
5) What other considerations should the presidential search committee bear in mind as they initiate the process?

Council members interested in helping assimilate the Council’s responses to these questions were encouraged to contact Ida directly.

Ida asked Council members if they had received any feedback regarding Ida’s and Michelle’s “Response to Recent Events” letter to President Fogel and Provost Knodell, and the administration’s response letter. The majority of the feedback focused on continuing the dialogue with members of the administration about all the issues raised in the communications and advocate for non-represented staff increases.

**STANDING COMMITTEE RESTRUCTURING INITIATIVE**

Several minor changes were suggested to the draft charges put forth by the Executive Board (EB) on March 28th. A final proposal will be drafted by the EB and sent to UVM’s General Counsel for review before it is voted on by the full Council in May or June.

The Council adjourned at 1:30 p.m. The next Staff Council meeting will take place in the Livak Ballroom, 4th Floor Davis Center, Tuesday, May 3, 2011 at 12:05 p.m.