Summary of Staff Council Meeting

August 2, 2011

August’s meeting marked the beginning of a new Staff Council year, with 33 representatives including 18 newly elected members. It also marked the introduction of a Public Comment Period at the beginning of monthly Staff Council meetings. The agenda included two guest speakers: Patricia Redmond, Athletic Advisory Board Staff Representative and Eric Hoefel, former Staff Council Representative and chair of the Staff Council Survey Ad Hoc Committee. Other business included the approval of the Council’s June 14, 2011 minutes, along with the appointment of a parliamentarian and several announcements by Ida Russin, Council President and Jeff Bukowski, Council Administrator.

Public Comment Period – For Audience Members

Marie-Andree Gervais raised three concerns on behalf of staff, specifically with regard to former President Daniel Fogel’s severance package. They include the contradiction recently exhibited by our Board of Trustees, given the inconsistency between the President’s severance package and this year’s zero percent salary increase for non-represented staff; she believes Staff Council should ask for more transparency and clarity around both administrative compensation and severance packages, especially golden parachutes; and she expressed concern that the Board’s recent actions are undermining the morale of staff at the University of Vermont.

Athletic Advisory Board Update

Patricia (Patty) Redmond just completed her third year of a four-year term on the Athletic Advisory Board (AAB), as a Staff Council Appointed Representative. The Board is comprised of five faculty members, an alumni representative, a student representative, and a staff representative. Athletic Director Bob Corran and Assistant Director Jeff Schulman serve as ex-officio members.

Patty highlighted the accomplishments of UVM’s athletic programs during the 2010-2011 academic year including the fact that the fall 2010 semester was the 16th semester in a row that UVM student-athletes attained a grade point average of 3.0 or better, with a 3.15 average. UVM also won the America East Academic Cup for the 2010-2011 academic year, the seventh consecutive year that UVM has won this award. And UVM is the only institution to win this award eight times.

The Athletics department, in recent years, has institutionalized a process of reporting to the AAB on its efforts in the areas of gender equity and ethnic/racial diversity and inclusion. The AAB is satisfied with the department’s performance in these areas and bases this opinion on several factors including the creation of an environment in which gender and multicultural diversity, inclusion, and mutual engagement are central values and hallmarks of excellence within the athletic department.

This report, as presented, was an excerpt from a report prepared by Robert Manning, UVM Faculty Athletics Representative and John Gennari, chair of the AAB for a report to the UVM Faculty Senate.
Staff Council Survey Report

Eric Hoefel, former Staff Council Representative and chair of the Staff Council Survey Ad Hoc Committee, presented a preliminary summary of the 2011 Staff Council Survey Results. His presentation reviewed the methodology used in creating the survey, the actual results, and the opportunities he envisions after reviewing the results.

The survey was administered online with LimeSurvey from 3/31 through 4/15. All 1,938 regular non-represented staff members were invited to participate and 846 surveys were completed. This represented a 44% response rate with a 2.5% margin of error. The data has been analyzed using PAWS 18 software and is still under review. The highlights of the presentation included the following: 95% of the survey respondents are familiar with the work that Staff Council does; 70% have visited the Council’s website in the last year and 87% rate the ease of finding information on the website as very good/good; 90% read Staffline always or sometimes and 83% rate the content of Staffline as very good/good. Staff Council’s 2011 Survey Report will be available in its entirety in the next 30 to 60 days.

A more detailed report will rank issues on which Staff Council may wish to focus, and highlight Staff Council Representative performance and Mission effectiveness. Eric reported that as a result of the preliminary findings, three opportunities were immediately evident. Staff Council should 1) emphasize the Council’s role at new staff orientation; 2) develop a new staff member contact protocol for Staff Council Representatives; 3) address the perceptions of the Staff Council as lacking real authority or influence with the Administration.

Council President’s Update

Staff Council President Ida Russin is scheduled to have her first meeting with Interim President John Bramley on Tuesday, August 9th, where she plans on discussing her cover article that appeared in the August edition of Staffline. Of primary concern to her is the severance package given to former President Fogel, and the fact that this creates larger questions about the zero percent salary increases for non-represented staff and UVM’s budgetary challenges. Ida, along with Staff Council Vice President Michelle Smith, and Council Administrator Jeff Bukowski, are scheduled to meet with Vice President of Executive Operations Gary Derr on August 10th.

The October Staff Council meeting will be expanded to include the Council’s annual retreat, where the Council will discuss everyone’s role in this year’s discussion regarding compensation and benefits.

Ida encouraged Staff Council Representatives to self-nominate for the position of parliamentarian for this fiscal year and Isis Erb volunteered her service. The Council voted to approve Isis as their parliamentarian through June 2012.

Announcements

Council Administrator Jeff Bukowski announced the submissions deadline for the September edition of Staffline is Friday, August 19, 2011. The Staff Council is currently accepting
nominations from regular non-represented staff members to serve staggered three year terms on the Grievance Review Committee in support of the University’s Grievance and Mediation Policy for non-represented staff. The Staff Grievance Committee is a group of non-represented employees appointed by the University President for the purpose of hearing grievances brought under this policy. Two of the appointed members will be designated as the chair and vice chair. The Staff Council Office will accept these applications through Thursday, August 11 at 3:30 pm.

The Council is currently conducting a ‘Back to School Supply Drive’ and accepting donations at several drop-off locations at UVM. The deadline for donations is Friday, August 5th. This drive, a partnership with the Greater Burlington YMCA, will benefit students in the surrounding area. Discounted Great Escape tickets and Jay Peak Golf Vouchers are available through the Staff Council Office. Champlain Valley Fair Tickets sales have concluded and tickets will be distributed on Tuesday, August 16th from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm in the Staff Council Conference Room, 305 Waterman Building.

The majority of Staff Council’s Representatives have been informed of their Standing Committee appointment. All four committees will meet the week of August 8th, and future meeting schedules will be determined then. The time commitment for each committee is approximately one hour per month. Representatives’ calendars should reflect their first committee meeting from 12 noon to 1 pm on one of the following days:

- Monday, August 8th: Compensation, Benefits & Budget
- Tuesday, August 9th: Outreach, Assessment & University Engagement
- Wednesday, August 10th: Personal and Professional Development & Occupational Environment
- Thursday, August 11th: Social

Jeff concluded with a brief overview of Representative responsibilities and the new Staff Council Representative Handbook that is now available online.

**Other Business**

The next Staff Council meeting will take place in the Livak Ballrooms, 4th Floor Davis Center, Tuesday, September 6, 2011 at 12:05 p.m.