SUMMARY OF THE UVM STAFF COUNCIL MEETING

August 7, 2012

August’s meeting began under new leadership, with the Staff Council’s new president Catherine Symans presiding. The University’s Employee Relations and Labor Relations Manager, Caryn Gronvold, presented Staff Council with an overview of Labor Relations at UVM. Other Council business included a UVM Foundation Report, given by Foundation Liaison Jeff Moreau, the approval of the June 5, 2012 draft minutes, and several announcements by Catherine Symans, Council President and Jeff Bukowski, Council Administrator.

**Human Resource Services Labor Relations Presentation** – Caryn Gronvold, Team Lead, Human Resource Services – Management Consulting Solutions

Caryn provided an overview of UVM’s collective bargaining units and process, and the upcoming union election that will be overseen by the Vermont Labor Relations Board. The presentation was given in a quiz format and the information provided may be found at the Informed Choice website [http://www.uvm.edu/informed/](http://www.uvm.edu/informed/).

**The University of Vermont Foundation – July 27, 2012 Quarterly Report to Staff Council** – Jeffrey Moreau, Executive Director of Annual Giving Programs

Jeff Moreau, the UVM Foundation’s Liaison to Staff Council, presented the Council with a quarterly report that marked the conclusion of the inaugural year of the UVM Foundation. The report indicated private gift commitments to UVM totaled $45,067,365 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012, resulting in the best fundraising production in UVM’s history. And although cash receipts were down from last year, total production from FY-2011 to FY-2012 increased 121 percent!

**Staff Council President’s Update**

Staff Council President Catherine Symans reported attending her first Staff Council Leadership Meeting in July. This meeting takes place monthly with the University President or his designee. Catherine, along with Council Vice President Renee Berteau and Council Administrator Jeff Bukowski, met with Gary Derr, Vice President for Executive Operations and Chief of Staff. They discussed the Staff Council’s Education and Outreach Campaign in anticipation of the upcoming union election, and Governor Shumlin’s Advisory Committee report, *New Ideas for Changing Times: Strengthening the Partnership between the State of Vermont and the University of Vermont*. When asked how Staff Council and the UVM community can participate in the possible implementation of the recommendations in this report, Vice President Derr suggested a good start would be to encourage staff to read the report as there are interesting ideas that staff will be hearing about in the future. Catherine asked the Staff Council Representatives to encourage all staff to please take a few minutes to look over this report.

The Staff Council Officers’ first quarterly meeting with Associate Vice President of Human Resource Services, Barbara Johnson is scheduled for Thursday, August 9th. Items on the agenda include the union
election, the Grievance and Mediation Policy – Staff (Non-Represented), and comprehensive diversity professional development. They also plan to continue discussions on post-retirement medical benefits, performance appraisals and People Admin, and the work of the University Benefits Advisory Council (UBAC).

As Staff Council President, Catherine will attend her first Board of Trustees Executive Committee meeting on Friday, August 10th. The Staff Council President serves as a staff representative, and is able to ask questions, but has no voting rights.

On Sunday, August 26th, the University will usher in the new academic year with the 2012 Convocation Ceremony, where Catherine will represent staff as Staff Council President. This event is free and open to the public. For more information visit the 2012 Convocation Ceremony website here.

A complete Staff Council President’s report for August 2012 can be found here.

Announcements

Council Administrator Jeff Bukowski called on Staff Council Representatives to consider volunteering for the role of Council Parliamentarian and/or Executive Board Member. The makeup of the Executive Board includes the Staff Council President, Vice President, Immediate Past President, the Standing Committee Chairpersons and Vice Chairpersons, and two additional members elected annually by the Staff Council from among its regular members. Filling these open positions will be determined at the September 4th Staff Council meeting.

Seeking Nominations for University Committees:

The Staff Council is currently seeking nominations for non-represented staff to serve as appointed representatives on the following University committees:

- Athletics Advisory Board
- Board of Trustees: Budget, Finance, and Investment Committee

Anyone interested in these opportunities to provide the staff perspective on behalf of Staff Council should complete a Nomination form. Nominations for both opportunities are due by Friday, August 24, 2012. Completed nomination forms should be sent to the Staff Council Office, 313 Waterman Building or email the completed form to Staff.Council@uvm.edu or fax it to 802-656-8790. For more information please contact Jeff Bukowski, Staff Council Office Administrator at Staff.Council@uvm.edu or at 802-656-4493.

Education and Outreach Campaign:

The Staff Council has heard from numerous staff over the last year and a half with questions and concerns about organizing efforts. We have repeatedly referred staff to the Informed Choice website where they could find facts and educate themselves about their rights, responsibilities, and the organizing process. With news that a union election was possibly going to take place in August 2012, and after much
consultation with University leaders and legal counsel, we were informed that as an organization, Staff Council had legal grounds to take a position for or against union organizing as well as the right to move ahead with efforts to encourage staff to educate themselves. However, we chose the latter approach because it respects the choice of staff to determine how they wish to be represented at UVM.

Staff Council has never formed an official opinion or taken a formal position for or against organizing efforts. This is not to be confused with being neutral, as a position of neutrality is actually choosing a position. We have simply never engaged the topic because Staff Council is built upon the voice of staff and all staff have the freedom to choose as they wish on this matter. Staff Council has an obligation to respect that voice, but we also have a responsibility outlined in our bylaws to make staff aware of matters that impact them.

The Staff Council’s information flyer which was sent to all non-represented staff, as part of our Education and Outreach Campaign, provides basic information that encourages a reader to seek out information so that they can actively participate in the upcoming election and make an informed choice. The websites for both proposed bargaining units are included on the flyer. The flyer does not tell staff how to vote, rather it tells staff to vote.

**Second Annual UVM Staff Art Exhibit:**

This event will be held during the month of September in the Livak Fireplace Lounge of the Davis Student Center. A reception is planned for Tuesday, September 11th. For more information visit the [Staff Art Exhibit](#) website or contact the Staff Council Office at Staff.Council@uvm.edu or 656-4493. This event will coincide with other Staff Appreciation Week celebrations.

**Staffline:**

The submissions deadline for the summer edition of *Staffline* is Friday, August 17, 2012. This edition is distributed on Tuesday, September 4th.

**Other Business**

Jeff Bukowski informed the Council Representatives that a Staff Council Update will be sent to those with responsibilities for distributing the Update to their constituents, via their listserves, or to the person in their area with this responsibility. He asked that when the Council’s Update is distributed, the Staff Council Office be copied (Staff.Council@uvm.edu), so they know when it has been sent.

The next Staff Council meeting will take place in the Livak Ballroom located on the fourth floor of the Davis Student Center, Tuesday, September 4, 2012 at 12:05 p.m. where guest speaker President Thomas Sullivan will address the Council.