Staff Council Standing Committee Reports for 9-1-09

Benefits – Rita Lemire, Chair

At its August meeting, the Benefits Committee elected Rita Lemire as Committee Chair, and Eileen Kristiansen as Vice Chair. It was reported that the issue of increased health insurance benefits for fertility treatment has been passed on to the University Benefits Advisory Committee’s Health Insurance Working Group. The Benefits Committee will be interested to see whether the UBAC decides to pursue this topic in the near future. The Committee also discussed the possibility of researching a tuition exchange program, and decided to see whether the faculty is actively discussing tuition remission and/or exchange. Selected committee members are currently engaged in background research on the tuition issue. Lastly, the Committee heard, but ran out of time to discuss, the recommendation to survey our constituents in order to better understand their needs and interests.

Communications – Joanne Montanye, Chair

The Council Office asked us to consider ways to make the Staff Council more visible, so we discussed avenues of communication on campus, both for us to reach staff and for staff to communicate to us. Also important to that effort seemed to be defining a consistent clear message about the benefits of Staff Council for us to carry to all the staff, and identifying motivation and reasons for staff to contact us. We discussed a variety of outreach methods, with special concerns still being 2nd and 3rd shift employees as well those who work at UVM sites throughout the state or with limited or no computer access.

Education and Professional Development – Todd Stewart, Chair

The Education and Professional Development Committee held its first meeting of the 2009-2010 academic year in early August. The committee reviewed the status of the Technical Training, Staff Mentor Program, and Lunchtime Learning Series initiatives from 2008-2009. Proposals have been sent to Human Resources for the next steps discussions. The committee also brainstormed goals for the coming year.

Employee Environment and Facilities – Michelle Smith, Chair

Michelle Smith will be Chair for the upcoming academic year. One of the initiatives the committee plans to focus on will be partnering with the Office of Sustainability and Recycling and Solid Waste to present "Greening Your Workplace", a brief power point presentation that educates staff about the ways they can help lower the University's carbon footprint. Our committee member Scott Lewins has also been piloting a composting project within his department, and welcomes any questions staff might have regarding the best way to compost food scraps. Please contact Scott (Scott.Lewins@uvm.edu) if you would like to schedule a presentation or if you have questions about composting. We are also working with T&PS and AFS to support the need for enhanced shuttle schedules from the Gutterson Garage to central campus, as well as the safety of bus shelters, and the desire for UVM to become a “pedestrian campus” by continuing to encourage alternative transportation. Please feel free to contact us with questions; we would also love to hear from staff regarding any other issues that we can help support or find solutions to!

Internal Affairs – Sharon Mone, Chair
The Internal Affairs committee met in August and elected Sharon Mone of ACCESS to be the new Chair of the Committee. Internal Affairs will continue its work to investigate the topics of Shared Leave Pool and Short Term Disability.

**Recreation – Marie Tiemann, Chair**

The Recreation Committee met in August and elected Marie Tiemann of University Financial Services as Chair. With the new year, the Recreation Committee is seeking staff members to join their committee to help organize events and activities for staff of a social or beneficial nature. If you’re interested in participating or have some great ideas for events, please join us at our next meeting on September 17th from noon-1pm in the Phi Beta Kappa room, 527 Waterman. The 5th Annual Golf Outing was held on August 8th and assisted in raising money for the Staff Emergency Loan Fund. The committee is currently planning for the September 19th Boston Bus Trip and an upcoming Book Fair this Fall. The committee also discussed looking into possible opportunities to increase staff volunteerism in the community.

**Rules & Election – Rob Rohr, Chair**

The Rules and Election Committee met in August and discussed the work of the committee last year to assist with bylaw changes, specifically on the work of the Nominating Committee. The overlap of responsibilities of each Council Standing Committee was also discussed and will be looked at the Executive Board level.

**Salary & Budget – Mary Reilly, Chair**

The Salary & Budget Committee met on 8/20/09. Carol Gross, Business Manager in OBGYN, was welcomed as a new member. Mary Reilly and Eileen Kristiansen were reelected as co-chairs. Members decided to continue the 11-12 noon meeting time on the third Thursday of each month for the coming year. A recording secretary will be elected at the next meeting. Jeff Bukowski reported that the new policies and procedures for the Staff Emergency Loan Program are working well, and the committee extended its appreciation to Jeff for his outstanding work. The committee recommends that Council staff should continue to be responsible for completing the check requests for these loans, and that the responsibility not be transferred to Human Resources as has been suggested by the administration. The standard procedures for the management of gift funds by the Staff Council should be the same as those in place for other units across campus. Our discussion of goals for the year centered on the timeline for our salary recommendations for FY 2011, which will need to be transmitted to the full Council no later than December 1. Barbara Johnson, Associate VP of Human Resource Services has been invited to our next meeting to discuss the process and ways in which we can improve our input. The date will be published on-line when it is set, so that others can attend if they wish to join us. We will also continue to look at ways in which the performance evaluation process can be improved. There was considerable discussion of a Shared Leave Pool, which the committee sees as a salary-related issue and might want to work on in conjunction with the Internal Affairs Committee.