UVM STAFF COUNCIL
September 2, 2008
Sugar Maple Ballroom
Davis Center
12:05 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

MINUTES

PRESENT: Marilyn Baker, Jeff Bukowski (Ex-officio), Erica Caloiero, Rodman Cory, David Ebenstein, Eileen Kristiansen, Eric Hoefel, Jennifer Larsen, Rita Lemire, Aliza Mansolino, Joanne Montanye, Michelle Smith-Mullarkey, Thi Nguyen, Jon Reidel (Vice-President), Mary Reilly, Ida Russin, Todd Stewart, Catherine Symans, Diane Trono, Beth Walsh (President), Cat Woodward.

ABSENT: Ernie Buford, Shari Langlois, Mary Parent, Morgan Phillips, Anne-Marie Resnik, Rob Rohr.

GUESTS: President Daniel Mark Fogel, Patricia Forguites.

President Beth Walsh called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES – August 5, 2008

The minutes were approved as presented.

APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Beth Walsh announced the following nominations for committee chairs were voted on in committee forwarded to the Council president and Staff Council Office for the purpose of having them endorsed at today’s full Council meetings. The nominations are: Eileen Kristiansen, Interim-Chair, Benefits Committee and Interim-Chair, Salary & Budget Committee; JoAnne Montanye, Chair, Communications Committee; Cat Woodward, Interim-Chair, Education & Professional Development; Michelle Mullarkey-Smith, Chair, Employee Environment & Facilities Committee; Marilyn Baker, Chair, Internal Affairs Committee; Ida Russin, Chair, Recreation Committee; Rob Rohr, Chair Rules & Elections Committee. Beth explained that the volunteer interim chairs had committed to serving through the month of September and October if necessary. Approval of the newly elected, re-elected and interim standing committee chairs was unanimous.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & CORRESPONDENCE – Jeff Bukowski

The location of the next Staff Council Meeting on October 7th is the Livak Ballroom. All future Council meetings will take place there, at least through June 2010. The October deadline for Staffline submissions is September 19th. The new Staff Council Office hours are 8:00 AM to 3:30 PM Monday through Thursday, and 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM on Friday.

Annual staff recognition events are scheduled for the week of September 15th. Events include the 10-year Anniversary Luncheon on Monday, September 15th; the Staff Appreciation Luncheon on
Wednesday, September 17th; and the Staff Appreciation Dinner for those with 15 years or more the evening of Friday, September 19th.

PRESIDENT’S UPDATE – Beth Walsh

Beth reported she had provided a written address to the BOT and participated in Convocation. The SC President is no longer invited to give an address at Convocation due to shrinking schedules and time allotted to speakers. Since our August meeting, Beth has been making a personal effort toward outreach. She has scheduled use of a table in the Davis Center Atrium to provide information about, and to promote Staff Council. She welcomed others to join her on the third Friday of each month through spring 2009.

Beth provided an overview of how staff members bring forth concerns or issues. Staff may contact the office or a Staff Council representative via a phone call, email, conversation or contact sheet. Committees need to inform the SCO on the status of all outstanding contact sheets they may currently be working on. Regardless of how this contact is initiated, the first step is to forward any/all communication on to the SC office. The office will forward it the President, who will decide if topic is a valid item for a contact sheet and will send it on to the appropriate committee. The decision will be based on recent or current work on the same or similar issue and may require some investigation on the President’s part.

Prior to committees being formed and Committee Chairs being nominated and voted on, Beth and Jeff Bukowski met with the directors of Parking and Transportation, and Health and Wellness. The contacts were initiated by Beth and Jeff in order to follow-up on concerns brought to the attention of both the SC President and the SC Office, prior to our Standing Committees being formed.

A report regarding Parking at Gutterson was written, with the approval of P&T, explaining how the new “brown” parking permits will work. Another meeting with Emina Burak is planned to further discuss and address funding questions regarding the Health and Wellness program.

Beth concluded with informing the Council that Richard Cate, Interim VP for Finance and Administration and Interim Treasurer will address the Council at the October 7th meeting. She asked Council Representatives to solicit questions from the members of their units and to come prepared with questions.

COUNCIL ELECTIONS – Beth Walsh

This year marks only the second year of Staff Council in its new configuration and its effort to achieve campus-wide representation. The Council has the support of UVM’s President, Provost, Dean’s Council, Faculty Senate, and the Board of Trustees. The remaining challenge is to both inform and educate staff about the mission and purpose of Staff Council. The Staff Council brochure produced by the SC Communication’s Committee and distributed to all staff via campus-mail was a great step forward; however, more personal outreach is needed.

Beth told the Council it had grown from an average size organization of 14 to 24 in 13 months. She explained that total Council membership for FY 2009 should be 44, as per the 4/15/08 staff census provided by UVM’s Human Resources Office. Current Council membership as of September 1st is 24. There remain a total of 20 vacancies on Staff Council in 6 out of 17 units. These units include the
College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Medicine, Development and Alumni Relations, Student and Campus Life, Enrollment Management, Finance and Administration.

The matter of Council representative vacancies was discussed at length with President Fogel at Beth’s July and August meetings with him. On August 6th, another letter of support and plea for volunteers was issued by both UVM’s president and provost. This letter was sent to all staff, directors, chairs, deans, and administrators. It was at Beth’s August meeting that she shared her plans for campus-wide outreach. She scheduled several “Learn about Staff Council” information table sessions in the Davis Center Atrium on the third Friday of each month, from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM. Her first effort on Friday, August 29th, was quite successful with a great deal of traffic. Beth said both she and COM Representatives intend on requesting and staffing an information table in the HSRF Gallery in the next few weeks. And Jeff Bukowski, as Council Administrator, will meet with staff in Development and Alumni Relations at their next meeting on September 5th in an effort to both promote participation and address staff questions regarding Staff Council.

Beth promised to keep everyone apprised of ongoing recruitment efforts in each of the units with vacancies, mentioned above.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Recreation Committee (Ida Russin) – No comments or questions were put forth.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Beth reported that Michael Moser, a Research Specialist is the CALS Dean’s Office, has been selected as the new Staff representative on the Socially Responsible Investing Work Group (SRIWG). The appointment term is “ongoing” until either the SRIWG is disbanded or the appointee steps down.

Nominations are currently being sought for the Transportation and Parking Services Advisory Committee (TAPSAC) and the Traffic Board of Appeals. A request for nominations will be sent to all staff this week, via the staff listserve.

With the approval of the Committee Chairs, Beth said Executive Board would be meeting in the very near future. She explained that the Executive Board allows for two additional members elected annually by the Staff Council from among its regular membership. Beth indicated she would request nominations prior to next full Council meeting and expected nominees would be voted on October 7th.

PRESIDENT DANIEL FOGEL ADDRESSES THE COUNCIL

President Fogel began by thanking Council members for volunteering to serve. He has enjoyed supporting and watching Staff Council transform and become more representative. He said, “it’s very, very important for staff at this University to have a voice collectively embracing all members of the staff who are represented by Collective Bargaining Units and those who are not, to come together to give voice to the staff to the concerns of the staff, to help the staff shape the life and direction of the University and to serve as an advisory body to the administration and above all to the president.”

Further, President Fogel explained “the role (of Staff Council) is one of advocacy but also one of participation in the direction of the University. Staff Council, has through its leadership, done a great
deal of work these last couple of years in creating new bylaws and beginning to build membership. And as you know I am personally very supportive of this direction for Staff Council; Provost Hughes is extremely supportive of this. We have tried to make that support visible to all our colleagues in the University, for instance the appeals that we sent to the whole campus to people to stand for elections to populate the empty (Council) seats, and to make sure that every unit that’s eligible for representation in staff council has a place at the table.”

Fogel said the success that UVM has had in the last half-dozen years and the quality that has been built throughout its history, is largely a result of the dedicated, loyal talented staff. Staff are critical to the quality of the University and to the value that it creates for our students, faculty, staff and the communities that we serve. He thanked the Council representatives their service and he commended both its current leadership and its predecessors for creating the new direction for Staff Council.

As President Fogel further discussed the role of Staff Council Representatives, he asked them to communicate staff concerns, but to also relay the President’s messages to staff. He discussed the University Budget Challenges (August 27, 2008 memo) and explained that Vermont is also facing many tough decisions as they prepare their FY 2010 budget. UVM’s State appropriation for FY 09 was cut 2.5% or approximately one million dollars and there may be further reductions in our FY 09 appropriation when the legislature convenes in 2009. This means the University of Vermont must either increase revenue or cut costs, now.

As a result of the recent audit, new financial controls will be put in place. We are approximately $13 million over our FY 09 budget projections. A proposal before UVM’s Board of Trustees would draw down $15 million from the University’s Loan Fund Reserve, an account created when general fund dollars were used to lend money to undergraduates until VSAC assumed this service. The total value of UVM’s Loan Fund Reserve is currently $22 million.

Fogel explained that plans to address our projected cost overruns going forward will include hiring freezes, the elimination of positions that become vacant, increased financial controls including lower spending approval levels, etc. He went on to say that administration is awaiting staff recommendations for cost savings in various divisions.

Council Representatives asked President Fogel if staff should expect layoffs during this budget year. Fogel replied he got the “okay” from Interim Vice President Richard Cate to say, “There are no planned layoffs at this time.” That said, Fogel explained that the possibility of future cuts to our State appropriation and general fund may alter current plans.

President Fogel thanked everyone for their willingness to serve as advocates and as the voice for all staff. He also welcomed the opportunity to address future questions of Council Representatives.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.