SUMMARY OF THE UVM STAFF COUNCIL MEETING

September 4, 2012

University of Vermont President Tom Sullivan joined the Staff Council for a group photo and then addressed the Council with an overview of his priorities. Other business included the approval of the Council’s August 7, 2012 draft minutes, the nomination of two Council Representatives to serve on the Executive Board, confirmation of Standing Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs, nomination and confirmation of a Staff Council Representative to serve as Parliamentarian, and several announcements by Catherine Symans, Council President and Jeff Bukowski, Council Administrator.

**UVM’s 26th President addresses Staff Council** – Tom Sullivan

After only eight weeks on the job, President Sullivan addressed the Council with an overview of what he has focused his time on since his arrival at UVM; he talked about his first 100 days on the job; and spoke about his priorities as president. He reported that, since arriving at UVM, he has spent half his time on campus and the other half traveling around Vermont. His primary purpose has been to listen, to both internal and external constituents. President Sullivan has spent time on campus, meeting with each of UVM’s deans, and the faculty and staff in each college. Thus far, President Sullivan reported traveling to nine of Vermont’s fourteen counties where he listened to several constituencies (community leaders and alumni) share their vision for the University of Vermont and how to strengthen the relationship between UVM and the State of Vermont.

President Sullivan identified four areas where he feels he should focus his attention (as reported on the President’s website) and they are:

1) to promote financial access and affordability for our students by ensuring that our tuition remains reasonable and competitive, while being mindful of any debt that our students may incur as they complete their studies within four years;

2) to ensure that the University has a rich curriculum that balances a first-rate educational experience for all of our students from the theoretical to the practical application of new discoveries and ideas;

3) to support a research infrastructure and facilities that will enable our great faculty and researchers to discover and transmit new knowledge for the betterment of society and resolution of difficult societal problems; and finally,

4) to promote economic development and to support workforce needs throughout Vermont, working closely with political and business leaders to ensure that the University of Vermont is the economic engine of the state. We also will embrace the internationalization and diversification of the University, while at the same time encouraging administrative efficiencies in every task, so that the resources of the University will be aligned closely with UVM’s highest priorities and goals. No university or institution can advance excellence unless it continues to make wise and important investments that are strategically consistent with its mission and goals. Cost-cutting alone will not bring innovation, creativity, and imagination. There must be important new investments that will take us to an even greater level and
intensity in promoting innovation, research, and excellence in teaching and learning. The result will be a
greater academic distinctiveness and reputation.

President Sullivan focused on the thread that runs through all four goals, enhancing excellence and
quality. He shared how UVM’s reputation has been built around the undergraduate experience, and how
more attention needs to be given to expanding UVM’s graduate program. If UVM is to be a small, premier
research institution, we must acknowledge that there is an inextricable link between UVM’s graduate
program and its research.

The President’s time has also been spent fundraising in Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York. UVM
is in the quiet phase of its next very large and bold Capital Campaign. This money is needed to realize
dreams, to address the lengthy list of deferred maintenance, and to continue to be a talent magnet for
faculty and staff.

Before concluding with a Q&A session with Staff Council Representatives, President Sullivan shared how
he plans to make sure UVM has human resource policies and practices in place that are practical, salaries
that are competitive, and a place to work that is pleasant (addressing deferred maintenance), all in an effort
to support UVM staff and faculty.

**Staff Council President’s Update**

Council President Catherine Symans participated in Convocation along with 2400 first year students.
She also attended the first meeting of all the Staff Council committees except one, due to vacation.
Catherine enjoyed this opportunity to meet the committee members and learn about their potential work
and goals for the coming year.

At the August Leadership Meeting with Vice President for Executive Operations and Chief of Staff,
Gary Derr, the focus was on Staff Council’s education outreach campaign and information regarding the
union election including dates and location of the election. The Council’s leadership was advised to
direct any questions concerning the election to the Vermont Labor Relations Board (VLRB). Detailed
information can be found on the [Informed Choice website](#).

The Staff Council Officers’ first quarterly meeting with Associate Vice President of Human Resource
Services, Barbara Johnson, focused on a number of issues including union organizing updates, post-
retirement medical benefits (no change), performance appraisals which are still on schedule to be up and
running within the next year and a half as UVM move towards a People Admin upgrade, and the work
of Human Resource Services in the 2012-13 academic year. Also discussed was the grievance and
mediation policy and comprehensive diversity professional development, but there were no new
developments. In response to our inquiry as to how Staff Council could provide support to the work of
the University Benefits Advisory Council (UBAC), Vice President Johnson suggested that a major
initiative in which the Staff Council could be involved is the creation of a smoke-free/tobacco-free
campus at UVM. This three-year project, in collaboration with Fletcher Allen Health Care, will need a
campus-wide working group and will actively involve University governance groups. Vice President Johnson referred us to The University of Michigan’s [website] that documents their process for becoming a smoke-free campus. Other initiatives of the UBAC will include marketing health and wellness with “Know Your Numbers” and promotional communications regarding hearing and dental benefits.

As Staff Council President, Catherine attended her first Board of Trustees Executive Committee Meeting on August 10th. President Sullivan reported, by phone, on his numerous meetings and “listening sessions” with legislators, trustees, civic and development constituents and alumni since arriving at UVM in July. The President reported that the major themes from his visits have included requests for more Extension and Continuing Education opportunities, more contact in respective counties especially in the southern part of the state, and a general reaching out beyond the Burlington area. Refer to the Board of Trustees [Executive Committee website] for the complete agenda and resolutions. A complete Staff Council President’s report for August 2012 can be found [here].

Announcements

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 October edition of Staffline is Friday, September 14, 2012. This edition will be distributed on Monday, October 1st.

Confirmation of Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs

Chairs and Vice Chairs of Staff Council Standing Committees who were elected by their committees in August were formally approved by the Staff Council at today’s meeting. The committee leadership is as follows

CBB – Compensation, Benefits, and Budget
Chair: Rodman Cory
Vice Chair: Troy Krahl

OAUE – Outreach, Assessment, and University Engagement
No Chair or Vice Chair were elected, but there are individuals interested who needed to check in with supervisors and should have confirmation for the next meeting as to whether they can serve in this capacity.

PPDOE – Personal and Professional Development & Occupational Environment
Chair: Sharon Mone
Vice Chair: Laurie Juskiewicz
Social
Chair: Karen Lemire
Vice Chair: Marie Tiemann

Executive Board Appointments

In accordance with the Staff Council Bylaws, the Executive Board shall consist of the Staff Council President, Vice President, Immediate Past President, the Standing Committee chairpersons and vice-chairpersons, two additional members elected annually by the Staff Council from among its regular membership at the first committee meeting of the new Council year. In the event that a committee Chairperson or Vice Chairperson cannot attend, the chairperson or vice-chairperson is recommended to choose to send another member of the committee to serve in his/her place.

Robin Lockerby and Isis Erb stepped forward to serve as the two additional members of the Executive Board elected annually by the Staff Council. They were formally approved by the Council at this meeting.

Parliamentarian Appointment

In accordance with the Staff Council Bylaws, a Parliamentarian must be appointed each year to serve the Council. Naima Dennis stepped forward to serve as Parliamentarian and was formally approved by the Council at this meeting.

Other Business

The Staff Council Annual Retreat will take place Tuesday, September 25th, in the Livak Ballroom of the Davis Student Center, from 8:00am to 12:30pm. Council members were asked whether they preferred the retreat take place in the morning or afternoon, and they chose morning.

The next Staff Council meeting will take place in the Livak Ballroom located on the fourth floor of the Davis Student Center, Tuesday, October 2, 2012 at 12:05 p.m.