The most exciting news we have to report is the recent data received from Human Resources, Diversity, and Multicultural Affairs that 90.7% of staff received performance appraisals in 2017. This is a tremendous improvement over the past year’s number of 40% and reflects the significant effort put forth by HRDMA to improve the process and implement a new system over the course of the last several years. Concerns about the lack of performance appraisals and the importance of performance management to employee wellbeing was an issue originally put forth by Staff Council’s Personal and Professional Development Committee in 2013 and we are incredibly pleased by this encouraging outcome.

Staff Council’s Outreach Committee performed a series of focus groups this summer to explore staff perspectives of the new performance evaluation process and the compensation structure at the University of Vermont. Many staff shared that are appreciative of the opportunity to discuss their professional development with their supervisors, with some employees having their first performance appraisals ever. However, the current amount available for merit increases (.5%) is perceived as insufficient compensation for exceptional service. In addition, many employees reported concern about what they perceive as supervisory deficiencies, especially supervisors who are not knowledgeable about either UVM policies and procedures or general employment best practices. This is only the latest data we have that helps us understand the need for more sound, widespread supervisory training at UVM to ensure consistency and competence among our many supervisors. We hope to partner with other areas in the upcoming year to investigate the feasibility of different forms of supervisory education and support to improve this situation.

Last spring, Staff Council submitted recommendations to administrators regarding the parking and commuting needs the university community and the importance of taking this into consideration as our campus grows and evolves. No progress has yet been made on this issue as far as we are aware, but we are still committed to helping ensure that the University’s parking and commuting situation is sustainable. Reassessing policies that support alternative commuting and public transit (such as flexible schedules) is necessary, and Staff Council continues to hope administration will work with Transportation and Parking to develop a reasonable plan for parking expansion as well.
Staff Council Leadership is also engaged in several projects this year. First, we will continue building on the excellent and productive collaborations the past several years have brought us. In addition, I wish to develop a plan for better promoting and advertising the excellent benefits UVM staff have available (such as tuition remission, but also including lesser-known opportunities at UVM). We are also working with HRDMA to develop a mentoring or “jump start” program to better stay connected to new UVM staff - helping newly hired individuals connect to our community by supporting them after employee orientation to answer questions, connect them to resources and educate them on everything their place of employment has to offer.
This is my first meeting attending as Staff Representative. Topics that I would comment on are as follows:

The Board of Trustees must approve tuition and room and board for each academic year. This usually happens at the May board meeting, but this year, FAFSA changed the rules so that institutions can publish the next year’s rates, and UVM needs to align with our competitor institutions, which means we must establish the rates earlier. The AY18/19 room rate will increase 3.75%, and the board rate will increase 3.5%. Tuition will still be approved at the May board meeting.

UVM contracts with Cambridge Associates to manage our endowment investments and Cambridge Associates provide a report at every board meeting. Our endowment is growing slowly but steadily; over the last 11 years, it has gone from about $275 million to about $505 million. This includes additional contributions by alumni and donors to UVM, and returns on investment.

Claire Burlingham reported that the FY17 external audit is nearly completed, and she has every confidence that next month she will be able to report a clean (“Unqualified”) opinion from the auditors on our financial statements. This is a great accomplishment by the Division of Finance team, and those of us whose work affects the UVM financial statements.

The FY17 budget to actuals for the University overall resulted in a $2.7 million net surplus.

The UVM Foundation reported on fundraising so far on two capital projects under construction: the STEM complex has fundraised well, but needs an additional $18 million to complete its goal. The Ifshin Hall project (for the Grossman School of Business) is in the beginning of its fundraising, and needs $9 million more. A full report on all funding of projects will be brought to the board in February.

This committee approved deferred maintenance to McAuley Hall, to replace the “curtain walls” (slate and glass frame on the outside of the building). Repairs will occur during the summer of 2018.

Finally, the committee approved a contract with a company called Educational Advisory Board. The company will provide information from our Banner system that will help UVM improve student retention and advising by analyzing our own student data and patterns, provide a communication platform to our students, and provide information to student advisors on a student’s record, risk factors for the student, and resources for assistance.
Chair Sweeney called to order the Educational Policy and Institutional Resources (EPIR) Subcommittee for the October 2017 meeting of the UVM Board of Trustees. The Chair indicated that first set of reports (*Provost Report, Annual UVM Foundation Report, Annual Enrollment Report, Annual Career Success Action Plan Progress Report, Annual Information Technology Report and Capital Projects Progress Report*) were expected to be read by the subcommittee prior to the meeting and were open for questions.

Few clarifying questions were asked by Trustees or representatives.

Chair Sweeney then moved for the approval of the May, 2017 EPIR meeting minutes. The minute were approved.

Director of Capital Projects and Planning, Bob Vaughan proposed the Resolution Approving Residential Life FY 2018 Deferred Maintenance Project (*McAuley Hall*). This $3,000,000 deferred maintenance of McAuley Hall on Trinity Campus would replace the window system built in 1958. They target the design phase to take place this academic year, with the project beginning in the summer. The Board approved the resolution.

Faculty Senate Curricular Affairs Committee Chair, Laura Almstead presented her committee’s report, proposing the following three action items (all were approved):

*Resolution Approving the Creation of a Minor in Law and Society in the College of Arts and Sciences* - This new minor is a great example of faculty looking at resources and repackaging to create something new and relevant. The curriculum will be built from existing courses.

*Resolution Approving the Creation of a Minor in Emergency Medical Services in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences* - Also created using existing resources, this minor will meet a clearly expressed request from students.

*Resolution Approving the Creation of a MS in Physical Activity and Wellness Science in the Graduate College* - This 1-year master’s program will be unique, with few similar programs in the country. They anticipate a high demand based on applicants for UVM’s undergrad program.

Senior Vice President and Provost David Rosowsky and VP for Enrollment Management Stacey Kostell presented a student retention and advising software program for consideration, based on work from the Educational Advisory Board. The software houses student profile that would track grades, track usage of academic (and career) advising and tutoring services, and serve as a communication and contact management system. For example, a faculty member could reach easily reach out to students who scored poorly on an exam to a schedule a tutoring session. The
system would track the communication, the student’s attendance (or absence) at the tutoring session and the student’s subsequent grades. This has been a powerful retention tool at other institutions and is nominal in cost at approximately $200,000 per year – or $20 per student.

Vice President of Human Resources, Diversity and Multicultural Affairs Dr. Wanda Heading-Grant and the Director for Institutional Research, Alex Yin, presented Annual Diversity Report. Dr. Heading-Grant provided a compelling narrative on the UVM Identity Centers (Center for Cultural Pluralism, the Women’s Center, LGBTQA Center, Mosaic Center for Students of Color, Interfaith Center) and how vital they are to the experience of all students. VP Dr. Heading-Grant read testimonials from students whose lives have been positivity impacted by the support, education and community of the identity centers. She also spoke to recent demands from students related to diversity concerns. Wanda was pleased to report that on many issues, University Administration and the students were on the same page. In other areas, the conversation continues.

Director of Institutional Research Alex Yin then presented the new Catamount Data Center, an online resource providing interactive student data related to demographics, enrollment, retention, graduation rates, etc. As Director Yin noted, the data shows how the recruitment and retention of a diverse student body has improved over the years. It also clearly illustrates the story Dr. Heading-Grant shares in her report - there still remains a lot of work to be done to diversify and retain a diverse UVM community.

The Enterprise Risk Management Report which was to be the final presentation, related to Title IX (Sexual Assault), was moved to the February 2018 meeting.

Chair Sweeney then moved to adjourn.