Summary of Staff Council Meeting

November 1, 2011

November’s meeting included a presentation on the UVM Foundation by Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations, Rich Bundy and a presentation on the Strategic Initiatives Project by Vice President for Executive Operations, Gary Derr. Other business included the approval of the Council’s October 4, 2011 minutes, and several announcements by Council President, Ida Russin and Council Administrator, Jeff Bukowski.

UVM Foundation Presentation

Vice President Rich Bundy provided an overview of the UVM Foundation, its mission and vision. The current Development and Alumni Relations division will transition on January 1, 2012 into the UVM Foundation with a UVM Alumni Association. This new model will allow the Foundation and its board to involve and engage a larger number of donors, have greater focus toward increasing private support, and provide leadership continuity around UVM’s long-term fundraising efforts. Rich emphasized that the Foundation is dedicated to supporting the University of Vermont and the fundraising priorities for the Foundation are set by UVM.

Beginning January 1, 2012, a fee of five percent will be assessed by the UVM Foundation on all gift receipts at the time the gift is made. The income derived from the fee will be used for Foundation operating expenses. This fee and the five percent rate is the norm for University-affiliated foundations nationally.

In the early years of its operations, the Foundation will continue to be funded primarily through the UVM General Fund, according to a service agreement between the Foundation and the University. Over time, the new funding model will reduce substantially the Foundation’s reliance on the University’s General Fund for the bulk of its operating expenses and make the Foundation a sustainably self-funded organization. Initially, there will not be a dramatic change. Over a period of years, however, the General Fund support for fundraising activities will decline substantially as total giving and giving to the Foundation endowment grow.

The Foundation is currently in the ‘quiet phase’ of a $500M eight-year, capital campaign that began July 1, 2011. The plan is to announce the campaign publically in 2015, allowing time to determine if the $500M goal needs to be modified (increased or decreased). Twenty-percent of this campaign’s proceeds will be used to fund capital improvements and the remaining eighty-percent will benefit student scholarships, increase the number of endowed faculty and fund programmatic priorities. The staff component in this campaign may be found in the programmatic piece.

For more information, the UVM Foundation now has a website www.alumni.uvm.edu/foundation.

Strategic Initiatives Project Presentation

Vice President for Executive Operations Gary Derr provided Staff Council with a presentation on The Strategic Initiatives Project (SIP). Gary began by explaining that SIP addresses many of the concerns expressed by Staff Council over the last several years, by developing a plan for a long-term sustainable budget. The SIP is focused on, “Positioning the University of Vermont to thrive and excel in challenging times.”

The SIP is a five-year project based on UVM’s Five Strategic Goals as well as several financial imperatives. The financial imperatives are driven by the desire for a sustainable budget that takes into account: declining
demographics; increased aid needs due to the lingering recession; restrained tuition increases (3.5% or less); and increased competition for external funding. The combination of strategic plan goals and the financial imperatives resulted in the Strategic Initiatives Project (SIP) and the development of five teams that have been working over the last six months to identify what UVM needs to do to be successful. These teams include:

1. Diversity & Internationalization (Invest)
2. TRI & Research (Invest)
3. Student Success & Satisfaction/Gen Ed (Invest)
4. Net Revenue Enhancement (Find new ways to generate revenue for Investment)
5. Cost Structure & Productivity Improvement (Liberate revenue for Investment)

The Net Revenue Enhancement team is charged with identifying opportunities to generate revenue, with a target of $12M.

The Cost Structure and Productivity Improvement team’s purpose statement charges them with analyzing our cost structure, recommending reductions (a target of $24M in cost savings over a 5-year period), and developing criteria and metrics that will allow for evaluating these recommendations. This team reviewed each department on campus and assigned them to one of four planning centers or rings. The center ring, representing UVM’s core mission, is the Academic Experience. The departments identified with Academic Experience were chosen because their costs are associated with instruction, research, creative activity and public outreach that produce new knowledge and learning outcomes. The outer rings all support UVM’s core mission. The second ring is Direct Support of the Academic Experience, the third ring is Co-Curricular Experience, and the fourth (or outer ring) is Business Operations (general administration, facilities & grounds, finance & accounting, etc.) Financial data from 2008-2010 was reviewed for the departments identified in each of these “rings” to understand general fund growth rates over this period and the impact on Academic Experience, Direct Support for the Academic Experience, Co-Curricular Experience, and Business Operations. Each area has also been broken down further, by purpose codes, to identify specific increases in expenses.

Draft criteria have been identified for determining the strategic value of the Academic Experience when assessing each department or program. These criteria will be vetted by several bodies before they are adopted.

Gary addressed concerns voiced by some, prior to today’s presentation on SIP, asking why ‘staff’ are not included among the criteria to be used in assessing a department or program’s strategic value as it pertains to the center ring, Academic Experience. He said staff are critical to the success of the Academic Experience; however, it is faculty and their research that speak to a program’s value and recognition. He emphasized that this does not diminish the value of staff at UVM and said, as criteria are developed for assessing the programs identified in the outer rings there will be much greater reference to staff as there are a limited number of faculty in departments that fall under Co-Curricular Experience and Business Operations.

The next step in the SIP process is a Strategic Value/Financial Attractiveness Assessment (SVFA) for the Academic Experience. SVFA will utilize established criteria to map units/programs and identify candidates for disinvestment (cost reduction), redesign (financial attractiveness improvement), and will guide decisions about strategic investment.

The teams will complete their work by December 2011 and present their recommendations regarding revenue generation and strategic investments. In spring of 2012, the Cost Structure and Productivity Enhancement team will recommend prioritized opportunities for cost savings. Spring 2012 will provide opportunity for campus engagement
around the proposed cost savings and the results of the SVFA. More information on SIP is available online at www.uvm.edu/provost/strategicinitiatives.

Council President’s Update

Council President Ida Russ reported that she attended the recent Board of Trustees’ (BOT) Executive Board Meeting on Friday, October 21, 2011. Her report to the BOT and the Staff Representatives’ reports appeared in the November issue of Staffline. Ida’s report highlighted the outcomes of the Staff Council Survey results from last April as well as the top five issues that are of concern to staff. She thanked the Board for recognizing the Staff Council’s 40th Anniversary, but closed by saying the Staff Council remains concerned about salary increases for non-represented staff at UVM.

Ida reported participating in a meeting of the BOT Annual Review Sub-Committee where they discussed trends in Presidential/Executive Compensation. These trends included simplicity around compensation language, performance based awards, the ability to address the candidate’s concerns around family, and monitoring other commitments the future president or candidates may have (outside of UVM) in addition to their responsibilities at UVM.

Ida thanked Staff Council Vice President Michelle Smith for her tireless efforts and passion around serving on UVM’s Irene Recovery Planning Committee, where they have met weekly in an effort to plan and help coordinate UVM’s response to the needs of Vermonters still struggling to recover from the devastation that Tropical Storm Irene caused.

Announcements

The Staff Council Executive Board has been asked to interview the final candidates for the position of UVM President in January. While the Executive Board will represent Staff Council and the concerns of staff, the Open Forum Presentations and Receptions afterwards are open to the entire University Community. There are plans to communicate to the entire University community the Open Forum Presentation dates, once the final number of candidates coming to UVM is determined.

Two additional volunteer days have been scheduled as part of UVM’s Irene Recovery Effort: Saturday, November 12th and Wednesday, November 16th. Volunteers will leave at 8 a.m. and return to campus by 5 p.m. Transportation will be provided for pre-determined relief areas affected by the storm. Space is limited and you must register online by November 8th.

The Staff Council’s Holiday Bazaar will take place Thursday, December 1, 2011 in the Davis Center’s Grand Maple Ballroom. We need volunteers to donate baked goods and help with the event throughout the day. We have created an electronic volunteer sign-up form that was included in Staffline on November 1st, and ask that you help promote this request for volunteers. Here is the link: http://www.signupgenius.com/go/holiday1379.

The submissions deadline for the December edition of Staffline is Friday, November 11, 2011.

Other Business

The next Staff Council meeting will take place in the Livak Ballrooms, 4th Floor Davis Center, Tuesday, December 6, 2011 at 12:05 p.m.