MINUTES

PRESENT: Marilyn Baker, Ernie Buford, Marty Burrows, Jeff Bukowski (Ex-officio), Deb Bryan (designee for Mary Schliecker-Brigham), Rodman Cory, David Ebenstein, Patricia Forguites, Mark Hall, Eileen Hanerfeld (Past President), Eileen Kristiansen, Shari Langlois, Rita Lemire, Sharnel Martelle, Joanne Montanye, Michelle Smith-Mullarkey, Mary Parent, Diane Pontecorvo, Jon Reidel (Vice-President), Mary Reilly, Rob Rohr, Ida Russin, Catherine Symans, Diane Trono, Beth Walsh (President), Cat Woodward.

ABSENT: Erica Caloiero, Eric Hoefel, Jennifer Larsen, Aliza Mansolino, Thi Nguyen, Anne-Marie Resnik, Todd Stewart,

GUESTS: Barbara Johnson, Scott Lewins.

President Beth Walsh called the meeting to order at 12:07 p.m.

BARBARA JOHNSON, ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT HUMAN RESOURCES

Beth Walsh welcomed and introduced our guest speaker, Barbara Johnson.

Johnson last met with the Council to discuss the planning process of restructuring UVM’s Human Resources area. She thanked the Council for this second opportunity to return and talk some more about UVM’s Human Resource Services and the changes that were recently implemented.

The decision to restructure wasn’t merely for internal needs as much as it was done improve their service to people within and outside the University. Instead of having to “find your way around HR” there are now multiple service areas within Human Resource Services (HRS).

The Management Consulting Solutions group is the go to group for business managers. Johnson explained that it’s always been clear that leadership knew they could go to her or Lee Stewart to get their needs addressed, and business managers knew who to contact to get the information they needed. However, there was no specific clear place for employees to get their questions answered or needs addressed. As a result, the Employee Information and Advising Services group was created to address employee compensation, benefits, job status, and matters of record. This group is available to address performance review questions, whether or not it’s okay to apply for jobs within UVM, and questions requiring advice.

When entering 228 Waterman offices, there are now two employees who make up the “HRS Information Center Team.” They manage walk-in, telephone and e-mail contacts, providing timely and accurate information regarding payroll and benefits production. These employees are part of the larger HRS Administrative Services Team and they will rotate with data entry positions in the
Colchester HRS office. This will allow cross-training and keep everyone current with ongoing changes in PeoplesSoft. The backup for this team is the Employee Solutions Team, Amanda McIntyre and Holly Zanes (Employee Advisors). They are the ones who will talk with staff about career advice; they will coach employees on how to address communication issues with supervisors. They will manage a full range of employee questions privately and confidentially.

The Employee Solutions Team is not located adjacent to the Management Consulting Team and they do not share information. However, if the Employee Solutions Team sees a pattern where several employees express concern about a particular manager, they might share an observation and the possibility of a communication problem needing attention with the Management Consulting Team.

HRS has developed a Service Promise comprised of only four words: Trusted Partner… Smart Solutions. Johnson explained Trust is absolutely key to the work they do. Partnering is a description of how they want to work with employees. And they hope their Solutions are efficient, effective and the best possible solutions available. HRS intends to create many opportunities for feedback about their Service Promise.

HRS has also identified five Operating Principles which won’t be posted, but they were created with the intent of being more collaborative. These are designed to describe and communicate how they want to work with employees and partners. The idea is to eliminate hierarchy and work collaboratively. Barbara and her leadership team met with the SC officers to stress that they want to be an institutional resource for Staff Council and staff individually. HRS will reach out to Staff Council with requests to appoint members of future ad hoc committees. HRS is linking their work more closely to the University’s Strategic Plan part of the University’s operation, getting the Staff front and center on Strategic Planning Process which is largely focused on the academic enterprise because that’s the business were in.

Q – “When did the process of restructuring begin?”
A – Johnson explained the process began before she arrived. These changes are the result of a transformation of what used to be known as Personnel function to Human Resources. It’s been a transition from “behind the doors transactional functions” to focusing on “interacting more with employees and providing direct service.”

The restructuring that was done and the type of services needed at UVM are unique to employees experiencing this University at a period of time when we have dynamic leadership and an open governance process and a lot of change happening, focus on systems changes and increased undergraduate enrollment. The restructuring was developed organically, as a result of input and feedback. Their focus on service and Operating Principles will allow them to improve as they go.

Q – “News of the new HRS open-door policy and Employee Information and Advising Services is something the SC would like to publicize on its website and in Staffline. Is this something you would support and who should I contact?”
A – Johnson suggested either Holly Zanes or Amanda McIntyre, or their manager Greg Brown would be happy to support this effort.

Q – “Do you foresee these changes affecting the career-pay system?”
A – We need to finish the Career-Pay System. The third phase is identifying the set of knowledge, skills and abilities that match each job family so employees know what they need for employee
development to advance or be successful where they are. This definition was never completed. Johnson said this is on their work plan going forward, and they’ll have to work with SC to develop this. This can’t be done in a vacuum. HRS will have to talk with the people who do the work. They will have to come up with a process to get this information to the people to create the KSA charts with each job family.

Johnson said another area of concern is the markets that are used for recruitment purposes because they are shifting. The availability of employees who have the levels of knowledge or training, not required in the past, is becoming more scarce. The workforce is shrinking and we have to do more regional recruiting.

Q – “What are we doing to address internal compression and is HR working with managers to help them identify ways to adjust this problem?”
A – We can’t really solve the compression problem unless we have a period of time when we have more resources. We can still compete and hire people, but market pressures are such that we may have to offer more money to get people in the door. There are pay-band adjustments that are made every year. However, as long as our salary pools are relatively low, it’s hard to take care of compression. UVM does pay attention to this and this is an area where we could be more transparent, and share these numbers with the SC Salary and Budget Committee and we’ll be coming to you with this.

Q- “If recruiting markets are shifting, is there discussion about developing staff from within our institution? Instead of looking backward at an employee’s performance through the use of annual evaluations, what about implementing Individual Employee Development Plans?”
A - Developing people already at UVM is our richest resource. The current evaluation is a “look back.” I am personally promoting the addition of an Employee Development Plan for everyone at UVM. Some employees may be fine with where they are at, but they need to be provided with the opportunity to have this discussion. Managers need to be able to focus on how they are going to use their resources to cover that full range of employee development needs within their department. The whole idea of performance communication should not be an annual event. The evaluation does need to happen annually; however, employees need to hear about performance all year long. This is something HRS would be looking to establish. But by having a management consultant working directly in the department, they hope to make this change.

Q- “Although staff appreciate the annual week of recognition (the luncheons and award recognition), the annual gifts have not always been appreciated. One of the concerns both my colleagues and I have is the environmental impact some of the gifts have when they wind up in the waste basket along with envelopes used to distribute them. Perhaps a donation to a local charity on behalf of staff would be better appreciated and understood.”
A - This is an example of a program that’s developed where many parts of the Staff Recognition Week are just great. A great deal of feedback has been received, not just about the bracelet, but given we’re in tough economic times what else could we do to recognize people. We’ll be taking another look at this program.

Beth thanked Barbara Johnson for her presentation and the time she afforded for Q&A. Johnson thanked the Council for this opportunity and invited members to contact her directly with future questions.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES – October 7, 2008
Beth explained there was one minor correction to the list of attendees. There were no further requests for corrections. That said, the minutes were accepted and approved as corrected.

**INTRODUCTIONS AND APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS** – Beth Walsh

Beth announced that Mary Reilly’s name has been put forth as the Salary & Budget Committee recommendation for their new chair. The Council unanimously approved this recommendation.

The Education and Professional Development Committee is meeting next week when they will hopefully approve a new chair.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS & CORRESPONDENCE** – Jeff Bukowski

The next Staff Council Meeting is Tuesday, December 2nd, in the Livak Ballroom, the same day as the Council’s Holiday Bazaar. The deadline for submissions to the December edition of *Staffline* is November 14th. Jeff announced he will be out of the office the week of November 10th, and referred everyone to contact Diane Trono in his absence.

The Staff Council Office, in concert with the Recreation Committee, is now selling Entertainment Books (filled with discount coupons), the First Night Buttons ($12 for adults and $5 for children), and Ski & Ride Day Vouchers to both Jay Peak and Smugglers’ Notch. We are also giving away Bolton Valley Coupons valued at $10 toward a full-day lift ticket.

Diane announced the need for a vendor to sell fresh balsam wreaths at the upcoming Holiday Bazaar and asked Council members to pass this request along.

**PRESIDENT’S UPDATE** – Beth Walsh

Beth reported that she attended several meetings. She met with Katherine Friedman, regarding the 2010 Affirmative Action Climate Survey. She also talked with Friedman about efforts to involve all staff in this survey, including grant-funded staff (allowing them to participate in any way they can).

With the assistance of the Executive Board Beth was able to send Dale Jaffe, Associate Provost, a lengthy list to of staff members who were identified for their knowledge and expertise to serve on the Strategic Action Work Groups including: Institutional Efficacy; Diversity; Academic Programs; Scholarship; and Student Experience. Beth is personally representing staff on the Student Experience Work Group.

Beth attended the Vermont Women in Higher Education annual Conference in Fairlee in October and attended a full-day workshop on “Women in Leadership: Finding Your Voice to Greatness.” The keynote was given by Peggy Williams, former president of Lyndon State and Ithaca College. Peggy provided a list of “must read” books about leadership which has inspired Beth to organize a leadership group of women from UVM and possibly around the state. UVM was well represented at this conference.

Beth, Jon and Jeff met with Lee Stewart, Greg Brown, Caryn Gronvold, and Barbara Johnson to discuss Human Resource Services and their many recent changes in organizational structure. The
discussion focused on the collaborative working relationship of Staff Council and HRS. Specifically, if a staff member comes to the Council with questions about their personal benefits, not about whether there should be changes to benefits, then they need to be referred to Employee Information and Advising Services.

Beth will be attending the Campus Leadership forum on Wednesday, November 5th, and is scheduled (along with Jon and Jeff) to meet with President Fogel and Gary Derr on Friday November 7th.

Jon reported he attended the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees on behalf of Beth in October. He reported the majority of this meeting was in executive session. He was able to share that Richard Cate reported that there were three job orders, or three sections to a contract with J.A. Morrisey Inc. where the total sum of the contract exceeded the limit where the Board would normally have to approve the expense, but not the individual sections. Although this was not necessary, given UVM’s recent experience where disclosure wasn’t always the rule, Jon said Cate’s efforts to promote transparency were appreciated. The Hazing Policy at the University was revised for some minor changes to current titles, names and sanctions (mostly housekeeping changes).

There were two Outreach tables since the October meeting, one in the Davis Center Atrium and the other in Waterman. There’s always a great deal of traffic in the Davis Center, but it consisted mostly of students. Beth takes the opportunity to provide free apple, in return for a promise that they find and thank a Staff Member for their efforts. She reported she was disappointed in the traffic at Waterman, at the information desk adjacent to Student Services. The next Outreach Table is scheduled for November 14th in the Davis Center.

Staff Council Committee Chairs were reminded to inform the Staff Council Office of the status of all outstanding contact sheets that they may currently be working on, and to forward any new contact sheets to either the Council Office or to Beth directly.

Several invited guests have agreed to attend future Staff Council meetings. In December, Frank Bryan, Professor of Political Science, will address the topic of Public Speaking; in January, Provost Hughes will give his annual address; at the February meeting, Patricia Prelock, Professor of Communication Sciences, will discuss Leadership; in March, Jill Tarule, Associate Provost Faculty and Academic Affairs, will talk about the Accreditation Process; and in April, William Cats-Baril, Professor of Business Administration, will discuss Consensus Building.

**COUNCIL ELECTIONS** – Beth Walsh

Beth explained she is encouraged by employee interest, and she will remain vigilant in her and the Council’s efforts to fill the remaining vacant seats. The 13 vacant seats include five openings within the College of Medicine, five within Administrative and Facility Services, one from University Financial Services, and two from Student and Campus Life.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Ernie Buford asked about the Benefits Committee’s work on the contact sheet regarding the tuition Remission Request form currently used at UVM and the questions about comprehensive fees coverage on courses taken for credit by the spouse or civil union partners of a UVM employee.
Rita Lemire, Benefits Committee Chair, explained that two recommendations have been forwarded to HRS regarding this sheet. The first recommendation asks that the current form, Tuition Remission Request, provide information about the fee coverage and the second request asks that HRS write-up a submission to the Staffline to address this benefit to employees and how they can apply for this in the interim.

Rodman Cory is working with the Staff Council Office and Rita Lemire, in an effort to draft language.

No other comments or questions were put forth.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Jeff announced that Staff Council Representative, Anne-Marie Resnik has agreed to serve as the Staff Representative on the Campus Master Planning Committee.

Beth explained the Staff Council’s official position on the unionization of staff has historically has remained neutral. The Council continues to support information being available to all staff. As Council representatives, she asked that everyone to remain neutral, “Staff Council does not feel it is in competition with the Union.” If individuals feel strongly that they need to share their position on unionization, Beth asked that Council representatives make it clear that they are expressing their personal opinion and not that of Staff Council.

At the last Executive Board meeting, work on several unfinished Policy Statements was assigned. If you are interested in working on any of the following policies, please contact the lead person: Policy and Procedures Manual ~ Jeff Bukowski; Conflict of Interest ~ Rodman Cory; Representative Policy Statement ~ Beth Walsh; Working Relationships Policy Statement ~ Beth Walsh, Joanne Montanye and Diane Trono; Election Policy Statement ~ Rob Rohr and Rules and Elections; Presidential Policy Statement ~ Marilyn Baker and Internal Affairs; Removal Policy Statement ~ Michelle Smith-Mularkey and Jon Reidel.

**AUDIENCE COMMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.