SUMMARY OF THE UVM STAFF COUNCIL MEETING

November 6, 2012

A presentation was made to Staff Council by Joel Shapiro, Director of Human Resources Organizational Services; Joe Speidel, Director of Community Relations; and Laura Smith, Administratieve Assistant in the President’s Office, regarding a volunteerism initiative for staff members. Other business included the approval of the Council’s October 2, 2012 draft minutes, several announcements by Catherine Symans, Council President and Jeff Bukowski, Council Administrator, a discussion on the November 13 & 14 Runoff Election for possible union representation for some staff and future work to better promote Staff Council.

Continuing Education Presentation to Staff Council – Joel Shapiro, Joe Speidel and Laura Smith

A presentation was made to Staff Council by Joel Shapiro, Director of Human Resources Organizational Services; Joe Speidel, Director of Community Relations; and Laura Smith, Administratieve Assistant in the President’s Office. They are spearheading a proposal to create an ongoing structure that would encourage service/volunteerism among staff members at UVM. This idea came out of the response UVM took to help with Tropical Storm Irene Recovery throughout Vermont last year. In the past year since this initiative’s conception, they have met with the State, outside agencies, private businesses, and other higher education institutions to identify strengths and challenges of implementing such a program at UVM. Citing a lack of focal organization on service as one challenge, they outlined in the proposal some possible solutions in order to make service a more visible and accessible activity for UVM staff:

- Forming a committee with a student coordinator to organize volunteer opportunities
- Obtaining funding for recognition events and awards
- Gaining support from UVM leadership, namely President Sullivan
- Initiating a branding campaign with a logo, website and use of social media
- Providing UVM staff members with two days of paid leave to pursue service projects as individuals, as departments, or large scale University wide days

With Staff Council, they also discussed some potential challenges with such an initiative. For example guidelines and supervision would be needed to verify and record staff’s volunteer efforts. Ample and effective communication was also addressed, citing the potential use of the Lynx system (used by current UVM students) and the reinvigoration of Catamounts Care (used by the Foundation and Alumni Association). Depending on funding, they may utilize a committee of volunteers to help plan service projects, along with the help of the United Way for planning larger-scale events. And Staff Council posed the question of whether such an initiative would shadow the importance of individual volunteer work (outside from an organized group); Joe replied that their goal is to embrace both individual and group volunteerism.

In addition, they also appealed to Staff Council to review the proposal and consider endorsing it prior to it being sent to members of the Administration. The presenters also felt that with the help of Staff Council to communicate service days throughout UVM’s staff, they could reach and engage a wider audience. Ultimately, they would like to see more than 500 UVM staff members participating in each
day of service and perhaps later a civic engagement center on campus for staff, community members and alumni.

**Staff Council President’s Update – Catherine Symans**

Last month, Provost Jane Knodell asked for a list of at least four staff nominees from the College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences for membership on the Dean’s Search Committee. A list of five suggested staff-nominees was submitted, and this past week, President Tom Sullivan announced the appointment of the Committee which includes staff member Marnie Owen, Academic/Student Services Advisor in CEMS.

In September, Provost Knodell announced the development of an Envisioning Environment at UVM – a cross-college faculty workgroup charged with conducting an inventory of the strengths of environmental education and research at UVM. The work group is co-chaired by Stephanie Kaza, Professor of Environmental Studies at the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources and Beverley Wemple, Associate Professor, Department of Geography in the College of Arts and Sciences. The group has been conducting weekly public forums and will report its findings to President Sullivan, Senate President Julie Roberts and Provost Knodell by December 20, 2012. You can find additional information about the work group, the public forum schedule and accompanying documents at [http://www.uvm.edu/provost/envisioningenvironment/](http://www.uvm.edu/provost/envisioningenvironment/).

Following a September memo from Provost Knobell regarding the Strategic Initiatives Program, a committee is to be formed to develop an initial process for an Administrative Program Review at UVM. Staff Council submitted four very qualified self-nominations from among Staff Council Representative, Committee Participants, and Appointed Representatives. The Provost will be selecting one person for membership.

Last month, Catherine attended the Precipice or Crossroads symposium which was a chance for participants to hear and to get into dialogue with leading thinkers from around the country about the many challenges and opportunities that mark the road ahead for institutions like UVM. Its six panel discussions and two keynote speeches over the three days discussed rising tuition, state appropriation reductions, and the future of higher education in general. To read a report on the symposium, please visit: [http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmpr/?Page=news&storyID=14571&category=ucommall](http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmpr/?Page=news&storyID=14571&category=ucommall)

The first meeting of the newly formed President’s Advisory Council will take place on November 6th. The main discussion item will be the Strategic Action Plan, which include the following four goals that President Sullivan highlighted in his installation speech:

- Promoting Access and Affordability
- Advancing Academic Excellence and Cultivating Talent
- Identifying Necessary Investments
- Instilling an Institutional Commitment to Efficiency and Effectiveness

In addition, the next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Nov. 7.
The next Staff Council leadership meeting with Gary Derr, Vice President for Executive Operations, has been rescheduled to take place after the runoff election vote, on Nov. 28. At this meeting will be a discussion of the results of the election and next steps that will be taken.

**Announcements**

**Staff Council Shopping Bus Trip**

More than 40 staff members, retirees and guests have signed up to take part in the Nov. 17 shopping bus trip to No Conway, N.H. Limited space is still available for those interested through the end of this week. For more information, see the Reservation and Risk & Release Forms [here](http://www.uvm.edu/~stffcncl/).

**Discount Tickets, Coupons and Vouchers**

Discount ski vouchers and coupons to Jay Peak and Bolton Valley will be available in the Staff Council office later this month and in early December, respectively. Coupons/vouchers for Smuggler’s Notch are currently available. More information (including pricing) can be found here: [http://www.uvm.edu/~stffcncl](http://www.uvm.edu/~stffcncl).

Additionally, discount tickets on hockey games will be available later this month.

**Buy Local Coupon Book**

The Buy Local Coupon Book is available in the Staff Council Office for $14 ($6 original price) and will be on sale until early December or while supplies last. Click [here](http://www.uvm.edu/~stffcncl/) for more information.

**Holiday Bazaar and Food Drive**

The Staff Council’s Annual Holiday Bazaar and Food Drive will take place on Thursday, December 6, 2012 from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. All tables except for one are filled. Staff, faculty, students, retirees, and alumni are encouraged to attend, volunteer or donate a baked good. Similar to last year, a Food Drive to benefit the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf will take place during the event. One free raffle ticket (limit one per person) will be given to those who make a non-perishable food donation.

For more information about the holiday bazaar, visit [http://www.uvm.edu/~stffcncl/?Page=holidaybazaar.html](http://www.uvm.edu/~stffcncl/?Page=holidaybazaar.html)

A sign-up sheet to volunteer or donate a baked good was circulated. You can also sign up to **Volunteer at the Event here**. Or you can sign up to **Donate a Baked Good here**.

Additionally, the Staff Council office will be closed the week of Thanksgiving, Nov. 19-23.

**Education Outreach Campaign Discussion**
Fliers were put up today with more information about the runoff election scheduled for Nov. 13 and 14. These will be mailed out next week, and Jeff will email it out as well. Hopes are that this communication will bolster 80% participation in the vote. Staff Council members are encouraged to share this flier in their units.

The Council continued a discussion of encouraging non-exempt staff in the Administrative, Technical, and Specialist job families to participate in an upcoming runoff election, as 1/5 non-represented staff members did not vote in the last election and the Council aims to obtain an accurate reflection of the feelings of UVM’s non-exempt staff.

The Council also continued its discussion on how to further highlight the Staff Council’s role and purpose at UVM. The newly formed Staff Council Ad Hoc Committee has been working on developing a video that will highlight the purpose and importance of the Staff Council at UVM. The Committee hopes to connect the video with a poster campaign that uses images of the staff in the video along with written testimonials and information about the organization. The purpose of this video and poster campaign is to promote awareness of Staff Council. The project aims to be complete by the end of January.

Additionally, the Council discussed the possibility of using representative webpages (or a blog) to bolster Staff Council’s message. It was suggested that a pilot program may be useful as building webpages can be difficult without tools readily available. A representative page already exists on Staff Council’s landing page, so it may be possible to transition this into a more personal way of communicating to other staff the role of Staff Council.

The idea of expressing credit for Staff Council in campus-wide communications was discussed. This would be a way to bolster Staff Council’s accomplishments, but the logistics of getting such credit in a memo from President Sullivan, for example, are not so easy.

**Other Business**

Questions regarding the staff service proposal can be forwarded to Jeff Bukowski. Staff Council will discuss its potential support of this initiative at the next meeting.

Michelle Smith provided a brief on UVM’s Clean Energy Fund to provide monies for clean, renewable energy sources on campus. Ideas for the Clean Energy Fund can be submitted via the Office of Sustainability’s web page, or by following this link: [http://www.uvm.edu/sustain/news-events/news/clean-energy-fund-opens-call-for-ideas](http://www.uvm.edu/sustain/news-events/news/clean-energy-fund-opens-call-for-ideas). Submissions will be accepted through the end of next week.

The next Staff Council meeting will take place in the Livak Ballroom located on the fourth floor of the Davis Student Center, Tuesday, Dec. 4, 2012 at 12:05 p.m.