Summary of Staff Council Meeting

December 6, 2011

December’s meeting included a presentation on the newly ratified United Academics Contract and the Implications for Staff by Vice President for Finance and Administration, Richard Cate. Other business included the approval of the Council’s November 1, 2011 minutes, and several announcements by Council President, Ida Russin and Council Administrator, Jeff Bukowski.

United Academics Contract and Implications for Staff

Vice President Richard Cate spoke about the United Academics (UA) contract (ratified on December 5th) and repeated what Interim Bramley had said on previous occasions, that it is the goal of the Administration to have a unified approach for salaries and benefits across the institution. Richard prefaced that this unified approach was not absolute, as the mediation process was still underway regarding the contracts for employees represented by United Electrical Workers, Local 267 (UE) and Teamsters. Richard reported the UA as having negotiated 4.9% in raises over three years with zero-percent in FY12, two-percent in FY13, and 2.9% in FY14. The focus of today’s presentation was on Post-Retirement Medical Benefits (PRMB). The Council agreed that the most significant detail in the UA contract regarding PRMB was that employees would have until June 30, 2014 to make a personal decision about their retirement plans. Details regarding the new UA contract should be posted shortly on their website (http://unitedacademics.org/). It is Richard’s hope that an announcement regarding PRMB will be made to all UVM employees in first or second month of 2012.

Council President’s Update

Council President Ida Russin relayed how the Presidential Search Committee recently traveled to Boston to interview twelve candidates for the position of UVM President. Every candidate asked to consider an interview accepted, inferring that UVM’s reputation is strong in the field of higher education and is seen as “attractive” to these potential leaders. In January 2012, UVM will welcome four or five final candidates to campus to interview for the position of University President. Staff Council’s Executive Board has been asked to take part in the formal interview process. Ida invited the Staff Council to submit their suggestions for potential questions by Friday, December 9th to the Staff Council Office.

The BOT Annual Review Sub-Committee has asked for input on the topic of Presidential/Executive Compensation; the deadline for input was Thursday, December 2nd. Council members who still had concerns and had yet to reply were asked to submit these by Thursday, December 8th at the very latest.

Ida, along with other governance body leaders on campus, was invited to be present at the November 8th press conference where Governor Shumlin announced he has appointed a small working committee to examine the relationship between Vermont and UVM. It will look at all aspects of UVM, including its governance, funding, impact on economic development, access and affordability. In particular, Ida said, it will look at whether the state’s appropriation to UVM is being fully utilized. The Committee is expected to issue its findings and recommendations on how the relationship between Vermont and the University can be optimized, by July, 2012.
Lastly, Ida reported that UVM is moving toward an expanded distance education model. UVM’s BOT has contracted to partner with Bisk Education, Inc., to develop professional graduate degree distance education programs.

**Announcements**

The submissions deadline for the December edition of *Staffline* is Friday, December 9, 2011. First Night Burlington Buttons are now on sale now through Monday, December 19th in the Staff Council Office. The price for an adult button is $16 and a child’s button is $5. A Presidents’ Day Bus Trip to the Montreal Casino is planned for February 20th. The cost for UVM employees and retirees is $21 and non-UVMers is $26. The Social Committee has partnered with Vermont’s Green Mountain Tours Company to offer an overnight trip to New York City and Broadway on April 14 & 15, 2012. Space is available first-come, first-served, and must be booked by March 1, 2012. Pricing is dependent on your overnight accommodations. Ski Vouchers for Jay Peak Resort are now on sale at a rate of $47 for adults and $41 for youth. Smugglers’ Notch Ski Vouchers for adults are on sale for $51 for adults and $41 for youth. Bolton Valley coupons are also available, providing a $10 off Alpine tickets and $5 off Nordic tickets. Detailed information on all discounts and events may be found on the Staff Council’s Discount and Event webpage [http://www.uvm.edu/~stffcncl/?Page=discounts.html](http://www.uvm.edu/~stffcncl/?Page=discounts.html).

Human Resource Services recently provided training for Peer Advisors, in accordance with the Grievance and Mediation Policy – Staff (Non-Represented). Peer Advisors are volunteer, non-represented staff members who assist other non-represented staff negotiate problems that may be grievable verses those that may be mediation. The role of a Peer Advisor has been recently defined to allow them to support a staff member through the Grievance Process, including mediation. Peer Advisors represent several departments across the University including:

- **Barbara Benton**, Risk Management  
- **Renee Berteau**, Biology  
- **Cathy Carlson**, School of Business Administration  
- **Pam Carter**, Medicine, Rheumatology  
- **Laurie Juskiewicz**, CALS  
- **Sharon Mone**, Academic Support Programs  
- **Sydnee Viray**, Student Financial Services

Ida reminded Staff Council Representatives that if they hear of someone experiencing difficulty at work, to refer them to the Grievance and Mediation Policy – Staff (Non-Represented) on Staff Council’s website, at [http://www.uvm.edu/~stffcncl/?Page=grievance.html](http://www.uvm.edu/~stffcncl/?Page=grievance.html).

**Other Business**

The Staff Council wishes to express its collective gratitude to Interim President Bramley for the University Holiday Party, where faculty and staff are invited to celebrate the upcoming holidays. It will take place on Monday, December 19th, in the Grand Maple Ballroom, Davis Center (3 to 5 p.m.) and everyone is encouraged to bring non-perishable food items or make monetary donations to help fill a bus that will be parked at the Davis Center oval beginning at 8 a.m. through the party. The items will be donated to the Vermont Foodbank.

The next Staff Council meeting will take place in the Livak Ballrooms, 4th Floor Davis Center, Tuesday, January 3, 2012 at 12:05 p.m.