MONTHLY MEETING WITH VICE PRESIDENT FOR EXECUTIVE OPERATIONS

On August 21, 2014, Johanna, Jeff and I met with Gary Derr, Vice President for Executive Operations. We shared the Staff Council overarching goals, discussed the Salary Increase Communication to clarify real take home pay and benefits increases, and discussed the changes to Staff Appreciation Week. We also discussed the upcoming Staff Salary Equity Review Study, and revisions to the Grievance and Mediation Policy – Staff (Non-Represented).

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS RECEPTION

On Thursday, August 21, I attended a reception welcoming International Students to the University of Vermont. President Sullivan, UVM Deans and Vice Presidents, and UVM governance leaders attended this annual reception, which is the largest ever this year. UVM is welcoming US Pathway Program undergraduates from China, Global Gateway students from China, and exchange and transfer students from around the globe. Over 250 new international students arrived on campus this summer and during the Fall move-in. I met students from China, Azerbaijan, France, and Australia. I welcomed them on behalf of UVM Staff, and steered a couple of them to meet the Dean of their discipline’s college.

CONVOCATION

On Sunday, August 24, 2014, I was privileged to be representing Staff on the platform during the Convocation ceremony for incoming students. The Class of 2018 was welcomed and inspired to work hard, be inquisitive, push themselves beyond their comfort zone, and support the tenets of Our Common Ground. A flash mob performance began the ceremony, the incoming class was addressed by the SGA President, Aya Al-Namee, the President, and the Provost, and then we all paraded, led by the Burlington Taiko drummers, down Main Street to the UVM Green for a Twilight Induction Ceremony. This anchoring event allows the incoming class to forge a bond that will carry them through the next four years, where they will meet again at Commencement in 2018.
QUARTERLY MEETING WITH PRESIDENT TOM SULLIVAN

On September 2, 2014, just prior to the September Monthly Staff Council meeting at which President Sullivan was to speak, Johanna and I met with President Sullivan. Also in attendance was Vice President for Human Resources and Multi-Cultural Affairs Wanda Heading-Grant. We shared Staff Council’s overarching goals for staff participation and focus on student success, as well as the goal of advocating and focusing on social justice, cultural diversity support and diversity awareness. The President was excited and pleased that staff would be focusing on student success, and noted that he is aware of the crucial part staff play in students succeeding at UVM, and applauds the efforts of staff to focus on student success.

We also discussed the FY15 salary increase and change to cost sharing of benefits for health care. We related concerns that there was no table that a staff member could go to which would outline the actual net increase the staff member could expect to see (which begins with the September 15 paycheck). We also related in this meeting, and in the Staff Council meeting that followed, that the net increase in pay for staff was far below a 2% increase when the health care increase was factored in, and follows a number of years of low or no raises for staff.

We discussed the upcoming Staff Salary Equity review, which will review salary for gender and race equity. We informed the President and VP for HRDMA that there is work needed to address the equity of staff salaries within the same position across different departments, as well as a need for a “roadmap” for staff on how to grow into new positions in their classification bands.

And we shared the concerns we have heard from staff about the changes to the Staff Recognition dinner, where only staff who are at the milestone years of service of 20, 25, 30, 35, and 40+ were invited this year. Vice President Heading-Grant outlined the factors that led the committee to institute the changes, which were predominantly due to vendor capacity limits and desire to make the dinner more of an honor marking the milestones. However, for this year, honorees will now be able to invite up to three guests that will enable more individuals, including colleagues, to attend. Vice President Heading-Grant will work with the Staff Appreciation Week planning committee to revisit this next year, and the President indicated desire to fine-tune this to try to address some of the concerns heard.

Respectfully submitted,

Renee Berteau, Staff Council President