



Staff Council President's Report

Board of Trustees
February 6, 2026

Prepared By
Jennifer Jorgenson, Staff Council President

Members of the Board,

The UVM Staff Council continues its work advocating for and elevating the needs, experiences, and contributions of staff across the university. The Council has engaged deeply with institutional planning efforts, strengthened collaborations with administrative leaders, expanded professional development and engagement opportunities, and advanced multiple committee level initiatives aligned with our mission.

Strategic Planning Participation: Council leadership and representatives played an active role in the university's ongoing strategic planning initiative. In October, Dean Katherine Shepard and Director Sarah Heath briefed the Council on emerging pillars, planning timelines, and campus engagement strategies. Staff Council leadership has emphasized the importance of inclusive staff perspectives throughout this process, with Staff Council Vice President Samantha Dickey serving directly on the planning committee. President Marlene Tromp later reaffirmed the critical role of staff voices in shaping the plan and a revised draft was shared with all campus members in December with an invitation to engage in the final stages of the plan's development by participating in a short survey,

Facilities, Technology, and Campus Operations: Responding to staff feedback and committee requests, Facilities Management leadership presented in October on operational structures, service request pathways, and the zone management model to improve clarity and responsiveness. Council members also received a detailed update on Catamount LEAP, UVM's multiyear digital transformation initiative, including clarification that the project aims to free staff from repetitive tasks—not reduce staffing—while improving student and employee experiences. Council member Monika Donlevy served on the LEAP task force. Further, staff engaged in discussions around campus Wi-Fi performance, digital communications processes, and opportunities to streamline internal information sharing. These discussions continued in December with a session led by University Communications Executive Director Adam White on *Inside UVM* editions, content submission processes, and establishing a centralized point of contact within Staff Council.

President's and Administrative Leadership Engagement: Staff Council leadership continues proactive, recurring engagement with university administration, including the Interim Provost, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Alicia Estey, and Human Resources (HR) leadership. Discussions included compensation analyses, retiree communication challenges, and broader institutional priorities. These conversations have strengthened collaborative pathways for addressing structural staff needs and communicating staff concerns effectively.

Committee Work and Accomplishments

Community Engagement Committee (CE) advanced several initiatives to build community fostering a sense of belonging among staff:

- Continued coordination of the Staff Council Book Club.
- Organized or supported numerous experiential events, including:
 - CREAM Farm tour (November)
 - Cancer Center tour scheduled for February 10
 - Energy Plant tour scheduled for January 13
- Partnered with Davis Center Arts to prepare for the annual Staff Art Show.
- Conducted seasonal craft and social events, including potato stamp gift wrap workshops.
- Formed an ad hoc group to explore partnering with Real Estate & Property Services on promoting Catamount Run.
- Across all events, the committee experienced strong turnout, reinforcing staff desire for connection and community building.

Social Committee delivered several high visibility, campuswide engagement activities:

- Sold out tickets to the Winter Lights event, demonstrating robust demand for Council supported social activities.
- Finalized preparations and hosted a successful annual Holiday Bazaar, held December 3.
- Began planning spring engagement events, including a door decorating contest to promote the spring CatChat.
- Continued work with Lyric Theatre to offer discounted tickets to Frozen in the spring.
- The committee continues to serve as a key driver of campus morale and informal connections.

Personal, Professional Development & Occupational Environment Committee (PPDOE) advanced multiple initiatives designed to support staff growth, learning, and work environment quality:

- Coordinated with HR on shared Lunch & Learn programming.
- Organized the spring CatChat—a hybrid, recorded professional development event—with presenters confirmed early in the planning cycle.
- Facilitated campus leadership attendance at Staff Council meetings to address facilities, occupational environment, and campus recycling.
- Explored development of a mentorship program in partnership with HR.
- Worked with Enterprise Technology Services to review Wi-Fi performance and plan follow up surveys to assess occupational environment needs.
- The committee remains focused on ensuring staff have access to meaningful growth opportunities and functional, supportive work environments.
- The Staff Council Professional Development Fund for Non-Represented staff has awarded \$7950 to 13 applicants through the end of Q2 FY26

Compensation, Benefits & Budget Committee (CBB) continued its core advocacy and policy review work:

- Advanced work on the annual Non-Represented Staff Salary Letter, completed and provided to university leadership in December.
- Discussed findings from the Non-Represented Staff Survey.
- Continued refining FY26 goals focused on compensation, transparency and equitable benefits.
- Elevated staff questions about benefits and compensation in leadership meetings, ensuring alignment with CFO Estey and HR leadership.
- CBB's work remains a foundational component of Staff Council's policy and advocacy responsibilities.

Council wide Issues, Member Concerns & Feedback

- **Volunteerism initiative** and renewed interest in expanding opportunities for staff supported service.
- **Improving communications** with retirees, off campus staff, and Extension colleagues.
- **RallyCat Cupboard and basic needs** visibility emphasized during the Fall Council retreat.