

## **Memo from the Executive Council to the Senate regarding the proposal to establish the Osher Center for Integrative Health**

In August 2022, Patricia Prelock, Provost and Vice President of the University of Vermont, submitted a proposal to the Faculty Senate to establish the Osher Center for Integrative Health at the University of Vermont. This Center would be reorganizing the umbrella organization of UVM Integrative Health, through the impetus of a \$5.5 million dollar grant from the Osher Foundation. The vision of the proposed Osher Center for Integrative Health at the University of Vermont is to be a leader in advancing integrative health through education, clinical care, research, and policy and to serve as a nexus and catalyst of integrative health activities in Vermont. The mission of the proposed Osher Center for Integrative Health at UVM will be to advance integrative health care by facilitating collaborations to educate future generations of health care practitioners, develop sustainable clinical models of integrative health, and generate and evaluate innovative ideas for improving health, with a focus on rural settings. The Osher Center for Integrative Health is designed to advance policy to support the widespread adoption of integrative health as the standard of care.

According to the University Manual, “Proposals to establish, substantially change, or eliminate academic centers and institutes must be approved by the Board of Trustees, upon recommendation of the President and Provost following application of appropriate governance protocols, the latter to include Faculty Senate approval” (204.5). Currently, the Faculty Senate does not have an approved process to review a proposal. President Borchert developed a process based loosely on past practice that would have the Executive Council act as the reviewing body of the proposal and make a recommendation to the Faculty Senate. Their review would include a discussion of the proposal, a review of comments, and the opportunity to ask questions of the proposer.

On August 22, Thomas Borchert, the President of the Faculty Senate, forwarded to the campus the proposal for a two-week comment period. Overall, there were 37 comments by people across the University, with 32 people in favor of the proposal and 5 opposed to it. Of the positive comments, the majority spoke to the importance of a broader understanding of health and wellness and the emergence of integrative health as an important clinical idea. Of the negative comments, one suggested it was duplicative of work already done at UVM. Questions that people had about the proposed center included whether it was primarily for cancer patients, whether nurses would be included as well as doctors in its programs, where the budget would come from beyond the two years in the proposal, and whether patients experiencing opioid addiction would be included in the proposed center’s programs.

On September 12, the Faculty Senate Executive Council met with Provost Prelock and asked her a variety of clarifying questions about the long-term budget, about what would happen if the Osher Center were approved and established, about the role of curriculum in the Center. Summaries of the EC questions to the Provost are included in an FAQ document. The Executive Council shares this information with the Senate so that the Senate has sufficient information to make a decision about the proposal.

As the committee responsible for reviewing this proposal, the Executive Council recommends that the Senate approve the proposal to establish the Osher Center for Integrative Health.

Thomas Borchert  
President of the Faculty Senate  
On behalf of the Executive Council