

Dear UVM Staff,

We the Officers of Staff Council, and the staff of the Staff Council office, failed to adequately receive or amplify questions presented by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) staff members at the Staff Council Monthly Meeting this past Tuesday. We also deflected questions addressing racial inequity and racism at UVM to Wanda Heading-Grant, a woman of color. With these failures we caused serious harm. We have since begun the urgent task of re-evaluating and re-imagining the structure and process of our meetings going forward, and of educating ourselves further, and in an ongoing fashion, about our own active participation in systemic racism at UVM.

While we grapple with our own struggles to do better, we remain committed to presenting the concerns of our constituents to UVM administration, and to challenging our colleagues and our community about their participation in ongoing racist structures and systems at UVM. In the attached letter, which we have sent to President Garimella and senior administration, we pose questions about structural and systemic racism at UVM and ask for a dialogue around these questions. We would like to humbly thank the many voices of BIPOC whose comments in the chat helped guide us to create these often-paraphrased bullet points. We honor your experiences and we thank you.

Stephen Lunna, Staff Council President
Caleb Gilbert, Staff Council Vice President
Alan Shashok, Staff Council Administrator
Elisabeth Blair, Staff Council Program Coordinator