



THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT  
**STAFF COUNCIL**

TO: Suresh Garimella, President  
Patricia Prelock, Provost and Senior Vice President  
Richard Cate, Vice President for Finance and Treasurer  
Gary Derr, Vice President for Operations & Public Safety

FROM: Staff Council Personal and Professional Development Committee,  
Staff Council Full Committee

CC: Jon Reisenweaver, Staff Council President  
Katherine McGinn Hall, Staff Council Vice President

RE: Temporary Extension of the Professional Development Fund to Newly Represented UVM  
Staff Unite Staff

DATE: February 3, 2022

The purpose of this proposal is to re-extend the opportunity for UVM staff currently bargaining (UVM Staff United) a finalized contract with the University the benefit of applying for funding for professional development through the Staff Council Professional Development Fund at UVM. By restoring this funding opportunity for qualified UVM staff members, the President's office and Staff Council's Personal and Professional Development (PPD) Committee will keep working together to continue enhancing learning opportunities for motivated UVM staff seeking to participate in trainings, conferences or other professional development opportunities. Just as we desire to prepare UVM students to live in a diverse and changing world, so must we strive to enable UVM staff to adapt and grow as we all move forward

#### Current state

The Staff Council Professional Development Fund (PDF) was started in FY20. The Staff Council PPD Committee created a PDF subcommittee to administer the funds. The PDF subcommittee worked to develop eligibility requirements and the application process, as well as a rubric system for determining awardees; currently, the PDF subcommittee takes applications and meets quarterly to evaluate the applicants. The quarterly process gives applicants 4 chances in a fiscal year to identify opportunities and apply via email to Staff Council. To space out funding and opportunities, usually no one is awarded more than \$500, and usually the PDF subcommittee limits the quarterly total awarded to \$3,000, so six awardees per quarter is the yardstick (there are also some carryover funds from FY21 due to COVID limiting training/travel opportunities).

#### Rationale for improving the current state

These guidelines served us fairly well in the first 3 quarters of FY20, when training and travel opportunities were abundant and the committee needed (and developed) a rubric and a ranking system to aid us in promoting the most qualified applicants. Once COVID hit and travel was severely restricted, we have seen less applicants in the last fiscal year. On top of COVID, far less non-represented staff are now eligible to participate, as the decision was made not to allow staff who are part of the UVM Staff United bargaining unit but not yet formally contracted (and therefore not able to obtain funding benefits for professional development via their union contract). Last quarter, we only had two applicants.

## **Proposal**

The Staff Council proposes to temporarily restore the opportunity for UVM represented staff (UVM Staff United) currently negotiating a finalized contract with UVM the benefit of applying for funding for professional development through the Staff Council Professional Development Fund at UVM. Once a staff member is formally covered by a union agreement, they would no longer be eligible to apply for this benefit. We fully expect and anticipate that as UVM emerges from the COVID impact, the desire for staff to focus on learning and growth will return stronger than ever. The University should have a robust game plan that enables staff to take advantage of all available professional development opportunities, with the availability of this Fund being part of that plan.