

UVM Staff Council Monthly Meeting Minutes

April 6, 2021

12:05-1:30 PM

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

Please note that the content below is in summary form only; for the full context the video recording of the meeting must be referenced, available on the [Staff Council website](#).

Members Present

Heather Allard, Brendan Andrews, Tatiana Andrievskaya, Barbara Asimwe, April Berteau, Robert Bolyard, Amanda Broder, Kristen Cella, Stephen DeVoe, Ashley Eaton, Jenna Emerson, Caleb Gilbert, Stephanie Glock, Nichole Hathaway, Cheryl Herrick, Alex Howe, Rejeanne Jalbert, Jennie Keenan, Jay LaShombe, Cindy Lee, Jen O'Donnell, Michael O'Sullivan, Holly Pedrini, Jon Reisenweaver, Carri-Ann Rock, Jilliene Rodriguez, Joe Speidel, Katherine Spence, Emily Taylor, Bridget Tully, Kenneth Viglucci, Erin Wertlieb

Staff

Alan Shashok, Elisabeth Blair

Guest

David Jenemann

Call to Order

President Caleb Gilbert called the meeting to order at 12:05.

Approval of Minutes

March 2020 minutes were approved with one minor correction.

Public Comments

No public comments.

Other Business

A Representative asked for a brief discussion on the genesis and process of the [recent letter \(PDF\)](#) which went out on 3/26/21 in support of staff who have been impacted by white supremacy and racism. The process of writing and approving it within a group, with many different viewpoints and concerns was difficult to write and involved a lot of discussion. One takeaway to be emphasized is the value of empowering Staff Council committees to create and push forward messages like this. One representative shared the website which the Fleming Museum has created: www.uvm.edu/fleming/fleming-reimagined and spoke about how the museum staff devote 3 hours per week to discussing how their museum participates in ongoing colonialist and racist practices, and how to move forward and away from this participation.

Presentation: David Jenemann

The aim of the Reorganization Working Group is: to enhance the student experience, academic

alignments, research productivity, and JEDI; and to reduce complexity/redundancy, barriers to student/faculty/staff success, and administrative cost.

April 15th from 12-2 will be a Campus-Wide Working Session which staff are invited to participate in.

Five questions were focused on today in this meeting; they are each listed below with the corresponding feedback and suggestions made both in the chat and aloud in the discussion:

What's working well?

- Excellent benefits packages
- Great people
- Beautiful campus
- Passionate, creative, innovative, compassionate, and talented staff colleagues
- Liberal, accepting views
- Open access to communicate with leadership
- Flexibility and support during global pandemic
- Attention to good local food

Suggestions for how to cultivate inclusiveness, justice, and equity?

- Design a feedback mechanism for what professors are using in their curricula, to avoid offensive books and lecture materials
- Make sure everyone at UVM is making a living wage
- Stop putting BIPOC community front and center to “sell” an inclusive/safe “look”
- Require weekly or monthly, ongoing, dynamic, mandatory DEI training for all
- Continue to maintain flexibility with telecommuting to help working parents
- Increase support for child care
- Look at recent UVM student demands around DEI and implement those changes
- Emphasize antiracism and anti-oppression in supervision training, to help white supervisors of BIPOC/marginalized staff members/students
- Explore non-tenure systems that eliminate dependence on an antiquated, supremacist, patriarchal system that too often protects those unable or unwilling to expand their circle of learning to outside of their “standard curriculum and research”
- Attend to the impact which UVM has had on Indigenous communities
- Uplift the brilliance, passion, and creativity of staff and their ideas
- Restructure the job classification system to give staff more upward mobility
- Perform an equity review for classifications
- Centralize or standardize hiring practices

- Cease use of Incentive Based Budgeting (IBB), which does not support working together for the collective good; Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity (JEDI) goals are inconsistent with inequitable resource distribution
- Focus on retention of marginalized communities/staff in addition to recruitment
- Offer more support for women in academia; e.g. maternity leave, child care support, flexible hours
- Offer more support for New American staff, including English classes that go beyond a conversational level of proficiency
- Offer staff opportunities to formally provide feedback on their supervisors' performance

What's generating barriers for success?

- Position descriptions rarely change, and it's difficult in the current job classification system to have flexibility or creativity to expand or redefine jobs as they grow or adapt
- An us-vs-them culture between administration and academia
- Disparity on how supervisors across campus manage staff; they should be held to a common core standard that is fair and equitable
- UVM and UVMMC policy & process differences lead to extra unnecessary work for administrative staff

Suggestions for new research alignments? Suggestions for potential synergies?

(These two questions were tackled together. Although some of the below answers may rest more logically as answers to some of the previous questions, these were given in the context of these final two questions.)

- Offer IT courses and degree programs for students in a range of topics such as security, cyber technology, digital arts, and so on
- Implement Universal Design Learning
- Engage with Indigenous communities and New Americans in sincere ways
- No student of Abenaki heritage should be paying to attend UVM, a land grant institution
- Increase capacity/quantity of academic advisors in all college office of student services
- Grant students in non-credit programs access to campus resources such as the libraries
- Offer online learning degree programs for anyone anywhere in the world
- Increase the "pre-award" support for young investigators so they can navigate the grant application process from the start of their careers
- Offer more support of real-world workforce development opportunities for students to engage in prior to graduation
- Encourage cross-training of staff so when individuals take vacation or go on leave, there is support and staff feel okay to take vacation
- When moving staff around—such as the recent move of career services and other departments out of DOSA and into academics—make sure the staff being moved are included in the decision-making process

- Create a stand-alone space dedicated to violence prevention and support that is separate from the AAEO/Title IX office (which is responsive and not preventative) and is housed outside of DEI

Folks may provide additional feedback at: www.uvm.edu/provost/academic-reorganization

Committee Updates

Personal and Professional Development Committee (PPD)

The committee discussed the Professional Development Fund (PDF) and the Staff Emergency Loan Fund (SELF). In recent and upcoming editions of *Staffline* is a call for submissions from staff about how their units formally recognize their staff. The group discussed the recently revised exit interview with its new additional question about the impact of COVID-19 on their decision to leave. They discussed the kickoff of this year's EDU@UVM. They looked at the travel policy of the university. Lastly, they encouraged folks to nominate and/or self-nominate (where eligible) for the upcoming Staff Council President/Vice President roles.

Social Committee

The committee has been successfully running a trivia competition online which happens twice a month; links and information are posted in each edition of *Staffline*. \$10 Davis Dollar cards will be awarded to the winners. Players must use their netID when they play in order to qualify for a prize. The committee has also been running virtual bingo once a month; the next one will happen on April 16th at noon. The Lake Monsters have yet to send any dates for their upcoming season. Tickets have been purchased however for an autumn game in Boston to see the Red Sox play; more details in the future.

Community Engagement Committee (CE)

The committee discussed food insecurity; there will be an option with the Catamount CSA to give out and receive free food for volunteers. The Staff Book club is in its second session; the group is reading *Kindred* by Octavia Butler. Anyone can sign up. The committee had a good conversation with Elisabeth from the SC office on the historical work the committee had done around community resources and volunteer opportunities. The committee discussed drafting a letter of support for staff impacted by racism, which resulted in that idea being raised at the Executive Board meeting, and a letter going out from the EB. The committee also approved five Community Service Awards (CSA), with \$25 being donated to each of 5 organizations.

Compensation, Benefits, and Budget Committee (CBB)

The committee discussed the salary restoration letter and attending communication around that. They also discussed performance reviews, and the process that led to the letter of support for colleagues impacted by white supremacy and racism. Committee member Eileen Kristiansen retired, and some members attended her retirement party over Zoom.

Meeting Adjourned

The meeting was adjourned at 1:32 PM.