

UVM Staff Council Meeting Minutes
August 4, 2020
12:05-1:30 p.m.
Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

Members Present:

Heather Allard, Kristin Allard, Brendan Andrews, Tatiana Andrievskaya, Barbara Asiimwe, April Berteau, Robert Bolyard, Carol Brakenwagen, Amanda Broder, Laura Clayton, Steve DeVoe, Jenna Emerson, Bech Evans, Caleb Gilbert, Stephanie Glock, Katherine McGinn Hall, Nichole Hathaway, Alexandra Howe, Allison Spain, Christa Hagan-Howe, Rejeanne Jalbert, Jilliene Johnson, Mindy Kear, Jay LaShombe, Deb McAdoo, Claire McCollough, Jen O'Donnell, Michael O'Sullivan, Holly Pedrini, Katrina Preiss, Jon Reisenweaver, Joe Speidel, Donna Stevens, Emily Taylor, Kenneth Viglucci

Staff: Elisabeth Blair, Alan Shashok

Guests:

Gary Derr, and 20+ members of the general staff public

Call to Order

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

Approve Draft Minutes

June meeting minutes were discussed. Several SC representatives had not yet read them, so while some revisions were suggested, the vote on the minutes was tabled until the September meeting.

Procedures

The procedures for holding online meetings were discussed, including having a person assigned to monitor the chat, and having the facilitator check in with that designated person. Caleb made it clear that the facilitators are committed to the meetings being a two-way conversation.

Public Comment Period

No public comments were made.

New Representative Introductions

The 11 new Staff Council Representatives briefly introduced themselves. They are: April Berteau, Carol Brakenwagen, Amanda Broder, Steven DeVoe, Jenna Emerson, Bech Evans, Stephanie Glock, Rejeanne Jalbert, Jilliene Johnson, Emily Taylor, Joe Speidel

Officer Updates

Teleworking: VP Caleb Gilbert gave a brief overview on how Staff Council has been working on telecommuting with administration since before the pandemic.

Early Retirement: Many folks wanted the original cutoff date / effective date to be changed, and both Staff Council (SC) Human Resource Services (HRS) and administration were communicated with to this end, and that date has since in fact changed.

Childcare: SC pursued administration re. outreach to help those whose childcare services ended with the closure of the Child Care Center. Administration responded said they have indeed done outreach. There is now a childcare subcommittee who will be administering a survey about childcare needs.

Pay inequity: This was brought up at the HRS meeting with Jes Kraus. He had brought several people to the meeting three or four weeks ago, and we asked the open question: Are we paying our senior executives too much, in an environment where cuts are being made? They responded with a strong no, noting that they did the work in benchmarking salary rates. Caleb feels this is a conversation we can continue but there does not currently seem to be openness to cutting from the top, due to concerns on their part with competitive hiring practices and benchmarking against peer institutions with headcounts among administrators. If we want to get more detailed and really learn the details of the counternarrative we can do that, but for now the issue has been raised and there does not seem to be openness.

Antiracism: Caleb noted that both Richard Cate's responses and SC's role in the June 9th meeting were problematic. We have since gotten a great deal of feedback and support from all sorts of staff across campus to have dialogue in antiracism training for SC and the university as a whole. We are looking inward right now to see what we can do to make SC an antiracist organization.

Parking: We are getting relief from the spring payments while off campus, because the summer payments were waived through September 30th. Payroll deductions will be suspended during this time. If you are getting charged during this time, you'll want to reach out to Parking and Transportation. Summer parking rules and designated zones are all still being enforced.

Hazard Pay: For high-customer-service facing roles, which involve interfacing with students on a regular basis, this is close contact that needs to be mitigated. Administration has stated there is no higher risk employee pool. Staff are creating a working group to pursue this question. The question of whether represented staff on campus are receiving or will receive hazard pay has been asked. We are awaiting an answer from Jes Kraus.

Safe Return to Campus: Staff Council haven't pushed this topic a lot yet since it's such a dynamic environment and our understanding continues to evolve about which are the safest routes forward. Right now there is a pretty strong opening plan with each department able to tailor its safety plan.

Q: In the health screening app for students, there is a checkmark approval process – do students need to physically display this checkmark when attending in-person classes?

A: This question needs an answer, we will pursue it.

Q: Even if you're working from home, will you need to report your symptoms on the prescreening form?

A: That is the case.

Testing: there may be an on-campus staff testing set-up but this has not been arranged to date. Otherwise you may need to participate in community pop-up clinics and will be able to go through supervisors for release time to take this test. But this has not been confirmed. So hopefully by the next week or two, we will get clarity on this question from Jes Kraus or Gary Derr.

Q: Has Administration not responded to the faculty support letters to our budget letter?

A: We have not received any communication or acknowledgement from Admin on those support letters because they were sent to Admin and we were sometimes copied on it or they sent them to us separately.

Q: Staff wages were cut, while for many of us, we have a larger workload. This does not seem fair. What can we do about that?

A: *This was generally discussed and agreed upon.*

Q: If the student enrollment numbers are good can we get the salary reduction cancelled?

A: If you all want to pursue this question, then we will need to pursue it in a formal way.

Q: What actions are we going to take with regards to the administrative budget cuts?

A: Let's start at a committee level and work on this. In our rebuttal to the salary cuts we asked for immediate implementation. Maybe we can push for other ideas, or double down on our idea. We could also ask for a written response, which we haven't received.

Call for Two Self-Nominated Members of Executive Board

The Executive Board consists of the standing committee co-chairs, the parliamentarian, two elected members, and the President and Vice President. This board helps guide the work SC does on a regular basis. It involves an extra hour-and-a-half per month of meetings. Michael O'Sullivan and Bob Bolyard self-nominated, and introduced themselves.

A motion was made to appoint Michael O'Sullivan and Bob Bolyard to the EB, but two new representatives asked for more time to consider this question and whether they wanted to self-nominate.

The motion was therefore voted to be tabled. Next Wednesday August 12th the Staff Council Office (SCO) will send out an electronic vote on all nominees (please contact the SCO before this date if you are interested in becoming a nominee) and the vote will be completed by the end of Friday the 14th.

Staff Council Antiracist Subcommittee:

SC is forming a working group to respond to the June 9th meeting and look inward for action items to enable Staff Council to unpack the events of June 9th and their implications, and to work toward becoming an actively and definitively antiracist organization. This is by no means meant to silo these efforts but to ensure prioritization of and focus on this goal. If you'd like to join this working group, please contact Caleb or the SCO.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 1:33 PM.