

Staff Council Officer's Report

April 2021

SC LEADERSHIP WITH HUMAN RESOURCES SERVICES

On April 15, 2021, Caleb, Laura, Elisabeth and Alan met with Mary Brodsky, Andrea Mast and Greg Paradiso. There were many items to cover, thus the reason for the two meetings.

- As of the 4/15 meeting, UA & UE had a proposal they were willing to bring back to their membership for a vote.
- The current staff organization efforts are in the process of confirming the list presented to administration that the organizing group wished to include. This requires administration to look at each person's position description and job codes to confirm their eligibility within the organizers defined group.
- On teleworking, a draft was sent to administration for the HRS working group. It was returned with a few requests to address a few items such as reimbursable expenses for teleworking, those working outside Vermont domestically and other details. Training for supervisors and managers of teleworkers was discussed as well as for those actually teleworking to work best practices for success.
- The opportunity to rollover unused vacation time for this year due to situations where an employee may not have been able to take vacation time during the pandemic. These should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis with supervisors. HRS would need more details on specific reasons and frequency before any type of university wide process were considered.
- Tuition remission and non-salary benefit initiatives to be restarted with an upcoming meeting with HRS. It had been temporarily placed aside that took the time of those assigned to the topic. However, HRS has assigned a point person (Diane Gaboriault who helped finalize the exit interview proposal with PPD) to help lead the initiative with an eye toward having a recommendation in place by the beginning of the fall semester.

SC LEADERSHIP WITH VP OPERATIONS & PUBLIC SAFETY

On April 21, 2021, Caleb, Laura, and Elisabeth met with Gary Derr, VP for Operations & Public Safety.

- The Our Common Ground staff awards was briefly discussed; Gary has some inquiries out separately from the recent letter Caleb wrote to President Garimella regarding it.
- The Staff Union petition has been filed. The process of determining who is in the bargaining unit has been completed and will be announced later in the week. Due to new rules around timelines, the election process will move swiftly.

- HRS and ELR are busy right now; however, should Staff Council need something urgently over the next few weeks, Gary will make sure it gets prioritized.
- Staff Council Elections were briefly discussed. The candidates are Jon Reisenweaver (for President) and Laura Clayton (for Vice President). Election week is May 5-12.
- The campus survey cycle was discussed; it was noted that the next UVM climate survey will probably not occur until after the position of Vice Provost for Diversity is filled.
- Employee “stay” interviews were briefly discussed, as a means by which we might assess what UVM is doing well and how that can be leveraged.
- Vaccinations were briefly discussed; Caleb shared that most people he works with are motivated to be tested and vaccinated. Gary noted that at least two students who were fully vaccinated have tested positive for COVID-19, so it’s important to still stay home and get tested if you have symptoms, even if you are fully vaccinated.
- Including Foundation Staff on the Staff Council mailing list was briefly discussed; all were generally in favor, while noting that many items we send out may not be relevant.

SC Leadership Meeting with LRE and HRS: Enhancement of Professional Development Opportunities/Tuition Remission

SC stated the ideal enhancement would be for for-credit tuition remission for spouses. Barring that, the next best enhancement would be to make non-credit bearing and certificate classes offered through CDE available through tuition remission or other means. This was discussed at length:

- The university and CDE would have to be thoughtful about how they arranged spots for staff in these programs, because they would need to keep spots open for paying customers. The availability to staff might vary widely; some courses have 20 seats total available, some have 105.
- The constraints around relevant and non-relevant training for staff and the effects these have on taxes were discussed.
- Community engagement is also important; UVM has a public mission, so another framework for this could be offering support for those who want to gain a skillset to support the community (like being a doula).

Staff Council will perform a quick survey at an upcoming SC meeting, asking representatives to choose the top three courses from the full list of offerings. These will then be examined to identify at least one program for which offering tuition remission would be mutually beneficial between staff and administration. Next steps would then be considered, with no guarantees at this early point in time.