

## **Staff Council Officer's Report**

**January 2021**

### **SC LEADERSHIP WITH Richard Cate**

On January 8, 2021, Caleb, Laura, and Alan met with Richard Cate. This meeting was called by Richard Cate as a partial response to the CBB Salary letter and to discuss additional ways to recognize and support staff. The discussion included:

- Will receive a formal response to the CBB letter, but too soon in planning process, will know better in March and to expect a response then on salary change proposal.
- Discussion around beginning the conversation related to additional professional development opportunities for staff and expansion of benefits to Non-Credit / non-monetary benefits. Meetings would be with Richard, Andrea Mast and SC reps to be determined.
- It was noted and expressed by Richard Cate that Professional Development does not replace monetary compensation
- Administration has no "Angst" per Richard Cate regarding the CBB letter, just a question of what or how anything can be done right now.
- It was noted by Caleb that we all can continue to remember there are human beings at all levels making the decisions that impact other human beings. He also expressed the desire to be sure equity and accessibility of any PD opportunities be part of the conversations.

### **SC LEADERSHIP WITH HUMAN RESOURCES SERVICES**

On January 11, 2021, Caleb, Laura, and Alan met with Mary Brodsky, Greg Paradiso and Andrea Mast. These meetings continue to be very congenial and loose, with very good discussions and openness.

- The conversation with UA are at the point of mediation, having had a meeting just that morning, 1/11. UVM continues to ask UA to accept the same level of salary changes as staff have already experienced.
- Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) Extension to end of March. Interesting to learn that UVM will bear the cost since as a public sector employer, we do not qualify for the tax credits of the program that many non-public sector employers enjoy. President Garimella felt the program important enough so as to incur this cost.

- Change and additions to the LER group were discussed as well as it being very important that employees and leaders contact LER with any disciplinary/grievance issues and not their “local” HR rep in order to receive the most consistent and up to date guidance.
- Communication going out to all leaders regarding Presidents Day Holiday. It will offer and reinforce guidance on how to administer. In essence, if an employee is not student facing or deemed essential to be on campus, they should expect to take that day off anyway and not hold it as a floating holiday.

## **SC LEADERSHIP WITH VP OPERATIONS & PUBLIC SAFETY**

On January 20, 2021, with Caleb, Laura and Alan meeting with Gary Derr, VP for Operations & Public Safety.

- Seeking advice from Gary about additional staff or Staff Council representation on the Reorg groups that Provost Prelock is heading up. It was felt a reasonable ask and no harm in doing so. The method used to “nominate” the original 4 interested members was appreciated.
- Caleb was interested in seeking additional, issues-based communications to come from the President’s Office or senior administration in general. The topic will be raised at the next quarterly meeting with the President in March.
- Discussion on the competitiveness of H/E and the current perception of staff that we are and always will be in a cutting of budget mode to maintain competitiveness. It was stated there needs to be a clear value statement to students and families, that they clearly understand what they are paying for is worth it to them no matter the cost. UVM regularly compares itself to the other institutions that students are applying to and not necessarily all colleges and universities. Typically, the state universities are our comparators like UNH, UCONN, U of Maine, but at times places like U of Colorado Boulder come up on this list as well. Regular meetings and overview of budgets with Provost Prelock were encouraged again especially with the regular new SC Reps that join each new fiscal year.
- Discussed but not on the agenda were having a staff or Staff Council seat at the table for the search for a new DEI VP like SC’s participation in the Provost and President search a few years ago. Caleb will follow up with President Garimella on this.

## **SC LEADERSHIP WITH VP FOR FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION and DIRECTOR OF CLASSIFICATION & COMPENSATION**

On January 29, 2021, Caleb, Laura, Cheryl Herrick, Nichole Hathaway and Alan, meeting with Richard Cate, VP for Finance & Administration and Andrea Mast, Director of Classification & Compensation to discuss non-monetary benefit options for staff which included:

- Certificate programs and a few of the hurdles involved in getting enrolled
- Some of the teachers for these programs are “contractors” so the cost for the course(s) is what helps cover their cost, too many reduced on free enrollees may create an issue.
- Converting course for spouses from audit to credit bearing
- How does Professional Development help a person get to a different desired position at UVM or simply improve their current skills?
- New skills gained is not an automatic guarantee of additional pay.
- Need to look long term, post COVID about this topic and what will be needed then and not simply formulate proposal for what is happening now.
- This group will continue to meet, adding Mary Brodsky, to determine if a survey of staff is warranted to determine what type of PD they wish to see and have better access to. Staff Council survey results and SCPDF data will help to be a starting point for this study.
- Will meet again on 2/9, in the meantime another group, Caleb, Laura Alan, Andrea, Mary Brodsky and Gary Derr will be meeting regarding the topic of Performance Reviews and timing.