

UVM Staff Council Monthly Meeting Minutes

October 5, 2021

12:05-1:30 PM

Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

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

**Chair:** Staff Council President Jon Reisenweaver

**Attending:** Barbara Asimwe, April Berteau, Bob Bolyard, Kristen Cella, Monika Donlevy, Krysta Gingue, Stephanie Glock, Nichole Hathaway, Jay LaShombe, Cindy Lee, Katherine McGinn Hall, Cheryl Herrick, Rejeanne Jalbert, Jen O'Donnell, Michael O'Sullivan, Carri-Ann Rock, Joe Speidel, Katherine Spence, Bridget Tully, Kenneth Viglucchi

**Ex Officio:** Alan Shashok

**Staff:** Elisabeth Blair

**Guest Speaker: President Suresh Garimella**

The President spoke about the annual staff Our Common Ground awardees, and the value of staff.

**Guest Speaker: Vice Provost Amer Ahmed**

Dr. Ahmed shared his top priority for staff: retention. He hopes for his division, DEI, to model the very thing he would like to happen through the university – harnessing the strengths, backgrounds, and abilities of each person to make it a welcoming and energizing place to work. He raised the question of how to systematize such a model? What does it look like in the management pipeline? He also voiced concerns about making sure training and development reflected these priorities and making sure they were ongoingly available. Finally, he touched on a desire to incorporate changes at UVM with ways to make the surrounding community stronger. DEI will be creating a cultural resource guide for resources available in this community, and will be reaching out to Staff Council to help populate it.

Also, he announced that henceforth, Allen House will be a site of affinity, a building which can offer resources and spaces to affinity groups on campus.

Some questions were fielded.

**Minutes Approval**

Meeting Minutes from September were approved.

**Public Comment Period**

No public comments were made.

**Committee Updates**

**Personal and Professional Committee (PPD)**

The committee discussed the Staff Council Professional Development Fund (SCPFD), as well as parking issues; they'll be discussing those soon with Jim Barr. The EDU@UVM 2022 team will be meeting in a few weeks to begin designing the structure for next year.

**Community Engagement Committee (CE)**

They discussed their three main priorities for this year: Book Club, Food Insecurity, and Volunteering.

- Book Club will continue meeting and discussing.

- Food Insecurity: The subcommittee will continue to look at ways to disperse further food resources to staff this fall, including seeking out a plot for growing vegetables.
- Volunteering: They intend to create opportunities for UVM employees to utilize the permission in our staff handbook that allows us to do volunteer work on UVM time.

### **Social Committee**

The committee discussed new events, looked over past events, and worked on narrowing their focus and redefining what makes a successful event. Upcoming potential events include a bus shopping trip and discounted game tickets. On December 8<sup>th</sup> they will be hosting the annual Holiday Bazaar, for which they're currently accepting applications from vendors, and seeking volunteers to help in a variety of capacities.

### **Officers' Updates**

#### **Advocacy for Non-represented Staff**

Jon is trying to rebuild a new version of the former Staff Council Committee on Compensation, Benefits, & Budget outside of Staff Council, in order to serve the remaining approximately 600 non-represented staff. If you know of currently non-represented staff who are interested in working on this, please let Jon know.

#### **Acknowledging Staff**

Jon passed along feedback he'd received from a staff member to President Garimella regarding the lack of significant mention of staff in a recent email from the President to campus which lauded faculty and student accomplishments and awards.

### **Nominating Committee Update**

The committee sent a communication to all staff who are eligible for the Vice President position (all those who have served on Staff Council for at least 6 months within the last 6 years). Now they are focused on having in-person conversations with potential nominees. They welcome Staff Council members' participation and input. Those conversations will take place this week and next, and then there will be formal nominees announced for the Vice President position.

### **Bylaws Changes**

The suggested changes for the Bylaws (the section with the Committee charges) were presented. These will be voted on in the November meeting. Some discussion was had about the SCPDF being no longer available to represented staff.

### **Retreat**

The Executive Board meeting this month made the decision to hold a mini-retreat for the Executive Board this fall, followed by a retreat of the full SC in the spring. These meetings will take a hard look at Staff Council, its identity, priorities, and processes, to determine where it can grow. The EB will put together a document that will be presented at the Spring retreat with all of SC to see what they might have missed. The overarching goal is to make sure SC remains relevant to UVM staff.

### **Other Business**

#### **Staff Morale on Campus**

Jon asked Staff Council members to reach out to those whom they feel might wish to provide feedback about morale on campus. Typically, we do a campus survey every two years, but at this point we are looking at doing this more casually by bringing firsthand accounts of how staff are doing, to the table at

leadership meetings. Please reach out to your constituents and try to respond to Jon by Monday, if possible, with thoughts from your units about what staff are currently feeling.

**Meeting Adjourned**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:22 PM.