

UVM Staff Council Meeting Minutes
February 4, 2020
12:05-1:30 p.m.
Memorial Lounge, Waterman Building

Members Present:

Heather Allard, Tatiana Andrievskaya, Barbara Asimwe, Bob Bolyard, Kristen Cella, Laura Clayton, Aimee Gale, Caleb Gilbert, Nick Hall, Cheryl Herrick, Alex Howe, Mindy Kear, Jay LaShombe, Cindy Lee, Stephanie Loscalzo, Stephen Lunna, Deb McAdoo, Claire McCollough, Jennifer O'Donnell, Michael O'Sullivan, Holly Pedrini, Shirley Pine, Katrina Preiss, Donna Stevens, Bridget Tully, Lacey Ure, Ken Viglucci, Erin Wertlieb, Bethany Wolfe

Members Absent:

Brendan Andrews, Katherine Hall, Nichole Hathaway, Miriam Harrison, Jon Reisenweaver, Allison Spain

Staff:

Elisabeth Blair, Alan Shashok

Guest:

Nicci Brown, Chief Communications Officer
Alex Yin, Executive Director, Office of Institutional Research

Call to Order

President Stephen Lunna called the meeting to order at 12:05. He spoke briefly about the Mamava Pod ribbon cutting which took place this morning. Stephanie Loscalzo also briefly spoke, particularly thanking Gary Derr for his help.

Guest Speaker - Nicci Brown, Chief Communications Officer

She spoke about her background: Originally from Australia, she worked for the ABC, then was at Syracuse University for 20 years, first as a student and then as a staff member. She then spoke about her priorities, and emphasized the importance of maximizing the effectiveness of communications. In her new position at UVM, she has so far been "drinking from the firehose" - i.e. taking in a great deal of information. She is currently analyzing the ways in which both internal and external communications take place. She hopes to connect with Staff Council, and encouraged representatives to reach out to her with any concerns or questions. She then opened it up to questions.

A: Do you have any thoughts with respect to UVM being a hybrid of centralized and decentralized models?

B: It's great that colleges and units can be close together and create many little communities. But it's also very important to have some centralization, so one of the things I want to do is bring people together some more, and come up with a consistent narrative across the university.

Q: What are your thoughts with regards to UVM websites, with so many individual web managers?

A: We need to be careful that there is coordination and care and feeding. Search Engine Optimization is important so we need to be careful that our content doesn't fight against the UVM presence. We need consistency, and we also need to keep our audience's goals in mind, and focus on what they're trying to

achieve rather than what we're trying to communicate.

Q: What are your plans for internal communications?

A: We're looking at a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, with the goal of making sure the left hand knows what the right hand is doing, and to make people's jobs easier and more efficient.

Q: The Staff Council office engages in a lot of communication, including a monthly newsletter, emails, Drupal, and social media accounts, but we're not using any of that to maximum efficiency. With regards to having a persistent message and being uniform, how might we access support?

A: We'll continue making templates and guidelines. A CRM system would represent cost savings. For a lot of companies out there, universities represent a real cornucopia of money, as they'll sell different licenses to multiple parts of institutions. Whereas in many cases it should be purchased at the institutional level, thereby saving departments that money.

Approve Draft Minutes

January draft minutes were approved with a minor edit.

Guest Speaker - Alex Yin, Executive Director of the Office of Institutional Research (OIR)

He spoke about the work that has been done to narrow down the survey, and explained the reasoning behind the sampling design, touching on how ultimately, actually using the data is what shows respect for the folks taking the survey, and for their time. Though he understands that giving the survey out to everyone is important to Staff Council, he pointed out that OIR must process all the information, which takes a great deal of time. His goal is to spend minimum time and get maximum impact on the community. He then led a question and answer session.

Q: How do you propose we balance feelings (such as when one person gets the survey and another doesn't, in the same office) with what is scientifically right?

A: Communication - before, during, and after the survey - is essential. Communicate to everyone what is happening and precisely why. Make it clear they also have ongoing opportunities to make their voices heard.

Q: Does it save Staff Council money or time to do the sampling? It seems like it's not going to be worth the image it will project. Also, there is a difference between having *an option* to take the survey, and actually taking it. Non-represented staff don't have a voice, so this is our chance to have one.

A: It does not save Staff Council money or time but the OIR staff will be saved time, with its staff having to process all qualitative information. Also, he doubts people frequently share with each other that they received a survey.

It was noted that the survey has shifted away from a climate focus, having yielded that to the Campus Climate Survey. Now the Staff Council survey focuses primarily on whether Staff Council is doing its job.

It was further noted that if we do a census survey, if we get 300 of 1000 respondents that will provide us with one ratio, but getting 300 of 2000 is another, much weaker ratio, so the reliability of the response will be driven down.

Extensive discussion followed about the sample design and implementation.

A motion was passed to accept OIR's recommendation to sample 1000 staff. The Staff Council office will provide staff with clear communications about how this is a random sampling and point them to another way to provide anonymous feedback. It was also suggested that the Staff Council Office use a "You said.... We Did" feature in the monthly newsletter.

Elections: Appoint 2 members to the nominating committee

Bridget Tully self-nominated, and Alex Howe was nominated, and accepted.

Standing Committee Updates

PPD - They are currently looking at existing staff support services such as mentoring. With regards to tuition remission, they are reaching out and gathering data on the possibility of including certificate programs. They are also gathering data on all existing staff awards. Please let them know if your area has staff awards by emailing Mindy Kear.

The Professional Development Fund committee received 28 applications for the 3rd quarter and those will be voted on in 2 weeks.

Social Committee - There were fewer athletics ticket sales this year, but this is probably due having begun sales later than usual, and because we didn't select weekend games. They are planning a trip to Boston for shopping and/or a Red Sox game in May. Skate Night will be Friday March 6th. *Matilda* tickets will be sold for \$27, hopefully through a new online ticket sales system. The Lake Monsters game and barbecue will happen on Sunday, June 28th.

Community Engagement - They are finding out the three most common languages spoken amongst staff, and are encouraging vendors such as BCBSVT, TIAA, and Fidelity to supply their information in these languages. With regards to food insecurity, they're working with students and organizations on campus on how to address that. They're also working on other ways to let staff know how they can volunteer for different organizations.

CBB - Andrea Mass, director of Class and Compensation came to a meeting and held a Q&A session to assist the Committee as they learn more about the job classification system, in order to identify areas that need more transparency. At the next meeting, that Q&A will be unpacked. They also hosted Dr. Heading-Grant and Jes Kraus at the meeting, in response to the salary recommendation letter.

Officers' Update

At the HRDMA meeting there was a discussion around advocacy on campus, and in collaboration with Mary Brodsky and Gary Derr's office, we now have an Excel spreadsheet listing resources for staff according to their specific problem, question, or concern. Sherwood Smith also led a lively discussion about the rise of antisemitism, not just on campus but across the country. Please let the Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Office (AAEO) know about any such incidents.

Fidelity and TIAA-Cref are coming next week to talk about the upcoming changes to retirement plans.

In the monthly leadership meeting with Gary Derr, the upcoming Staff Council Elections were discussed. Gary confirmed that his role working with us will not change despite his new duties and new title.

At the Board of Trustees meeting (BOT) on Friday Jan 31st, they switched up the process, so Staff Council didn't give an in-depth presentation, but we will at the next meeting in May.

Other Business

Stephanie Loscalzo will lead a Lunch & Learn training on change management on Wednesday, February 26th. The workshop will cover the phases of change, the responsibility of the employer and employee in regard to change, and how to leverage change for personal development.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 PM.