

UVM Staff Council Meeting Minutes
March 3, 2020
12:05-1:30 p.m.
Memorial Lounge, Waterman Building

Members Present:

Heather Allard, Brendan Andrews, Tatiana Andrievskaya, Barbara Asimwe, Bob Bolyard, Kristen Cella, Laura Clayton, Aimee Gale, Caleb Gilbert, Christa Hagan-Howe, Katherine Hall, Nick Hall, Nichole Hathaway, Alex Howe, Mindy Kear, Cindy Lee, Stephanie Loscalzo, Deb McAdoo, Jennifer O'Donnell, Holly Pedrini, Shirley Pine, Katrina Preiss, Jon Reisenweaver, Allison Spain, Katherine Spence, Donna Stevens, Bridget Tully, Lacey Ure, Ken Viglucci

Members Absent:

Miriam Harrison, Cheryl Herrick, Jay LaShombe, Stephen Lunna, Claire McCollough, Michael O'Sullivan, Erin Wertlieb, Bethany Wolfe

Staff:

Elisabeth Blair, Alan Shashok

Guests:

Gary Derr

Call to Order

President Stephen Lunna called the meeting to order at 12:05.

Public Comment Period

No public comments

Approve Draft Minutes

February draft minutes were approved with a minor edit.

Standing Committee Updates

PPD – They discussed telecommuting with regards to exempt staff and compared UVM's policy with the policies of other companies and universities. They also discussed job sharing, office sharing and other related ideas. The committee also went around the table to share staff needs, such as parking, expanding the UVM childcare program, additional support for parents, and exit interviews (about which there have been some helpful meetings recently). Staff Awards were discussed. The group is still gathering awards information from colleges.

Social Committee – The Committee is working on a lot of events, including the bus trip to Boston on Saturday May 2nd, the Skate Night on Friday March 6th, the Lake Monsters game and BBQ in June, the cooking class Thursday April 30th, the Lyric Theatre show *Matilda* on Sunday April 5th, and the Corporate Cup on May 7th. For the Corporate Cup we need to gather some swag – talk to Elisabeth if your unit could offer some. The golf event will take place at Links at Lang Farm this year. Smugglers' Notch Daycation details will come soon.

Community Engagement – The Committee has continued to work on ways to address staff experiencing food insecurity, including possibly organizing a summer event. They approved 5 community service awards, and they are still working on campus translation services.

CBB – The committee is working on a way to partner with HRDMA to do some kind of initiative like “walk like a penguin” that would drive costs down for slips and falls. The telecommuting subcommittee continues in-depth discussion and work on adjusting current policies to include non-exempt staff. They also discussed the Staff Council Survey and the importance of regular post-survey communications.

Officers’ Update

In the recent HRDMA leadership meeting, the point was raised that confusion sometimes arose around how Staff Council communicates its subcommittees’ research requests and proposals to leadership. After discussing Staff Council bylaws, it was concluded that subcommittees should have a specific charge/goal and a specific timeline, and Staff Council leadership should be aware of this. If the group wants to continue to exist but focus on other goals, these new charges should be authorized by Staff Council leadership.

In the leadership meeting with Gary Derr, some concerns were discussed that had come through to the Staff Council office regarding the closure during the February snowstorm, but leadership did do the best they could with the updates they had from the National Weather Service.

The floor was opened up to questions. One member raised the question of spring break and travel plans with regards to the covid-19 virus. Gary Derr spoke about the website on UVM’s site that highlights a lot of good links for up-to-the-minute information about the spread of the virus. Right now, leadership is working closely with the Emergency Operations Group which has been meeting frequently. Back in 2008-09 that group did a lot of planning for a pandemic response. They’re refreshing that plan now to include updates. Clearly, spring break is a concern. UVM participates in 10 different programs in different countries for spring break study abroad. Any participants in a country designated threat level 3 are being asked not to travel. All of the students in Italy have had their programs cancelled. UVM operates only one University-sponsored study abroad program, in Costa Rica, and there has been no need to cancel that yet.

UVM leadership is working with custodial staff to regularly disinfect frequently touched surfaces. The age population of most UVM students is in the low risk category, with the real risk being for people who are 60+ or who have serious underlying health conditions. The University has a stockpile of medical supplies and are encouraging faculty to explore alternative means for class delivery, such as online.

Subcommittee Reports

Announcement on Subcommittees and Ad Hoc Committees

All subcommittees and ad hoc committees should report up through their committees about their activities and should run all research requests through the Staff Council Office. This is not to require anyone to have “permission” but instead to avoid repeated requests and to centralize our communications with administration. Alan read the Staff Council mission statement as a reminder that the mission statement should be consulted when establishing any subcommittee’s charge.

PDF Committee – During this quarter there were 28 applicants and 5 awardees. Each quarter the application and rubric have changed in order to better meet the Committee’s needs. The Staff Council office is tracking all information from all applications as well as requesting reports from awardees after they use their award. A suggestion was made that in the future the applications should ask applicants how they heard of the Professional Development Fund. A question was asked regarding whether there was a department or unit from which we received more applicants than the rest. The response was that in Q1 there was (Athletics) but since then it has been pretty widely spread.

Working Parents Subcommittee

The project to install Mamava pods has drawn to a successful close after bringing two pods to campus. Because of this, the group will be changing their name and goals. They are currently gathering more information and connecting with other groups on campus, as they switch their focus to paid family leave, university changing tables, benefits expansion for LGBTQ staff, parental leave for fathers, and more.

Telecommuting Subcommittee

The Committee has been conducting research on other universities that do have telecommuting policies for non-exempt employees – including Purdue University. Large federal and state employers also have them. The Committee will present their findings to the Executive Board to move forward on that. They noted that the ability to work from home has become an immediate concern with the covid-19 virus.

Exit Interviews

The subcommittee has been gathering data from our current exit interviews. They noted there is no data regarding reasons an employee may leave a department to move laterally elsewhere on campus. Additionally, they noted that exit interview data doesn't get processed much, period. So the committee is working with HRDMA on streamlining it and making sure all the right people are informed on their progress.

Nominating Subcommittee

They convened and went over the Officer Nomination application and made some changes and additions. Next, the Subcommittee will reach out to anyone eligible to serve as an officer (anyone who has served on Staff Council for at least 6 months in the last 6 years). Staff Council hopes to have a table in the lobby during @edu and is looking for volunteers to staff that.

Food Insecurity Subcommittee

The food pantry just went up for students and the subcommittee is working on ways to provide the same service to staff.

Staff Council Survey

Alan announced that the Staff Council survey will go out this week. He recognized the committee members and others who worked on honing and preparing the survey, including Jimmy Huynh from the Office of Institutional Research, Caleb Gilbert, Cindy Lee, Brendan Andrews.

He then went over the email that will go out, and the survey itself, walking through each question.

Other Business

A question was asked regarding the administration's response to CBB's annual salary letter. Caleb Gilbert responded that right now we just need to wait and see. In the past, staff have been notified around April, and before then there is usually communication from HRDMA to the President and Vice President of Staff Council.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 PM.