

UVM Staff Council Meeting Minutes
November 5, 2019
12:05-1:30 p.m.
Memorial Lounge, Waterman Building

Members Present:

Heather Allard, Tatiana Andrievskaya, Bob Bolyard, Kristen Cella, Laura Clayton, Caleb Gilbert, Nichole Hathaway, Cheryl Herrick, Alex Howe, Mindy Kear, Jay LaShombe, Cindy, Lee, Stephen Lunna, Deb McAdoo, Jennifer O'Donnell, Michael O'Sullivan, Holly Pedrini, Shirley Pine, Jon Reisenweaver, Allison Spain, Donna Stevens, Bridget Tully, Lacey Ure, Ken Viglucci, Erin Wertlieb, Bethany Wolfe

Members Absent:

Brendan Andrews, Barbara Asimwe, Aimee Gale, Katherine Hall, Nick Hall, Miriam Harrison, Stephanie Loscalzo, Claire McCollough, Katrina Preiss

Staff:

Elisabeth Blair, Alan Shashok

Guest:

Governor Jim Douglas

Call to Order

President Stephen Lunna called the meeting to order at 12:15.

Guest Speaker - Governor Jim Douglas

Governor Douglas spoke about dealing with bureaucracy. He noted that the first step with a complex organization is to learn exactly how it is structured, and get a sense of how things actually work. Also, accept the fact that change in large organizations is not expeditious and will take much longer than you'd like.

Next, building relationships is key - at Middlebury College, twice a year the Staff Council has breakfast with the Trustees. It's a great opportunity to connect.

Finally, he cited the difficulties Middlebury College had during the recession in 1991 when it laid off a number of staff suddenly and in an unusually secretive way. He emphasized that while rough times will always occur, openness and honesty are vital when implementing difficult changes.

He held a Question and Answer session after this speech:

Q: How might we deal with the "us and them" mindset between faculty and staff?

A: Bring the two groups together more often to socialize and build community. For example, at Middlebury College there is a team built into each of the five Commons (units) which involve both faculty and staff as leadership. They recently held a reception sponsored by both staff and faculty at a local brewery.

Q: Do you have any examples from your life experience of people not in positions of authority who have been effective change agents?

A: In terms of institutional change, no examples came to mind. However, he related stories of individual people in low-power situations who were able to advocate for themselves.

Q: When higher education institutions close, it has a huge impact on communities and business and state revenue. What can we do to bring everyone together to ensure that higher ed is a sustainable model?

A: It's true that the trajectory is concerning and troubling. UVM is better positioned to withstand it.

Q: We do a lot of pitching of proposals as an advisory body. Do you have advice for prioritizing issues?

A: It's better to have something that has broader applicability in the field than not. Something that is important to everybody and/or to the mission of the university, and look for prioritization in those terms. Also, it's important to develop relationships with key players early on and build that framework, rather than just presenting a proposal out of thin air.

Q: How might we best go about building a relationship with a new executive?

A: Be respectful of the breadth of his responsibilities. Be clear, concise, and prioritize your issues.

Q: How to get the most out of those 30 minutes we have, once per quarter, with President Garimella?

A: Perhaps you should explore other ways to communicate in between that single meeting - for example, memos, and communications that might go through Gary Derr.

Q: There seems to always be room for growth at the top - new deans, etc - but how might we deal with the fact that there isn't as much room for growth at the bottom?

A: Any bureaucracy has a natural tendency to grow and you have to, on an annual basis, ratchet it back, or it gets out of control. The trend of higher education costs has exceeded healthcare and that's not due to instructional costs, but bureaucracy. You might consider putting together compelling statistics about compensation increases versus growth in administrative positions.

Approve Draft Minutes

October draft minutes were approved.

Committee Updates

PPD - Joel Shapiro came and they discussed how they might help at @edu - this year Joel said it's going to only be one day versus two days. However, at this point the Committee will likely just be helping with marketing it, and will probably not do an event this year. They also worked on pinpointing what they will focus on this year.

Social Committee - They discussed moving the administration of the Community Service Award to the Community Engagement Committee. They plan to bring that up for a vote at the Staff Council monthly meeting in December. The Addams Family show sold 54 tickets, and four families signed up for the Creative Family Workshop. Seven people have signed up for the cooking class thus far. The bus trip to the outlet center in North Conway has been arranged for December 7th, at the price of \$35 for UVM staff/faculty/retirees and \$38 for non-affiliates. A minimum of 45 participants are required or the trip will be cancelled. The Committee is also planning for the Holiday Bazaar - help is needed: volunteers for the day of the event, and baked goods.

Community Engagement - The Committee is focused on four topics:

Firstly, translations of important information for staff - they are obtaining data around that question and at the next meeting there will be a member of the Office of Institutional Research to help advise the Committee.

Next, they are looking at the issue of food insecurity and are gathering resources to post about that.

Thirdly, they are looking at volunteerism and have formed a subcommittee to compile resources.

Finally, they are focused on overall communications on campus and how to help staff be more aware of what's going on and what's available to them.

CBB - The Committee welcomed two new members to the group: Marcus Weinman, graduate student representative, and Sarah Gordon, an at-large member from the library. They discussed the survey regarding the benefits statement and will draft a response to the survey that was sent out in September. The Telecommuting working group has been created. Richard Cate, Vice President of Finance, met with the Committee to review the funds being recommended for the University's Retirement Plan, and the Committee continued the discussion regarding steps forward on transparency issues within classification and compensation at UVM. The Committee will finalize and approve a draft of the FY21 Salary Recommendation at the November Meeting.

Officers' Update

The Officers attended the Board of Trustees meeting in October, at which each governance leader spoke about how their particular group helps with student success (the text of this speech will be shared with the Staff Council via email). They were asked about how we collaborate with other governance groups, and Steve Lunna pointed out that this is the first year we've included students from the Graduate Student Association on our committees.

There had been an outstanding question around whether staff would receive December 23rd off and the answer is they will not.

Transportation and Parking is looking for at least one more staff member to be on their board of appeals committee, and any interested parties can reach out to Alan or Elisabeth for the application.

At the most recent leadership meeting with Gary Derr, we reviewed some of our recent successes, like the nursing parent group achievements.

At the HRDMA meeting, the Campus Climate Survey results were brought up and the idea that Staff Council could have someone come from the Office of Institutional Research to discuss the findings that pertain to staff. It was noted that the decision to disallow Staff Council at the Benefits Fair was made *after* the most recent HRDMA meeting, but that it will be on the agenda for the next HRDMA meeting.

There has been a low-level renewal of the discussion around having the staff vote again for unionizing. However, Staff Council does not have an opinion, and are a neutral party.

Nursing Parent Update

Mindy Kear presented about the Nursing Parents Advocacy Committee, born out of the PPD committee. Stephanie Loscalzo and Mindy started it and partnered with AAEO. They solicited feedback through tabling, a survey, and flyers. They then compiled five priority action items and wrote and submitted a formal proposal. The outcome of which is that UVM will be purchasing two Mamava pods, one for STEM and one for Athletics. We also established new spaces, and heightened security for those and existing spaces. They also created the Lactation Liaison Network (all inquiries can be sent to lactationresources@uvm.edu and any important questions will be forwarded to Amber Fulcher, ADA504 Coordinator, in AAEO), and updated the lactation resources website, including an active map. Currently they are working on a document that will detail these resources for supervisors.

Staff Council Communications Update

Elisabeth presented the new website. Alan asked for any feedback on the topic of Staff Council office communication. The tip was given that the staff can switch the default on the Staff Council list serve so that replies do not go to the whole listserv but to an individual.

A reminder was given to please RSVP to the invite to President Garimella's house.

Other Business

The Catcard office hours were reported as being problematic because it is difficult to get their kids Catcards, and it would be great to have it open later. Variant hours were pointed out by a Catcard office staff member; there are certain days of the year when it's open on the weekends, for example.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 PM.