

Staff Council Officer's Report

October 2020

PCIE LISTENING SESSION CO-HOSTED BY CALEB & LAURA

The listening session on September 29, 2020 was led by Paul Yoon and Cathy Osmer's Rahill, with guests Staff Council President Caleb Gilbert and Vice President Laura Clayton. Rahill and others present are members of the President's Commission for Inclusive Excellence (PCIE), an institutional advisory board at UVM whose primary mission is "to advance the strategic diversity and inclusion goals of the university." The objectives of the listening sessions are to provide an opportunity for PCIE and other governance bodies (such as Staff Council and the Student Government Association) to be active listeners and learn from community members' experiences regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion at UVM. Notes from these unrecorded meetings will be condensed, anonymized, and presented to UVM Administration.

In this listening session, the following issues were discussed:

- The current and ongoing issues with the flag policy, and how it is negatively impacting students of color, who have recently been limited to just 5 days to hang their respective flags in their identity centers.
- The need for a clear statement from Administration that Black Lives Matter, and the concurrent need for the decoupling of that statement from the "political".
- More robust trainings for students are needed around sexual misconduct, listening to survivors, and supporting them.
- Ongoing problems with retention of faculty of color.
- The need for more and better antiracist training for Administration.

SC LEADERSHIP WITH Richard Cate, and TPS

On October 8, 2020, Caleb, Laura, Alan and Kristen Cella met with Richard Cate, Jim Barr, Taylor Page, Luce Hillman and Gary Derr. There was a follow up meeting with SC leadership, Jim Barr and Taylor Page on 10/12 to finalize a direction and possible path forward.

- TPS is an income-expense unit, not part of the larger university general budget, so if they are taking in no revenue, there is less and less funding to cover continued expenses. Currently suffer \$70K+ monthly short fall.
- How best to address this shortfall with TPS while still being able to maintain services and still be fair to those paying for parking passes and other parking options. Several

options were discussed at both meetings resulting in the survey sent out to all SC Reps and the communication sent to Richard Cate as a result.

- Also discussed as additional cost saving measure the consolidation of parking over winter to lessen the need for maintenance and snow removal in lots seeing little use at this time. May result in some having to walk further, some may end up being closer.
- Also discussed that at the end of this all, how will the process be reconstructed to “normal” while being mindful of the impact on operations and employee parking payments.

SC LEADERSHIP WITH HUMAN RESOURCES SERVICES

On October 16, 2020, Caleb, Laura and Alan met with Jes Kraus, Mary Brodsky, Greg Paradiso and Andrea Mast. This was a very productive meeting that touched upon numerous ongoing initiatives that concern staff.

- Conversation around wellness initiatives raised by SC Rep and how best to work with SC and administration. Britta MacAlpine will be in attendance at the next CBB meeting to discuss these topics.
- Discussion on outcome of Presidents Day survey to the SC Executive Board which identified Floating Holiday as the preferred method to address the day off. Expect a communication for HRS shortly to finalize the decision.
- Language Translation services conversation, the plan is for this service to become centralized on campus so any unit can access the services and stressed the use is for business purposes only. More to come on this initiative.
- Flu shots was on the agenda as well, but as you all saw the announcement of expanded flu shots went out a day or two prior to this meeting. The conversation then was around the logistics of what had to happen to offer additional opportunities, CVS will be administering these additional opportunities since UVMCC could not accommodate the overflow required. Still all in Waterman for non-students.
- Exit interview process was covered and how to get better participation. Unit HR reps will be given specific guidance from central that it is imperative to get separation info to central in a sufficient amount of time so the survey can be sent to departing employees before they actually leave, this was not happening in the past with regularity. HRS is also looking at a new & improved version of the questions. HRS will share the new tool when available.
- Clarified that there is no hiring freeze at this time, but a very strict and precise approval process in place before hiring can take place.
- Also discussed UA/UE negotiations and how there is no specific timeline in place for completion, but that good faith negotiations continue until a deal is reached. (This was prior to the Impasse in contract negotiations with United Academics email)

SC LEADERSHIP WITH VP OPERATIONS & PUBLIC SAFETY

On October 21, 2020, Caleb, Laura and Alan met with Gary Derr, VP for Operations & Public Safety. Discussed were

- Out of state travel issues with regularly 12-15 employees each week which subsequently require quarantine by those employees which evolved into additional conversation about employee holiday travel plans out of state and quarantine required upon return.
- Furloughs over the extended student absence and while there have been no specific conversations, it was clear that many cost savings items continue to be on the table.
- Testing to continue over the extended break for all UVM community
- May be a proposal to scale back on campus employee presence from 12/11 - 1/19 (Not furlough or layoffs, but back to pre on campus operations during that time since there will be very little need for on campus presence) this to be discussed at the next regular Campus Logistics & Safety officer meeting on Monday.
- Extreme stress on flexibility of remote working to continue through the spring.
- Discussion around the UA negotiations and the letter from Mary Brodsky. Administration always has plans in place when these negotiations take place, regardless of the situation. Since the process is nowhere near over, it may be many weeks or months before there is any resolution.
- Caleb was very strong in his advocacy for staff and the appearance of where the situation may be heading, stressed many times that staff should not take the lion's share of the impact on budgetary issues.
- Brief discussion on Staff Council organizational structure and research being done to see how it can be more inclusive. Be sure to know what goal or issue attempting to address by making such changes.
- Brief discussion about an SC E-Retreat and what that may look like as SC places the spotlight on itself to see where SC can grow, change and be more inclusive.