



THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT
**OFFICE OF STUDENT AND
 COMMUNITY RELATIONS**
 DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

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**UVM and Office of Student and Community Relations (OSCR)
 Neighborhood Initiatives, Programs, and Services
 2019 - 2020**

(1) **Community Coalition**: The Coalition meets monthly throughout the academic year. At these meetings, students, neighbors, landlords, city officials and staff, UVM and Champlain College staff and administrators meet to discuss neighborhood concerns; opportunities to develop community; and ways to take action that will result in systemic change. Some Coalition initiatives: our Street Strategy utilizing community development to make positive change; the [Off Campus Living Guide](#); expanding restorative practices in neighborhoods; and letters to parents of first and second year students providing background about the community their student is moving into, including expectations of residents and identifying local safety nets. The Coalition is co-chaired by the Student Government Association (SGA) and the OSCR.

(2) **Off Campus Living Workshops**: These workshops are held in the Fall and Spring of each academic year. Students participate in the workshops to learn about their rights and responsibilities as a tenant and a resident of Burlington. Attendees of the 2-hour workshop receive a UVM Preferred Renters Card to share with potential landlords. Panelists at the workshop include representatives from the Code Enforcement Office; Burlington Police Department; Vermont Tenants; Vermont Apartment Owners Association; City Council; Community Support Program; OSCR; and UVM Police Services, as well as off-campus students, and landlords. Survey comments from participants about what they learned included “what to look for to get safe housing;” “the concerns that non-college student neighbors have;” “that I have a safety net besides my family if I have problems with my off campus housing;” “communication with house mates and neighbors is the key to happy experience off campus;” “what landlords expect and how to advocate for tenant rights;” and “that there are fair housing laws.”

In Spring Semester 2020, OSCR will launch an on-line Off Campus Living tutorial with video clips of the above named resources providing critical information followed by quiz questions. Students who pass the quiz will receive a UVM Preferred Renters Card.

(3) **Neighborhood Grants and the Student-Neighbor Liaison Program**: Liaisons have access to OSCR’s Neighborhood Grants for community development projects. Some liaison projects: Buell St. Community Garden; Fletcher Place Fall Block Party; Hyde Street Triangle O.N.E.der Dome; Old East End Neighborhood Group mural; neighborhood clean-ups; and Isham Street Green Belt Gardens and Blueberry and Herbal Community Garden.

- (4) **Conflict Resolution Resources:** OSCR staff provides restorative practices approaches to our students, neighbors, and landlords to resolve conflicts. Generally, sessions take place at the Pearl House (OSCR office). Some past sessions involved several fraternities and a local business regarding behavior and property maintenance; a local landlord and tenants whose activity was disruptive to the neighborhood; and a group of neighbors, a City Councilor, and a landlord who rented primarily to students whose property was causing a nuisance to the neighborhood; and students and a landlord who was not repairing issues in their rental. All of these sessions had successful outcomes according to the individuals involved.
- (5) **Spring Move Out Project (SMOP):** Every year, this event diverts about 30 tons of goods from city green belts and the landfill. Students leaving the city receive “The Seven Spring Move Out Tips” brochure, which helps them to plan how to properly dispose of their stuff. In addition, the SMOP team (Burlington Code Enforcement Office, Chittenden Solid Waste District, UVM, Burlington Community and Economic Development Office, ReSOURCE, and Champlain College) holds a recycling event on Loomis St. for students to drop off unwanted items in good shape for community members and local non-profits to pick up to re-use. Students can also get rid of their trash on-site for a small fee. Working with neighbors in the West Hill Neighborhood Association, we added a second event in 2011 on Bradley St., which the neighbors reported was a “huge success.” In 2019, the two sites collected 31 tons of recyclables and waste.
- (6) **Response to Problem Houses:** The OSCR visits problem properties that have UVM student tenants when a call or email with a specific address has been received. OSCR has also been working in a coordinated way with Code Enforcement, the Burlington Police Department, and landlords to address problem houses in the City based on the number of calls for service as part of the efforts of the UVM Mapping Group (see below for information on this group). We have had success especially with landlords taking actions that change the behavior of their tenants.
- (7) **Welcome Bag Canvassing:** Each Fall, the OSCR and UVM staff, SGA Senators, and neighbors deliver Welcome Bags to about 500 households and have conversations with the off-campus student residents about living successfully in the community as a tenant and a neighbor. The bags include UVM’s Off Campus Living Guide and Vermont Tenants’ Renting in VT brochure, as well as CCTA guides, Resource Magnet; Bicycling Map; the Guide to Sustainable Living in Burlington; and a Welcome to the Neighborhood oven mitt, which the students and our Fire Marshal love!
- (8) **OSCR Appointments:** The OSCR staff meets with UVM students and their families, faculty, and staff to answer questions and to provide resources regarding finding off-campus housing and navigating life off-campus.
- (9) **Fraternity and Sorority Life Neighbor Relations Sessions:** In the Fall and Spring semesters, our office provides these sessions to Chapters as part of their efforts to educate new members about responsibilities expected of Burlington residents; opportunities to get involved in neighborhoods; and how to think and act strategically to create positive relationships and safer and healthier neighborhoods.
- (10) **Have a Heart Events:** These events take place in the Fall and Spring with the SGA members, Fraternity and Sorority Life members, and UVM administrators and staff. Volunteers hand out to students Lake Champlain chocolate hearts and fliers created by local children reminding them that neighbors live “just a wall away” and to be aware of the impact of walk-by noise and disruptions on our neighborhoods. Information is also provided about the off-campus late night shuttle schedule and taxi cab companies that take CatScratch.

(11) **Landlord Workshop:** The OSCR sponsored several workshops with the Burlington Code Enforcement Office and the Vermont Apartment Owners Association. UVM also presented on the resources landlords can utilize, such as our office's conflict resolution resources; the university's outreach and education efforts and materials, like the Off Campus Living Workshops and the UVM Preferred Renters Card; and the messages we share with students about the importance of creating good relationships with their landlords and their neighbors.

(12) **Letters to Landlords of Tenants Who Receive Party-Social Event Noise Violations:** Our office works with Code Enforcement and the Mapping Group to identify problem properties. Landlords of these properties are then sent a letter from Code outlining the behavioral tenant issues and asking for assistance in addressing them.

(13) **Parent Letters:** Letters about expectations of residents of Burlington are sent to parents of first- and second-year students. Parents of second-year students also receive information to assist their student in making a smooth transition to off-campus living.

(14) **Neighborhood Clean-Ups:** OSCR partners with the SGA to do clean-ups several times each semester on City streets. A special clean-up is scheduled for Halloween each year.

(15) **Cookies in the Library:** This event is held during exam week in the Fall and Spring Semesters. Local school children decorate cookies and then deliver them to students in the library along with a note thanking them for being part of the Burlington community and wishing them well on their finals. Cookie Love provides the batter and Dining Services does the baking.

(16) **Leadership TREK Neighborhood Canvass:** Student leaders work with the OSCR to deliver letters to neighbors about the university's Week of Welcome activities and to survey residents about neighborhood concerns and ways to build community between students and neighbors. (Note: This experience increases the awareness of students about the community they are joining and provides guidance to the Community Coalition members as they plan their work for the academic year)

(17) **Service TREK:** Before the official opening of campus, OSCR partners with Student Life and the STREK program to do a neighborhood project. Past year's projects have been creating new gardens in neighborhoods with Student-Neighbor Liaisons; cleaning up gardens and getting them ready for fall plantings; doing random acts of kindness for street residents in partnership with Burlington Health and Rehab residents (for e.g., decorating pots for succulents that are then handed out on to residents in neighborhoods with a high population of students).

(18) **Babysitter Mingler:** This event is held in the Fall and Spring and provides an opportunity for parents and children in need of babysitters to meet and mingle with UVM students who want to babysit. Over 400 students, parents, and children participate in the Fall and Spring minglers.

(19) **Marketing and Outreach:** We have found that an effective means of communicating the impact of late-night activity on families and to build positive relationships is to create messages from local schoolchildren to college students. Some egs., Have a Heart messages (see #10 above) and the Edmunds Middle School video featuring children talking about what they love about having UVM students in their neighborhoods and what is challenging for them. Another strategy is to bring the information to students where they are (resource fairs, ActivitiesFest, transfer orientation, graduate orientation, ...) and when they most need it, for e.g., tabling at the Davis Center in late spring with information about security deposits.

(20) **Catamount Classes:** The OSCR partners with Student Life to offer fun and informative classes to off-campus students and neighbors. Some of the classes we have held: “Cooking Healthy on the Cheap” with City Market,” “Doctor Your Bike” with the Bike Users Group (BUG) and Bike Recycle Vermont, “Green Your Cleaning” with Purple Shutter Herbs, and “Weatherize Your Off Campus Home - Save Some \$\$\$” with Button Up Vermont.

(21) **Dean of Students; Student Government Association President, and Burlington Police Chief Letter to Students:** Every Fall and Spring, the OSCR facilitates the creation of this letter about expectations for living off campus; city ordinances; and getting involved in making positive change in the community. The information then goes out on the all-student list serv and the Residential Life list serv. The letter is also sent as a press release from the Burlington Police Department to local media.

(22) **Transfer Student Socials:** Each year the OSCR partners with Student Life, the Admissions Office, the College of Arts and Sciences Transfer Advisor, and Student Financial Services to offer Transfer Student Socials in the fall and spring. These socials are hosted at the Pearl House and provide an opportunity for transfer students to meet each other and learn about UVM resources and how to get involved on and off campus.

(23) **UVM Service Network:** The OSCR partners with this group of UVM members representing community-service-related offices and programs on campus. These members serve as advocates/ambassadors for a broad range of community engagement activities and offerings.

(24) **Town Gown Group:** This group’s mission is to enhance the quality-of-life in neighborhoods for UVM students and their neighbors. Quality-of-life is diminished by noise, aggression, alcohol and drug use and abuse, and other disruptive behaviors. Quality-of-life is enhanced for persons, properties, and neighborhoods by awareness, knowledge, respect, dialogue, diversity, safety, and healthy community-building activities. The group’s membership is composed of representatives from UVM departments and organizations whose work can impact the community: Dean of Students Office, Student Life, Fraternity and Sorority Life, Student Government Association (SGA), Police Services (UPS), University Relations, Campus Planning Services, Residential Life, Student and Community Relations (OSCR), and Center for Student Ethics and Standards (CSES).

Other UVM-Burlington Initiatives:

- **Joint UVM-BPD Police Patrols** The patrols take place in the Fall and Spring semesters and focus on quality-of-life issues. The Fall patrols begin in August and end after Halloween. The Spring patrols begin on St. Patrick’s Day and end in May. Contacts: Lt. Matt Sullivan of the Burlington Police Department (msullivan@bpdvt.org) and Deputy Chief Tim Bilodeau of UVM Police Services (656-2027)
- **UVM Funded Increase in BPD Neighborhood Patrols:** In an effort to more effectively address chronic noise and other quality-of-life concerns, the Burlington Police Department and the University of Vermont have instituted a university funded program that assigns additional BPD officers to conduct neighborhood patrols. BPD manages the project. These expanded patrols will take place for 8 weeks each semester (early fall and late spring), when the majority of problems have tended to occur. The program will allow BPD to assign up to six additional police officers to neighborhoods on weekend nights. Contact: BPD Lt. Matt Sullivan (msullivan@bpdvt.org)

- **Accountability:** The Burlington Police Department sends the university and the local colleges the list of municipal and criminal violations between the ages of 18 and 24. At UVM, we identify the individuals who are our students and then our Center for Student Conduct responds in a 3 Tiered system. In our tracking, we have found that few students have additional violations, so the tickets do have an impact, as well as UVM intervention. To view the University's Statement of Expectations for Off Campus Students, please go to: <http://www.uvm.edu/sconduct/?Page=ExpectOffCampus.html&SM=menu-student.html>
- **UVM Mapping Group:** In 2012, the BPD, UVM, and Code Enforcement began mapping police calls for service in off-campus locations related to alcohol misuse and noise and subsequently worked together to respond to units, streets, and neighborhoods with higher numbers of calls for service. Actions coming out of the work of the group:
 - Residents of units with three or more police calls for service and one City violation are visited by a representative of the University and the City (either a BPD Lt. or the Director of the Office of Code Enforcement).
 - Landlords are engaged by Code Enforcement and contacted by Burlington Parallel Justice when tickets are issued.
 - Joint meetings are held to discuss trends in C-Area data (e.g. calls for service, violations).
 - Members look for trends in behavior (days of the week, the beginning or end of the academic year, holidays, ...) and underlying causes (alcohol use, inexperience managing households, ...)
 - When community members report incidents (whether they involve noise or other issues, we can track where incidents occur and focus resources there).
 - Good News: There was a 46% decrease in violations in 2018-2019 from 2017-2018. And a 71% decrease since the 2016-2017 academic year. Which means our initiatives wheel with lots of spokes as outlined in this report is working and we need to sustain it!
- **Strategic Operations for Community Concerns (SOCC):** The members of this group (Office of the Dean of Students, Campus Planning Services, Transportation and Parking Services, Local Government and Community Relations, and the Office of Student and Community Relations) meet monthly to discuss current opportunities and challenges in the City and in the neighborhoods. Some initiatives of the group: creating an opt-in system of notification to neighbors about events that might impact their neighborhood (<http://uvmevents.activehosted.com/f/5>) and engaging Green Mountain Security to be on So. Prospect St. during key times of the year.
- **Cats Off Campus Late-Night Shuttle:** In an effort to decrease late-night student foot traffic on city streets and to keep students safe, the university operates its Cats Off-Campus Shuttles from Mon. through Thurs. nights until midnight and on Fri. and Sat. nights until 3 am.
- **Fraternity and Sorority Life Neighbor Relations and Adopt-A-Cop Program** (Contact: Assistant Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life Cristina Vega; Cristina.Vega@uvm.edu; 656-2060)
- **Residence Hall Meetings:** Staff will have scheduled discussions with students about UVM expectations for their behavior off campus; the impact of late-night noise and disruption on neighbors; city and state laws governing noise and alcohol use; and UVM repercussions when students receive municipal and state violations.
- **On-Campus Educational Programs and Social Activities:** UVM continues to make a concerted effort to engage new students in programs and activities on campus year round. For e.g., during Opening

Weekend late-night activities include: The Campus Hop, Late-Night Rec Fest, and Club 590 music in the Davis Center.

- **New Housing:** In Fall 2012, Redstone Lofts opened, providing 400 beds for Juniors, Seniors, and Graduate students on the university's Redstone Campus. The new residence hall that opened in Aug. 2017 resulted in 300 new beds being created on campus. Starting in the 2018 Fall semester, the Jeanne Mance Residence Hall will be housing for Juniors, Seniors, and Graduate students. There are 160 beds available for students participating in the [Journey to Independence](#) Learning Community, as well as non-programmed space for upperclass students.
- **Housing Master Plan:** This effort was to assess and plan the future direction of student and faculty/staff housing from 2012 through 2026. The Housing Master Plan will give the university a strong framework from which it can decide how best to address future housing needs and will include a market analysis, operational/facility analysis, and financial analysis. See <http://www.uvm.edu/~plan/housingmasterplanconcepts.pdf> for more information.
- **Food Insecurity Group:** Under the leadership of UVM Dining Services this group brings together local and state food resource folks with UVM student leaders, staff, and faculty to survey our students' needs and how best to fulfill them; to create a sustainable and nutritional food supply on campus; and to share information about available resources locally and statewide. Some initiatives: the Swipe Out Hunger Program (students in need have access to student-donated meal points); OSCR managed food drive for the pantries at the Mosaic Center and TRIO; and a UVM Engaged Practices Innovation (EPI) grant to fund Discovery Kitchen Off Campus Students cooking workshops developed in a collaboration between Dining Services and OSCR.