



The University of Vermont

Staff Council

Staff Council President's Report
Board of Trustees – Committee of the Whole
Friday, October 25, 2019
Stephen Lunna, Staff Council President

Another year has passed us by, and as we take a moment to reflect, we quickly recognize that a lot of change has taken place. Besides a new President and Provost, we've welcomed the class of 2023, one of the largest and most talented incoming classes in this university's history. Staff Council, not to be outdone, has welcomed a fantastic new administrative team, and there are several other new developments rolling out:

We have a new Standing Committee – the Community Engagement Committee. Through this group's advocacy and research, we are hoping to offer UVM Staff more opportunities to be informed about--and engaged in--the areas of social justice and the environment. The Committee will examine and address issues and opportunities both on-campus and in the greater Burlington community.

The new Staff Professional Development fund has already awarded its first round of funds to selected staff, to help offset limited professional development funding from their departments. And Staff Council Committees have been hard at work determining their areas of focus for the coming year. Some of these include Parking, expanding facilities for Nursing Parents, and Modifying Tuition Remission.

Another issue that we're grappling with is how to address the rapidly increasing costs of benefits. As these rise faster than our pay increases, many Staff are finding it more difficult to balance their budgets every month. This is not a UVM-specific issue, but one that is affecting higher education on a national level. We would ask the Board to include this important issue in their discussions and help Staff Council find solutions.

We also continue to hear from our constituents about the wish for non-exempt staff to be able to make remote work arrangements when appropriate. Given the University's goals for reduced emissions, retaining valued staff, and the daily challenges with adequate parking, we are seeking ways to join the other large Vermont employers who offer this to their personnel.

In the spirit of broader collaboration across the campus, Staff Council leadership has recently met with the leadership of the Faculty Senate, Graduate Student Senate and the Student Government Association. Members of the Graduate Student Senate are now serving on our standing committees this year, in hopes that we may find areas of mutual interest and benefit. We feel strongly that a collaborative, committed community will benefit us all.

Staff Council stands ready to address and embrace change and the opportunities for growth which change can bring. I am truly excited to see what's next for our great institution.