

UVM Staff Council Meeting Minutes
May 5, 2020
12:05-1:30 p.m.
Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

Members Present:

Mindy Kear, Shirley Pine, Alex Howe, Allison Spain, Barbara Asimwe, Bethany Wolfe, Brendan Andrews, Bridget Tully, Caleb Gilbert, Cheryl Herrick, Christa Hagan-Howe, Cindy Lee, Deb McAdoo, Donna Stevens, Erin Wertlieb, Aimee Gale, Heather Allard

Members Absent:

Miriam Harrison, Kristen Cella, Bob Bolyard, Claire McCollough

Staff:

Elisabeth Blair, Alan Shashok

Guests:

Amanda Broder, Carol Brakenwagen, Catherine Symans, Corinne Thompson, Gwen Landis, Gary Derr

Call to Order

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

Approve Draft Minutes

April minutes were approved.

Victoria Gauvin: LiveSafe Presentation

She gave an overview of the LiveSafe App launch (phase 1) and the upcoming review of the Blue Light System (phase 2). The Phase 1 project goal is to improve campus safety and mitigate risk for all stakeholders through the implementation of the LiveSafe app by August 2020 with a minimum functionality of providing reliable two-way safety communications at the push of a button from mobile devices –with or without an internet connection. She detailed the app’s capabilities and the expected timeline, and fielded questions. She will build a Q&A and send it out separately. The Staff Council was asked to download the app in order to test it.

Steve thanked and welcomed new SC reps.

Several new representatives were in attendance. They will begin their service on July 1st, 2020.

Standing Committee Updates

PPD – Their last meeting was on 4/21. They discussed tuition remission and determined that with the current uncertainty, they will hold on pursuing that issue for now. They also discussed exit interviews and looked forward to presenting their proposal for approval by the Executive Board. The activities of the Parent Working Group were also discussed.

Social Committee – June 28th is still the date for the Lake Monsters game and BBQ, with a backup date of August 16th. Smugglers’ Notch Daycation tickets – the committee is holding off on this until after May 15. The *Matilda* show was rescheduled to July, but it has now been postponed again. The golf outing has been scheduled for Friday April 7 at Links at Lang Farm. The Corporate Cup was rescheduled for Sept 10. Everything else is on hold until mid-May.

Community Engagement – They had a brief meeting a few weeks ago, and approved a CSA application. The Food Insecurity subcommittee’s summer potluck event is not going forward, given the current situation, but hopefully they can pick that back up in the future. Some work into translation services was reported, especially around the availability of it with UVM’s partner vendors. They are determining next steps with regards to translation. They discussed how they might contribute to the weekly COVID-19 Resource newsletters.

CBB – They have begun conversations about the “How are you doing?” questionnaire responses on how staff are coping during the pandemic. 88 people have responded. This has been shared all the way up to President Garimella and leadership in HRDMA. The committee will continue to look at questions that arise and what there is to learn from these responses.

Officers’ Update

- At the quarterly leadership meeting, President Garimella expressed that he was very pleased with the efforts being put forth by Staff Council, especially the work that Elisabeth has done in putting out the COVID-19 Campus & Community Resources newsletter, and CBB’s “How are you doing?” questionnaire.
- President Garimella and Gary Derr both asked Stephen and Caleb to continue for another year. The Executive Board made a resolution to extend the two officers’ services for another year, to end June 30, 2021. This decision was taken to maintain stability and experienced leadership during these uncertain times.
- Stephen will be giving a presentation to the Board of Trustees on May 15th on the following topic: How do UVM Staff contribute to the Strategic Imperative Statement? This consists of:
 - Ensuring Student Success
 - Investing in our Distinctive Research Strengths
 - Fulfilling our Land Grant Mission

Stephen asked that Staff Council Representatives contribute to his presentation by helping provide him with specific examples and stories that tie staff to those three areas.

- June 1st and beyond: Right now UVM is maintaining all employees through the end of May with full pay and benefits. In discussions with Alan Shashok, Gary Derr, and Jes Kraus, it is clear there is no definitive plan yet as to what happens after that. The University’s back-to-work orders are being closely aligned with what the VT Governor declares, and it will be a slow return.

Gary Derr added that each Friday the governor holds a weekly press conference, and that the last few have contained encouraging news. He’s been gradually modifying and adjusting the Stay Home, Stay Safe (SHSS) order. Within that, he’s also implemented requirements which UVM is looking at how to implement. This includes a required training component for all employees who will be working on campus. Employees will complete this training, which includes a self-assessment, and this will generate a certificate to be provided to supervisors. Also required will be plastic shields in high-contact spaces, frequent cleaning of those spaces by those who work in them, more hand sanitizing stations, mandated breaks, and the appointment of a Health and Safety Officer – Francis Churchill. UVM is currently identifying an assistant Health and Safety

Officer in every unit who is responsible for compliance in their unit.

When the governor lifts the SHSS order, there will probably be a little bit of a lag before UVM responds with its own plan. A large group will meet again this Thursday and will look at what compliance issues may exist in the physical spaces of offices, for example, 6 foot distancing. There will be a great deal of flexibility in how each unit meets their own unique needs, such as alternating remote vs in-person working, putting up signs, and having individual staff report to their work sites on different days. Self-reporting of symptoms will be required. UVM will not provide cloth masks, so employees should provide their own. This is due to ongoing supply chain issues. In the future, it may be possible to sell or provide UVM branded face masks.

He acknowledged that those with children still out of school will be facing issues in the event of a return to work on campus.

Specific details on the Fall 2020 plan will be solidified and shared in the coming weeks.

All in all, work will be very different when we return. We will require cooperation from everyone at all times to ensure a safe and healthy return to operations.

Exit Interview Proposal

The Exit Interview Proposal was recently approved by the Executive Board. At this time the floor was opened to questions about this proposal.

Q: Several employees I've known personally around campus who have left who have never gone through the exit interview process. One was a hostile environment leave. None of that was reported to HR. As we implement this, is there a plan to ensure that these exit interviews are in fact being offered each time?

A: It's always voluntary. People choose whether they want to fill it out or not. Steve acknowledged that the exit interview suffers from very poor response rates. We can look into ways to hold HR accountable, if need be.

Questionnaire: COVID-19: How are you doing?

The floor was opened to discussion around the ongoing comments coming in through this anonymous survey.

Q: I noticed several respondents said they were receiving no support from their units. Have any SC representatives received complaints from individuals?

A: Some reps have heard from parents that they are stressed and struggling. One representative reached out to their dean with data from this questionnaire and it helped convince him to reach out to the unit's managers, reminding them to be extra flexible with their staff. Steve will mention to Jes Kraus that deans may need to reach out to faculty supervisors for this encouragement, in case that's where some issues lie.

Q: It sounds like the people with children are suffering more from the situation than those of us without them. But are they taking advantage of the opportunities offered with the two weeks' paid, and the ten weeks at 2/3 income?. Is there a way to find out if people are taking advantage of that?

A: Some people felt they couldn't take the pay cut, and there have been reports that people are still having to pay for part of their daycare in order to hold their children's spots in the programs. Steve will bring this up to Jes and Richard Cate where relevant, and will pass the questionnaire responses along to Provost Patty Prelock.

The questionnaire will remain in the weekly newsletter at least for another week.

Other Business

No other business.

Public Comment Period

No public comments were brought to the Council.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 PM.

DRAFT