

We've remained invested in maintaining and expanding training opportunities for staff, partnering this year with Professional Development and Training to ensure that EDU@UVM—an annual array of peer-led educational workshops—would be a great success. We also secured an increase in the Staff Council Professional Development Fund, and a promise of its continuation.

Before the pandemic, our Compensation, Benefits, and Budget Committee had already begun examining ways to modernize the UVM telework policy to better meet staff needs and capabilities. Then, as so many of us worked remotely over the last 15 months, the committee continued to monitor and research how telework revolutionizes the efficient performance of duties and the balancing of work and life demands. They've formally submitted their recommendations, with the hope that the “new normal” will be more supportive and inclusive than the old.

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The future, we know, holds more change, more uncertainty. As we continue to advocate for non-represented staff, we may adjust the shape and structure of Staff Council to fit the evolving needs of the UVM staff community. We will continue to support the university's goals of providing an inclusive, safe climate for students, staff, and faculty of all identities, by continuing our participation in antiracist work and education, and by focusing on both attracting and retaining diverse staff. We will invest in community building by forming staff affinity groups, and by organizing and formalizing volunteering and community outreach efforts.

Staff Council's Mission Statement makes it clear that we are not only focused on elevating and supporting staff – we work to “promote the betterment of all.” We know that lifting up staff also lifts up the entire UVM community. As we emerge from a difficult time, we look forward to a stronger future - and I know I leave Staff Council in good hands, with incoming President Jon Reisenweaver, and continuing Vice President Laura Clayton. Thank you.