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Burlington City Council Unanimously Votes on UVM Resolution Calling for the Protection of Jobs and Programs and for Greater Transparency and Inclusion

February 17, 2021

Last night, the Burlington City Council voted unanimously in support of a resolution calling on the UVM President and Board of Trustees to act with greater transparency, and to prioritize the inclusion of faculty, staff & students and the protection of jobs. The resolution was introduced by Councilor Stromberg and co-sponsored by Councilors Tracy, Hanson, Shannon, Dieng, Hightower, and Pine. Throughout the public comment section of the City Council meeting, UVM students, faculty, and staff spoke in support of the resolution. It is notable that Progressives and Democrats worked together to co-sponsor the resolution, and that the vote was unanimous.

[The resolution](#) lays out a series of actions the UVM administration has taken over the past year which have created turmoil for many UVM faculty and staff. The statement ends with a message to be sent to the President and Trustees: “The City of Burlington calls on the Administrators of the University of Vermont, as an exemplary model of Burlington values, to prioritize protecting jobs, to respect staff’s right to organize, to work with UVM faculty and staff to reverse regressive austerity measures aimed at vulnerable educators and staff, to cease non-educational bonuses, and instead to make decisions with employees recognizing the community value of a liberal arts education, rewarding educational investment of lecturers with job security that reflects their skills and value, and sustaining the foundational focus higher education must provide to serve the needs of the community.”

Supporters of the resolution called out the UVM administration’s lack of transparency in making decisions to cut high-performing, relatively low-paid Lecturers, while executive administrators and athletic coaches continue to bring in salaries of between a quarter- and a half-million dollars. They drew attention to the State of Vermont and taxpayers’ commitment to UVM and the administration’s failure to follow through on promises noting “the UVM Administration committed to the State of Vermont to use COVID relief funds to prevent job losses during this same period”. The council also stressed the failure of the administration and the Board of Trustees to be responsive to employees’ needs and pleas, failing to respond to emails and requests to meet and making the Trustees meetings difficult to access or participate in.

Julie Roberts, Linguistics Professor and President of United Academics, the UVM faculty union, responded by saying, “We faculty are extremely grateful for the support shown by this resolution and the fact that it was passed unanimously by the Burlington City Council. We hope that the administration will pay close attention to this resolution and realize that the regressive tactics taken have had effects that reach beyond the campus and into the Burlington Community. We can and must do better.”

About United Academics: UVM United Academics represents over 700 full-time and 100 part-time faculty at UVM and is affiliated with AFT Vermont, which represents 5000 higher education and healthcare professionals in Vermont, and AAUP.