



Office of the President

March 19, 2008

Daniel Mark Fogel

From: Daniel Mark Fogel
To: Members of the Student Labor Action Project
Re: **Meeting Basic Needs**

Student livable wage advocates are actively engaged in communications designed to persuade UVM to adopt a livable wage policy. First, I wish to commend students who responsibly share their views on this and other important issues of the day, activity that goes to core values of a university. Second, on the merits of this issue, I wish to begin by reiterating that addressing the basic needs of UVM employees remains an important priority in our approach to compensation.

UVM is one of Vermont's most progressive and responsible employers. Our wages and overall compensation levels for our lowest-paid workers are among the highest of any public higher education institution anywhere in the country as well as competitive locally. In addition, as to benefits, we have instituted policies such as salary-sensitive insurance premium payments and parking fees that are both progressive and uncommon.

The University's contract with the United Electrical Workers, which was negotiated and ratified in good faith by the membership of the duly-elected union representing the vast majority of our lowest paid workers, runs through June 2009. The University also brought the wages of the approximately 20 non-union-represented workers in the lowest pay range to the same levels as those established in the contract. Looking ahead, we can, under state labor law, negotiate wages only with the designated representatives of the collective bargaining unit. Addressing the basic needs of these employees will be a vital aspect of those negotiations.

The University Board of Trustees, and the administration, have fiduciary responsibilities for the University that require careful thought and planning with respect to resource allocation and policies that will promote the future health and success of the institution. This work includes consideration of resources allocated to compensation, and between faculty and staff, and of the impact our decisions may have on student access and affordability. Future consideration of compensation levels must take place within that complex context, all components of which are critical to the viability and welfare of UVM.

I hope we can all make every effort to keep our communication constructive and ongoing. Again, I thank you for your communications on these important issues.

cc: Trustees, Vice Presidents, Deans and Directors, Governance Leaders