

Dear Madam Chairwoman Pugh and members of the House Committee on Human Services,

We write to ask you to invest a portion of the \$1.25 billion stimulus package into UVM's childcare center, the Campus Children's School (CCS). UVM's president announced last week that CCS will close, with all employees laid off and families who had counted on that childcare faced with the difficult task of finding care without notice and few or no options immediately available. The administration argued that the COVID epidemic worsened UVM's finances and the University could no longer afford to subsidize the center at the cost of \$550,000 per year.

The center's deficit had already been reduced by half with a variety of structural and other changes, and there were plans in place to continue to reduce this deficit. Therefore, we believe bridge funding could help preserve this childcare center, a model center that pays teachers well and is renowned for its teacher education and best practice.

Specifically, we are asking that you allocate \$550,000 of the stimulus money to support UVM's childcare center for one year, contingent on the agreement that UVM will use that year to work with an inclusive group of UVM faculty and staff to reorganize the childcare center to a place where it is financially sustainable. Families and stakeholders across the UVM campus need to be involved in the process.

As you know, many childcare centers in Vermont are closing, with some providers choosing not to reopen due to the effects of COVID-19. Vermont working families cannot afford to lose more child care spots because it will result in parents not being able to work to provide for their families. UVM's Campus Children's School is not alone in navigating the challenges the COVID-19 poses to all early learning centers and Vermont schools in general. We need to be part of the solution, as opposed to adding to the demand and overcrowding of childcare facilities by permanently closing CCS during this time. We would like to ask for further funding to allow us to make structural changes or move into a temporary space to be able to open a school that meets requirements of current child care regulations designed for preventing the spread of COVID-19. Since we do not know if the current location of CCS is able to accommodate the regulatory guidelines, we cannot place an amount on this request. Instead, we respectfully ask that the financial support of the Campus Children's School to reopen for the 2020-2021 academic year be a stipulation of any relief funds allocated to UVM.

We attach to our letter 1) a commentary written by Eleanor Miller (UVM Professor of Sociology and former Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences) and Stephanie Seguino (UVM Professor of Economics and Fellow, Gund Institute for the Environment, and former Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences) who provide further background on the context of this challenge here at UVM, 2) "Letter to the editor" from founder and former Director of UVM's Campus Children's School from 1990-2011, Dale Goldhaber, and 3) a petition signed by over 1000 people in support of our request for UVM to reopen the childcare center for one year, and work towards viable alternatives for a long-term solution.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue, as it holds implications beyond the walls of our school and UVM, into the broader community.

Respectfully,
Families of the UVM Campus Children's School

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