



Across the Green  
July 2015

TO: University of Vermont Academic Community

FROM: David V. Rosowsky, Provost and Senior Vice President

“Energy and Momentum”

...two properties of physics that aptly describe what is happening at UVM. The sources of **energy** are both internal (the hard work and collective goodwill of UVM’s people) and external (enthusiastic support of our alumni and new resources to the University that will enable us to achieve the vision and goals articulated in the [President’s Strategic Action Plan](#)). And the **momentum** (think of a giant flywheel picking up speed<sup>1</sup>) is evident all around us: capital projects are underway, the new budget model has been implemented, new programs across all of our academic units are being launched, new research partnerships and consortia are being supported, new technologies are being commercialized and businesses launched, and new student populations are being reached.

Faculty and departments are energized around pedagogy, innovation, and scholarship. And colleges and schools are now fully authorized and incented to work toward their own goals and priorities (consistent with those of the University) in a fashion similar to how other universities operate and which will allow important and necessary growth and change. How UVM evolves as a great university is *entirely up to us*. And now the mechanisms are in place to enable colleges and schools (as well as departments and programs) to evolve effectively, responsibly, and successfully.

#### PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Summer is a very special time on any university campus – an opportunity for restoration, renewal, focus on scholarship, and “reset” in advance of the next academic year. It is an even more special time at UVM as we are blessed by our location, climate, and myriad outdoor opportunities on the lake, along the trails, and in the mountains. I certainly hope each of you is able to take time amidst your scholarly and professional pursuits to enjoy some of what makes summer in Vermont so special.

---

<sup>1</sup> The powerful ‘flywheel analogy’ comes from the book *From Good to Great* by Jim Collins, which I read soon after arriving at UVM.

I write, as I start my third year as Provost at the University of Vermont, with great excitement and even greater anticipation for the year ahead. Indeed we are now, as a university, in a period of considerable transformation – culturally, operationally, and in terms of our physical campus. What is perhaps most remarkable is the way that these changes have come about and are being implemented, through a series of campus-wide engagements and commitments over the last two years. I have been profoundly impressed by the spirit of cooperation and shared vision that have been evident throughout these dialogs, and the willingness of faculty, staff, and students to share their time and talent. *Together*, we are doing great things for our academic community and our university.

For more information:

[Provost's Report](#) to the Board of Trustees, EPIR Committee (May 2015)

## COMMENCEMENT AND SUMMER

The 214<sup>th</sup> Commencement Ceremonies at UVM were, once again, stunningly beautiful. The grounds, the pageantry, and the celebration – all were in full bloom and created truly memorable experiences for the graduates and their families.

Nearly 3,000 graduates received their UVM diplomas at Commencement in May. The Class of 2015 included 2,385 bachelor's, 362 master's, 112 doctoral, and 116 M.D. degree recipients. Graduates hailed from 42 states and 16 countries. Nearly 1200 of the graduates were Vermonters, and about 300 were ALANA and bi- or multi-racial students. The University of Vermont also reached an important and impressive milestone: awarding of our 100,000<sup>th</sup> bachelor's degree.

I know that many of you participated in the ceremonies and attended the various college, school, and departmental functions during Commencement week. *Thank you*. This means the world to students and parents and sends a powerful message to our newest alumni.

Very soon after we bid farewell to the graduating class, we welcomed our summer session students. This was the second straight year of notable growth in our summer enrollments – one of the President's highest strategic priorities – with increases in nearly every college/school. Discounted summer tuition coupled with aggressive marketing strategies and clearly connecting summer study opportunities to the [Four-Year Plan for Career Success](#) have resulted in steady enrollment growth. The deans are looking at growing summer programs as a way to both generate new revenues for the colleges/schools *and* improve retention and four-year graduation rates. Your support in visioning the role of summer programs in your departments and programs, and of course creating the best offerings, is essential and very much appreciated.

As is always the case, a number of important leadership retreats are being held over the summer. They began with a university-wide leadership retreat that brought together deans, department chairs, program directors, vice presidents, and other university administrators. These “big tent” meetings, convened and hosted by President Sullivan, are held twice a year. Whether at the college/school level or university-wide, these summer retreats are invaluable opportunities to reflect on progress and to look ahead to the coming year, to re-affirm or adjust (as needed) shared goals, and to seek new ways to leverage resources and talent. I have asked each of the deans to share highlights and outcomes from these discussions with faculty and staff this fall.

## LAUNCH OF INCENTIVE-BASED BUDGETING (IBB)

IBB was launched on July 1. The prior two years of planning and preparations – with thanks to all who participated – allowed this date to pass with relatively little fanfare. By all accounts, and as I reported in the most recent IBB update memo to the campus, the shadow (parallel model) year was successful. I have every confidence that the model will perform as designed and as expected, however the IBB Steering Committee *will continue to meet* regularly in the coming year (and beyond) to evaluate the model’s operation, identify/rectify any problems, and resolve any conflicts that may arise. I invite you to continue to check the [IBB website](#) for updates, useful information, and planned changes. The success of this model is predicated on *transparency*. I pledge to continue to provide timely, complete, and accurate information with full transparency. Please don’t hesitate to suggest ways I can improve in my communications in this regard.

Excerpt from [IBB Campus Update Memo #4](#)—

“(IBB) is transparent, predictable, and easily understood. The model supports academic quality, it distributes budgetary responsibility, it provides clear incentives, and it allows multi-year planning.

It has been my privilege to work with the 240 members of our campus community involved in the development and implementation of IBB, and to witness such a collaborative, inclusive, and authentic process. This bodes very well for the future of the University of Vermont.”

Excerpt from [IBB Final Report](#)—

“(IBB) is not a surrogate for leadership, vision or innovation. It is a management tool that will empower our academic leaders to develop and manage their resources strategically, efficiently, and effectively as the academic units continue to elevate the quality and reputation of academic programs in order to meet the needs of our students. (We) all must play a role in that process. We must be willing to examine and question long-held practices and beliefs. We must be willing to change, to create, and to innovate.”

## SCHOLARLY PRODUCTIVITY AND IMPACT METRICS:

### *A campus-wide engagement around Academic Excellence*

At the beginning of the last academic year, I asked the deans to engage in a robust discussion with their faculty and academic leadership to develop a set of metrics by which scholarly productivity and impact can be tracked, evaluated, and communicated. This was among my earliest priorities for the University, motivated by my belief – stronger even today than when I first shared these thoughts with campus in 2013 – that we all want to be part of the best university possible and that excellence is a shared goal at any great academic institution.

Tracking, reporting, and acting upon collected information describing scholarly productivity and impact is part of how universities function today. This information can be used to message and affirm our value, distinguish the University, advance our reputation, and inform strategic and positive change.

The goal of this effort is to empower departments and colleges to effect positive and strategic change – *e.g.*, to inform student and faculty recruitment strategies, to make informed decisions about investments or reallocations, and to make contextualized decisions to positively impact national reputation, visibility, and ranking. No intent exists to use this information for any other purpose.

I recognize and respect that different scholarly fields have different cultures, outlets and mechanisms for scholarship, and national norms for measuring productivity and impact. To that end, I asked the deans to work closely with the faculty within each discipline to identify suitable and appropriate metrics to track and report, and that can inform goal-setting and decision-making.

The results of these discussions in the colleges and schools have been both impressive and affirming. They reflect thoughtful assessment, introspection, and external benchmarking. The resulting metrics are clear and unambiguous, reportable and verifiable, and both comprehensive and inclusive of scholarship vectors within the discipline.

A [webpage](#) has been created that provides information about the genesis of this process, the process itself, and its results. There are three sections to the webpage: (1) Background communications: *making the case*, (2) Specific charge: *sparking the conversation*, and (3) The metrics: *a shared articulation of scholarship*.

I thank all of you – faculty, department chairs, and deans – for your participation in this important process and for your continued commitment to academic excellence at UVM.

## ACADEMIC ADVISING

The [President's Strategic Action Plan](#) and the supporting [Academic Excellence Goals](#) both place a high priority on effective student advising and the *continuum* of academic advising and career planning.

In spring 2015, we concluded a year-long exercise to assess, re-affirm, and where necessary re-design our academic advising processes. Recognizing the “local culture” that invariably exists at the college and school level, and the need to preserve both identity and successful programs at these levels, each college and school was asked to undertake this assessment locally. The results are a series of advising plans that are comprehensive, robust, and better meet the evolving needs of our students.

Developing advising plans was one element in a broader suite of initiatives to improve academic advising at UVM. The Student Government Association (SGA) is working to create new peer advising programs that will support and enhance college and school-based academic advising programs. And plans are rapidly evolving for a new central advising center to address the needs of undeclared majors, transfer students, and those seeking to change their major or add a second major. The advising center could be located in close proximity to the Career Services Hub in the Davis Center, perhaps sharing space or staff, and will leverage the outstanding advising staff that exists in the academic units across the campus. My hope is to launch the new advising center in the coming year.

This year we will also be evaluating possible web-based advising tools that can improve effectiveness, connectivity, and evaluation of time-based progress toward degree completion. Such tools are becoming common at other colleges and universities, have been shown to be extremely effective, and are being requested by students.

I want to thank the deans, department chairs, and faculty, as well as the professional advising staff within the academic units, for their work on these advising plans. I have asked the deans to continue to socialize these plans, and the advising processes and opportunities therein, with the faculty, staff, and students each fall. They are now clearly posted on each college/school webpage and on the [webpage](#) of the Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning. The plans already have received some very positive feedback from students and student governance leaders.

Taken together, these initiatives represent a considerable commitment to, and investment in, academic advising at UVM – which is critical to student success (including retention and four-year graduation rates). Our academic advising focus also directly supports, and complements, the Career Services efforts (including the [Four-Year Plan for Career Success](#)) we have launched over the last two years.

For more information:

[Charge to the deans](#)

[Academic Advising Plans by college/school](#)

## INSTITUTE FOR ENVIRONMENT

In June, the Task Committee on Resourcing the Institute for Environment provided me with its final report with recommendations and an action plan. This university-wide institute is one of my highest priorities for the University and, I believe, represents one of the greatest opportunities for the University to engage, collectively, in an area that is both a historic strength for UVM (and indeed the state of Vermont) and can help us to achieve distinction nationally. As you know, I place priority on creating and supporting programs that are both *distinctive* and *distinguished*, that can leverage the tremendous intellectual talent that we have at UVM, and that can help to advance the University's visibility, reputation, and rankings. The [Institute for Environment](#) (a placeholder name only) is an important part of this strategy.

I am carefully reviewing the task committee's report this summer and expect to announce next steps by early fall. In the meantime, I am continuing to work to secure resources to properly support this bold initiative. With my thanks to Taylor Ricketts (RSENr) and Donna Rizzo (CEMS) for their ongoing leadership of this this important effort. Their work with the faculty, the deans, the Vice President for Research, and the UVM Foundation has been invaluable.

## E-MAIL AND CALENDAR TRANSITION

UVM's current email and calendar offerings were first deployed in the 1990's, and were state-of-the-art at that time. However, they haven't kept pace with modern web and mobile needs and no longer serve the University well. Soon after arriving at UVM, I made the replacement of both email and calendar systems a high priority. After campus-wide listening and planning efforts, Microsoft Exchange was selected as the new email and calendar solution for faculty, staff, and students. Microsoft Exchange has a long-standing position as one of the leading systems for enterprise-level email and calendaring. It offers a number of advantages over our current tools and will greatly enhance the ability of faculty, staff and students to work together efficiently and effectively.

Exchange will be rolled out to the UVM community in phases, beginning in August. In order to become familiar with the system, IT support staff across campus will begin using Exchange in August and September. For faculty and staff who use Oracle calendar as well as email, the migration is expected to occur in late December, to minimize disruption to the academic semester. For those who use email but do not use Oracle calendar, some early adopters will migrate this fall, though most active users will migrate over winter break; this group includes many faculty and all students. Throughout the transition, deployment of the new system will be compatible with existing email programs, and should not disrupt access to email.

Given that communication and collaboration are at the heart of our academic mission and administrative processes, we are striving to minimize disruptions while ensuring that communications and calendar events are migrated safely. This incremental approach will allow the UVM community to ease into a new and transformative system of communication while ensuring a smooth transition. More details on training opportunities and specific dates will be provided by ETS as the fall semester unfolds.

I want to thank the members of the Systems Architecture & Administration department in ETS for their dedication and hard work in making this project a success.

For more information: [UVM Exchange transition](#)

## COLLEGE LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS AND PLANS

This summer, we welcomed two new interim deans, Bill Falls (CAS) and Cynthia Gerstl-Pepin (CESS), and thanked two outgoing deans (Antonio Cepeda-Benito and Fayneese Miller) for their service to their respective colleges and to the University. Bill and Cynthia are well known to their colleges – both are highly respected scholars and leaders, and each brings experience and dedication to their new roles. We are fortunate at UVM to have such talented and deeply committed faculty to step into these important leadership roles.

This fall, we will launch national searches for both deanships. I fully expect both opportunities to attract national interest and to lead to a deep and rich applicant pool – one that includes highly qualified internal candidates. The search committees for both positions have been formed and will start to meet in early fall. The advertisement and call for applications will appear shortly thereafter.

I want to thank Professor of Geology and Former Provost John Hughes and Dean of Libraries and CIO Mara Saule for agreeing to chair the search committees for the CAS dean and CESS dean, respectively. Vice President for Executive Operations Gary Derr will coordinate both searches on behalf of the Offices of the President and Provost. My goal is to conclude both searches in the spring and to have new deans in place by fall 2016.

I am also very happy to report that Lisa Schnell has agreed to serve a second year as Interim Dean of the Honors College while we consider plans to fill the deanship on a permanent basis. Lisa brings tremendous talent and energy to the deanship and I am grateful for her willingness to continue in this role.

## CONSTRUCTION ON CENTRAL CAMPUS

In early June, we broke ground on the STEM Complex, the first of three large construction projects to be built on the [Central Campus](#). In the months leading up to the groundbreaking, you may have seen pre-construction activities to prepare the site, install infrastructure to support the new buildings, and create alternate walking and bus routes. Over the next four

years, there will be considerable activity (and commensurate disruption) in that area of the campus, as construction proceeds on (1) the STEM Complex, (2) a new first-year residence hall, and (3) the UVM Medical Center's new in-patient building.

There has been considerable work done behind-the-scenes in advance of these projects, both in the design of these important new living, learning, and discovery spaces, and in preparing for the inevitable disruptions that occur with such projects. For example, a committee dedicated to identifying potential disruptions and developing solutions/alternatives to ensure continued smooth operation of the University and its programs worked closely with the Faculty Senate and others to modify the class schedule to allow extra time between classes. This same committee has examined classroom needs during the construction, worked closely with project personnel to prepare for office and laboratory moves in each stage of the STEM Complex construction, and worked with Campus Planning and others to ensure adequate routes are maintained for pedestrians and bus traffic.



A “Building UVM” [website](#) has been created, and will be updated regularly, to provide important information to the campus and the community in the coming years. Here you can learn more about each of the three major projects on the Central Campus.

Stay informed, be part of the excitement, and thank you (in advance) for your understanding and patience as we accommodate the inevitable construction dust, noise, and disruptions. Above all, think about what this part of Central Campus will look like in just a few years: a bold and impressive new academic quad that bridges science, engineering, business, medicine, and that creates impressive new living and learning spaces for first-year students.

Other parts of campus also will see construction activities, as plans continue apace for the Alumni House and event pavilion (UVM Foundation), the Miller Farm Complex (Agriculture/Animal Sciences), renovation of the Taft School (Arts), and renovation of Billings (Humanities and Special Collections). Conceptual design and associated fundraising continues for the Kalkin Hall expansion (Business) and Patrick/Gutterson and Virtue Field (Athletics). Finally, the University is continuing to work closely with private partners to develop new housing options for third and fourth-year undergraduate students as well as graduate students/families.

#### FIRST-YEAR SUMMER READ

This year's [First Year Summer Read](#) selection is the award-winning *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* by Anne Fadiman. I encourage all of you to read this book this summer along with our students. “Spirit” is beautifully written, exceptionally well researched, and



compelling in both its narrative and its message. I commend the First-Year Summer Read Committee for its selection of this year's book and hope that many of you will find ways to incorporate it into your courses and discussions with our incoming students, the members of the UVM Class of 2019.

I found the book difficult to put down, and I already have my notes ready for a blog essay (as I wrote for "Ghost Map" in 2013) around the messages of "Spirit" to be posted soon. And, as has become my custom, I will include comments about the book in my remarks at Convocation.

Author Anne Fadiman will be giving a university-wide lecture on September 15. I hope you can join us for what promises to be a very special event.

### CLOSING THOUGHTS

If you have not done so already (or recently), you might take a moment to acknowledge, absorb, and appreciate all that is happening at the University of Vermont<sup>2</sup>. *This is a great time to be at UVM*, to be part of the excitement on our campus, and to be part of the engine driving our growth and our evolution as a great university. Your **energy** fuels our collective **momentum**. The possibilities are limitless and opportunities are right in front of us.

Thank you for all that you do for our students, for your colleagues, and for the University of Vermont. And my very best wishes for a restful, restorative, and wonderful summer.

Webpage: [www.uvm.edu/provost](http://www.uvm.edu/provost)  
 Twitter: [www.twitter.com/UVMprovost](https://www.twitter.com/UVMprovost)

*"We all want to be part of the best university possible ...  
excellence is a shared goal at any great academic  
institution."*

*"Faculty and departments are energized around  
pedagogy, innovation, and scholarship."*

*"This is a great time to be at UVM."*

---

<sup>2</sup> See: President's [Annual Report](#) for 2014/2015.