



Office of the Provost and
Senior Vice President

Across the Green
August 2017

TO: University of Vermont Academic Community
FROM: David V. Rosowsky, Provost and Senior Vice President

Mission: Impact

The start of a new academic year is filled with excitement – for students, faculty, and staff, but also for the community. As I start my fifth year as provost, I am excited not only to welcome our newest students and commence the new academic year, but for all that the new year means and promises. We are bearing witness to a transformational time in our university’s history. We are present for, and indeed we are driving, this important and exciting change. And we are working together to secure a bright and sustainable future for our university. Not a day passes that I am not profoundly humbled by your commitment to and your passion for UVM. This inspires, motivates, and propels us all. It also reminds me why we work so hard: because we are committed to this great university, its people, and its mission.

I have heard many times from faculty, staff, and alumni that the changes in the last five years have been greater than those in the last five decades. But as I have said often, we do not seek change for change’s sake. We change to adapt, evolve, respond, address, and grow as an institution. We change because it is strategic for the University, allowing us to best meet our mission as an educational and research institution – to best serve our students, our community, and our state. We adapt to changes around us, and we evolve to expand our reach and our impact. And we do all of this with a commitment to building a robust and sustainable future – intellectual and financial – for the University of Vermont.

With significant investments made and changes implemented, and commitments to both ongoing assessment and adjustments where needed or where strategic, our attention now turns to assessing and communicating our *impact*. This is our new “mission” as an academic community committed to and focused on *academic excellence* and *student success*. You will hear President Sullivan and me speak often, this year, of the importance of reporting *impact*. This both affirms and asserts our collective efforts, helps us to track our progress against shared goals, and helps us recruit the best people and generate broader and deeper support. President Sullivan often refers to the University as a “talent magnet.” People want to join an organization that (a) has a strong

sense of identity, and (b) is on a clear upward trajectory. Today, we can boast both. We must now take inventory of our efforts and our investments of energy, time and resources. We must be willing to hold ourselves up against other top universities (the very best in the country), and we must be willing to report (and even brag) on our achievements *and* our impact. This is the next chapter in our evolution as a great university.

As the new academic year commences, we also know that we are in a time of considerable strife in our country – politically and socially – as evidenced by events in Charlottesville earlier this month. I know, like me, you were grateful to President Sullivan for his [memo to the campus](#) and for his unequivocal statements and reaffirmation of our common values, *Our Common Ground*. I hope you join me in extending support and expressing solidarity with our colleagues at the University of Virginia. I join President Sullivan in condemning racism, bigotry, and violence. Hate has no place at UVM.

An excerpt from my [remarks](#) at the campus-wide leadership retreat in June:

“As scholars, we are seekers of knowledge and truth. As educators, we trade in learning and discovery. And as members of the UVM academic community, we are committed to diversity and inclusion – as beacons, as pillars, as core values, as foundational principles, and as aspirational ideals. This is what makes a great university.”

As I wrote last [January](#), the University is (and must always be) a place for civil discourse and the safe exploration of ideas. American higher education is a privileged institution, but must never be taken for granted. We must be purposeful and proactive in ensuring access, freedoms, and the free exchange of ideas and ideologies. We must seek out ideas contrary to our own in order to have true discourse, and true learning. And we must [recommit ourselves](#), every day of every year, to principles of equity, justice, diversity, and inclusion. As I wrote in one of my first [blog essays](#) after coming to UVM in 2013, this is what “supercharges” the University to achieve its highest ideals as a knowledge engine for society.

What follows are a series of updates I hope you will find interesting. As you know, I use [Across the Green](#) as a way to communicate with the broader academic community about plans and progress, provide updates on timely and relevant topics, and generate excitement for what we are doing, together, as a university. As always, I welcome your feedback and your suggestions. Please feel free (and encouraged) to send me an email or, better yet, stop me when you see me on campus. I also invite you to join me at one of the monthly “Coffee with the Provost” sessions this fall.

ABOUT THE UVM CLASS OF 2021

This year’s first-year class, about 2650 strong, represents the most academically talented class ever at UVM. Average SAT score and average class rank both are up, and nearly half of the incoming class comes in with AP, IB, or other college credits. The Class of 2021 is 22% Vermonters (the same as last year) and 13% students of color, up from 11% last year and the second highest percentage ever. The class also is socio-economically diverse, with a larger number of Pell-eligible students. Also significant, and a clear indicator of the recognized quality of our academic programs, our yield has increased from 13.4% to 17.8% in the last two years. This is a 33%

increase in yield. Students from across the country continue to choose UVM. In addition to continued increases in numbers of students from Massachusetts and New Hampshire, this year also saw significant increases from Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia.

FIRST-YEAR READING SELECTION

This year's incoming class was invited to read (with us) the book *A Deadly Wandering*, by Matt Richtel. I commend the selection committee on another outstanding choice for our campus. I hope you will read this book along with us and find ways to incorporate it into your classes, residence halls, events, and gatherings. The book tells the story of a young man coming to terms with a terrible tragedy he caused, texting while driving, and of our awakening as a society to the deepening, sometimes dangerous, role technology is playing in our lives. In addition to being timely and relevant for college-age students, the book offers opportunities for deep learning and deep reflection on topics ranging from technology, to cognitive and brain science, to ethics and the law. We learn about Moore's Law and Metcalf's Law, compulsion and addiction, business models and learning models, human nature and human frailties. And in doing so, we learn about our students, our children, and ourselves. Please, please read this book. It very well may change your life, and it very well could save a life. At the very least, I hope you will find a way to make this important book part of your academic year. I know our students are looking forward to it.

UNIVERSITY-WIDE ASSESSMENT AND REACCREDITATION

University-wide Assessment

We are in the second of a two-year process to create a university-wide system to promote and support the assessment of student learning outcomes in our academic programs including General Education. The purpose of this system is to have assessment findings inform curricular revision which, in turn, will improve students' achievement of the outcomes. J. Dickinson, the Provost's Faculty Fellow for Assessment, and Brian Reed, the Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning, are leading the Assessment Initiative with support from the Center for Teaching and Learning.

The process has been informed by research into best practices, our experiences to date, and consultations with assessment experts at other universities. The evolving system is being tailored to UVM's culture, resources, and needs. Many of our programs, most notably our externally accredited professional programs, already had assessment processes in place. In other cases, program assessment was spotty, and was non-existent for the General Education learning outcomes. An overview of the project and its progress, as well as many useful resources, can be found at the [UVM Assessment Website](#).

These assessment efforts are important parts of the preparations for our 2019 NEASC reaccreditation site visit. More importantly, J. and Brian report evidence of a shift in campus culture as programs become more familiar with evidence-based assessment processes, and department chairs and faculty members see how relatively simple planning and evaluation tools can inform and guide curricular change in an organized and meaningful way. Now, after a year and a half of intensive work, we have a good understanding of next steps needed and places where targeted intervention will materially improve assessment efforts on campus.

Assessment is not just about satisfying our NEASC accreditors. Ongoing assessment is essential to continuous improvement, guiding decisions about program improvement, and helping us better educate our students. The Provost's Office has committed significant resources to building these university-wide systems and establishing a culture of assessment at UVM. Please watch for announcements about upcoming events and do engage in this important Assessment Initiative.

NEASC Accreditation and Self-Study

UVM is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). Our next decennial accreditation site visit will occur in spring 2019. In preparation for the accreditation review we must prepare a detailed self-study report framed around NEASC's nine standards, as well as any previously identified weaknesses. The standards, which were revised in 2016, set aspirational goals toward which institutions are expected to strive, and they are permeated by the themes of institutional integrity and effectiveness. The self-study must provide for each standard (1) an objective, evidence-based *description* of the current status of the University with respect to the standard; (2) a candid and critical *appraisal* of our strengths and challenges in addressing the standard; and (3) a realistic and specific *projection* of what the University will do to better address the standard. The Office of Institutional Research (OIR) will play a key role in providing data to support the narratives in the text. Having good systems for assessment of student learning outcomes is essential for addressing the standards on academic programs, educational effectiveness, and teaching and learning. It is important to note that our approach to the self-study is not to "sell" ourselves; but rather, this is an opportunity to take an honest look at ourselves. The real value will be in what we learn, what changes we make, and the processes by which we accomplish both.

Needless to say, [writing the self-study](#) will require a great deal of coordinated work. A tiered task force has been created to get the job done during the coming year. It is comprised of standards committees for each of the nine (9) standards; a Steering Committee made up of the co-chairs of the standards committees; and an Executive Committee co-chaired by Mara Saule, Dean of Libraries and CIO; and Brian Reed, Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning. In total, nearly 100 faculty members, staff, and students will be involved. In recruiting these individuals, careful consideration was given to expertise, constituencies, and representation across the campus community. The self-study project officially kicked-off August 21, and work will progress through the academic year with the standards committees submitting their reports in May 2018. The draft self-study report will be synthesized from the committee reports and then vetted for comment in fall 2018.

President Sullivan and I extend our deepest thanks to all who are serving on the various committees. I also want to emphasize that *all* of us have a responsibility to participate in the self-study processes. The self-study needs campus-wide input. During the fall semester the standards committees will be gathering data, sometimes through surveys or public forums. Later there will be opportunities for input on drafts of the report. There will be regular communications about the project through many venues including a website where there will be updates and information about opportunities for engagement. Your participation is critical to our successful reaccreditation.

FACULTY PROFESSIONAL/LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Our efforts to enhance and expand faculty development programs have continued, as outlined previously, under the leadership of Associate Provost Jim Vigoreaux. Faculty professional development, throughout the faculty lifespan (from candidate recruitment through emeriti status), is a priority for my office. Jim has done outstanding work in the last year to enhance existing programs and implement new programs aimed at providing timely and meaningful faculty development opportunities.

Last year we piloted the University's first campus-wide faculty conference as the kick-off event for an annual Faculty Development Series. Over 300 faculty participated in four events held throughout the academic year around the theme of *student success*. The four events provided faculty with tools and skills to teach resilience and manage students in distress, as well as opportunities to share information and strategies to engage students and enhance their learning experience.

The second annual Faculty Development Series has been designed around the theme of *academic freedom*. The kick-off event, the campus-wide faculty conference (August 21) included a presentation and discussion led by President Sullivan (more than 300 attendees, standing-room only in the Davis Center). Throughout the academic year, the Faculty Development Series will explore the multiple facets of academic freedom in a variety of formats, from invited speakers to faculty panels.

The [Office of the Provost](#) works in partnership with many units on campus to provide opportunities for faculty professional development. Throughout the year we will be announcing new training activities, support mechanisms, and informational sessions. Let me touch briefly on two initiatives here: (1) Teaching as Research (TAR), and (2) Academic Leadership Development.

As part of our continuing commitment to the [Teacher-Scholar model](#) at UVM, we will be conducting a pilot project this year to implement curriculum on teaching as research (TAR). Throughout the fall semester, the [Center for Teaching and Learning](#) will be training cohorts of faculty and providing assistance to develop TAR courses that will be taught in spring 2018. The support for our emerging community of TAR practitioners will strengthen and enhance our scholarship of teaching and learning, improve classroom teaching, and enrich the educational experience of our students.

The University is fortunate in its proven ability to attract and retain outstanding faculty. It only follows that we should seek to develop a pool of potential future leaders from this group, both to provide professional development opportunities for those faculty with interests in academic or administrative leadership and to ensure a deep pool of qualified candidates for leadership positions as they arise.

I have asked Associate Provost Vigoreaux to use the coming year to plan and develop new programs aimed specifically at faculty leadership development. While not recruited at the time they join the University to eventually assume leadership roles, many faculty develop an interest in

leadership over the natural course of their careers. Faculty having interest in leadership roles, and who exhibit the qualities needed to be successful in such roles, should be provided with timely guidance, support, and training opportunities. While informal mentoring can and should be sought, the University should also be more purposeful in providing more formal leadership development programs and opportunities. Over the course of the academic year, we will engage in discussions with faculty, faculty leaders, and administrators to identify topics and needs, which will form the basis for faculty leadership development programs at UVM.

A special thank you to Jim Vigoreaux for his leadership on these important faculty professional development efforts. In his role as Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs, he continues to make excellent progress toward comprehensive goals for faculty recruitment, retention, development, advancement, and recognition. Please visit his [website](#) for more information.

RETENTION AND FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION

Student retention and four-year graduation remain top priorities for the University, as articulated in the [President's Strategic Action Plan](#) and the underpinning [Academic Excellence Goals](#). Retaining students from year to year and ensuring our undergraduate students graduate in four years are strategic goals for multiple reasons: (1) to support student success and access to a four-year undergraduate degree; (2) to enhance reputation and rankings of the University; (3) to make effective and efficient use of university resources; and (4) financial sustainability. To the last point, we know that every one percent up or down in retention (Year 1 to Year 2) equates to \$500K in net tuition revenue, allocated directly to the colleges/schools per IBB.

The University of Vermont benchmarks itself against a group of designated comparator institutions that align with our academic profile and size. Owing to the quasi-public nature of UVM, our high academic profile, and our tuition price point for out-of-state students, this group includes a mix of public and private institutions. While our Year 1 to Year 2 retention rate and four-year graduate rate are excellent relative to many public (and even some private) universities, they lag slightly behind some of our most direct regional comparator public and all private institutions in our comparator set. For the reasons given above, we must elevate both of these important student progress/success rates such that we are competitive with the elite private universities against whom we compete directly for students. We cannot be satisfied with rates that may be enviable for competitor publics.

Both our retention and four-year graduation rates have remained essentially unchanged in the last five years. Working closely with the Vice President for Enrollment Management and the academic deans, we are developing an action plan to increase both rates. Many of you will have a role to play in executing this plan. While we have been working hard on this for the last few years, the transition to IBB now both highlights the importance and incentivizes progress toward these important goals. The action plan is being finalized and will be shared with the colleges/schools this fall. I am asking all academic departments and those administrative units that support (directly or indirectly) student retention, student progress, and student success to take ownership of this plan and become engaged in our efforts to be successful. Working together – understanding both our motivations and our goals – I am confident we can move the dial.

FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE

You will recall discussions over the last two years around *high impact practices* (those practices that have been shown to improve student success, satisfaction, and achievement) and how we can adopt/implement many of these (best) practices at UVM. Among these high impact practices, two fall into a category we have called “first-year experience” (FYE): (1) maximizing participation in first-year residential learning communities, and (2) common first-year course or curriculum. Last year, a task committee led by Stacey Kostell (Vice President for Enrollment Management), Annie Stevens (Vice Provost for Student Affairs), Brian Reed (Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning), and Jen Prue (Provost’s Faculty Fellow for Advising and First-Year Experience) worked with representatives from the Faculty Senate and both academic and residence life leadership to develop a first-year experience (FYE) strategy and plan for implementation. Evolving plans were vetted among faculty and student governance groups, college/school leadership, academic units, and student life professionals.

We start the 2017-18 academic year with 72% of our first-year students living in some type of programmed housing, with 64% enrolled in a wide variety of associated credit-bearing courses. Specifically, 52% of our first-year students will be living in five different theme-based Learning Communities enrolled in associated (1-3 credit) courses. Why Learning Communities? Because we know that students benefit when they participate in living environments created with a shared purpose engaged in active learning. Theme-based learning communities offer students rich educational opportunities that optimize and emphasize academic success and provide a broad range of opportunities for community engagement.

Active engagement within Learning Communities will include curricular elements, community-wide programs, peer mentoring, and opportunities for experiential learning and connections with passionate faculty through intellectual presentations and informal advising.

We will continue to assess and focus on this model, as we gradually and thoughtfully ramp-up to 100% first-year participation by developing additional academic partnerships. Learning Community themes will reflect the University’s values and core academic strengths. Current Learning Communities include: Honors College, Sustainability, Leadership, Wellness Environment, and Outdoor Experience. Future themes being considered include: Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Global and Domestic Cultures, and Arts and Creativity.

Considerable discussion this year centered around the structure and content of a first-year common course/curriculum and, while conversations are continuing this fall, it is expected that a final plan will be approved and implemented by the end of the fall semester. Our goal is to create a meaningful first-year experience for all of our undergraduate students that (a) integrates with and leverages existing first-year programming in the colleges/schools, with the least possible disruption; (b) creates meaningful new opportunities for faculty engagement with first-year students within and as part of residential learning communities; (c) moves steadily and incrementally (over a period of 2-3 years) toward articulated goals; and (d) does not create a significant new resource demand for the University.

I want to thank Stacey Kostell, Annie Stevens, Brian Reed, and Jen Prue for their leadership of this important initiative. Thank you also to all of the faculty and staff who have been engaged in the development of FYE programming and plans. These represent a significant investment in (and commitment to) student success and satisfaction, and the implementation of these plans will drive student retention, meaningful engagement with faculty, and academic achievement.

RESEARCH

The University continues to invest strategically in research, both in supporting established programs and seeding new initiatives. The latter is aimed largely (though not exclusively) at creating new research collaborations across disciplines. The Vice President for Research maintains a [webpage](#) with complete information about the various funding programs, including application process, selection criteria, and recent awards.

Collectively, the Office of the Provost and the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) allocate more than \$1M annually to faculty for research and scholarly activity. This includes support through the SPARK-VT program; the REACH program; the Faculty Activity Network (FAN); and the OVPR Express program (for new faculty); as well as some direct financial support (cost-share, equipment, or matching funds) and investment in proposal development assistance for large center-level grants identified by the Vice President for Research as strategic priorities for the University. As evidence of the success of the latter program, five of the recent large awards benefitted from this additional support, provided by Dr. Jeralyn Haraldsen, grant proposal manager in the OVPR.

UVM's [SPARK-VT](#) program continues to garner interest from faculty members and faculty teams across the University. An important part of our *Innovation and Entrepreneurship Ecosystem* at UVM, the SPARK-VT program has received national and international attention and recognition as a model for such university-based programs. This year the SPARK-VT program, which provides seed funding to translate novel research ideas into commercial products and services, made two awards to UVM faculty:

- Jason Botten (Microbiology and Molecular Genetics, LCOM), Development of therapeutic antibodies for treatment of hantavirus cardiopulmonary syndrome
- Daren Hitt and Ryan McDevitt (Mechanical Engineering, CEMS), Discrete Foaming Agent Solid Thruster (DFAST) Array for Small Satellite Precision Control

Our plan is to steadily increase the amount of funds being allocated to faculty for research and scholarship through these and other programs over the next 3-4 years, both through increases in the OVPR's investment fund (included as part of the new budget model) and the availability of new research initiation funds awarded through the [Institute for Environment](#). Growth in extramural research and increased interdisciplinary activity are two of the [Academic Excellence Goals](#) underpinning the [President's Strategic Action Plan](#).

In recent months, a large number of new research grants have been awarded to our faculty. An increasing number of these grants have been significant in size and often highly interdisciplinary, involving investigators and supporting students from multiple colleges and schools. In the last few

months, 9 new research grants of \$1M or more were awarded to UVM faculty. Examples include (PI's listed alphabetically by last name):

- Kelly Cowan (Pediatrics, LCOM), IMPACT VT: Improving Pediatric Access to Clinical Trials in Vermont, NIH, \$1.79M
- James Hudziak (Psychiatry, Pediatrics, LCOM), Wellness Environment, Conrad Hilton Foundation, \$1.87M
- Yvonne Janssen-Heininger (Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, LCOM), NHLBI Outstanding Investigator: S-Glutathionylation Chemistry in Fibrotic Lung Remodeling, NIH, \$6.49M
- Melissa Pespeni (Biology, CAS), NRT: Quantitative and Evolutionary STEM Training (QUEST): An Integrative Training Program for Versatile STEM Professionals to Solve Environmental and Global Health Problems, NSF, \$3.0M
- Susan Ryan (Center on Disability and Community Inclusion, CESS), Vermont I-Team, Vermont Agency of Education, \$1.07M
- Gary Stein (Biochemistry, LCOM), Northern New England Clinical and Translational Research Network (IDeA CTR), NIH, \$5.0M
- Judith van Houten (Biology, CAS; EPSCoR), Vermont Genetics Network, NIH, \$3.49M
- Judith van Houten (Biology, CAS; EPSCoR), RII Track-1 Lake Champlain Basin Resilience to Extreme Events, NSF, \$4.0M
- Susan Wallace (Microbiology and Molecular Genetics, LCOM), Structure and Function of DNA Repair Enzymes and Cancer, NIH, \$9.23M

Congratulations to these investigators, their co-investigators, and all those involved in successful grant applications. UVM's research enterprise continues to increase in size and scope, engaging more faculty members, garnering more extramural support, creating more opportunities for our students, and gaining national and international attention for outcomes.

Recall that last year, the faculty in each college and school developed a list of [Scholarly Productivity and Impact Metrics](#) to plan, guide, and track their progress toward their own goals for growth in research and scholarship. Each college and school includes extramural support for research as one of its key indicators.

CORPORATE RELATIONS

Our faculty are engaged in innovative research that sets us apart as leaders nationally and internationally for our contributions in health, the environment, food systems, sustainable business, energy, and complex systems and data science, among other areas. These contributions have generated considerable attention and have attracted local, national, and global companies to partner with us, including: MassMutual, CA Technologies, Green Mountain Power, Seventh Generation, MITRE Corporation, Pfizer, Sodexo, Land O'Lakes, United Therapeutics, Ford Motor Company, and others.

UVM is committed to working with companies to advance faculty career development, research collaborations, and innovative partnerships. We are building new relationships with alumni who are eager to establish partnerships with their companies, and we support faculty interested in pursuing new opportunities that will advance their research and teaching.

This summer I invited Alexa Woodward, Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations, to present opportunities for corporate engagement to our STEM Leadership Council and to an invited group of faculty from the STEM disciplines. These efforts encourage our faculty and our external advocates to think about corporate partnerships that can have transformative effects on our institution, the economy of our state, and beyond.

Our [Corporate and Foundation Relations Office](#) helps companies navigate the University to explore a range of partnership opportunities. The office also provides internal support directly to our faculty to identify corporate funding opportunities. Such support can augment and enhance funding from federal and state agencies, especially important in light of current uncertainties in Washington, and can create new opportunities for faculty as well as student engagement, learning, and discovery.

Interested faculty should contact Alexa Woodward (Alexa.Woodward@uvm.edu), to find out what opportunities might align with your interests.

SUMMER TERM

One of the goals in the [Academic Excellence Goals](#) underpinning the [President's Strategic Action Plan](#) is the expansion of academic programming during the summer months at UVM. This is strategic for many reasons: (1) capitalizes on the attractiveness of Vermont in the summer; (2) improves utilization of classrooms, residence halls, and other spaces during the summer months; (3) provides opportunities for our students to catch up or accelerate progress toward timely graduation; and (4) generates new revenue for the colleges and schools.

Before such goals could be fully realized, however, it was necessary to make certain infrastructure investments (e.g., air conditioned residence halls and classrooms) and changes in our budget model (e.g., revenue direction to the academic units). With the transition to IBB now complete, the construction of 'Discovery' (the first building in the new STEM Complex which opened earlier this summer) and Ifshin Hall (Grossman School of Business, opening summer 2018), and the opening of the new Central Campus Residence Hall and associate dining hall, these investments and changes have now been completed.

Another important change we made in anticipation of significant expansion of summer programs was the 30% tuition discount for summer courses. We made this change even before transitioning to IBB, as a means to encourage more students to enroll in summer courses. We also coupled this (again, before IBB) with a decision to direct a substantial portion of the summer revenue back to the colleges and schools, as a means of encouraging the academic units to expand summer course offerings. Following the launch of IBB we saw immediate and significant changes in summer course offerings and enrollments as colleges and schools made intentional decisions about which

courses to offer, target enrollments, and course sequences (i.e., alignment with fall/spring, courses most needed by students for progression toward four-year degree completion, etc.).

We are now well positioned to move toward a robust and predictable *summer term* model. This does not mean creating an expectation of students enrolling (or faculty teaching) over 12-months, or the creation of a formal summer semester, but rather seeks to create predictable *flexibility* and *opportunity* for both students and faculty. To do this, we will seek to remove any remaining barriers and inefficiencies that may exist currently, whether related to enrollment management (e.g., admissions, financial aid, registrar) or academic (e.g., advising, internships, student services). I will be charging a university-wide task committee to examine these (and other) opportunities and make recommendations to me by the start of the spring semester. The task committee will be co-chaired by the Vice President for Enrollment Management and a dean from one of the colleges/schools.

Once recommendations are reviewed and accepted (staged as necessary to ensure smooth implementation), we will have realized our goal of a robust, productive, and efficient *summer term* at UVM. This will provide enormous opportunities for our students and for the University, directly aligned with our highest priorities around access and affordability, elevating student retention and four-year graduation rates, making more efficient use of our facilities, and generating new resources for colleges and schools to invest in their highest priorities.

NEW LEADERSHIP

This fall we welcomed three new leaders to the University of Vermont. Ryan Hargraves joins us as Director of Admissions. Ryan joins us from the University of Virginia where he has worked in Admissions for more than 15 years, serving more recently as Senior Associate Dean of Admissions.

Brian Prindle joins UVM as Executive Director of Research Administration, providing leadership and oversight for three offices: Research Administration and Compliance; Sponsored Project Administration; and the Research Protections Office. Brian comes to us from the University of Florida where he oversaw UF's Sponsored Research Administration with responsibility for \$750M in annual research grants.

Late last spring, following a national search, Veronika Carter was appointed University Registrar. Veronika joined the Registrar's Office in 1997, over time rising to the position of Senior Associate Registrar. Many of you know Veronika as a thoughtful, strategic, and dedicated partner to academic leadership, departments, colleges, and schools.

We continue to be fortunate to be able to attract leaders of such high caliber to the University of Vermont, a reflection of both what we have accomplished and where we are going. Please join me in welcoming Ryan Hargraves and Brian Prindle to UVM, and in congratulating Veronika Carter on her promotion.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

We have completed Phase I of the STEM Complex ('Discovery Hall') and the First-Year Housing and Dining Facility. These projects came in on-time and on-budget, and will add immensely to the University. Five additional central campus projects are underway: Phase II of the STEM Complex ('Innovation Hall'); the Votey Hall renovations; the Ifshin Hall addition to the Grossman School of Business; renovation of the Billings Library; and the UVM Medical Center's new in-patient care facility. You can find information on these projects, as well as a map of pedestrian pathways on the [Building UVM](#) page on the [Provost's Office](#) website.

Thank you for your patience with the inevitable inconveniences that come with facilities construction projects. Such projects, whether renewal or expansion, are part of any vibrant university. They are signs of intellectual and organizational health, vision, and commitment. And they are a critical part of any university's strategic plan for success. The results will be both inspirational and transformative for our campus and our academic community.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Fall is a special and very beautiful time in New England. I was fortunate to have been born and raised in New England; but even more fortunate to return a little more than four years ago to begin serving as provost at the University of Vermont. It is a role that I cherish and an opportunity for which I am most grateful. Adding to the sights, smells, and sounds of fall (think: leaves), is the bounty of local variety apples. I seem to write about these each fall. If you are new to Vermont, I hope you will make time this fall to go apple picking and expand your cooking repertoire with the amazing fruits of our land. And as if the sights, sounds, smells, and tastes of fall are not enough – we also have the excitement of the new academic year and the return of our students. [Alumni Weekend](#) (UVM's reunion and homecoming weekend, October 6-8, 2017) cannot be far behind.

As we return to the lively pace of the academic year, and continue in our pursuit of shared goals and the aspirational ideals to which we are committed as an academic community – with measurable outcomes and demonstrated *impact* – please take time to look around and appreciate our beautiful campus. Always ranked among the most picturesque and bucolic college campuses in the country, we have added several beautiful new buildings this year (Alumni House and Silver Pavilion, Discovery Hall, and the Central Campus Residence Hall), and several more are under [construction](#). As part of the overall campus master plan, we also are constructing the Green Mountain Walkway and of course continue to add trees throughout our beautiful campus. We are privileged every day to work in such beautiful surrounds.

Finally, I invite you to join me this fall at [UVM Athletics](#) home games. Throw on an extra layer and enjoy a beautiful fall day at Virtue Field or Moulton Winder Field. And GO CATS!

Whether on the campus, at the game, or in the orchard... see you out there. –DVR

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“The University is fortunate in its proven ability to attract and retain outstanding faculty. It only follows that we should seek to develop a pool of potential future leaders from this group, both to provide professional development opportunities for those faculty with interests in academic or administrative leadership and to ensure a deep pool of qualified candidates for leadership positions as they arise.”

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