



Across the Green
January 2019

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

“Launch”

INTRODUCTION, RETROSPECTIVE

I always enjoy reflecting on possible themes for these campus-wide updates. Writing this memo, coming in the middle of my sixth year as Provost and a year in which we plan for both the conclusion of a highly successful capital campaign and a presidential transition, provided a wonderful opportunity to reflect on progress, provide updates, and look ahead to the future.

The theme “Launch” seemed obvious on so many levels. First, our privileged role as educators includes preparing our graduates for success upon launch from the University. Second, we have launched and are launching several new or refreshed initiatives, platforms, models, and programs this year. Third, the success and growing excitement around the *Innovation and Entrepreneurship Ecosystem* at UVM, launched only a few years ago, is generating significant new interest, attention, resources, and opportunities for students and faculty. Fourth and finally, the growing number of new academic programs being launched (many collaboratively across colleges/schools), creating exciting new opportunities for students, responding to student interests, creating meaningful academic pathways and partnerships for students to be successful following graduation, and generating new revenue that can be invested into the colleges’/schools’ highest priorities.

I also reflected on my launch as Provost at the University of Vermont. When I arrived at UVM in fall 2013, I made it a priority to meet with, hear from, and listen to as many people on our campus (and in the University’s “orbit”) as possible. My office helped to set up an ambitious schedule of more than 100 meetings in the first three months. My earliest impressions were recorded both in a *UVM Today* [interview](#) and in the very first *Across the Green* [memo](#) (November 2013). I was excited and full of energy, but had much to learn. As I have shared often, and with humility, that learning continues to this day. It never really ends, and nor should it. Leaders must adapt, evolve, and grow just as organizations must. Recognizing this, committing to and embracing it, I would posit, is essential to success.

When I arrived in 2013, President Sullivan asked me to focus on four things: (1) leading the campus in developing a **new budget model** (a specific element of the 2012 [President's Strategic Action Plan](#)), one that directly linked revenue allocation to student credit hours, incented innovation, enabled colleges and schools to plan for and make strategic and informed decisions, and opened pathways for generating new revenue that remained with the colleges/schools to invest in their highest priorities; (2) leading faculty and departments in the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences in the visioning, planning, and realization of a new **STEM Complex**, providing long-needed new space for teaching, learning, and discovery across the STEM disciplines at UVM; (3) reflecting on the recently completed "Envisioning Environment" report and conceptualizing, planning, and operationalizing one of its highest priorities and top recommendations, the creation of a **university-wide institute** for study of the environment; and (4) creating an effective **communication strategy** for the Office of the Provost to provide timely and regular updates on priorities, plans, and progress to the broader academic community, creating a culture of transparency that inspired both trust and engagement.

This was an ambitious agenda. I was excited to get started but mindful of two things: (1) my commitment to completing an extensive listening tour before undertaking any major initiatives, and (2) I only knew what I knew, and had much to learn about things I did not. I rolled up my sleeves and got to work. I asked questions of many people at UVM and many colleagues at other institutions. I spoke with faculty, staff, students, and alumni. I read voraciously. And I sought to keep open lines of communication wherever possible. This, I felt certain, would be key to any progress and, ultimately, success. I created a "quad chart" (ever the engineer) to focus both my attention and the expectations of others on four areas: academic excellence, student success, budget, and STEM. While my role and responsibilities took me outside these four domains regularly, people who knew me well in my first couple of years as Provost know that this quad chart guided my leadership and much of the work of my office. The quad chart served me, my office, and I believe the University, well. Today, I parse my efforts into two areas: academic excellence and student success. And, of course, these areas intersect and overlap (*e.g.*, advising, retention, residential learning communities, mental health and wellness, career planning).

While additional information on several of these initiatives is provided elsewhere in this memo, I can offer the following quick summary of our shared progress in the four areas President Sullivan asked me to focus upon:

1. New [budget model](#)
 - IBB 1.0 launched FY16
 - IBB 2.0 to launch FY20
2. [STEM Complex](#)
 - Discovery Hall opened summer 2017
 - Votey Hall renovations completed
 - Innovation Hall to open summer 2019
3. University-wide institute
 - [Gund Institute for Environment](#) launched 2017

4. Communication strategy

- [Across the Green](#), a series of periodic letters from the Provost, providing updates on current initiatives and information on topics of interest to the broader academic community at the University of Vermont, launched fall 2013
- New Office of the Provost [website](#) launched fall 2013, updated regularly
- IBB [website](#) launched 2013, updated regularly
- In addition to meeting with each dean and direct report (vice president, associate/vice provost, director) individually once a month, the Provost attends at least one college/school faculty and staff meeting and at least one college/school advisory board meeting per year

Whether launching into space or launching a new program, product, or company, launches into any new frontier are complex operations. So much goes into planning for and executing a successful launch. And the work doesn't end with the launch. Great care and discipline must be applied to closely monitor the launch, making course corrections where needed, and ensuring its success. This metaphor serves us well in our own domain. One of my responsibilities as Provost is to create and oversee process that is inclusive, responsive, responsible, transparent, authentic, respectful, and ultimately successful in achieving shared goals. That covers pre-launch preparations, the launch sequence, and mission. (My love of science fiction and anything to do with the Apollo program may be coming through here.) Many of you have heard me recount a favorite line from the movie *Apollo 13*, when Flight Director Gene Kranz (played by Ed Harris) says calmly yet with an appropriate sense of urgency, "Let's work the problem, people." I think of Gene Kranz as the Provost of NASA's Mission Control. He, too, is surrounded by very capable, very talented, very smart, and very dedicated professionals, all of whom are committed to both mission and challenge.

We continue on an ambitious and exciting trajectory at UVM, at a time where higher education is facing stiff headwinds. I have written about the challenges to higher education arising from changing public perceptions and expectations, funding models, and expectations of families and employers in previous *Across the Green* memos (e.g., [Age of Disruption](#), and [The University: Agent of Change in a Changing Age](#)). UVM is neither immune nor blind to these very real challenges. But I can say with confidence that we have been, and continue to be, responsive. This has required discipline and intentionality. We have made strategic and often difficult decisions.

When making a decision and faced with a choice (stipulating that options have been deemed both strategic and sustainable for the University), I ask one of two questions:

- (1) Which option is best for our students?
- (2) Which option best enables faculty success?

It's that simple. Anyone who has worked with me knows that, above all else, the answers to these questions drive my decisions. I have been heartened to see others adopt this simple rubric as well. If we focus on these fundamental questions, we will continue to make good choices and good decisions.

As Provost, I have worked to develop "equitable strategy" and to be "strategically equitable." Decisions are made with benefit of the best information, from all stakeholders and viewpoints, in full view and with complete transparency. Decisions are informed and they are owned. There is

responsibility and accountability. There is process both in decision-making and in monitoring post-decision results and impacts. And along with transparency and accountability, there is clear, timely, and regular communication.

We must, all, remain committed to the success of our students, our colleagues, and our institution. As times, expectations, needs, financial realities, pedagogies, technologies, partnership models, and both markets and market forces change, we must continue to adapt and evolve. Failure is not an option (to again quote Gene Kranz). Failure to adapt in the face of change serves neither our students, nor our colleagues, nor the institution. While some point to higher educational institutions as infamously slow to change, or resistant to it altogether, I see it quite differently and wrote about this in last January's *Across the Green* memo ([Age of Disruption](#)). I also wrote a short blog essay on [change](#) several years back, arguing the necessity and even the social justice of responsible change. My thoughts continue to evolve with every year, but my fundamental beliefs have not changed. And with each year, I am more proud of what we have accomplished as an academic community, a campus, and a truly great university. And as was also expressed by Gene Kranz, "With all due respect, I believe this is going to be our finest hour."

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE GOALS: PROGRESS REVIEW

"During President Sullivan's installation speech in fall 2012, he outlined his *Strategic Action Plan* for the University of Vermont. The Plan was discussed by the Board of Trustees in several meetings in 2012, and was approved by the Board in 2013. In FY14, a set of *Academic Excellence Goals* was established in support of the *Strategic Action Plan*. The intent of the Academic Excellence Goals is to galvanize the University community around a common set of well-defined objectives, and to "plant a stake in the ground" committing UVM to achieving the highest standards of academic excellence – the highest ideal of any great university.

In defining these eight *Academic Excellence Goals*, we carefully considered our mission as a land-grant university and our role as Vermont's flagship public research university, our commitment to the principles and content of a liberal education, and our nearly 225-year history as a distinctive and important institution of higher learning. We also considered the challenges facing higher education today and the changes being made by universities to ensure relevancy, sustainability, and a vibrant future."

D. Rosowsky, Provost and Senior Vice President
Academic Excellence Goals Narrative, September 2014

The [Academic Excellence Goals](#) were developed by the Provost in early 2014 to both undergird (support) and animate (realize) the priorities articulated in the [President's Strategic Action Plan](#). The *Academic Excellence Goals* were accompanied by the [Academic Excellence Goals Narrative](#) that provided information about the bases for the articulated goals, timelines, mechanisms and strategies to achieve them, and specific metrics for tracking and reporting progress. The Provost reported progress regularly to the campus (through [Across the Green](#) memos, campus-wide leadership meetings, and other invited presentations), the Faculty Senate, and the Board of Trustees.

During the fall 2018 semester, a review of progress against specific *Academic Excellence Goals* was conducted. The intended outcomes of this review and reaffirmation of the goals were (1) to assess and report progress, (2) to modify goals and/or strategies in cases where goals have not yet been achieved, and (3) to identify possible additional goals that may be appropriate as we prepare for a presidential transition and possible refresh of the *Strategic Action Plan*. A [summary report](#) has been posted on the Provost's webpage and both the findings and recommendations will be presented to the EPIR Committee at the February Board of Trustees meeting.

NEW ADVISING SOFTWARE – EAB'S NAVIGATE

We began implementing *Navigate*¹, our [new advising software](#), in January 2018. *Navigate* is an innovative and powerful system. Most importantly, it houses all of the advising information a faculty member needs in one convenient location. (More information about the system's goals and capabilities can be found in a recent *Across the Green* [memo](#) (April 2018).

I'm very pleased to report that *Navigate* went live with our Phase I user group this fall. The Phase I users, a group of 25 Student Services professional advisors from four UVM colleges/schools, began using *Navigate* to:

- Efficiently access student academic information;
- Record notes related to advising conversations (logging summaries of more than 3000 advising appointments this fall alone);
- Schedule appointments with individual or groups of students; and
- Create and deliver customized communications to targeted groups of students.

In spring 2019, Phase II of the *Navigate* implementation will begin with the training of more than 100 faculty from all colleges/schools (These early faculty users were selected by their deans.) The remaining Student Services teams will also access *Navigate* in January, as will other offices supporting students such as Athletics and the Office of International Education. Monthly Q&A sessions will be held to support users.

Our goal is to have all faculty using *Navigate* by fall 2019. To facilitate the transition, additional training sessions will be scheduled late this spring and early next fall.

This is an exciting realization of years of hard work for our campus, serving the needs of students, their advisors, and both enrollment management and student services staff. As I have suggested before, the EAB Student Success Collaborative (*Navigate* on our campus) has the potential to be transformative for the University of Vermont and our students' experience. But we only realize the return on our investment in *Navigate* if we use it. Thank you in advance for making this a priority in 2019. Each of us play a role in academic advising and ensuring student academic success (retention, progression, 4-year graduation, and 'launch' post-graduation).

¹ At the time of purchase, the software was called Campus/Guide. The vendor (EAB) has just renamed the software, which we will refer to as *Navigate* moving forward.

RESIDENTIAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

“Residence halls are more than simply a place to live. We know that students benefit when they participate in learning communities created with a shared purpose that engages students in active learning. By offering theme-based learning communities, students will be engaged in rich educational opportunities that optimize wellness and emphasize academic success and community engagement.

Active engagement within Learning Communities includes a first-year success course, community-wide programs, peer mentoring, and opportunities for experiential learning and connections with passionate faculty and staff through intellectual presentations and informal advising.”

UVM Learning Communities Vision, 2017

As I shared in the last *Across the Green* [memo](#) (August 2018), now in our first full year of our new residential learning community (RLC) model, we are engaging 82% of our first-year students (and 71% of our second-year students) in one of eight residential learning communities. Our goal remains at 100% participation of first-year students by fall 2019, and we are on-track to meet that goal.

As with any new model, particularly one as ambitious as the RLC model we sought to create and implement as a hallmark element of the broader UVM *First-Year Experience* (FYE, an initiative set called for by President Sullivan), there are bound to be bumps in the rollout (launch) and first year. This fall we held a series of listening sessions with participating students, student affairs/residential life staff, and faculty directors to hear some of their impressions, suggestions, and requests for additional guidance, structure, support and/or resources as we move into Year 2. The FYE and RLC leadership team (led by Vice Provost Annie Stevens, Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning Brian Reed, and Vice President for Enrollment Management Stacey Kostell, and joined starting this semester by Lisa Schnell in her new role as Provost’s Faculty Fellow for RLC Courses) will be taking this important feedback and implementing changes to improve the RLCs next year, ensuring all participating faculty and staff are both supported and clearly understand the goals of the RLCs in supporting our students’ success.

BUDGET MODEL (IBB 2.0)

As I have shared many times previously, we are required to deliver a balanced budget to the Board of Trustees annually. This requires strategic and sometimes difficult decisions to be made by deans, vice presidents, and other senior leaders. But, as a result, we operate under a balanced budget every year. Over the last seven years, under President Sullivan’s leadership, we have maintained a relentless focus on (1) elevating academic quality, visibility, and reputation, (2) growing the University’s endowment to provide more financial assistance, reducing the cost of attendance for students and their families, and (3) seeking efficiencies, reinvesting and redirecting resources, where possible, to our highest strategic priorities (*e.g.*, emerging academic disciplines

and innovative cross-disciplinary programs, pedagogical innovation, research and scholarship). This is by design, and as articulated in the 2012 *Strategic Action Plan*.

As you know, in FY14 the University engaged in a two-year university-wide effort to develop and then implement an incentive-based budget model². The IBB model went live in FY16, starting July 1, 2015. As noted in the [IBB Model 1.0 Report](#), the model was to undergo a major review in FY20. That major review – the development of IBB Model 2.0 – was initiated in November 2017 and concluded in December 2018.

The IBB Steering Committee met formally eleven times during the Spring and Fall 2018 semesters, and held several informal brown bag lunch discussions. They hosted three focus groups for Deans, Department Chairs, and Academic Program Directors in early May to gather feedback on potential changes to Algorithm 7. The Steering Committee also hosted eight focus groups for the Associate Deans, the Academic Business Managers, the original Algorithm 1 Subcommittee, the Staff Council, and four sessions for Deans, Department Chairs, and Academic Program Directors, to gather feedback on potential changes to Algorithm 1.

The Steering Committee's recommendations to the President were communicated to the campus throughout the fall semester. As has been the practice since FY14, all campus IBB communications and updates are posted on the IBB [website](#).

The same commitment to the open and transparent process established for the development of Model 1.0 also is evident in the Model 2.0 process, which has included the following communications:

- Posting results of the November 2017 IBB [Model 1.0 Review](#)
- Issuing [Campus Update Memo #6](#) (November 2017) requesting IBB Model 2.0 Steering Committee nominations; announcing the Model 2.0 Input Surveys
- Posting results of the [Model 2.0 Input Surveys](#)
- Issuing [Across the Green](#) Memo (January 2018) providing an update on the Model 2.0 process and timeline
- Issuing [Campus Update Memo #7](#) (April 2018) announcing the three areas of the model that would be refined in Model 2.0
- Issuing [Campus Update Memo #8](#) (August 2018) announcing a revised IBB Model 2.0 timeline and preliminary recommendations to modify Algorithm 7
- An IBB 2.0 Update at the September 24, 2018 Faculty Senate Meeting
- Issuing [Campus Update Memo #9](#) (October 2018) outlining preliminary recommendations to modify Algorithm 1
- An IBB 2.0 Update at the October 29, 2018 Campus Leadership Meeting
- Issuing [Campus Update #10](#) (November 2018) outlining preliminary recommendations to modify Algorithm 6
- Posting [IBB 2.0 Final Report](#) (January 2019)

² A good summary of history and background, as well as the processes used to develop, implement, assess, and revise IBB, can be found in my [remarks](#) at the Campus-wide Leadership Meeting (June 2018) attended by 150+ leaders from across the campus.

Now approved by President Sullivan, the recommended changes to the model are being implemented this spring (in the new budget planning cycle) and will become effective July 1, 2019 (FY20). The Steering Committee will continue to meet to assess the model's performance and impact. The next major review of the model will occur in FY24, with the implementation of IBB Model 3.0 in FY25.

In addition to the feedback that informed the Steering Committee's work on revising selected algorithms in IBB 2.0, feedback received throughout the IBB 1.0 development and implementation processes, and the more recent IBB 2.0 process, highlighted understandable fears and concerns about potential consequences that could run counter to our commitments to academic excellence, interdisciplinarity, and the teacher-scholar model. The Steering Committee took these concerns seriously and took steps through the model's design to both minimize the likelihood of such trends and to monitor (annually) key indicators of success to help evaluate whether or not such trends were, in fact, occurring.

The Indicators of Success were [updated](#) in November 2018 to include FY18 data. The data now reflect trends from FY13 (a pre-IBB baseline) through FY18 (our third year operating under IBB). The data tell a very strong and positive story, and it is clear that the most prominent IBB concerns expressed during the model's development in FY14 have not come to fruition. While most of you have probably heard the major concerns, they bear repeating here. This also provides an opportunity to share what the Steering Committee learned during the IBB 2.0 process. More detailed information and data can be found in the [University-wide Indicators of Success](#) posted on the IBB [website](#).

Concern: Quality of undergraduate experience will decline.

Findings: Student quality has increased. Acceptance rate, yield, and retention all are trending positively. There has been no significant change in the distribution of undergraduate class sections by size³.

Concern: Interdisciplinary activity will decline.

Findings: Significant increase in the number of new interdisciplinary academic programs created and approved. Growth in number and size of cross-college extramural proposals and awards.

Concern: Research activity will decline.

Findings: Proposal submission rate has increased. Extramural research funding has increased.

Concern: Graduate education will decline.

Findings: Graduate enrollment has increased 14%. 21 new graduate programs have been created and approved. Accelerated Master's Program enrollments have increased 300%. PhD yield improved by 25% in the last year. Graduate revenue has increased 61%.

³ The only appreciable change is a modest *increase* in the number of small class sections (10-19 students).

Concern: There would be a change in distribution of SCHs required within the college/school of the major vs. outside the college/school. This is sometimes referred to as “poaching” or “hoarding” of credit hours.

Findings: This is monitored by the Office of Institutional Research. There has been no significant change in the distribution of in-college vs. out-of-college SCHs since the launch of IBB. University-wide, the percentages of in-college and out-of-college SCHs have remained constant at 63% and 37%, respectively.

Concern: UVM’s Teacher-Scholar Model will be weakened.

Findings: There has been no significant change in the distribution of undergraduate class sections by size. Grant activity has increased (both submissions and awards). Internal investments in pedagogical innovation, high impact practices, and faculty research have increased. Nationally, among public research universities, 30% of instructional faculty are T/TT and 70% are non-TT faculty. The split at UVM has varied from about 70/30 to 60/40 over the last decade. In other words, our distribution is nearly *the opposite* of the national average (30/70). There has been little change in this very favorable position since IBB was launched.

The transition to an incentive-based budget model reflects a significant administrative and cultural shift, neither of which are easy undertakings for large and complex organizations. Along the way there have been bumps in need of smoothing, decisions that needed re-thinking, and it is true that the impact of the model has not been felt evenly across units. That said, the [University-wide Indicators of Success](#) all indicate that the shift has had been positive, and we will continue to monitor and update the [University-wide Indicators of Success](#) annually. As challenging as this transition may have been for some, the University as a whole is much better positioned to achieve financial sustainability than it was under the prior budget model.

Collectively, our understanding of the form and function of IBB models has deepened and matured. As we enter this second phase of IBB, I expect that our focus will move from the model itself to the potential and possibilities that the model incents and enables. Realizing this potential – in each college and school – requires engagement, commitment, diligence, and persistence. It requires some new thinking. There will be changes. Some will be very exciting, others will create understandable anxiety (as change often does).

I realize that acceptance, action, and success has come at different paces for different college/schools. And while the new budget model can incent and even enable innovation and success, it cannot force it. For some, the shift in mindset and willingness to engage may take more time. But as I have said on several occasions, “I am a tireless optimist. I will not be satisfied until 100% of our colleges and schools are able to realize success.”

I am proud of our academic community for its commitment to this transition; for the excitement and creative thinking that has been generated and shared within units; for the programmatic innovations that have provided new opportunities for our students; and for the demonstrated and continued commitment to academic excellence evidenced by the distinctive and distinguished research, scholarship, creative activity, and academic programs that are evolving.

I want to express my thanks to the members of the Steering Committee for their careful and deliberative efforts to respond – respectfully and responsibly – to the important IBB campus feedback that was received. I am grateful for the time, talent, and wisdom they have shared on behalf of our University and its future.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

We continue to see significant growth in research activity across the University, with increased extramural support (driven both by increased grant proposal activity and the increased number of multimillion dollar awards in several colleges and schools), the launch of several new research centers (including the University's first industry-funded *Center of Excellence*), and continued investments in the most promising transdisciplinary research and scholarship (*e.g.*, project exploration funds, initiation funds/seed grants, grant writing support, and equipment and matching funds) from both the Office of the Vice President for Research and the Office of the Provost. While the list is long, let me share some highlights:

- Launch of the MassMutual [Center of Excellence](#) for Complex Systems and Data Science
- 24 new awards of \$1M or more have been received by UVM faculty investigators since the start of the fiscal year
- Three new [SPARK-VT](#) projects awarded this year; new Pre-SPARK program launched
- The new [Innovation and Entrepreneurship Residential Learning Community](#) was launched, housing more than 300 students in its first year
- UVM faculty receive two NSF Major Research Instrumentation (MRI) grants totaling \$1.9M
- Launch of the [Humanities Center Provost's Faculty Fellow's Program](#)
- UVM faculty received two NIH Center of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) awards totaling \$23.2M
- Through [UVM Innovations](#), working with UVM faculty: 43 invention disclosures, 10 US provisional patent applications, 13 US non-provisional patent applications, 10 patents granted, 6 total options and licenses, and 2 spin-off companies formed

Faculty engagement, with students, in research, scholarship, and creative work is at the core of any great research university. The University of Vermont, like all research universities, must maintain active and vibrant research and scholarship activity – largely extramurally funded – to fulfil its research mission and provide meaningful opportunities for its students.

Recognizing that not all colleges and schools at UVM participate equally in research activity or have similar needs/expectations for support for their scholarship, and that not all departments offer research-based graduate degree programs, and that there are differences in disciplinary cultures around pursuit of extramural support for scholarship (whether from federal agencies, from corporate or philanthropic foundations, or through industry partnership), the Office of the Vice President for Research [website](#) maintains and supports (with additional funding from the Office of the Provost) a diverse array of programs to support faculty research, scholarship, and creative work. Please continue to familiarize yourself with these opportunities, for both [research/scholarship](#) and [innovation/entrepreneurship](#), and take good advantage of the support provided to faculty. We remain committed to investing in faculty success and the teacher-scholar model that has always been such an important part of our culture and our campus.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

“A refresh of our academic campus, our facilities, and our infrastructure that supports our teaching and scholarship and our students’ learning and discovery is essential for the University. Just as we renew and refresh our students, faculty, and staff each year – bringing new energy, new ideas, and new expectations – so, too, must we renew and refresh our physical campus, in order to attract, inspire, and support them.”

D. Rosowsky, Provost and Senior Vice President
Across the Green, August 2018

I have used previous *Across the Green* memos to provide updates on capital projects, from planning through construction phases. I hope such updates have been both informing and useful as we ‘navigate’ our very dynamic campus. We have also created (and update regularly) the [Building UVM website](#), which provides timely information on project timelines, road closures, and even live streaming webcams.

As we approach the conclusion of [Move Mountains](#), the Comprehensive Campaign for the University of Vermont, we cannot help but recognize the changes to our campus and facilities made possible through the vision and generosity of our donors. This fall we celebrated the official openings of the [Cohen Hall](#) for the Integrative Creative Arts, the renovated [Billings Library](#) (housing several centers in the Humanities as well as Libraries Special Collections), and [Ifshin Hall](#) (Grossman School of Business). These projects were only possible through philanthropic support. This summer we will be opening Innovation Hall, the second new building in the STEM Complex.

With the news of the [Tarrant Gift](#) just last month, we expect to move quickly into final design and then construction phases of the [Multi-Purpose Event Center](#). This exciting project will provide new/improved space for Athletics, much needed new space for recreation and wellness, and new instructional spaces. Also being planned is a new biosciences research building for the Larner College of Medicine and creation of new space for the Department of Psychological Science (College of Arts and Sciences) that will move the department into closer proximity to other academic health sciences departments. Philanthropy plays a major role in both of these projects.

At universities such as ours, whether or not they are fortunate enough to receive state support⁴ for buildings, project horizons (planning, approvals, and construction) for large capital projects often span many years and more than one administration. As such, I thought it would be informative to provide a sampling of major academic⁵ building projects (both new construction and major renovation) over the last two decades at UVM (1996-2018). This sheds light on the scope of projects as well as the relative distribution of new space by unit at the University.

⁴ UVM does not receive capital construction funds from the State of Vermont.

⁵ Only academic building projects having costs in excess of \$1M are shown. Residential life and athletics projects are not included. Campus improvements, facility/infrastructure upgrades, and individual research laboratory upgrades are not included. Projects currently being planned or in early design stages are not included.

Building (year):	Cost:	Primary occupant(s):
Old Mill/Lafayette (1996)	\$13.5M	CAS (Social Sciences, Humanities)
Pomeroy (1996)	\$3.2M	CAS, CNHS
Rubenstein Sci (1999)	\$4M	RSENR
HSRF (2001)	\$25M	LCOM
Waterman (2002)	\$4.2M	CESS
Delehanty (2004)	\$4.7M	CAS (Sciences)
MedEd/Dana (2005)	\$9.5M	LCOM
Carrigan addition (2006)	\$6.9M	CALS
Terrill (2008)	\$7.5M	CALS
Colchester Res (2008)	\$5.7M	LCOM
Delehanty (2008)	\$1.9M	CAS (Sciences)
Rowell (2008)	\$2.5M	CNHS
Williams (2008)	\$2M	CAS (Arts)
Given (2009)	\$12.5M	LCOM
Jeffords (2010)	\$55.7M	CALS
Aiken (2011)	\$13M	RSENR
Clinical Sim Lab (2011)	\$2.3M	CNHS
Stafford (2013)	\$2.8M	LCOM
Miller (2015)	\$4.1M	CALS
Discovery (2017)	\$57M	CAS (Sciences), CEMS
Larner Commons (2017)	\$2M	LCOM
Cohen (2017)	\$7M	CAS (Arts)
Library addition (2017)	\$2M	UVM
Billings (2018)	\$8.5M	CAS (Humanities), LIBR
Ifshin (2018)	\$11M	GSB
Innovation (2018)	\$40M	CAS (Sciences), CEMS
Votey (2018)	\$7M	CEMS

As always, I encourage you to [follow along with our plans/progress](#) as we thoughtfully, strategically, and responsibly update our facilities and refresh our beautiful campus. All universities are challenged to keep pace with changing needs and expectations of students and faculty alike. While we have not been able to move as quickly as better resourced universities (with larger endowments and greater state support, for example), the record above demonstrates ongoing institutional commitment to investment in facilities and campus infrastructure. This is necessary to continue to be able to recruit top students, recruit and retain top faculty, and ensure we are able to deliver on our joint academic and research missions.

ACCREDITATION VISIT, FINAL PREPARATIONS

We are just months away from our decadal NECHE (formerly NEASC) accreditation site-visit. The review team will be on our campus March 24-27, 2019. With thanks to the eight subcommittees comprised of faculty, staff, and administrators, and with input from many different campus constituencies, our self-study report is now completed. This is a comprehensive document that provides an evidence-based self-assessment of our university: who we are, how we function, and what we aspire to be. The full report will be posted online in early February and I encourage you to review it and provide comment. I also encourage you to attend one of the open forums which will be scheduled as part of the March site visit.

My thanks to Associate Provost for Teaching and Learning Brian Reed, Dean of Libraries Mara Saule, and Provost's Faculty Fellow for Assessment Jennifer Dickinson for their leadership, to the Executive Committee and Steering Committee, and to the 100+ faculty and staff members serving on the various Standards Committees.

During the March site visit, the team of external reviewers will host open forums, conduct interviews, tour facilities, and examine our supporting and enabling infrastructure. Their service will conclude with a formal report to President Sullivan, including both their findings and notification of our re-accreditation status.

FINAL THOUGHTS

What have we launched (or will we launch) in the 2018-19 academic year? Here is just a sampling:

- Several new Residential Learning Communities, engaging students and faculty
- MassMutual Center of Excellence in Complex Systems and Data Science
- Eight new graduate programs including the PhD in Complex Systems and Data Sciences, MS in Biomedical Engineering, and Graduate Certificate in Sustainable Enterprise
- New home for Humanities-themed Centers and Special Collections (Billings Library)
- New home for the Integrative Creative Arts (Cohen Hall)
- UVM's newest academic building, 'Innovation'
- ***Navigate***, a new advising platform, connecting UVM to EAB's Student Success Collaborative

As we launch into the New Year, we do so with renewed energy and much anticipation. No year is without milestones, but 2019 is especially noteworthy for the University. We will celebrate the conclusion of the largest fundraising campaign in the history of the University of Vermont (surpassing our ambitious \$500M goal); we will thank and recognize President Sullivan for his leadership during a period of tremendous advancement for the University; and we will welcome our next president. Milestones are marked by achievement, celebration, and change. I hope you will join me in bringing enthusiasm and excitement to all of these in the coming months.

Few things are as important as our commitment to preparing our students for a successful launch upon graduation. Whether undergraduate or graduate, our students look to us for guidance and mentorship, as well as for help in facilitating introductions and making connections that can help them post-graduation. The best of these relationships often extend years beyond a student's graduation. As we strengthen our advising, expand our career services, add new internship opportunities, and work with our students to help them plan for and explore post-graduate pathways, know that each of us plays a vital role.

I always appreciate feedback. If you see me at the café one morning, let me buy you a cup of coffee. You can find me in my favorite spots: Waterman Café, Henderson's Café, and (now) Campus Perk. I would love to hear your thoughts and ideas, receive suggestions or feedback, or share some enthusiasm for our Catamounts. Coffee is on me.

THANK YOU for all that you do for our students, for one another, and for the University of Vermont. The launch of new ideas, new disciplines, new fields, new pedagogies, new research, new scholarly and creative work, new innovation, new technologies, new discoveries, new cures, new partnerships, new knowledge, new understanding, and new graduates is indeed our shared best destiny.

Go Cats Go!



“Reflecting on the past year and looking ahead to the new one. Thinking about our responsibility to help our students structure/leverage their education (major, minor, co-curricular experiences) to be successful after graduation. What a great opportunity to extend our impact.” [@UVMProvost on Twitter, December 2018](#)

