Dear Members of the University of Vermont Community,

The University of Vermont and other college campuses in the state and around the country have seen recently a proliferation of racist messaging. The origins of these messages on our campus are unknown. Regardless of whether the messages come from within or outside our community, we condemn them to the fullest extent. We have no tolerance for racism in any form.

The University of Vermont has a strong, visible, and ongoing commitment to diversity, racial equality, and inclusion. We consistently speak out against racism, injustice, and bigotry on our campus and communicate frequently with concerned and impacted members of our community. And, we know that the work around these important issues is far from done.

We appreciate John Mejia’s passion for racial equality both on campus and in the city of Burlington. We are concerned for John’s health and wellbeing. We are offering John health assistance and support as John makes personal choices regarding these issues.

Our students, faculty and staff always have been key to helping us make significant progress over the years on these critical issues. This work started decades ago and continues in earnest today. The University has invested significant resources, time, and money in critical initiatives designed to promote diversity and educate and engage the entire University community. Even though we face challenging times here and nationwide, we have enjoyed much progress. Past efforts have laid a foundation for those in our community to have their message heard and valued rather than dismissed. We continue to focus on understanding issues of culture and social justice through supportive professional development opportunities. We have built recently assessments of our efforts into the formal process of professional performance reviews and through a Framework for Inclusive Excellence tool. We provide regular and substantial diversity and inclusion training, are actively working to hire more faculty of color, and are partnering with the Faculty Senate to improve the diversity curriculum and instruction, among other initiatives.

Full transparency and open communication have been key elements of our past and current processes. As progress has been made, the University has issued in the last year 8 comprehensive updates to keep students and the entire campus community informed. More detailed information, including all recent updates, is available at this website: https://www.uvm.edu/advancingdiversity.

As a public institution we remain mindful of the rights of all to express freely their views on issues of importance. Our University remains steadfast in our commitment to diversity, inclusion, and racial equality, and as we grapple with these difficult challenges, we will continue, as we have, to speak out against racism, bigotry and injustice.

Working together and communicating with each other on these issues of national importance, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and civility, will allow us to continue making progress as one University. We welcome all who want to join together to be a part of what needs to be a campus, community, and national conversation.

With deep respect,

Tom Sullivan, President
David Rosowsky, Provost and Senior Vice President
Wanda Heading-Grant, Vice President for Human Resources, Diversity, and Multicultural Affairs
Annie Stevens, Vice Provost for Student Affairs