August 13, 2017

Dear Members of the UVM Community,

The tragic events in Charlottesville are deeply disturbing and disheartening. They affect all of us, regardless of our background, politics, or location, and are particularly harmful to those members of our community whose identities are targeted. Events like these are an assault on our values as a free society, as well as the foundational principle that all of us are created equal.

We are living in a time when it is imperative that we find our voices and speak clearly against injustice, prejudice and racism. It is equally imperative that we seek civil, peaceful, and diplomatic approaches to resolving issues that divide us. The use of violence or intimidation as a means of protest is abhorrent and disgraceful, and outside the bounds of any constitutional protection. The violence experienced in Charlottesville is to be condemned in the strongest terms, as is the white supremacist ideology that is becoming increasingly visible in America.

As the summer winds down and we look ahead to welcoming our students back on campus, I am hopeful that we will continue to engage each other in important national conversations in ways that are guided by these principles, as we have in the past. I urge all of us to continue to embrace and promote Our Common Ground values: Respect, Integrity, Openness, Justice and Responsibility.

Respectfully,
Tom Sullivan