From: Tom Sullivan, President
To: UVM Community
Subject: Academic Year 2017-2018!
Date: May 7, 2018

As we near the finish line of a very busy and sometimes challenging semester, I want to thank each of you for your part in making this a successful year at UVM. Our University is receiving important national accolades, our students are showing impressive advances in their studies, and our faculty continue to gain national and international recognition for their cutting-edge accomplishments. The tide of our University is rising; each one of you is adding to it by your academic efforts, your service and volunteer commitments, and your advocacy.

Activism is civil engagement. Fostering this kind of engagement is part of our University mission statement, and it is part of our history. In our rich 227 years as an institution, UVM has been on the forefront of change. We were the first institution of higher education to declare public support for freedom of religion, and the first University to admit women and African American students into Phi Beta Kappa honor society. We developed the first Environmental Studies program in the nation, and are leading now in new medical education models. None of these advances in the public sphere happened without the vision, leadership, and active support from many members within the UVM community.

Today, we carry on that will toward positive change. This has been a year marked by collective efforts on the part of many to advance our University on issues of racial understanding, diversity, and important institutional priorities. At times these efforts are hard and challenging, but all serve the ultimate goal of creating a better and inclusive University. We have countless examples from this year on how important issues have advanced through engaged and respectful communication. We’ve accomplished a lot, but more needs to be done. Our University will be refreshed in August, as a new group of students is welcomed to campus, and new faculty and staff colleagues join our community. Even with that continual change one thing is clear: Our University has the best chance of evolving to its next, best level when everyone is working together and supporting one another in positive ways.

I wish you all productive and rewarding weeks as this academic year comes to a close. I know we all look forward to a wonderful Commencement week for our graduates and their families. Let us continue to work, together, to foster an even more vibrant and welcoming University community.

In respect and with every best wish,

Tom Sullivan