From: Tom Sullivan, President

To: UVM Faculty and Staff

Re: First-Year Summer Reading for Class of 2019

I am pleased to announce that in June we will ask all incoming first-year students to read Anne Fadiman’s *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*.

Fadiman tells the true story of a young Hmong girl (diagnosed with severe epilepsy) and her refugee family from Laos and their interactions with the doctors treating her at a small hospital in California. This book explores the intersection of culture and medicine and, over the past fifteen years, has become a classic in the area of medical anthropology. Winner of numerous awards, including the National Book Critics Circle Award for Nonfiction, Fadiman’s compelling narrative draws you into both this true story as well as the challenges facing modern medicine as we unravel the impact of culture on the delivery of health care.

The ability of this book to bridge human as well as disciplinary cultures, and to do so as part of a gripping and engaging narrative, offers opportunities for faculty from every corner of UVM to incorporate all or part of the book into their first-year coursework in the 2015-2016 academic year. And, by announcing this selection at this time, we hope that faculty members will be able to integrate this book into their curriculum and academic events across campus next year.

- We urge faculty, particularly those teaching first-year students, to use this interdisciplinary book in their Fall 2015 courses, assigning readings from *The Spirit Catches You* as appropriate, and to incorporate some aspect of its themes into their syllabi for the 2015-2016 academic year. We invite all campus community members to read *The Spirit Catches You* with the hope that the experience of sharing this text will generate lively discussions and activities related to the book both inside and outside of the classroom.

- Additional information regarding academic and co-curricular programming associated with this selection will be forthcoming. You can direct questions to the First-Year Read Committee in care of Joel Goldberg (Joel.Goldberg@uvm.edu).

I would like to thank the First-Year Read Committee for their excellent selection. I look forward to many engaging discussions and events across campus next year, inspired by *The Spirit Catches You*!