To: UVM Faculty and Staff

From: Tom Sullivan, President
David Rosowsky, Provost and Senior Vice President

Re: Administrative Unit Review Process

As part of the Strategic Initiative Process that the campus engaged in during the academic year 2011-2012, the Cost Structure and Productivity Improvement Committee chaired by Dean Douglas Lantagne and former Dean Mary Watzin recommended that a review process similar to the existing Academic Program Review Process be implemented for administrative units. It also recommended that the process include performance metrics and benchmarks and an evaluation of whether the structure, cost and effectiveness of our central administrative departments is on par with comparable institutions.

We are pleased to announce the launching of a pilot Administrative Unit Review (AUR) Process this fall. This process is an important component of the Strategic Action Plan in our efforts to instill an institutional commitment to efficiency and effectiveness. Further, administrative unit review is a critical element of the Incentive-Based Budget model. It also is key in raising quality and performance thresholds throughout the institution. We expect that all administrative units will be reviewed over a multi-year cycle.

The overall purpose of Administrative Unit Review is to assess a unit’s program quality, efficiency, and effectiveness; to stimulate program planning and improvement; and to encourage the unit’s professional development in strategic directions that reflect the University’s priorities. Among the issues the process will consider are: 1) the current strengths and weaknesses of the unit; 2) levels of satisfaction of those served, 3) efforts to address multicultural and diversity awareness issues; 4) the adequacy of other resources to carry out the mission of the unit; and 5) potential areas of cross-unit collaboration where the University and units’ resources could be leveraged.

The Administrative Unit Review process is overseen by the Administrative Unit Review Council (AURC), an appointed group of senior faculty and administrators who also serve as chairs of the review subcommittees. At least one-third of the members of AURC are faculty. In addition to the faculty members on the AURC, it is representative of the various administrative units within the University. The AURC will appoint subcommittees to assist in advancing its responsibilities. A member of the AURC chairs each subcommittee; the remaining subcommittee members are not members of the AURC. Gary Derr, Vice President for Executive Operations is responsible for coordinating the Administrative Unit Review Process and assuring the completion of each program review. If you are interested in serving on the Administrative Unit Review Council, please contact Gary Derr (Gary.Derr@uvm.edu).
The process will include submission of a 1) unit self-study, 2) review by the internal AUR Subcommittee, 3) review by external reviewers preeminent in their respective fields, and 4) concludes with a memorandum of understanding designed to implement recommendations developed during the review process.

This year we will be piloting the Administrative Unit Review Process with five units, specifically: Administrative Business Service Center, Athletics, General Counsel Office, Registrar’s Office, and Student Life. We greatly appreciate their willingness to participate in this important process. Once the pilot phase is complete, the plan is to implement the review process with all units beginning fiscal year 2015.