From: Tom Sullivan

To: University of Vermont Community

Re: Welcome back to campus!

Welcome back for the new semester and a new year! This fall our University enjoyed another highly productive term marked by academic achievement, exceptional events, and continued progress in our educational, research, and service mission. I look forward to working with all the members of the UVM community to continue to set ambitious goals for ourselves.

This spring term begins with a series of exciting events that truly exemplify the vibrant culture of the UVM campus: 1) Salman Rushdie’s Lecture this Wednesday, January 14 and 2) the Martin Luther King Celebration, Education, and Learning Events on January 14 – 30, 2015. The King celebration will feature a keynote lecture from Wil Haygood, New York Times best-selling author of The Butler: A Witness to History and award-winning Washington Post reporter, on Tuesday, January 20. The University also will host UVM Gives A Dollar, a community service fundraiser, as part of the celebration from Wednesday, January 14 - Friday, January 23 at various locations on campus for the benefit of the Chittenden County Emergency Food Shelf, Women Helping Battered Women, and the Ronald McDonald House. We welcome all members of the campus community to participate in commemorating Martin Luther King Day.

I am delighted to announce that Nina Totenberg, acclaimed senior legal affairs correspondent from National Public Radio, will give the address at our 214 Commencement Ceremonies on the Green in May. It will be our privilege to welcome to our campus Ms. Totenberg, whose regular reports on legal affairs and the Supreme Court keep us all well-informed on All Things Considered, Morning Edition, and Weekend Edition. We will be announcing shortly the other honorary degree recipients.

The University continues to serve as a leader in higher education and has been recently recognized across a broad range of disciplines for our advancements in business education, diversity, and sustainability and food systems.

- The School of Business Administration was ranked as one of the “Top 50 Most Innovative Business Schools in America” for its MBA in Sustainable Entrepreneurship (SE MBA).

- INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education, gave UVM the 2014 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award.

- A recent article in the New York Times featured UVM's Food Hub Management Certificate Program, that is the first of its kind in the nation.
Meanwhile, UVM’s hometown of Burlington yet again tops the rankings as one of the best places to live in the U.S. In addition to Travel and Leisure magazine’s #1 ranking of Burlington as the best college town in the U.S.,

- Outside magazine named Burlington the 7th “best place to live ever” on account of the local culture that is rich in the arts, health and well-being offerings, and easy access to lake and mountain outdoor activities.

- MSN Money listed Burlington as the 4th “Hottest city for 2015” for leading the country in sustainability with the local food movement and its commitment to sustainable energy.

Each of these rankings cites the University as a major contributor to the quality of life in this area.

In November, we celebrated our vital and longstanding partnership when Fletcher Allen Health Care officially became the University of Vermont Medical Center and Fletcher Allen Partners became The University of Vermont Health Network. We will continue our critical work together under one name as we improve health and wellbeing across Vermont and the North Country through exceptional patient care, research, and high quality education.

Last month, I was honored to participate with President Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, Vice President Biden, and other college presidents and higher education leaders in The White House College Opportunity Day of Action. This important gathering advanced the President’s goal to bring colleges and universities together with business leaders, foundations and non-profit organizations to expand opportunities in higher education, especially for low-income and underrepresented students. Helping more students to enroll and successfully graduate in a timely way from college is one of UVM’s top priorities. It was a pleasure to work with leaders from across the country at this White House meeting where 600 new actions were announced that will further our mutual academic goals.

I hope all of us will set our goals high and keep achieving measurable success across the campus. I wish you an exhilarating semester full of discovery, achievement, rewarding learning and wellbeing!