From: Tom Sullivan
To: University of Vermont Community
Re: Welcome back to campus!

Welcome back for the new semester and a new year!

This term begins with our important annual Martin Luther King Celebration, featuring a keynote lecture by Michele Norris, award-winning journalist and author, on Monday, January 25, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. in Ira Allen Chapel. Ms. Norris is a National Public Radio host and special correspondent and former co-host of National Public Radio’s All Things Considered. She is the creator of The Race Card Project, which invites people to share their thoughts, observations, feelings, and experiences about race in just six words on a postcard. In keeping with Dr. King’s dedication to service, the University also will host UVM Gives A Dollar, a community service fundraiser, as part of the celebration from Tuesday, January 19 – Friday, January 29 at various locations on campus for the benefit of the Chittenden County Emergency Food Shelf, Women Helping Battered Women, and the Ronald McDonald House. For more information, go to the Martin Luther King Celebration website. Please join us and participate in these important Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration opportunities as a time to reflect on our values and Dr. King’s aspirations for us all.

The Spring term concludes with another acclaimed author and journalist, Gail Sheehy, Class of 1958, who will give the address at our 215th Commencement Ceremonies in May. Ms. Sheehy has written profiles and biographies of several influential figures, including Margaret Thatcher, Mikhail Gorbachev, and Hillary Clinton. Her 1976 book Passages: Predictable Crises of Adult Life, was named one of the 10 most influential books of our time by the Library of Congress. Ms. Sheehy recently published her 17th book, Daring: My Passages, a memoir. She is considered one of the most important journalists and authors of the last 50 years.

I also am pleased to report progress on several major initiatives. Through the Move Mountains Comprehensive Campaign for the University of Vermont, we already have raised $261.5 million towards our goal of $500 million—the largest campaign in the University’s history. This early success reflects the high regard our alumni and friends hold for our University. This campaign already is enhancing the academic life of our University thanks to a dramatic increase in the number of endowed chairs and professorships that assist us in recruiting and retaining top scholars, and in the many programmatic investments that are fostering a richer, more vibrant student experience on campus. Another key objective in this campaign is to significantly increase private scholarship support so that we can continue to offer financial access to talented UVM students from all walks of life.

As the semester progresses you will witness a significant physical transformation of our campus as the new residence complex and the first phase of the STEM project continue to take shape. The new STEM facility will promote innovative teaching and research and enable faculty and students to engage together in creating and sharing new knowledge. The residence hall will serve as the center for the emerging first-year student program, designed to enhance
the first-year experience and position every student to excel in their chosen fields and endeavors.

While we continue to work on advancing excellence across the entire University, I am proud to note just a couple of the many accolades UVM recently has received. For example:

- *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education, awarded UVM the 2015 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award. This is the second year in a row for the University to win this prestigious award for diversity.

- UVM has been ranked by the Educate to Career College Rankings Index among the top 10 schools in the country in the economic value of a UVM degree, as measured by the good jobs students receive after graduation without the burden of excessive loans.

- UVM ranked seventh nationally among comparable schools for the number of students involved in the Peace Corps, a number that now exceeds over 840 for UVM graduates.

In addition to these examples of university-wide recognitions, faculty and students continue to win national and international recognitions for research and scholarship spanning all of our disciplines, enriching our lives, and positioning us for a better tomorrow.

As we start another new semester, let’s all set our aspirations and dreams high. Our University community has accomplished a great deal together. We have the potential to achieve even more by working collaboratively and supporting each other.

I wish everyone an enriching and rewarding semester!