From: Tom Sullivan
To: University of Vermont Community
Re: Fall Welcome

It has been a spectacular summer in Burlington. I am delighted to welcome you all back to our beautiful, lush green campus, and to our new students who join us for your first semester, a big welcome. As we turn our attention to our plans and goals for the academic year ahead, I want to encourage all of us – faculty, students, and staff – to set ever higher goals for ourselves and to push ourselves to achieve more than we ever thought possible. This year I want to focus on how we as individuals and as a community can promote and contribute to the culture of academic excellence and success in everything we do at the University of Vermont.

This vibrant academic community offers a wealth of cultural opportunities, including the Burack Lecture Series, the Marsh Professor Program, and the Lane Series of performing arts, among many others. Please save the dates for two exceptional events on campus this coming year. The highly influential and best-selling author Michael Pollan will speak at UVM on October 30, 2014. Internationally acclaimed novelist Salman Rushdie will speak in the Ira Allen Chapel on January 14, 2015; free tickets will be available to the public at the Davis Center. I hope you will all take the time to draw inspiration from the many scholars, scientists, researchers, writers, and artists that visit UVM.

When you walk the halls of Waterman this fall, you will see a new addition to the graduates recognized on the third floor: a plaque honoring Andrew Harris, Class of 1838, the University’s first African American graduate and an important abolitionist. In April, as you may know, we formed a committee of campus leaders to determine how UVM would recognize Andrew Harris. We are pleased to announce the placement of the plaque near the Registrar’s office and a chair in Waterman Memorial Lounge. It is a real pleasure to recognize the notable accomplishments of Andrew Harris as part of the legacy of this University.

Members of this University community continually demonstrate how aspiration, determination, and perseverance can lead to unprecedented success. Each year, our faculty and students receive national and international recognition for their accomplishments while our talented and dedicated staff continue to advance the University in so many ways. In May, we released The President's 2013/2014 Annual Report, which details the considerable achievements of our community members over the course of the last academic year. In addition, this year for the first time, we launched The 2014 Research Report, highlighting the crucial research endeavors of our faculty who are finding solutions to the world’s gravest challenges. Please take a moment, if you have not done so already, to find out what our faculty, students, and staff have achieved in their fields.

Each member of the University community has many opportunities throughout the course of the year to imagine, to aspire, and to contribute in unique ways to the academic quality of this venerable institution we all share. We should all remember that significant accomplishments are almost always the cumulative work of many people with various skills working collaboratively. Game-changing innovations are never made in a vacuum. Let this rich creative interdisciplinary community motivate and inspire you. As we work together and learn from each other, we will realize our greatest potential as a community.

I very much look forward to working with you to enhance the culture of academic excellence and success at UVM in the coming year.