Along with our Associate Director Dani Comey, I feel privileged to honor Pat with the Common Ground award today. Pat Brown is a connector, a believer in people and their potential and a teacher. His vast network of UVM colleagues are also friends – from students to the folks caretaking our buildings and grounds to faculty to many of UVM’s senior leaders and alums. Like me, they know and appreciate his authenticity and his stories. They share their own stories with him, and feel more connected to UVM as a result. We all benefit from the easy way Pat builds community and the years (32 plus!) he has spent doing that at UVM.

Pat truly brings to life the values of respect, integrity, innovation, openness, justice and responsibility in everything he does. As my supervisor, mentor and friend I see him “walk the walk” every day in the unique way he:

- Sits with students – genuinely listening, patiently supporting their vision and imparting his wisdom when asked;
- Interacts with colleagues – valuing each individual’s narrative and seeing each of us as a whole person with our unique identities and experiences;
- Gives to his work – often being the first person to arrive in the morning (after tending the sheep, pulling the garlic and collecting fresh eggs) to closing every Tuesday with the SGA evening meeting.
- Asks questions – challenging each of us to think critically and creatively, to look for meaning, and solutions, in unlikely places. Pat loves to complicate our thinking and in doing so raises our collective intelligence.

I have benefitted individually from his caring and talented guidance and support, and I have witnessed the countless ways that he offers the same care and talent in the service of the larger UVM community.
I don’t say it enough, but I would like to take this opportunity to say “thank you.” Thank you, Pat for teaching me how to “be a duck.” Thank you for running with me, for including me, for welcoming me to UVM and for making this place my home. I look forward to seeing you every day. A day does not go by that I don’t ask myself what you would do, how you would lead and what you would say. You have been the greatest teacher I have ever had because you lead by example and continue to do the hard work to make yourself, our office, our division and ultimately this University the best place it can be. You put students first and have shown me that it is this contact with students that energizes our work in Student Life. I think I speak for generations of students and staff in sharing this gratitude today.

In closing, I’d like to share the poignant words of former SGA President, UVM alumna and State Legislator Kesha Ram:

“Pat lives and teaches in a way that serves as a constant reminder that you cannot have integrity without living up to your responsibilities, you cannot innovate without the openness to listen to new ideas and diverse perspectives and you cannot truly give and earn respect without seeking to stand on the level playing field of justice.”

For all of these reasons and many more, Pat is eminently deserving of the Our Common Ground Award.

Congratulations!

Katherine Strotmeyer
Assistant Director for Marking, Dudley H. Davis Center

Dani Comey
Associate Director for Student Life