

UVM Welcome

Prelock Opening Remarks for the University of Aberdeen Leadership Exchange Program

I am delighted to welcome the faculty, staff, and administrative leaders from the University of Aberdeen as well as our own faculty, staff, and administrative leaders at the University of Vermont.

For the next two and a half days we have the unique opportunity to share our respective leadership experiences in higher education—learning from and with one another.

I joined the University of Vermont faculty in the fall of 1994 and for the last quarter-century I have had the privilege of working with dedicated, accomplished, collaborative, and creative colleagues, and I'm grateful for this opportunity to add to my experiences in higher education as we engage with our colleagues from the University Aberdeen.

This leadership exchange is well aligned to our aspiration as an institution to become more globally engaged, with very specific goals including:

- establishing a globally diverse community of students, faculty, and staff;
- providing international educational opportunities for students;
- preparing students for careers in an international business milieu or working in multinational corporate settings; and,
- engaging faculty, staff and students in international research collaborations and professional development.

Our ability to engage in leadership exchange with our University of Aberdeen colleagues is a first step in our efforts to connect globally at a leadership level.

To begin our efforts to achieve our global vision, the University of Vermont is in the process of hiring an Executive Director for International Partnerships and Programs. This is an investment in leadership and infrastructure to expand our existing assets in study abroad and engaged international faculty and to address our existing gaps in international undergraduate and graduate enrollment, inclusive pedagogies, and international research.

We have developed a comprehensive internationalization plan with four key strategic priorities:

- to increase UVM's ability to attract and retain outstanding and diverse undergraduate and graduate students;
- to enhance the diversity of the campus community, creating a rich environment of multiple viewpoints, experiences, backgrounds, and perspective;
- to establish a culture of global citizenship and impact; and
- to enhance the University's research reputation and profile through international partnerships and collaborations with global institutions and organizations and international companies or corporations.

We have begun the background for developing a university wide strategic plan that will guide UVM's international activities and initiatives in teaching, research, and partnership development. Our new hire will help us create and implement that plan.

There are several principles that are guiding our thinking to realize our internationalization plan. These principles are drawn from both the

American Council of Education (ACE) model for internationalization and the Institute for International Education.

The Institute for International Education asserts “that when education transcends borders, it opens minds, enabling people to go beyond building connections to solving problems together.” Their model supports creating a vision for an equitable world that is enriched by ensuring a “greater understanding between people and cultures.”

International education and leadership exchanges such as the one we are embarking on over the next few days brings together people and organizations who I believe can thrive in a world with numerous possibilities to create and maintain global leadership connections.

As international leaders we can advance scholarship, help build economies, and promote access to opportunities for our faculty, our staff and our students.

A comprehensive plan for internationalization requires leadership and structure, institutional commitment, and collaborative partnerships. We look forward to partnering with the University of Aberdeen on this leadership development opportunity and to create partnerships that will allow us to capitalize on future global opportunities.

As we advance our thinking about our international efforts, we have considered three strategic lenses the American Council of Education suggests should guide us as we take on international leadership opportunities like what we are doing here with the University of Aberdeen.

- The first lens is one of *diversity, equity, and inclusion*. We are committed to creating a welcoming, inclusive, equitable, and supportive campus community for members of all backgrounds—we hope you will sense that commitment as visitors on our campus.
- The second lens considers the importance of *agility and transformation* to create an adaptable organizational structure that

establishes our value proposition in the market, and recognizes the talent of our students and faculty and follows our [common ground values of justice, respect, innovation, integrity, openness and responsibility](#). We look forward to hearing your perspective on how the University of Aberdeen establishes itself as an agile and transformational organization so that we might learn from you.

- And finally, the third lens is *data-informed decision making* which highlights the importance of establishing qualitative and quantitative metrics, so we are accountable to achieving our stated goals. I hope at the end of our time together, we establish some goals for our continued collaboration whether it be creating a UVM study abroad site at your university, establishing a faculty exchange program for sharing teaching pedagogies and scholarship opportunities or defining ways we might build leadership training for global leaders in higher education.

We have an opportunity, here, to create authentic leaders: leaders committed to building enduring organizations who have a sense of purpose, are true to their core values, have the courage to meet the needs of their stakeholders, and recognize the importance of serving (adapted from Bill George, 2016). Thank you for challenging us to take this step together.

I would like to end with some powerful words by Gandhi which should provide a guidepost for our leadership journey together. He said, “*We but mirror the world. All the tendencies present in the outer world are to be found in the world of our body. If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards him. This is the divine mystery supreme. A wonderful thing it is and the source of our happiness. We need not wait to see what others do.*” I am reminded by the power of his words that as leaders, we must become the change we want to see.

Thank you and I look forward to participating in the discussions over the next three days.