

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT AND STATE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

PRESIDENT'S 10-YEAR VISION STATEMENT

President's Ten-Year Vision

As I embark on my second six months in office, I want to offer you a preview of my vision for the university that I will outline for the Board of Trustees later this week.

First, I will make the case for why we must pursue bold action:

We have come to a critical moment in the history of the University of Vermont, approaching what many of us believe to be a tipping point that can carry us decisively and permanently into the first-rank of American universities--but only if we understand rightly who we are, how to define our special place within the constellation of peer institutions, how to make the most of our resources and opportunities, and how to be at once bold and smart, seizing the main chances, driving hard for competitive advantage, and making investments that will yield high return at acceptable levels of risk.

Make no mistake: if we do not seize this moment energetically and urgently, it will pass as a similar moment did fifteen years ago during the era of the "public ivy." Furthermore, we may be at a more precarious point than we were at the twilight of the Lattie Coor era. Our market position is more vulnerable now, in a time of economic contraction and constraint, than it was throughout the 1990s, a decade of economic exuberance. With applications for fall 2003 admission 7 % ahead of last year's remarkable advance, we have another opportunity to raise the selectivity, quality, and diversity of the student body so that they are better aligned with sticker price. Will we then be able to recruit and retain, year after year, increasingly strong students, offering them a fully rewarding experience once they're enrolled at UVM? What must we do this time to ensure that the quality thrust is not spasmodic but sustained?

The ground that is ours to seize is lofty: the University of Vermont is positioned to establish itself as an internationally distinguished research university that offers undergraduates the human scale, flexibility, and responsiveness of a liberal arts college. The hallmark of all our endeavors must be quality—in our academic programs, in the student experience inside and outside the classroom, and in research and scholarship.

The foundation on which the entire enterprise must rest is excellence in undergraduate education. That would be true even if we were not a heavily tuition-driven institution with a sticker price higher than that of some private institutions, albeit less than the most elite and selective independent college and universities. We are tuition driven, with high cost but only moderate perceived value in the marketplace, and this reality makes our pursuit of substantive quality and perceived value imperative. If we are to attract stronger and stronger undergraduates whose families are prepared to invest in a UVM education, we must be better and better, and we must be seen as better and better.

As benchmarking data I have been developing since my arrival suggests, we are the most expensive of the public flagships, at the very top of the peer list in student cost, but in most quality indicators (with the exception of class size and faculty-student ratio, where we lead the pack) we are at best in the middle portion of the middle third. Clearly, this must change. We must bring value, which is highly correlative with those quality indicators, into line with price. The good news is that our middling position puts us within shooting range of the next step up, through the top of the middle third and into the bottom of the top third, which we must attain if we want to achieve gains in quality and market position. If we do not move up, moreover, we are at risk of dropping down in a perhaps irreversible negative spiral.

So we must offer outstanding programs in first-rate facilities with first-rate faculty, and the amenities of student life on campus must be as attractive and welcoming as they are among our strong competitors. I'm convinced that to compete we must invest in

- Faculty and staff
- Student scholarships
- Programmatic initiatives like the Honors College
- Attractive residence halls that promote community
- New academic and research facilities
- A student commons and enhanced programming
- Intercollegiate athletics
- Maintenance and beautification of the campus
- Instructional technology

These investments will require aggressive, efficient management of the University, the accrual of private resources to support faculty, students, programs, and facilities through the University's development programs, appropriate public investment, and, as suggested in my November 8 letter to the Board, a long-term enrollment plan that allows us to minimize the institution's historic economy-of-scale challenge while building student and programmatic quality.

Now I would like to briefly paint a picture of where I think UVM can be if we act to take the University past the tipping point. I will preface it with the following disclaimer: This is neither a blueprint nor a set of specific promises. Figures like the precise number of master's programs we might offer at UVM a decade from now should not be taken literally. Everything that follows is meant simply to be suggestive of a plausible, and in my view highly desirable, set of outcomes for the University of Vermont to achieve over the course of the next decade. Subject to contingency and offered to stimulate aspiration and discussion, this is Dan Fogel's vision of what I believe UVM can achieve if we make the right moves now.

Welcome to Burlington in the fall of the 2012-2013 academic year. At UVM you'll see a lot of changes and a lot of continuity as well. Let's start with the physical campus. The Trinity Campus is the thriving home of the College of Education and Social Services, of the Department of Geology, and of a high technology incubator that has already graduated a number of viable new Vermont businesses based on intellectual property generated by University faculty.

Across Colchester Avenue, the College of Engineering and Mathematics occupies a renovated and expanded Votey Hall and a renovated Perkins Hall. Billings has been adapted for multi-purpose use that preserves its historic nature, housing library special collections as well as the highly successful Honors College. Williams Hall has also been renovated for Art and Anthropology. As part of the University's implementation of the campus master plan, the quadrangle between Fleming and Bailey-Howe now rivals the College Green in the beauty of its landscaping.

Just to the west of the Health Science Research Facility, where the Hills Agricultural Sciences Building once stood, gleams a large new life science research building serving the plant sciences and the Medical College. The Medical College, in alliance with units across the campus, has stepped dramatically to the next level as a center of world-class research, a step it could not have achieved without the capacity to accommodate high-powered scientists that the labs in the new research building have provided. Nearby is an astonishing construction housing both the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and the Gund Institute, a transparent cylinder wrapped around the water tower. It's an easy walk from a large parking deck, one of two parking garages, with the other located by Gutterson.

To the west, where the rugby field once lay between East Avenue and the Sheraton Hotel, arises an arena with nine thousand seats (ten thousand in concert configuration). While there are multiple users of the arena, UVM is the indispensable anchor tenant, playing both hockey and basketball here, and also co-sponsoring many of the major concerts that the arena accommodates (twenty-five concerts a year by acts like Bruce Springsteen, Billy Joel, and, of course, Phish). With an AHL pro hockey team and the ability to host mid-sized conventions, the arena has been an enormous jolt in the arm not only for UVM but also for the entire region--a magnet for entertainment, sports, and business activity,

and a dynamic economic driver.

The arena is a public-private partnership involving UVM and both private and governmental partners. The arena rocks for UVM hockey and basketball, with thousands of UVM students accommodated on a regular basis to cheer on their championship teams. (UVM students now have free entry to all athletic events, a practice that goes back to the '04 fiscal year, when the athletic fee was increased). The Athletic renaissance continues at the old Athletic Complex. Not only has the University retained both the Gutterson Field House and the Patrick Gymnasium, but it has also created a new venue for soccer and lacrosse (replacing Centennial Field), a new field for softball, and a new one for field hockey as well.

Moving west from the Athletic Campus to the Redstone Campus, all of the residence halls have been renovated. Most of them, like the other residence halls across the campus, are residential colleges, rich with programming and with faculty-student interaction. Coming back toward the central campus, the Living & Learning Center has been renovated and now lies at the north end of a magnificent quadrangle defined by the five new residence halls (over 800 beds!) to the west, at University Heights; by Austin and Harris-Millis to the east; and by the Patrick Gymnasium to the south. A wetlands water feature runs down from the University Heights residence halls on the west side of this new quad, across the quad, and into a pool with a fountain between Austin and Harris-Millis. The north-south walkways along the quad cross the watercourse on arched bridges.

But none of the additions to the physical campus have had the transformative power of the University of Vermont Commons, a vital student union that seethes with activity from early morning to late night. It is more than a physical change. The Commons has rewoven the fabric of community at UVM in ways that all agree are highly positive. It is the place to congregate, to see and be seen. It is the locus of thousands of informal and formal encounters daily among students, faculty, staff, alumni, prospective students and their families, other visitors to the campus, and significant numbers of members of the greater Vermont community. The Commons, completed in 2007, is dramatically compelling both architecturally and programmatically, and as a result garnered unexpectedly high levels of private support as the project was planned and constructed.

At midday, the Commons is full of students, faculty, and staff who throng the food hall, the state-of-the-art bookstore (which now carries 70,000 trade book titles selected for the student and academic community), student organization offices, and various retail services (a branch bank, a unisex hair salon, a travel agency, a video-DVD sales and rental outlet, and a number of fast food franchises as well as attractive cafeteria service in the food court), the art gallery, and handsome commons areas with lounge furniture and study carrels. Career Services is a thriving operation in the Commons; its well-appointed quarters include attractive interview areas (and recruiters who come to interview UVM students greatly appreciate the spaces reserved for them in the nearby parking garage).

A state-of-the-art theatre within the Commons now serves both the campus and the community as a major venue for theatrical and musical performances as well as for marquee speakers. The theater is also thronged with students for regular film screenings, one of the many examples of the enormously enhanced student programs that draw students to UVM and help, along with strong academics, to keep them here (coffee houses, poetry slams, performances, casino nights, popular speakers, concerts, and many others, not to mention the athletic and entertainment spectacles in the arena).

Recruiters highly covet UVMers, for the quality of the University's graduates is extraordinary. Credentials of entering students have soared: 30% of first-year students are in the top 10% of their high school class (as opposed to 18% in 2002); their SAT scores range from 1160 at the 25th percentile to 1320 at the 75th percentile (as opposed to 1090 and 1230 in 2002). Admissions selectivity and yield have risen dramatically--with 14,450 applicants for the class of 2016, the University admitted only 48% of its applicants (as opposed to 71.5% of applicants for the class of 2006), and with a yield rate of 31% (as opposed to 25% for the class of '06) precisely hit its target of 2,150 first-year students.

Recruiters are avid to hire UVM students for more than their academic aptitude. They also highly value their diversity, which has risen steadily over the past decade, from 5.8% ALANA enrollment in 2002, to 8% in 2007, to 13% this year. And recruiters talk with great enthusiasm about the communication skills of UVMers. The University-wide communication-across-the-curriculum requirement (part of the advance in curricular cohesion achieved in the last decade) has had its desired effects: UVM graduates are notable for their excellent skills in writing and in speaking, as they are for their strong work ethic. They continue to have much in common with earlier generations of UVMers: personal warmth, civility, and an engaging lack of pretense.

You cannot tell this from simply looking at the crowds in the Commons--it would be thronged at lower enrollments—but enrollment is up along with quality and diversity. The 7,601 undergraduates of 2002-2003 had grown to 8,601 by 2008-2009, and this year, 2012-2013, undergraduate enrollment is approaching 9,600, the target for steady-state enrollment. The proportion of Vermonters in the first-year class has risen significantly, to 35%, for UVM is increasingly the school of choice for highly capable and academically motivated Vermont high school graduates; overall, Vermonters are now 47% of the total enrollment, up from 44% in 2002.

At the same time, graduate student enrollment has grown as well. There are now 2,000 graduate students (nearly 17% of the total). Graduate and professional enrollment (adding, that is, Medical College to Graduate School enrollment) stands at 2,390, or 20% of the total (compared to 14.5% in 2002-2003). The largest increases have been in the doctoral programs, along with selected master's programs such as the M.B.A. (which now has part-time and executive options) and the M.P.A. The number of degrees has changed since 2002-03, when there were 72 master's and 20 doctoral programs; there are now 52

and 25 respectively (so that the average number of graduate students per program has more than doubled, from 12 to 26, though the range is from 15 in the lowest enrolled programs to 150 in the most heavily enrolled, an umbrella biological and biomedical sciences program that spans five colleges).

UVM's distinction as a center of research and graduate education has risen steadily, led by superb programs in biomedical sciences and environmental sciences and studies. The number of post-docs has tripled since 2002-2003, and among the faculty there are now twelve members of the national academies, a four-fold increase since the turn of the century. Research funding has grown at a steady clip, rising from \$103 million in '02-'03 to just under \$170 million in 2012-2013. The faculty regularly garner major national fellowships and awards. Some 280 of them hold endowed chairs and professorships. Faculty and staff are more diverse than they were a decade ago; for example, the number of African-American tenure-track faculty has nearly tripled, from 15 to 41.

The University is in the midst of its third comprehensive campaign, which was launched quietly in 2009, two years after the close of the very successful second comprehensive campaign. The goal this time, for completion by 2016 (when President Fogel has announced he will leave office, at age 68), is \$500 million. When it has been achieved, the University endowment will stand at approximately \$1.2 billion, generating \$54 million in spendable earnings on endowment annually, or 20% of the general fund budget of \$270 million (compared to \$9 million in spendable earnings on endowment in 2003, or 5.2% of the general fund budget). Indeed, it is the steady growth in private resources, including increased annual giving as well as giving to endowment, that has allowed the University to stabilize its enrollment after a decade of driving budget growth with rising numbers of fee-paying students augmented by increases in tuition and fees that have averaged, annually, at just about half the national average.

UVM tuition is still high by public university standards, low by the standards of elite private institutions, but resident tuition is now only 110% of the median for its public peers (as opposed to 195%, or nearly twice the median, in 2002). The decisive turn, manifest in the high quality of annual record-breaking applicant pools, is that the value-price equation has shifted decisively in favor of value. Students and families want to invest in a UVM education. Donors make their gifts to UVM with confidence that quality will be sustained and built over the long haul. Employers seek out UVM graduates, and the networks among UVM alumni are strong and highly beneficial to those who participate actively in them. In the scientific and scholarly world, UVM has a luster that is the envy of all but a handful of the other elite public flagship institutions. It is a premier center of biomedical research, and is widely acknowledged as the premier environmental university. Everything that the Board of Trustees planned for in the early years of the new century has been brought to fruition.

There it is: a specific, bold, high-minded, and, I hope, compelling vision of what the University can be ten years from now--and also a highly plausible one. Its plausibility rests on our recognizing the strategic moment, the tipping point at which we now stand, and acting boldly to do what must be done if we are not to fall back but to move upward--our recognition and our commitment to action being the absolutely essential and enabling premise of this vision. This is a tide that we can take at the full. Or, to cite John Keats's favorite line in Shakespeare, from King Lear, "ripeness is all." We've come to the moment of ripeness at UVM: let's enthusiastically seize it.

I look forward to the thoughtful discussions that I hope these ideas will promote.

Daniel Mark Fogel
President

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