A meeting of the Committee of the Whole of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College Board of Trustees was held on Friday, February 5, 2016, at 8:00 a.m., in the Silver Maple Ballroom, Room 401 at the Dudley H. Davis Center.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Debbie McAneny, Vice Chair David Daigle, Secretary Joan Lenes, Cynthia Barnhart, Bill Botzow, David Brandt, Robert Brennan, Frank Cioffi, Carolyn Dwyer, Richard Gamelli, Bernie Juskiewicz, Samantha Lucas, Ron Lumbra, Don McCree, Curt McCormack*, Anne O’Brien, Ed Pagano, Kesha Ram, Dale Rocheleau, Tom Sullivan, Donna Sweaney, Tristan Toleno, Lisa Ventris, and Jeff Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Governor Peter Shumlin

ALSO PARTICIPATING: Provost David Rosowsky, Alumni Association Board of Directors Member Afi Ahmadi (for Alumni Association President Kristina Pisanelli), Immediate-Past Faculty Senate President Lisa Aultman-Hall, Faculty Senate President Cathy Paris, Graduate Student Senate President Devin Champagne, Staff Council President Renee Berteau, Student Government Association President Jason Maulucci, Interim Dean of the Honors College Lisa Schnell, Linguistics & French double-major Claudia Garber (Class of 2018), Political Science & Economics double-major Luke Dodge (Class of 2016), Biochemistry B.S. Hira Haq (Class of 2015), Doctoral Student at Vanderbilt University (and Class of 2015) Nicolas Strayer, Cambridge Associates Managing Director LaRoy Brantley, University Controller Claire Burlingham, Special Advisor to the President and Provost John Evans, Incoming Trustees Briar Alpert and Soraiya Thura (Terms to begin March 1, 2016), Vice President for Finance and Treasurer Richard Cate, Vice President for University Relations and Administration Tom Gustafson, Vice President for Legal Affairs & General Counsel Francine Bazluke, Vice President for Executive Operations Gary Derr, Vice Provost for Student Affairs Annie Stevens, Chief of Staff & Senior Counsel to the President Sharon Reich Paulsen, Dean of the College of Medicine Frederick Morin, Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences Patty Prelock, Chief Risk Officer & Assistant to the Vice President for University Relations & Administration Al Turgeon, Director for Center for Health & Wellbeing Jon Porter, Assistant Dean of Students Patience Whitworth, UVM College of Medicine Pediatric Neuropsychiatrist Dr. Jim Hudziak, Cait Fitzgerald (Class of 2015), Remi Castella (Class of 2015), Caroline Duksta (Class of 2015), Cal Rawlings (Class of 2015), UVM Foundation CEO & President Rich Bundy, and Director of Capital Planning and Management Robert Vaughan

*Arrived at 8:58 a.m.

Chair Debbie McAneny called the meeting to order at 8:09 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Chair McAneny presented the October 2 & 3, 2015, minutes for approval. A motion was made, seconded and voted to approve the minutes as presented.
Chair’s Report (see full report appended to minutes, beginning on page 22)

President’s Report

President Sullivan reported that, since the October launch of the Comprehensive Campaign, much progress has been made. The Board will receive a more detailed campaign report later in the meeting.

President Sullivan recognized retiring Trustees Samantha Lucas, Dale Rocheleau and Debbie McAneny. On behalf of the University, he expressed much gratitude for their dedicated service.

President Sullivan then reported that he spent a full day at the Vermont State Legislature last week. He said that he met with the House Education and House Institutions Committees, and also with the Senate Education and Senate Appropriations Committees. With each Committee, he shared data regarding the impact that UVM has in Vermont both in terms of return on investment and output performance measures. For example, he stated, UVM provides a $1 billion-per-year impact on the economy, as well as a return of investment of $25 per every $1. President Sullivan also spoke about the impact UVM makes, such by means of first-rate teaching, learning and scholarship; research; and the service and engagement we provide in our community and across Vermont.

President Sullivan next introduced a new publication, Real World, which focuses on stories of service learning and community engagement by UVM faculty and students. A copy of the publication was distributed to Trustees. President Sullivan highlighted the following:

- Students in the College of Education and Social Services helping Burlington’s newest Americans to prepare for their U.S. citizenship test.
- First-year College of Medicine students working with Burlington-area agencies to address public health issues in our community since the program was established, over 39,000 hours of work have been completed.
- Faculty and students in the College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences designing a plan to address traffic flow issues at a busy intersection in Essex Junction.
- Vermont Senator Richard Sears, Class of 1969, who played football while at UVM, working with faculty in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, in particular the Athletic Training program, to shape one of the most comprehensive concussion laws in the country.
- Faculty in UVM Extension assisting Vermont farmers on the viability of growing wheat in Vermont, an important part of our efforts to expand the local food movement.
- In October 2015, faculty in the Spatial Analysis Laboratory in the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources being contacted by the Vermont Agency of Transportation to provide overhead pictures using a drone of the Amtrak Train derailment in eastern Vermont.
- Students in the College of Arts and Sciences interviewing 379 inmates at 7 Vermont correctional facilities to explore issues surrounding the families and children of prisoners and how they are impacted by incarceration of their loved ones.
• Faculty and students in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences working with the US Department of Agriculture to address the issue of what is referred to as “food deserts” – areas with largely low-income populations and few places to buy affordable, healthy food.
• The Grossman School of Business aiding small family businesses to assure their sustained success.

President Sullivan also announced that, in 2015, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching renewed the University of Vermont’s Community Engagement Classification. UVM was one of just 76 schools in the United States to receive designations for both academic engagement and community participation.

President Sullivan summarized that Real World is a great tool to inform interested parties what the University does for Vermont. He added that, not only does UVM educate and graduate Vermont college students (approximately 1,000 per year), but the University engages in applied research that drives the Vermont economy.

In conclusion, President Sullivan expressed his pride in all that UVM does to improve our community in Burlington, across Vermont, and around the country and the world.

**Governance Leaders Reports**

Alumni Association Board of Directors Member Afì Ahmadi reported on behalf of Alumni Association President Kristina Pisanelli. He focused on the Alumni House and announced that, in less than six months, the doors will officially open, and the grand opening will take place during Alumni Weekend in September. Mr. Ahmadi described several ways that the University has influenced the project, such as timber harvested from the UVM Research Forest in Jericho; the student-developed landscape plan for the property grounds; and historic UVM artifacts that will anchor the display cases. He also explained that program and sales plans are taking shape. The Association is asking all published alumni to send in their publications for inclusion in a new alumni book collection that will be featured in the Newton Library at the Alumni House.

Mr. Ahmadi moved on to say that the Association continues to focus on engaging more alumni, building stronger alumni/student networks, and leveraging the strength of the alumni community to advance institutional priorities. In the first quarter of this year, the Association is partnering with UVM Admissions to offer more than fifteen (15) regional events to help enroll the strongest class in UVM’s history. He also noted that a robust digital engagement strategy and new web functionality is planned for a March launch. Mr. Ahmadi concluded his remarks by thanking Chair McAneny for her leadership and commitment to UVM, and also thanked and acknowledged retiring Trustees Rocheleau and Lucas for their service.

Immediate Past Faculty Senate President Lisa Aultman-Hall reported that she needed to step down from her duties as President due to personal circumstances. She introduced Cathy Paris as the new Faculty Senate President.

Chair McAneny thanked Immediate Past President Aultman-Hall for her service.
President Paris thanked Immediate Past President Aultman-Hall for her services and Faculty Senate Vice President Jan Carney for her role in taking over the duties of Acting President as the transition was taking place. President Paris highlighted recent structural changes to Senate Committees, including the support structure for General Education (GE) programs. The Senate also added a six-credit diversity requirement as part of the GE portfolio. The Professional Standards Committee, and then the Senate, approved a new faculty pathway rank of Faculty Scientist in the College of Medicine. The Faculty Senate Curricular Affairs Committee is noticing an increase in proposals for new programs, several of which are in response to IBB. President Paris noted, that due to the recent special election for the Faculty Senate President, the Senate discovered that an amendment was needed to its Constitution and Bylaws to clarify the process. The amendment was approved by UVM faculty in December 2015. Going forward, the Senate plans to further review its Constitution and Bylaws; increase the efficiency of Senate committees; plan a faculty forum on IBB; schedule a University-wide faculty meeting to inform faculty on the challenges facing students; and explore computer and technology needs for faculty. Finally, President Paris thanked retiring trustees.

Trustee Bill Botzow stated that he is impressed with the quantity, quality and spirit of work coming forward from the Faculty Senate.

Trustee David Daigle voiced his appreciation for Immediate Past Faculty Senate President Aultman-Hall’s attitude and approach during her short tenure, especially in terms of her focus on the University being “One UVM”.

Graduate Student Senate (GSS) President Devin Champagne began by expressing gratitude for follow-up that was completed in response to issues he reported in October regarding graduate student support. He recalled that graduate students were upset by the sale of Fort Ethan Allen. President Champagne explained that, through the efforts of the Graduate College and in collaboration with other Deans, stipends for all funded graduate students will be increasing in FY17 and for doctoral students in FY18. The University will also increase the support for student health insurance costs from 75% to 100% for all funded students choosing the student health insurance policy. President Champagne explained that these significant investments will allow graduate students to focus more on their studies, research, and teaching roles. Although great strides have been made, he articulated that there is still more work needed to improve the lives of graduate students, noting that they are disproportionately affected by mental health issues. He also reported that GSS is working to combat this issue by increasing social activities. President Champagne concluded by stating that the University has great resources for mental health, but he feels that students need to be more encouraged to ask for help.

Staff Council President Renee Berteau began her report by expressing appreciation for Chair McAneny’s service to UVM and for her strong and graceful leadership. She moved on to report that Staff Council recently approved their first Vision Statement. President Berteau recognized Tara Messier, of Professional Development and Training, for taking the lead on facilitating the development of the Statement, which reads as follows:

Staff Council is a representative resource and advocate for positive change for staff at UVM through engagement, communication and collaboration with university leadership.
We strive to build an empowered community and a positive and equitable work environment.

President Berteau next reported that the electronic performance appraisal system, slated to launch this spring, will be delayed until at least the next academic year. Efforts continue towards updating the paper form and developing supervisory training for its use. She noted that it remains difficult to determine if supervisors are meeting President Sullivan’s expectation that all staff receive routine, thoughtful and skillful performance appraisals as there is no means to assess who is, or is not, receiving them. President Berteau concluded by announcing that in March, Staff Council will recognize and commemorate its 45th anniversary.

Student Government Association (SGA) President Jason Maulucci announced that Soraiya Thura, of the College of Medicine, will be replacing retiring Trustee Samantha Lucas as the next student trustee. President Maulucci then provided an update on SGA’s peer advising initiative. Recruitment processes have begun for the initiative’s pilot year in both the Grossman School of Business and the College of Arts and Sciences. Additionally, the prospect of creating a central advising center is being reconsidered. Another developing project is the Safe Ride Home Initiative, which provides free and safe transportation for students during the weekends. President Maulucci echoed GSS President Champagne’s mental health concerns for students, adding that universities are finding that far more students in the current generation suffer from mental health conditions than students even one or two generations ago. In response to this issue, SGA will sponsor a mental health awareness week, later this month, aimed to help dismantle stigmas that surround mental illness, educate students as to available resources, and provide fun events. Also relative to the mental health issue, SGA intends to create a special activities fund of $20,000 that will be available to clubs and organizations that wish to sponsor large, healthy and safe events on dates that are identified as being high-risk for misuse or abuse of substances. President Maulucci moved on to acknowledge that SGA has attempted over the last decade to address the lack of information provided about courses available to students when registering. Although progress has been made, she said, this issue still needs to be addressed. Lastly, she advised that SGA’s 160+ clubs and organizations are currently submitting their FY 17 budgets for review. After implementing their own version of IBB, SGA was able to raise their allocation rate from 36% of club requests to 60%. Furthermore, SGA intends to be the first SGA in more than 25 years to ensure that not a single club or organization passes along debt to next year’s leadership.

Chair McAneny acknowledged the importance of the initiatives that President Maulucci outlined, and thanked SGA for working on them.

**Academic Presentation**

Dean of the Honors College (HCOL) Lisa Schnell began the academic presentation by providing historical context for HCOL, noting that the first class was admitted in 2004. At the time, there was one staff person and 91 students. Since then, HCOL has grown significantly and currently has a staff of seven, a student population of 771, and has awarded approximately 900 students with the designation, at graduation, of Honors College. Dean Schnell explained that there are two ways a student can enter HCOL -- either through an invitation extended to a high school student based
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upon academic performance, or through a student’s application after the first year. The goal for founding HCOL was to create a community of scholars characterized by academic excellence. Dean Schnell explained that the rest of the presentation would be provided by two current students and two alums, who will highlight aspects of their HCOL experiences.

Claudia Garber ‘18 (College of Arts & Sciences, Linguistics/French major) was the first to speak. Ms. Garber was invited to be a part of HCOL as a senior in high school. As she explored her options for college, she finalized UVM as her choice after attending an admitted student visit day. Ms. Garber outlined HCOL program requirements and stated that it has helped to create a basis upon which to build her experience. She added that, by living in the HCOL community, she appreciates that she can continue learning outside of the classroom and has immediate access of support.

Luke Dodge ‘16 (College of Arts & Sciences, Political Science/Economics major) continued the presentation by highlighting his experience of joining HCOL as a sophomore at UVM. He explained that he had a difficult first year and was feeling unsure as to whether he should stay at UVM. Ultimately, he decided to apply to HCOL and was accepted. Through the influence of one of his HCOL advisors, he was encouraged to develop his ability to be a leader. As a result, Mr. Dodge is now a member of the Lawrence Debate Union and he also became inspired to begin the Vermont Prison Debate initiative. He is conducting his own research to seek to expand access to education to communities who are under-served. He cited the Honors College as a major influence on the success of his efforts to improve the community.

Hira Haq ‘15 (College of Agriculture & Life Sciences, Biochemical major) discussed her perspective as a recent graduate of the Honors College. Ms. Haq is a native of Essex, Vermont, who never thought she would attend UVM because it was too close to home. However, she decided to accept an invitation to be a part of HCOL and cites it as one of the best decisions she has made. As a pre-med student, she became involved with a clinical nutrition study that compared how full-fat dairy and low-fat dairy affect gut bacteria. Ms. Haq credits her status as a HCOL student for being chosen to be an investigator on the study. She was pleased to be allowed the freedom to design and conduct many important aspects of the study and stated that it was the first of its kind. She has recently been accepted into UVM’s College of Medicine and credits HCOL for changing her from being student to being a scholar.

Nick Strayer ‘15 (College of Engineering & Mathematics, Statistics/Math major and current graduate student in Biostatistics at Vanderbilt University) recalled that his first-year Honors College seminar provided him with his first glimpse into the power of narrative. He drew on his experience from other HCOL classes as well and applied these skills to his thesis research, which focused on the use of narrative visualization for data pertaining to climate change. Mr. Strayer’s work was recognized by The New York Times, which has since hired him as a reporter, citing the empathy that resonates in his work. He credits the education he received as an HCOL student for preparing him for his success.

Trustee Kesha Ram, also a former HCOL student, asked how HCOL has been able to reach out to alumni as resources. Dean Schnell replied that they hear from alums frequently, and also find
ways to engage them such as inviting them to participate in panels at Homecoming. They also use LinkedIn as a tool to remain engaged with alums.

Trustee Ron Lumbra asked how our Honors College compares to those at other universities. Mr. Strayer answered that he had toured other honors colleges, but felt that many of them encourage students to be distinguished as “different” from the rest of the student population. UVM did not encourage their HCOL students to be separate, which he respected. He added that he does not feel any other University could have offered him a better experience.

Trustee Curt McCormack asked Mr. Strayer what the specific subject was in his climate work. Mr. Strayer replied that he focused on data that showed how different policy implementations, if put in place, could lower the rate at which climate temperatures are rising.

Trustee Bill Botzow asked the student panel what UVM can do better. Mr. Dodge stated that everyone should be a global student and that UVM can expand ways in which students can engage in critical thought. Mr. Strayer referenced the many campus transformations currently taking place, and urged the University to honor its historical character, which he feels should be amplified and not moved in another direction.

Chair McAneny expressed thanks to the presenters. She noticed there was a common theme, being that each student had a transformative experience encouraged by faculty. She asked that Dean Schnell pass on to faculty her thanks for an outstanding job.

**Investment Subcommittee (ISC) Chair Socially Responsible Investing Report**

ISC Chair Robert Brennan reported ISC’s decision in response to the Socially Responsible Investing Advisory Council’s (SRIAC) recommendation to divest from companies that invest in coal. Prior to making its decision, ISC researched the history of Socially Responsible Investing (SRI) at UVM, as to which ISC Chair Brennan provided a brief summary. He explained that SRI conversations have been occurring for 38 years and that the Board established its first *ad hoc* Investment Advisory Committee in 1978. Approximately 10 years later, a standing Committee on Socially Responsible Investment (CSRI) was established. By 2006, the Statement of Investment Policies and Objectives was amended to allow for the consideration of moral, ethical and social criteria in determining which companies to invest. In 2008, CSRI was dissolved and the Socially Responsible Investing Work Group (SRIWG) was established. Over the next several years, it became clear that SRI-related recommendations from the community, vetted through the SRIWG, were placing the Board in direct conflict with its primary role as a fiduciary. As a result, the SRIWG was dissolved and the Socially Responsible Investing Advisory Council (SRIAC) was established under the supervision of the Vice President for Finance (VPF).

By placing SRIAC under the administration, rather than the Board, the idea was that there would be more continuity and that the Council would be in a better position to understand and consider SRI-related requests. ISC Chair Brennan further explained that, if SRIAC decides that a request has merit, it passes on the request to the VPF in an advisory capacity. The VPF then makes the final recommendation to the ISC. If the ISC chooses to move the recommendation forward, it is
presented to the Budget, Finance and Investment Committee, which decides whether to refer the recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

Historically, he said, SRI focus had been on shareholder advocacy and proxy voting. However, in recent years, focus has shifted to divestment. Divestment proposals have been approved four times in the past 38 years, three of which occurred in the last fifteen. In 2013, a request was made that the University divest from fossil fuel, which was denied. In the spring of 2015, concerns were raised by a Board member regarding monitoring and compliance with divestment resolutions and the need to clarify the intent of those resolutions. The ISC committed to research past resolutions and compliance therewith, and then report back to the Board. A significant amount of research into these issues ensued and the ISC arrived at several conclusions, the first being that divestment activities were limited to the University’s direct, or separately managed, accounts and not its commingled funds. The second conclusion is that the endowment management has been compliant with that mandate.

ISC Chair Brennan invited Cambridge Associates Managing Director LaRoy Brantley to highlight the differences between direct investments and commingled funds. Mr. Brantley first said that he has been working with UVM for 13 years. Moving on, he explained that commingled funds are funds where investors pool their capital with an investment manager, who typically has the discretion to make investments. In this scenario, investors own shares or interests in the fund, or vehicle, not the underlying assets, and have no ability to control strategy, liquidity expenses or securities lending. Commingled funds have minimum account sizes and fees vary. For direct investments, investors own shares of the company or underlying assets and the manager most often has discretion, and specific companies or industries can be negatively screened. For direct funds, there is typically higher minimum account size ($10 million–$100 million) and lower fees. As of December 2015, UVM’s portfolio comprises 19.3% direct funds and 80.7% commingled. He added that many of the best managers do not have separate accounts and focus on commingled funds. He also explained that a notable portion of the 19.3% direct funds of the University’s program emerged to accommodate SRI mandates. He also clarified that there is no way to accommodate SRI mandates for hedge funds.

ISC Chair Brennan asked Mr. Brantley if larger endowments frequently choose to purchase commingled funds. Mr. Brantley replied that, although large endowments have more freedom in what they can afford, they often choose to purchase commingled funds due to benefits such as access to the best managers.

ISC Chair Brennan next provided the definition of a fiduciary, and also of fiduciary duty. He emphasized that a fiduciary’s duty is to avoid any conflicts of interest between themselves and their principals, or between their principals and the fiduciaries’ other clients. He urged that the Board remain mindful of unintended consequences of divestment. Using tobacco as an example, he recalled that the Board approved divestment from tobacco-related funds in May of 2000. Since that time, tobacco stocks have remained a profitable investment: if UVM had invested 10% of the 2000 endowment in tobacco, it would be worth $100 million more than it is today. ISC Chair Brennan also stated that his personal opinion is that tobacco is terrible, but that he has to separate his feelings so that he can maintain his fiduciary responsibility. He also reminded the Board that
endowment contains money left to the University for a specific purpose and under the expectation that the highest fiduciary care would be given.

Trustee Jeff Wilson handed out a recent article from *Trusteeship*, titled “Fiduciary Duties and ESG Investing”, which covers a 21st century approach to endowments and pension funds. He noted that the article specifically states that SRI can co-exist with being a prudent investor. Trustee Wilson queried whether the University should be doing more in terms of SRI. He cited tobacco companies as an example, acknowledging their profitability, but stating that it is at the expense of the health of vulnerable populations. He explained that he understands the challenges, but advised that it would be prudent to look deeper into alternative possibilities.

Trustee David Daigle explained that, although tobacco companies can be seen as offensive, so can many other types of companies for numerous reasons. He expressed that he cannot reconcile divestment with his fiduciary duties to maximize returns on the endowment.

Trustee Anne O’Brien expressed her surprise that, while the Board had approved divestment in tobacco, it can only be applied to direct funds. She agreed that the Board needs to look deeper into this issue.

ISC Chair Brennan reiterated that, if the University wants to continue to take advantage of commingled funds, it is not able to dictate to managers what they buy or sell. He added that, in response to a previous divestment request, the ISC attempted to push managers to comply with UVM’s desire to divest from funds involved with a specific issue; either the managers did not reply, or they replied that they were unable to honor the request and that the University was welcome to remove its money from the funds.

Trustee Daigle added that, with commingled funds, one does not know how the fund composition will change at any given time. The only real way to participate in SRI, in terms of commingled fund options, he added, is to invest in specific SRI vehicles.

Trustee Carolyn Dwyer stated that she is dealing with this issue in several groups in which she is involved, including higher education, philanthropic, and public policy-related entities. She finds that it always becomes a debate of morals versus financial gain. She urged that the Board think consciously about the process and requested that it be further educated on the criteria for our investment decisions.

Trustee Ed Pagano stated that it would be helpful to learn more about the history of the University’s allocation in commingled versus direct funds.

Mr. Brantley replied that, when he began to work with the University, direct funds comprised approximately 15% more of the portfolio than they do currently. He explained that he sees several issues related to opportunity costs, and also commingled fund exemptions. In terms of the University’s tobacco divestment policy, he understands that there is a false sense of transparency. He used hedge funds as an example, stating that legally they are not required to disclose short positions, but that they are required to disclose their long positions. He also explained that, when you start practicing divestment, it becomes a slippery slope.
Trustee Ron Lumbra referenced the University’s 80/20 ratio in terms of commingled versus direct funds, and asked if this ratio is best practice.

Mr. Brantley replied that, in terms of direct funds, if it makes sense to invest in them to meet SRI requirements, they do so. If markets go up and the endowment strengthens, then direct funds could be tapped more frequently. Trustee Daigle added that the ISC has never arrived at an investment decision based on commingled versus direct; rather, it always looks at the best blended-risk adjusted scenario for returns. He further explained that right now is a low-return environment, and it might be for an extended amount of time, which presents many challenges, stating that divestment would complicate these challenges even more.

Trustee Wilson stated that, relative to the University’s current SRI-related policies, the intent may have been for direct investments only; however, the SRI-related resolutions did not make this clear. He advised of his intention to offer an amendment when the clarifying resolution is presented later today to the Budget, Finance & Investment Committee. Trustee Wilson reiterated that he feels the Board should look more deeply into the issue, not only in terms of divestiture, but also to examine ways to consider environmental, corporate governance, and social factors. ISC Chair Brennan and Chair McAneny both replied that proxy voting is a great vehicle to address these concerns and that such voting is being paid attention to by company directors.

Trustee Donna Sweaney stated that she is dealing with SRI-related discussions at the Legislature and that it is a conversation occurring broadly.

Trustee Bill Botzow opined that this discussion is an exercise in conscience and wonders if the role of SRI at UVM should be a reactive or proactive one. He agreed that proxy voting can be a powerful tool and asked for more information regarding the University’s proxy voting procedures. He also acknowledged that it appears that the investment world is moving slowly in terms of becoming more SRI-focused, and he asked if there are ways that UVM can incent that response to allow us to invest in ways we want, specifically in commingled funds.

Mr. Brantley replied that there is definitely more of a demand for SRI funds and that there are commingled funds emerging to address it, adding that the problem now is that there is no track record on how these products will perform. He advised that his team does not typically invest in a product that does not have at least a three-year track record.

Trustee David Daigle asked what challenges exist in terms of generating risk-adjusted returns if one removes a targeted sector from the investible universe percent of investible money. Mr. Brantley replied that it can be expensive because one decreases the latitude of investment opportunity.

University Controller Claire Burlingham was asked to provide information regarding how many proxies the University votes. She reported that UVM receives approximately 75-125 statements annually and votes them based upon guidelines that were established by the ISC. For example, UVM has screens that include livable wage, tobacco, and human rights. She explained that proxies can only be voted for direct funds. Trustee Ed Pagano requested that these proxy guidelines be shared with the Board.
Trustee Cynthia Barnhart observed that this topic hits at the heart of the University. She opined that, in many ways, excellence is related to available funds. At the same time, the University community is proud to be socially progressive and responsible citizens. However, she feels the conversation is narrowly focused and encouraged broader conversation regarding other mechanisms for maintaining excellence while moving forward with a socially responsible agenda.

Trustee Dale Rocheleau observed that it was his understanding that according to Vermont state law, for profit entities could take into consideration moral, social and ethical issues when trying to maximize shareholder returns. Trustee Rocheleau stated that he believed not for profit entities could not consider SRI issues when exercising their fiduciary duties.

Trustee Samantha Lucas asked if there have been donors that have expressed concerns about our investment policies. CEO & President of the UVM Foundation Rich Bundy answered that, in general, he has not heard that our policies are of concern; however, he added that a Green Fund was established in response to one donor who had concerns regarding investing in funds that support fossil fuels.

ISC Chair Brennan next provided information on the request from the SRIAC to divest from coal. He explained that the SRIAC had received the request from the community. The SRIAC next recommended the request to Vice President for Finance and University Treasurer Richard Cate, who in turn advanced the request to the ISC. ISC Chair Brennan stated that the exact wording of the SRIAC recommendation is that “the University commit to removing current and all future investments in the University’s holdings, that are actively managed, in coal companies.”

ISC Chair Brennan stated that the ISC declined action on this recommendation. He noted that the UVM endowment does not currently have direct investments in coal and do not currently intend to so invest; however, the ISC is not comfortable with committing never to invest in coal in the future.

He further explained that a driving factor for the request being declined is that the ISC is required to comply with the University’s Statement of Investment Policies and Objectives (SIPO), which mandates that the endowment be optimally invested in a manner consistent with prudent investment principles. Commingled funds are used by the ISC in order to meet return, diversification, liquidity, and expense objectives in compliance with the SIPO. A move away from the use of commingled funds to meet divestment objectives would be financially imprudent, he stated, as it would burden the endowment with substantial costs. He added that, excluding commingled funds from potential investment opportunities would have adverse consequences on the long-term return and diversification profile of the endowment fund, would increase the risk of volatility in the investment portfolio, and would be inconsistent with the investment policy objectives outlined in the SIPO. ISC Chair Brennan handed out the official statement that the ISC has issued in response to the request for divestment from coal. He finally noted that included as Appendix A of the handout is a list of accomplishments UVM has made in terms of environmental stewardship.
Chair McAneny emphasized the importance of understanding the University’s SRI history and recommended that it be included in new trustee orientation. She also stated that, in her 12 years as a trustee, there is no doubt in her mind that the Board understood that the divestment requests that they approved were intended to relate only to direct funds.

Other Business

Special Advisor to the President and Provost John Evans reported that the University has completed the sale of property at Fort Ethan Allen for $3.9 million. The Champlain Housing Trust (CHT) is now fully responsible for the buildings, grounds and tenants. He explained that CHT will renew all UVM student leases thru June 30, 2017. Additionally, 12 of 31 units will remain as rental units and UVM affiliates will receive preference through 2018. Nineteen units will progressively be converted to homeownership and there will be a direct marketing campaign to UVM affiliates for such homeownership opportunities. The transition has only been in place for few weeks and is going smoothly. Special Advisor Evans thanked the staff of Residential Life and Campus Planning for all of their work on the project.

Executive Session

At 10:55 a.m., Chair McAneny entertained a motion to enter into executive session to consider contracts, as to which premature general public knowledge would clearly place the University at a substantial disadvantage. She noted that action was anticipated following and that the session was anticipated to last approximately 30 minutes. Everyone was excused from the meeting with the exception of incoming Trustees Briar Alpert and Soraiya Thura, Provost David Rosowsky, Vice President for Finance and Treasurer Richard Cate, Vice President for University Relations and Administration Tom Gustafson, Vice President for Legal Affairs & General Counsel Francine Bazluke, Vice President for Executive Operations Gary Derr, Chief of Staff & Senior Counsel to the President Sharon Reich Paulsen, Special Advisor to the President and Provost John Evans, and Vice Provost for Student Affairs Annie Stevens.

Special Advisor Evans and Vice Provost Stevens were excused after the first item.

Dean of the College of Medicine Frederick Morin, Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences Patty Prelock, and Chief Risk Officer & Assistant to the Vice President for University Relations & Administration Al Turgeon were invited to join for the second item.

The meeting re-opened to the public at 11:34 a.m.

The following resolutions were presented for approval with opportunity for discussion:

**Resolution Authorizing Amendment to Ground Lease**

RESOLVED, that the Board hereby authorizes the Vice President for Finance to negotiate and execute a Second Amendment to the Ground Lease Agreement between the University and Vermont ETV, Inc., dated December 31, 1989, on the material terms and conditions reported on this date.
Resolution Authorizing Negotiations and Execution of the Sale of Certain Fort Ethan Allen Property (County Apartments)

WHEREAS, the University owns certain property at Fort Ethan Allen known as County Apartments (“the Property”) and

WHEREAS, the administration advised this Board previously of its intent to sell the Property; and

WHEREAS, the administration has now briefed the Board on the proposed material terms and conditions of the sale;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board hereby authorizes the Vice President for Finance to enter into negotiations and conclude the sale of the Property subject to the material terms and conditions reported on this date.

Resolution Authorizing Approval of Revisions to the Bylaws of the University of Vermont Medical Group

WHEREAS, this Board previously authorized the University to enter into an Affiliation Agreement (“the Agreement”) with Fletcher Allen Health Care, Inc. (FAHC), University of Vermont Medical Group (UVMMG), Inc., and Fletcher Allen Partners, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, under the Agreement, the University recognizes UVMMG as the organization through which UVM College of Medicine faculty-physicians will engage in the clinical practice of medicine during the term of the Agreement; and

WHEREAS, under the Agreement, FAHC and UVMMG agreed that, as a material inducement to UVM to enter into the Agreement, neither FAHC nor UVMMG would seek to, nor shall UVMMG, adopt or implement subsequent changes to the governance, composition, or major organizational characteristics of UVMMG unless UVM approves such changes in accordance with the UVMMG Bylaws which, pursuant to Article 10.3, require prior approval of the changes by UVM; and

WHEREAS, UVMMG now has under active review proposed changes to its Bylaws; and

WHEREAS, the UVM administration has briefed the Board Work Group on Medical, Nursing and Health Sciences Education and Research regarding the proposed changes; and

WHEREAS, the Work Group convener, with the administration, has reported to this Board on the material proposed changes;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board hereby authorizes the administration to approve the proposed material changes, provided that such changes are, and will remain upon adoption of the Bylaws, consistent with this report.
Trustee Lisa Ventriss disclosed that she would be recusing from voting on the first resolution (amending the ground lease agreement).

Referencing the last resolution (approving revisions to UVMMG bylaws), Trustee Dale Rocheleau asked who the convener of the Work Group on Medical Nursing and Health Sciences Education and Research is. Chair McAneny replied that the convener is Trustee Dr. Richard Gamelli.


The vote was unanimous to approve the resolutions as presented.

At 11:37 a.m., the meeting was recessed.

The Committee reconvened at 3:19 p.m.

**Alcohol, Marijuana & Other Drugs (AMOD) Update**

Vice Provost for Student Affairs Annie Stevens, Director for the Center for Health & Wellbeing Jon Porter, and Assistant Dean of Students Patience Whitworth, provided information regarding historic and current trends of alcohol, marijuana, and other drug use at the University of Vermont and discussed the misuse of drugs as national public health issue that is incompatible with the core mission of higher education.

Vice Provost Stevens stated that, from her viewpoint, this challenge is the primary obstacle for student success. She further explained that the topic is often glossed over, because it has become normalized, but she added that progress is being made in combatting the issue on campus, which makes her optimistic.

Dr. Porter continued the presentation by examining how UVM, whose mission includes optimizing the intellectual and social development of students, has arrived at a place where 1,800 undergraduate students have not been able to recall activities from the night before at least once in the previous month, and where 3,200 undergraduate students report the use of marijuana in the last 30 days, with 1,600 of them reporting use at least 20 out of the last 30 days. He acknowledged that these issues are not unique to UVM, as roughly 2,400 other four-year institutions face identical issues. He next stated that, in order to reverse the status quo, the University community must name it, understand it and approach it as a systems problem, while also understanding it will take time to see results.
Dr. Porter next described efforts being made to design and implement a sophisticated assessment matrix that measures student behavior related to AMOD, as well as the impact of this behavior. These metrics have allowed his team to identify which times of the academic semester are characterized by higher rates of alcohol-related adverse outcomes than the mean. The Department of Student Life has responded by providing augmented social programming, which offers students non-alcoholic alternatives, giving them a healthy option as they decide how to spend their time.

Dr. Porter then highlighted several other initiatives, such as evidence-based sanctions for AMOD violations and universal screening for AMOD, and also for depression, in Student Health Services. He also spoke about the need for engagement. He noted that several student groups have been involved in efforts to mitigate AMOD impacts. Efforts have also been made to engage parents to combat the issue. For example, parents of first-year students receive correspondence from Vice Provost Stevens beginning in the summer before their children’s arrival and preceding high risk weekends. These now continue through the students’ second year. Faculty engagement is also important, he stated. Last year, the Faculty Senate approved changes in the academic calendar, going into effect for academic year ‘16-17, which provides for a fall semester recess and situates the exam period within a five-day time frame. This was responsive to a concern that students were not fully engaged at the end of the semester, as was visible in the high-risk weekend assessment. Additional faculty engagement includes an initiative taken this past fall, where a number of Deans sent letters to their students prior to the naked bike ride encouraging them to make decisions that would result in a healthy and successful conclusion to their semester. This spring, the Center for Health & Wellbeing will work with faculty on best practices on how to engage students on this issue. Finally, community engagement is important; Dr. Porter said that for the last three years, the University has engaged with Burlington authorities to map calls for service related to complaints tied to alcohol misuse. The information has enabled the University to identify problem properties and neighborhoods, and to contact the residents and landlords of these properties, which has resulted in 20% decrease in calls for service in the last three years.

Assistant Dean of Students Whitworth reported that high-risk drinking has decreased in last few years due to many of the efforts that Dr. Porter covered. Referencing the evidence-based sanctions for AMOD violations, the Center for Student Ethics and Standards performed a comprehensive review of its sanctioning approach, and found that, since 2012, UVM has seen reductions in self-reported, high risk drinking; declining recidivism rate in AOD conduct; and improved quality of life in local neighborhoods.

Dr. Porter next addressed marijuana use. He explained that potency has increased significantly since the 1970’s. At the same time, young people are increasingly viewing marijuana as a non-risk. He stated that there is proof that marijuana affects the morphology of the brain, resulting in decreased function, anxiety, psychosis, and use disorder. Other outcomes are lower rates of academic success and staying in college.

Dr. Porter added that additional challenges include the non-medical use of prescription drugs, engagement of men, and the need for long-term funding. He concluded the presentation by stating, that ultimately, we all benefit in approaches like the Wellness Environment, which will be the focus of the next presentation of this meeting.
Trustee Rob Brennan referenced changing attitudes, and asked the presenters how they view the potential legalization of marijuana. Dr. Porter replied that, in his personal opinion, it sends a powerful message of normalization. He cautioned how it might impact young adults and emphasized the need for it to be thoroughly vetted. Vice Provost Stevens added that, in her personal opinion, whether legalization passes or not, it is in direct conflict with the academic goals of the University.

Trustee Dale Rocheleau asked if the University has been in talks with state colleagues regarding this issue. Dr. Porter replied that such talks have occurred, and that there is a shared concern regarding the increase of substance use by young people.

Trustee Lisa Ventriss asked if peer-advising would be included in the conversation. Vice Provost Stevens responded that the SGA-led peer advising initiative is at the discretion of the students, but that her team will work with them to encourage that the topic be included. Dr. Porter added that mentoring is a pillar of the Wellness Environment and feels that it is an important way to transmit information and expectations.

Trustee Kesha Ram asked if the University helps students navigate insurance as they seek access to long-term treatment for substance abuse. Director Porter replied that the University does work with students regarding their insurance policies. He added that wait-lists for treatment are already long, and a concern about the legalization of marijuana is that it would place further demand on already sparse resources.

Trustee Bill Botzow asked if the connection between substance abuse and other behaviors on campus is well-tracked. Vice Provost Stevens replied that 90% of student disciplinary cases are related to alcohol or drugs. Residence hall staff work hard to combat this issue, she noted. Assistant Dean Whitworth added that, five years ago, Residential Life started restorative programs where residence hall floors would get together to talk about the impact of bad behavior.

Trustee Samantha Lucas asked if the University tracks differences between age groups in terms of alcohol use. Assistant Dean Whitworth said that information is gathered from the monthly survey of high-risk drinking and that distinct patterns have emerged. For example, she explained, first-year student drinking is at its highest in the fall and that, for junior and seniors, it is highest in the spring.

Chair McAneny thanked the presenters for the important information that they shared.

**Presentation on the Wellness Environment**

In follow up to the update on alcohol, marijuana and other drug use on campus presentation, Dr. James Hudziak, a pediatric neuropsychiatrist in the College of Medicine, provided a presentation on the Wellness Environment (WE). The WE, he explained, is a neuroscience inspired substance-free residential community for first-year students that aims to create a campus wide behavior change towards health promotion. This movement is powered by providing students with scientific understanding and resources to engage in healthy decision making.
Dr. Hudziak stated that the premise for the program began when he was looking for colleges with his own daughter. He said that, when they were conducting an online search for UVM substance-free housing, they found many entries that were concerning, and highlighted exactly the opposite type of information that they were hoping to find. This exercise drove him to create the idea of behavioral change from within the community to develop a healthier campus. To make this idea a reality, he worked on a proposal to redesign the application process and to provide resources and University commitments to build a wellness environment. Within nine months, the proposal has come to fruition, with 120 students living in Patterson Hall with multitude of resources to create healthy decision making and living, as well as a launch of WE courses for a proposed curriculum.

Dr. Hudziak next explained the science behind wellness. He began by stating that what we do changes gene expression through epigenetic modification and influences the plasticity of our brain structure and function, and, ultimately, how we think, feel and behave. He next commented on emotion regulation and the brain, which houses a cognitive network and an emotion network. He described that stress, trauma and adversity diminish the cognitive network and allow the emotional regions of the brain to become larger. From the ages of 14-22, adolescents have heightened emotionality, risk-taking behaviors, the emergence of substance abuse, the development of close interpersonal ties outside of the family environment, puberty, and a drive for increasing autonomy. All of these factors combined make an adolescent brain similar to a supercharged car with poor breaks, as there is a mismatch between regulatory behaviors and risk behaviors.

Dr. Hudziak next described ways to mitigate the challenges that the adolescent brain poses for college-aged students. He explained that the single best treatment for cognitive problems is daily exercise, adding that fewer than 12% of Americans exercise daily. For WE students, the program offers incentives to for them to exercise and also encourages them to participate in mindfulness. Dr. Hudziak added that science proves that mindfulness helps with emotion regulation.

Dr. Hudziak moved on to highlighted the WE curricular program, which includes a recently proposed College of Medicine Behavior Change minor. WE is also building outside support and the program hosts many new events that offer healthy options for students.

Looking to the future, Dr. Hudziak announced that, in 2016-2017, the WE program will include two residence halls for first-year students and two for second-year students, with a total amount of 492 students enrolled next year. Also, coming in Fall 2016, WEventure will begin, which is an initiative where students who sign up for WE will come to campus three days early to get acquainted and to help build the community. He also announced that UVM Dining has committed to collaborating on a series of events for WE students; is promoting healthy options with WE insignia in UVM dining halls; and is exploring options for hydration stations in each WE Residence Hall. UVM Dining is also making changes to the environment in McAuley dining hall and will offer the following: WE menu options that focus on nutrition; a ‘My Zone’ that is nut, dairy and gluten free; and convertible dining space for WE activities.

He concluded his presentation by noting that Tulane University is currently cloning the UVM WE program. He then introduced four Wellness Environment students, all of the Class of 2015: Cait Fitzgerald, Caroline Duksta, Cal Rawlings, and Remy Castella.
Trustee Samantha Lucas asked the students about their WE experience. Ms. Fitzgerald answered that she was looking for an accepting community and found it via the WE. She added that some people who are not part of WE tend to think of the group as strict about working out, but she said that is not necessarily true and that each member practices wellness in their own way. Ms. Duksta stated that she appreciates that the WE allows her to come home to a peaceful environment. Mr. Rawlings replied that he appreciates that the WE is a place where students can nurture themselves and establish healthy habits. Mr. Castella stated that he receives great reactions from people who are not part of WE, and that they are often interested to learn about the program. Dr. Hudziak added that, of the 120 WE current residents, 100 have signed up to live in WE next year. He also said that of 35 athletes were required to participate in the program, 17 decided to continue next year without being required to do so.

Trustee Kesha Ram asked what the gender balance is in WE. Dr. Hudziak replied that the composition follows the same composition guidelines that other UVM dorms follow.

Trustee David Daigle asked what role faculty can play in this success of WE. Dr. Hudziak replied that, in the Honors College, faculty will soon be required to learn the science of mindfulness, nutrition, and exercise. He stated that awareness and the ability to talk about wellness in a scientific way are key.

Trustee Ron Lumbra asked if the WE program is restrained in terms of available space and if there needs to be thought in terms of physical infrastructure. Dr. Hudziak replied that space is definitely an issue, and that the campus does not currently have adequate facilities to host a broad movement of the WE program.

Trustee David Brandt asked about the composition of WE students across the colleges. Dr. Hudziak replied that this year was the experiment year and that most students were from the College of Arts and Sciences.

**Move Mountains: The Campaign for the University of Vermont Update**

UVM Foundation CEO & President Rich Bundy offered a brief campaign update on progress since the launch in October during the last Board meeting. He explained that over $22 million was raised in the last quarter and that, as a result, the campaign is at $269 million against the $500 million goal (54% of the goal with 56% of time elapsed – right on schedule.) He added that the UVM Medical Center is at about 50% of its goal within the total campaign. CEO & President Bundy further reported that the campaign has already received 62% of funds that have been committed, with another $42.7 million in pledges pending. He added that the maximum amount of time allotted for pledges is five years. He explained that there are $59.4 million in bequest intentions, which can be somewhat unpredictable in terms of the timing of their receipt; however, when the receipts and pledges pending amounts are combined, they represent 80% of funds committed during the campaign to date, far outpacing national averages for receipts during campaigns.

In December, the campaign passed the 100 mark for endowed faculty, which places the total just four shy of the original goal to double the number of endowed faculty from 52 at the start of the
campaign to 104 by the campaign’s conclusion. At this rate, Bundy projects that the endowed faculty goal will be met by the end of this fiscal year, which would leave three years remaining in the campaign to add onto that total.

CEO & President Bundy next reported on the campaign progress by purpose, focusing on the program support category, which has nearly reached 100% of the dollar goal for these types of gifts. It includes $137 million in new gifts, which breaks down to include $25.6 million in research support, $38.9 million in unrestricted gifts to the respective units, and $14.8 million that is completely unrestricted.

CEO & President Bundy also presented the campaign progress by unit. He noted that Libraries and the College of Education and Social Services have already exceeded their dollar goals, but still have specific campaign priorities within their portfolio for which they still need to secure gifts. He stated that he and his team plan to work with units who are further behind their dollar goals than expected at this time to accelerate their fundraising activity.

CEO & President Bundy concluded that, for the first time in this campaign, the University has documented a pipeline of donors that exceeds what is needed to meet the overall fundraising goal of $500 million. He realizes that not all of the potential gifts in that pipeline will happen, but said that, right now, his team is able to see the light at the end of the tunnel that ends in 2019.

Trustee Ron Lumbra asked whether market volatility has impacted donor conversations. CEO & President Bundy replied that he has not seen a consistent response to this concern. He was particularly worried donors would begin to make it an issue after January’s volatility, but found that donors remained committed. As far as he knows, his team has not had a cancellation or restructuring of a major donor commitment as a result of market concerns.

Trustee Bill Botzow asked if the campaign has yielded any surprises. CEO & President Bundy answered that he found that changing culture is harder than he thought it would be, and that he and others find that they still have interactions with donors who do not understand the importance of private philanthropic investment in the University. However, he said, he feels that as more conversations occur between prospective donors and campus leaders, more understanding arises.

CEO & President Bundy next presented Chair McAneny with a gift on behalf of the Foundation, in honor of her service. Chair McAneny expressed her gratitude in working with the Foundation and watching its success.

Capital Projects Update

Director of Capital Planning & Management Bob Vaughan provided an update on progress made on the construction of the Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) Complex, the new First Year Residence Hall, and the UVM Medical Center’s new Patient Care Facility since the last meeting.
Director Vaughan stated that he was pleased to report that all three projects remain on schedule. He then highlighted the progress made for each of them with a series of pictures and views from the live webcams, which are available on the Building UVM - Investing in Quality website. He stated that the warm winter has worked to the University’s advantage in moving these projects forward.

Chair McAneny asked if the projects remain on budget. Director Vaughan replied that STEM is on budget. He also confirmed that the housing project is on budget at this point, but that it only has 40% of bids in hand.

President Sullivan recalled that, several meetings ago, there was concern about ability of Director Vaughan’s team to manage all of the vehicular and pedestrian traffic on campus during the construction phase. He is happy to report that and that he has yet to hear a complaint and congratulated Director Vaughan for a job well-done.

Trustee Rob Brennan asked what was the decision was on the exact number of floors in the residence hall. Director Vaughan replied that they are still waiting on estimates, before a decision can be made.

Annual Deferred Maintenance Report

Due to time constraints, the annual deferred maintenance report was deferred until the next meeting.

Action Items

Audit Committee Chair Dale Rocheleau reported that the Audit Committee reviewed the FY 2015 Audited Financial Statements at their November 9, 2015 meeting. Opinion showed no material weakness or significant deficiencies.

The following resolution was presented for approval:

Acceptance of Fiscal Year 2015 Audited Financial Statements

WHEREAS, the financial Statements of the University of Vermont and State Agricultural College for the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2015, have been audited by Grant Thornton LLP, Certified Public Accountants, in accordance with 16 V.S.A. Section 2281(a);

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board hereby accepts the FY 2015 Audited Financial Statements as recommended by the Audit Committee and presented today and acknowledges receipt of the FY 2015 Financial Report.

A motion was made, seconded and the following roll-call vote was taken to approve the resolution as presented: Cynthia Barnhart – Yes, Bill Botzow – Yes, David Brandt – Yes, Robert Brennan – Yes, Frank Cioffi – Yes, David Daigle – Yes, Carolyn Dwyer – Yes, Richard Gamelli – Yes, Joan Lenes – Yes, Bernie Juskiewicz – Yes, Samantha Lucas – Yes, Ron Lumbra – Yes, Debbie McAneny – Yes, Curt McCormack – Yes, Don McCree – Yes, Anne O’Brien – Yes, Ed

The vote was unanimous to approve the resolution as presented.

Chair McAneny next asked for approval of the Board meeting and retreat dates for 2017 as proposed in Attachment 9 of the meeting materials.

A motion was made, seconded and voted to approve the 2017 meeting and retreat dates as presented.

**Acknowledgement of Grants and Contracts Awards Report**


**Other Business**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie McAneny, Chair
Deborah H. McAneny  
Board of Trustees, Chair’s Report  
February 5, 2016  

This is my final Board meeting, and not surprisingly, I have spent a lot of time over the last few weeks reflecting on my twelve years on this board. My conclusion, it has been a thrilling ride. We have enjoyed more than our share of successes: the physical transformation of the campus, a thriving honors college, a highly successful Foundation, international expansion, record applications, and national recognition on a variety of fronts, to name just a few. And we have faced our share of challenges including navigating the biggest recession of our lifetime, presidential transition, significant budget challenges, and the list goes on and on. While it was fun and easy to wallow in nostalgia, I eventually found myself looking to the future.

Most of you probably don’t know this, but I come from a long line of politicians. My mother, father and grandfather served for many years in the state legislature in Rhode Island. Given the recent death of Mayor Buddy Cianci, now may be a good time to reassure you that these three Rhode Island state politicians were never accused of corruption.

I learned over the years that determining whether we are on the right track or the wrong track is an important first step in polling and a critical element to a successful governance transition.

So, in anticipation of the upcoming passing of the gavel, I asked myself the question: Is UVM on the right track or the wrong track? Ideally I would survey all of you, but I hope you will humor me with the results of this survey of one. After much thought and contemplation, I submit to you that UVM is very much on the right track and its future is bright. There is ample evidence to support my conclusion but let me just highlight a few things:

Our national reputation continues to grow as evidenced by the record number of applications we receive and the increasing quality of the applicant pool. More importantly, we need only look at the important scholarly contributions of our faculty and the outstanding achievements of our students to have a palpable sense of the growing excitement and energy on this campus.

We have not only established a thriving foundation but we have publicly launched the largest capital campaign in the history of the University. With $267M of campaign commitments as of year-end 2015, we are well on our way to achieving our $500M goal. Rich Bundy will be here this afternoon to give us an update on the Move Mountains Campaign, but I would like to highlight one important achievement. As a result of this campaign, we now have over 100 endowed faculty positions. I highlight this because growth in the endowment is a critical element to our plan for financial sustainability, and a topic near and dear to all of us.

Our significant and historic commitment to STEM this past year is critical to the long-term success of UVM. But it also demonstrates the university’s dedication to our land grant mission and UVM’s increasing importance to the economic development of the broader community and the State of Vermont.
Very importantly, we have the right leaders in place across the University and a widely held appreciation for and commitment to our shared governance model that will serve us very well into the future. Working together, under Tom and David’s leadership, the Senior Leadership Team, Deans and the leadership of the Faculty Senate, Staff Council and Student Government Association have not only kept us on track but are partners in propelling us to an even brighter future. Please join me in congratulating and thanking this impressive team, many of who are here with us today, for the tremendous job they have done advancing our exceptional university.

Speaking of the right leaders, last but not least, I turn to the members of this board. This is by far the most unique board I have ever served on in so many ways. Its structure and composition is, to put it mildly, distinctive. And yet somehow it works.

The job of trustee in such a complex institution is challenging. But, let’s face it, if this was easy the University would not need us. Over the years, I have been incredibly proud that this group of 25 trustees, from disparate backgrounds, leave their baggage at the door, and time and time again, demonstrate their commitment to doing the right thing for this great university. I am proud of your willingness to ask the tough questions, embrace controversy, remain open to new information and perspectives and sustain your resolve to unite in support of this essential enterprise. It is because of you, Tom, and all of the University leaders in place today that I feel so confident in the future and comfortable in passing the gavel in the next several weeks. Thank you for your selfless and tireless service. It has truly been a privilege working with you and I thank you all for the opportunity to serve as your Chair.

I can’t let this day go by without saying a special word of thanks to Corinne and Erin for all the time, effort and hard work they put into keeping this board and its Chairperson on track. I can assure you it is a constant challenge and they do a tremendous job. Please join me in expressing our gratitude to Corinne and Erin.

I would also like to take an opportunity to thank our hardworking, talented and committed faculty and staff for all you do to make UVM an exceptional place. You are absolutely essential to our success. Our university is better and stronger because of you.

And of course, our wonderful students, engaged, active, hard-working, and a great source of pride for each and every one of us. They are a powerful force for progress and academic achievement, and in so many ways the lifeblood of our institution. Indeed, our students are why we are all here.

Let me also take a moment to publicly recognize our other outgoing Trustees, Dale Rocheleau and Samantha Lucas. We will have time this evening to recognize you for your individual accomplishments but I want to extend our thanks to each of you for your outstanding service to our University.

And finally I would like to introduce our new student trustee Soraiya Thura. Soraiya is originally from Falls Church, Virginia and is currently a student in the Class of 2018 at the College of Medicine, pursuing her M.D. degree. She graduated magna cum laude with University Honors from Virginia Commonwealth University. Welcome, Soraiya.
We also have here with us today, Briar Alpert, whose nomination to the board is expected to be approved by the UVM Board on Saturday morning. Briar Alpert is CEO and President of BioTek Instruments, Inc., a leader in the creation of microplate instruments and software used in the advancement of life sciences research and to facilitate the drug discovery process. Briar is a 1983 graduate of UVM, with a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering. He earned a MBA from UVM in ’92. Briar is also on the Board at the Vermont Center for Emerging Technologies. I hope you will all take a moment to introduce yourself to Soraiya and Briar.

Also joining the Board, but not with us today, will be David Aronoff. David is a General Partner at Flybridge Capital Partners. His investment interests and experience include the semiconductor, internet & mobile infrastructure and digital media sectors. He holds a BS in Computer Science from the University of Vermont, an MS in Computer Engineering from the University of Southern California, and an MBA from Harvard Business School.

In closing, let me say again: It has been the privilege of a lifetime to serve on this Board, with Trustees present and past. I will always cherish this experience and the time we have spent together to move our beloved UVM forward.

Thanks to all of you.

This concludes my remarks.