March 23, 2011

To All Members of the University of Vermont Community:

It is with a profound sense of pride and gratitude that I write to you today to share with you my plans to step down as President of UVM, effective June 30, 2012. It has been my great good fortune to be a part of Vermont’s extraordinary university, and Rachel and I plan to continue to be a part of this exceptional community for years to come.

In my first statement as UVM’s President-elect, in January of 2002, I said that service as President of the University of Vermont seemed to me to be the opportunity of a lifetime. A little more than nine years later, I feel that more than ever. Over the course of the last decade, we have worked together to craft many successful initiatives at UVM—from (among many others that might be cited) the creation of the Honors College, of the Dan and Carole Burack President’s Distinguished Lecture Series and the James Marsh Professors-at-Large program, the six-credit diversity requirement, and the UVM Transportation Research Center, to programs still in the process of coming to birth such as the Transdisciplinary Research Initiative, General Education, and UVM’s growing partnership with Vermont’s electrical utility industry and the Sandia National Laboratory. We have seen the transformation of the physical campus, expanded by 1.3 million square feet, or roughly 25%, including the Trinity Campus, Jeffords Hall, the University Heights Residence Halls, the Greening of Aiken (which will be completed this year), the Medical Education Center and the Given Courtyard Building, and the Dudley H. Davis Student Center, which opened just in time to support an enrollment management plan that has taken us from 9,000 applications a year for undergraduate admission to over 22,000.

Together we have seen UVM achieve unparalleled diversity in its student body. We have seen the University intensify in intentional and effective ways its commitment to our historic land-grant mission and to the indispensable role of Vermont’s only research university in supporting the economic vitality of the Green Mountain State. We have seen UVM’s wonderful faculty come off the bottom of national salary rankings to attain market averages for public doctoral universities while they have won unprecedented levels of research awards, garnered national honors of great distinction, and made extraordinary contributions to the scholarly and artistic life of the nation. We have seen our students, supported by our talented and dedicated faculty and staff, achieve record numbers of prestigious national fellowships and retention and graduation rates that would be the envy of the vast majority of public colleges and universities nationwide, including last May’s historic graduation rate for Vermonters of more than 80%.

All of this and much more has been widely recognized. For the last two years, U.S. News and World Report has listed UVM as one of the nation’s top up-and-coming national universities. Our alumni, parents, and friends expressed their great and rising pride in Vermont’s University through their generous support of the successful Campaign for the University of Vermont,
which we completed above the goal in 2007, and which included the first naming gift for a UVM college or school. And all members of the UVM family have thrilled to the rising competitive metabolism of our athletic programs, including first-ever wins for both men’s and women’s basketball in the NCAA tournament and the return of men’s ice hockey for only the second time in program history to the Frozen Four, not to mention our point of greatest pride, our student athletes’ garnering of the America East Academic Cup for six straight years.

Rachel and I have been deeply privileged to play a part in UVM’s remarkable advance, and neither our work nor UVM’s is done. Much more lies ahead of this great university, and we intend to remain active in the life of the University and of the Vermont community for as long as we live. There is a time and season, however, for all things, and it is important for you to know that I have informed the Board of Trustees that I wish to serve as UVM’s president through June of 2012, by which time I hope the University will have identified a successor ready to take the helm and to carry on and sustain UVM’s advance.

It is my observation, after thirty-five years of work in higher education, that the academy does not always do leadership transitions well, but looking forward to the completion of a full decade as UVM’s president next spring it struck me that this was a great opportunity to get it right, just as we step up planning for UVM’s next comprehensive campaign—the engine of what I believe will be the University’s growing margin of excellence—which will not be completed until I am well into my seventies. It is important that UVM’s next leader be in a position to see that campaign through from start to finish.

Rachel and I are immensely grateful for the opportunity to serve UVM and Vermont, and our work is not yet done. This is not a valediction—there will be plenty of time for that. And there will be moments of regret for all that remains to be done that we had hoped would already be behind us, but in truth that is part of the continuous act of collective creation that makes a great institution of higher learning. I do not intend in the next fifteen months to be a lame duck. With the continuing, enthusiastic support of a great Board of Trustees, with deans, vice presidents, faculty, and staff who show me every day what terrific colleagues they are, and with engaged, vibrant students, alumni, parents, and friends who cherish this unique institution, we will be working over the course of the next year to ensure that our most recent initiatives, including the Transdisciplinary Research Initiative, General Education, the creation of the UVM Foundation, and the laying of the groundwork for the next campaign are all well established before UVM greets its twenty-sixth president. We look forward to that work with great joy and enthusiasm.

All that we have accomplished has been possible because of the efforts of so many individuals who care deeply about Vermont’s University. I look forward to seeing all of you as we continue our work together to build a bright and sustainable future for UVM.

Sincerely yours,

Daniel Mark Fogel