



Daniel Mark Fogel
President

September 14, 2009

Dr. Barbara Brittingham
President/Director, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
New England Association of Schools and Colleges
209 Burlington Road
Bedford, MA 01730

Dear Dr. Brittingham:

On behalf of all members of the University of Vermont community, I would like to begin by thanking Dr. Philip Austin and the other members of the Evaluation Team for their generous commitment of time and effort in support of the reaccreditation process for the University of Vermont. We are deeply appreciative of their work and of the professional and collegial manner with which they conducted the visit.

We at UVM have been committed to the reaccreditation process as a learning experience, as a time for serious self-reflection and introspection, and as an important means of continuing the advance of the University of Vermont. We greatly valued the initial, oral report of the Evaluation Team at the conclusion of the visit, and we were very pleased that the written report this summer recognized the significant progress the University has made since the last accreditation visit in 1999. We appreciate the thorough and candid assessment by the Evaluation Team contained in the report. We find that we concur with the Team's observations. We do not wish to offer any major corrections to the factual or interpretive accuracy of the report.

In part as a result of institutional self-reflection prompted by preparation of the University's Self-Study and also, more immediately, in response to the report of the Evaluation Team, the University is committed to addressing a number of the concerns raised in the report. Here are some general observations and comments on the Evaluation Team's Summative List of Strengths and Concerns.

- Under the leadership of the Interim Provost and Senior Vice President, we recently initiated a process to identify areas of academic strength in which targeted investments could move the University into national prominence. We expect shortly to appoint University-wide committees, one for each of these areas, to develop formal proposals that would advance the specific areas of emphasis. A critical element of the process is the expectation that the proposals will contain demonstrable metrics and targets to assess progress. Further, the Board of Trustees has

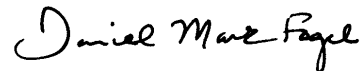
asked the administration to develop a series of dashboard indicators that would be reported quarterly in order to measure the University's progress towards achieving its stated goals. We expect to present those indicators to the full Board for the first time at its October meeting.

- Working with the Faculty Senate and the Colleges and Schools, we will be developing a comprehensive undergraduate general education requirement, which will entail well-rounded assessment procedures, including one of three testing instruments (MAP, CAP, or CLA) administered cross-sectionally to first-year students and seniors (as well as to new transfer students and transfer students in their final semesters), according to the protocols of the Voluntary System of Accountability, in which UVM is an active participant (the University was one of the sites at which all three instruments were piloted in 2008-2009 under a FIPSE grant). Assessment of the aims of general education will be combined with further development of a wide variety of methodologies currently in use at UVM for assessment of learning in the academic majors. Together, general education assessment and assessment of student performance in the major will constitute a robust learning outcomes assessment program for undergraduate education at UVM. We expect to bring the proposal for UVM's first University-wide general education requirement to the Board of Trustees for approval in May 2010.
- We take to heart the Evaluation Team's general comments about decentralization. We are taking steps in several areas to assess organizational culture and structures in order to move toward more centralized processes wherever we conclude that there will be gains in efficiency, service, and accountability, and in academic quality. We acknowledge with appreciation the observation of the Evaluation Team that improved University-wide communication will be essential as we address issues of decentralization. Further, we concur with the Evaluation Team's assessment of our student health services; we are actively considering options to improve the delivery of those services. The Board of Trustees toured student health facilities in May 2009 and will be discussing multi-year options to address this issue.
- We are currently in the process of updating the academic technology section—including classroom technology and faculty development—of the 2005 Information Technology Strategic Plan, and we are also looking at tighter policies and practices around information technology security.
- We appreciate the Evaluation Team's concern about tuition discounting but believe that we have managed the process effectively and with increased precision and that there is room for further expansion. We will remain mindful of the concern, and staff in the enrollment management division will monitor both the short-term and long-term use of tuition discounting.
- Since the Evaluation Team's visit, we have moved forward to address several issues associated with the University's risk management activities. The Audit

Committee of the Board of Trustees is conducting a search for a new Chief Internal Auditor (reporting directly to the Chair of the Audit Committee of the Board). That search should be completed by December 2009. In addition, we recently created a new position of Chief of University Compliance (reporting to the Vice President for Legal Affairs): a search to fill that position is under way and is also expected to be completed by December 2009. We have identified resources to support both positions, including space, operating funds, and additional personnel, one of whom will be devoted to information technology security.

I want, finally, to reiterate the University's appreciation and indebtedness to the members of the Evaluation Team for the dedication and professionalism that produced a report we find very instructive, very helpful, and very valuable. I look forward to meeting with the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges in mid-November.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Mark Fogel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

Daniel Mark Fogel