Good morning Graduates, Families and Friends!

As President of the Staff Council, it is my great pleasure to address you on behalf of more than 2,000 staff members who work at the University of Vermont.

We all know the important role that faculty play in educating and mentoring the students at UVM. And yet, as President Sullivan reminds us in an article that appeared in the most recent edition of our staff newsletter, the faculty’s efforts are made possible by the staff. It is the staff members who “complete the essential tasks that advance the educational mission of the University.” It is the staff who “are often the people that students turn to for support, advice, and counsel.”

The President’s words reminded me of a conversation I overheard in the grocery store not long ago while waiting in line at the check-out counter. Two sales associates were discussing the pros and cons of their residence halls when I realized they were UVM students. One of the students was a senior so I asked what her plans were after graduation. She told me that she had been applying to graduate schools and that her experience had not been very good. When I asked her what she meant, she said that the people she had been dealing with weren’t very helpful. She said she had been spoiled while at UVM because the staff here are all so nice and that she wished the staff at the other schools were as helpful and pleasant as the staff at UVM.

That brief conversation in the grocery store served to reinforce my whole purpose of working at the University of Vermont....to serve you, our students, and to support you through your academic endeavors, providing you with the positive learning environment you need to succeed in reaching your goals at UVM.

As President Sullivan so aptly puts it, “Commencement is the culmination of the work each staff member executes individually, and it is the event that reveals how truly collaborative your diverse endeavors are.” In our various roles, we have been with you throughout your academic journey, and we are delighted to join you today in celebrating your success on this truly special occasion.

On behalf of all the staff at UVM, good luck and congratulations!