Thank you, Chairman Pizzagalli. Good morning, everyone. As we observed at Convocation yesterday afternoon, the launch of the new academic year this fall finds our customary joy at new beginnings deeply and sadly alloyed by our knowledge that we are at this very moment losing a radiant and distinguished colleague, Dean Joan Smith of the College of Arts & Sciences. Our thoughts and prayers are with Joan and her family this morning.

My report today will be brief. You have in your Board books a rich trove of material, the harvest of a great deal of focused and productive hard work since our last historic meeting, work undertaken by all of you as Board members, and by countless colleagues here on campus, led by the best team of vice presidents anyone could have. I do want to single out for special thanks all of you have worked so hard on committees like the Executive Committee, Diversity, Investment, Facilities and Technology, and the Debt Subcommittee of Finance and Budget throughout the course of the summer, and, among the many colleagues who have worked so hard to prepare for our meetings today and tomorrow, Corinne Thompson, who has been ably assisted by staff members up and down our corridor. Thank you as ever, Corinne, and everyone who has lent a hand.
Our May meeting was marked by your historic unanimous endorsement of our shared vision for UVM and of the Strategic Plan, including the financial plan that underpins it. In delivering that endorsement, you fully subscribed this Board to the drive the plan declares to establish the University of Vermont as the nation’s premier small public research university and to provide our students with simply outstanding opportunities for intellectual and personal development. We have wonderful students, terrific faculty and staff, talented deans leading our colleges and schools, and, united in a common vision, I am confident we will succeed—

Confident, but not complacent—and I know I speak for my colleagues as well. I want to assure you that I am personally and intensely focused on successfully executing, under your guidance, the plan to which we have all committed. So are Provost Bramley and all of the vice presidents. We know—and I believe our colleagues throughout the campus increasingly appreciate—that we will succeed in implementing the plan only by bending our very best efforts to executing every facet and phase of the programs, projects, and initiatives embedded in it, and by doing so at the highest levels of performance and integration we can attain ourselves and inspire in our colleagues. Critical work lies ahead of us in meeting our schedules of high-quality enrollment growth, in creating the programmatic richness and synergies across the whole institution that will provide our undergraduate, graduate, and professional students with remarkable educational experiences and our faculty and staff with an environment in which they can realize their full potential as educators, as scientists, scholars, and artists, and as public servants, in designing the interdisciplinary collaborations that will establish at UVM programs of research and scholarship that in their carefully focused areas are the best in the world, in
carrying out the array of vital infrastructure projects that are essential to our collective success, from new buildings to renovations to campus and information technology master planning, and in managing this complexly and intricately interconnected enterprise so that service to all of the people we serve, on the campus, beyond its walls, and throughout Vermont, is as facilitative and as efficiently cost-effective as we can possibly make it.

Our commitment to execution is only exceeded by our commitment to ensuring that the advance of the University of Vermont is an open and collaborative process. The Board, our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends, along with all of the citizens of Vermont, all of whom have a tremendous stake in the success of this institution, must be engaged in the ongoing evolution of the vision. On campus, the coming year will be enlivened by discussion and debate around the five questions Provost Bramley and I posed yesterday at Convocation about the thrust of liberal education at UVM in the new century, the realization of our chosen identity as the nation’s environmental university, the areas of focus to obtain the maximum value from our strength in health and in biomedical sciences, the measures required to provide our students with the finest educational experiences attainable and our faculty and staff with resources, facilities, and an institutional culture that fosters success and fulfillment at the highest levels, and the programs and commitments that, in the great Land-Grant tradition, will yield for the people of Vermont the intellectual, cultural, educational, social, and economic vitality that only a research university—only Vermont’s only research university—can provide. To listening attentively to this dialogue and to drawing on the wisdom that emerges from it as we give our all to executing the vision and plan for UVM, my colleagues and I are fully and passionately committed.