

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT AND STATE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE**

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 6, 2026, at 10:30 a.m., in the Silver Maple Ballroom (401), Dudley H. Davis Center.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Cynthia Barnhart, Vice Chair Donald McCree, Secretary Catherine Toll, John Bartholomew, Susan Brengle, Frank Cioffi¹, Matt Devost², R. Stanton Dodge², Jodi Goldstein, Jennifer Ha, McKenzie Hart, Stephanie Jerome, Jason Maulucci, Ed Pagano², Kristina Pisanelli, Lucy Rogers, Shap Smith, Tristan Toleno, and President Marlene Tromp

MEMBERS ABSENT: Scott Beck, John Dineen, Carol Ode, Monique Priestly, and Governor Phil Scott

ALSO PARTICIPATING: Faculty Senate President Abigail McGowan, Staff Council President Jennifer Jorgenson, Student Government Association President Kennedy Connors, Graduate Student Senate President Saba Rafiei, Alumni Association President Deb Mignucci, UVM Foundation Interim President and CEO Kathleen Kelleher, College of Education and Social Services Dean Katharine Shepherd, Chief Communications and Marketing Officer Lauren Griswold, Interim Provost Linda Schadler, Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel Sharon Reich Paulsen, and Vice President for Finance and Administration Alicia Estey²

¹Joined the meeting at 11:02 a.m.

²Joined the meeting via remote conferencing.

Chair Cindy Barnhart called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

Approval of minutes

Chair Barnhart presented the October 17, 2025, meeting minutes for approval. A motion was made, seconded and voted to approve the minutes as presented.

Chair's report

Chair Barnhart (see full report appended, beginning on page 10)

President's report

President Marlene Tromp began by expressing her appreciation for the Strategic Planning Committee's work in preparing the final plan to be presented to the Board for approval later in the meeting. Now eighth months into her tenure at UVM, she noted that she is thrilled and privileged to serve as president and is inspired by the incredible achievements of faculty, staff, students and alumni. Reflecting on UVM's history, President Tromp highlighted two enduring themes: bold innovative thinking and values-driven learning. She referenced James Marsh, UVM president in 1826, who championed active learning and created one of the first English departments in the country. The President concluded her report by emphasizing that these same themes continue to define the work of UVM's students, faculty, and staff today.

Governance leaders' reports

Chair Barnhart invited constituent group leaders to share important, strategic initiatives on which they are working.

- Faculty Senate President Abigail McGowan provided an update on recent Senate activities, highlighting work in curriculum development, strategic and systems planning, and support for faculty amid national uncertainties.

The Catamount Core Curriculum Committee continues to review hundreds of courses every semester for possible inclusion in the university's general education requirements. The committee also contributes to program assessment and evaluates proposed revisions and innovations to academic programs including minors, majors, graduate degrees and certificates.

The Senate has been an active partner in assessing existing systems and planning for the future with members participating in Catamount LEAP (the Learning Environment and Professionalism Committee) and the Strategic Planning Committee. Additionally, the Senate is partnering with the AI Task Force to help guide the integration of AI-related training into the curriculum.

President McGowan reported that the Senate is focusing on supporting faculty as they navigate heightened uncertainty and tension with the broader national landscape. She shared examples of how faculty have experienced increased vulnerability and outlined the Senate's efforts to gather feedback and host conversations about changes in research and teaching practices. The Senate has also developed new guidelines to support faculty in maintaining classrooms as safe spaces for the exploration of critical ideas, addressing issues related to

academic freedom, disagreements over invited speakers, and situations in which students decline to do assignments for political reasons.

She concluded by expressing appreciation for the Board's commitment to sustaining UVM as a community grounded in inquiry and innovation.

- Staff Council President Jennifer Jorgenson reported that the Council continues to contribute actively to UVM's strategic planning efforts, ensuring staff perspective and operational realities inform the future direction of the university. Regular working sessions with Interim Provost Linda Schadler, Vice President for Finance and Administration Alicia Estey and Human Resources leadership have strengthened partnerships with administrative leaders.

She noted increased staff engagement and community-building through Council committees, along with expanded access to professional development opportunities. In the first half of FY 2026, the Professional Development Fund awarded nearly \$8,000 to 13 staff members. She emphasized that compensation and benefits advocacy remains a key focus, particularly regarding pay equity, transparency, and market competitiveness.

President Jorgenson concluded by highlighting that UVM staff are engaged, solutions-oriented, and committed to advancing the university's progress through collaboration, transparent communication and continued investment in staff development and connection.

- Student Government Association (SGA) President Kennedy Connors provided an update on recent accomplishments and goals for the spring semester. Key initiatives include expanding student support in response to the current U.S. climate, strengthening efforts to foster a culture of consent at UVM, and improving SGA operations to better engage with students. Signature programs such as the Week of Kindness and the Week of Wellness will continue this semester. To address student concerns related to the political climate, SGA will host a Civic Engagement Fair in partnership with the Office of Civic Engagement on February 25th.

President Connors also highlighted the progress in sexual violence prevention efforts, including two recent trainings for campus leaders, with additional strategies being explored to enhance safety in residential halls.

She introduced a resolution passed earlier this week supporting the completion of the athletic facility. The resolution included a statement from UVM's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee emphasizing that finishing the Multipurpose Center

would significantly enhance the student-athlete experience by demonstrating the university's commitment to their well-being.

President Connors concluded by expressing enthusiasm for the Strategic Plan and appreciation for President Tromp's leadership.

- Graduate Student Senate (GSS) President Saba Rafiei reported on progress towards five organizational goals:

Increased Transparency: The GSS has increased access to information by publishing full budget reports, spending details, and weekly newsletters explaining what GSS is working on and available resources. The Senate also approved a public comment period prior to voting on any resolution.

Strengthening Collaboration and Engagement: The Senate advanced a resolution focused on member retention and empowerment. The GSS is actively collaborating with campus partners including the Graduate College, Counseling and Psychiatry Services (CAPS), the Vice Provost and Dean of Students Office, Transportation Services, the Office of International Education, and Enterprise Technology Services. Graduate students are also well represented on Faculty Senate committees across academic and student-life areas.

Raising Visibility and Accessibility: Outreach efforts have expanded through broader communication about GSS initiatives and graduate student participation in institutional initiatives.

Centering Graduate Student Voices: The GSS is finalizing a survey to gauge student priorities for funding allocations. It is also launching structured listening sessions to better understand academic, financial, and wellbeing challenges students are experiencing.

Improving Quality of Graduate Student Community: Recent initiatives include bi-weekly open-space breakfast gatherings, pizza nights twice a semester, and a combined pizza and games event during exam week. Additional social programming will be guided by upcoming survey responses.

To address safety and transportation concerns, President Rafiei reported that GSS is collaborating with CAPS, the Vice Provost and Dean of Students Office, and the Equal Opportunity Office to launch a new initiative that will begin with an educational workshop focused on gender-based, sexual, and relationship violence and assault. The long-term goal is to develop a sustained safe-space

community for graduate students and, potentially through collaboration with SGA, evolve this effort into a fully supported student organization. President Rafiei concluded by noting that the GSS will continue focusing on visibility, data-driven advocacy, safety and mental health initiatives, and strengthening graduate student community life.

- Alumni Association President Deb Mignucci provided an update on campus partnerships and highlighted ongoing efforts to strengthen the student-to-alumni engagement pipeline. She noted that the Student Alumni Association (SAA), a student-led organization committed to fostering connection among UVM students, past and present, continues to collaborate closely with the Association and its student leaders serve as voting members of the Alumni Association Board of Directors. This fall, SAA offered a range of on and off campus programs including *Alumni House Blend*, a new monthly career program held at the UVM Alumni House. SAA is also preparing for two major spring initiatives, including the 10th annual LUVMYCLUB crowdfunding campaign and Senior Week 2026.

Additional Alumni Association activities included partnering with Enrollment Management to host Admitted Student Receptions in Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and New York City, with additional events scheduled for March, including one in Denver, Colorado. President Mignucci highlighted that through in-person programs, athletic events, one-on-one student mentoring, and virtual programming showcasing current UVM research, the Association continues to broaden engagement opportunities for alumni and students.

She concluded by expressing pride in the outstanding group of current students and alumni representing UVM at the 24th Olympic Winter Games in Italy.

UVM Foundation President & CEO report

UVM Foundation Interim President & CEO Kathleen Kelleher reported that the UVM Foundation has raised \$47.5M as of December 31, 2025—62% of its FY 2026 goal of \$75M in new philanthropic commitments. Progress continues to be ahead of last year. Current commitments total \$47.5M, and with three seven-figure gifts nearing completion, the Foundation is expected to surpass \$55M soon. Gift receipts exceed \$35.5M representing 71% of the \$50M annual target, continuing a post-2019 trend of annual receipts between \$45M and \$60M. A priority for the next campaign will be sustainably increasing commitments to drive higher receipts in future years.

Interim President Kelleher highlighted several recent major gifts including: the Larner College of Medicine receiving a \$2M gift to support stroke research, a \$1.4M gift from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to support the African Clinical Research Network's Early Infant Probiotic Implementation Research, a \$1M gift from the Hoffman Family to the Grossman School of Business to launch the Hoffman Family Center for Student Success, a \$800K gift from the Patricia Pizzagalli Estate to augment a Professorship in Neurological Sciences, a \$1.25M new Estate Commitment from Howland Hartley M'77 to a Professorship in Dermatology, an additional \$2.1M gift from the Osher Foundation, and finally a \$1.2M new Estate Commitment from Darryl Raszyl M'82 and Stoner Lichty to establish a named scholarship as well as support for the Larner College of Medicine General Fund.

FY 2026 fundraising priorities include: supporting research which directly impacts endowed faculty positions graduate and postdoctoral fellowships, and UVM's nationally recognized research centers and institutes; supporting student success through scholarships, internships, experiential learning, and a broad range of programs that directly impact students; and securing additional philanthropic support to complete the Multipurpose Events Center.

She noted that the Foundation continues its national travel schedule to introduce President Tromp to alumni and donors, is developing a campaign staffing plan, and is supporting the search for the next the Foundation CEO. She concluded by stating that staff enthusiasm is high as preparations for a fourth comprehensive campaign progress.

Adoption of 2026 UVM Strategic Plan and University mission and visions

President Tromp presented the Strategic Plan: *Green, Gold, and Bold - Green Mountains, Gold Standard, Bold Future* and acknowledged Alumni Association President Deb Mignucci for proposing the name. She expressed appreciation to the committee and thanked Dean Katharine Shepherd for her leadership.

Dean Shepherd and Chief Communications and Marketing Officer Lauren Griswold summarized the planning process which included 53 listening sessions and engagement from more than 1,000 campus and external participants. Four successive drafts incorporated community feedback. The final plan includes a message from the President, new Mission and Vision statements, and four core pillars with associated strategies. Dean Shepherd pointed out that the President's message sets the stage for who we are as a university, where we are now, and where we will be in the future.

Dean Shepherd noted that over two dozen members served on the Strategic Planning Committee and recognized Enterprise Technology Services, Senior Systems Engineer Ian Davis and Larner College of Medicine Senior Executive Assistant Vicki Gilwee for their support throughout the process. Committee members were invited to share their experiences.

She then reviewed the Mission & Vision which are centered on Our Common Ground values. The mission articulates UVM's purpose and objectives, and the vision delineates the university's strategic outlook for the future. The plan is organized around four integrated pillars:

1. **Forge Bold Futures:** Student Connection, Purpose, and Impact
2. **Study What Matters:** Values-Driven Learning, Research, and Practice
3. **Create Opportunity:** Access, Engagement, and Partnerships
4. **Enable Excellence:** Campus Community, Systems, and Infrastructure

Dean Shepherd described the implementation process, which includes unit-level alignment, tactics and metrics, annual reporting, and oversight by an implementation committee. The plan will guide fundraising efforts, shape communications, and be supported through a centralized Strategic Alignment Plan (SAP) led by Strategic Communications and Marketing.

Chief Communications and Marketing Officer Griswold explained the purpose of the Strategic Alignment Plan. The Office of Strategic Communications will create a brand-level annual communications and marketing strategy aligned with the strategic plan. Phase 1 includes: 1) conducting and building on existing market research in alignment to the strategic plan, 2) developing a brand platform to help UVM's messaging better connect to audiences, 3) building out capacity to enhance visual identity in support of the messaging strategy, 4) building and launching a paid, earned and owned media strategy—surround sound, and 5) making investments to mature the marketing model and supporting the strategic plan alignment and implementation.

Reflecting themes from community feedback, President Tromp emphasized UVM's aspiration to make a meaningful impact for its students and for the state of Vermont and to elevate the university's national reputation. She highlighted alumni as essential partners in advancing this vision.

An opportunity for discussion followed. Trustees expressed appreciation for the committee's work. Questions focused on student recruitment, selectivity, and Burlington's public image. Vice President for Enrollment Management Jay Jacobs affirmed that selectivity is a key priority, and President Tromp underscored the

importance of UVM's partnership with the city, noting alignment with the plans third pillar.

President Tromp concluded that campus leaders will now begin developing alignment plans to operationalize the strategic plan, with annual reporting on metrics by units and a yearly progress report from her office.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Chair Barnhart presented the following resolution for endorsement and referral to the Board for approval:

Resolution recommending adoption of the 2026 UVM Strategic Plan: Green, Gold and Bold – Green Mountains, Gold Standard, Bold Future (and mission and vision statements)

WHEREAS, the administration has presented the 2026 Strategic Plan: Green, Gold and Bold – Green Mountains, Gold Standard, Bold Future, appearing as Appendix A to this document; and

WHEREAS, the Plan establishes four foundational pillars and related strategies to position the University for future success; and

WHEREAS, faculty, staff, students, alumni and community members contributed through listening sessions and surveys;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Committee recommends Board approval and adoption of the 2026 UVM Strategic Plan;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Committee recommends Board approval and adoption of the updated statements of the University's Mission and its Vision presented in concurrence with the new Plan, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the President report periodically on progress toward the Plan's goals.

A motion was made, seconded and it was unanimously voted to approve the resolution.

At 12:23 p.m., Chair Barnhart called for a recess.

The meeting reconvened at 3:02 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Cynthia Barnhart, Vice Chair Donald McCree, Secretary Catherine Toll, John Bartholomew, Scott Beck, Susan Brengle, Frank Cioffi, Matt Devost¹, Jodi Goldstein, Jennifer Ha, McKenzie Hart, Stephanie Jerome, Jason Maulucci, Carol Ode, Ed Pagano¹, Kristina Pisanelli, Monique Priestly², Lucy Rogers, Shap Smith, Tristan Toleno, and President Marlene Tromp

MEMBERS ABSENT: John Dineen, R. Stanton Dodge, and Governor Phil Scott

ALSO PARTICIPATING: Interim Provost Linda Schadler, Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel Sharon Reich Paulsen, Vice President for Finance and Administration Alicia Estey¹, UVM Chief Communications and Marketing Officer Lauren Griswold, Foundation Board of Directors Chair Robert Brennan¹, Director of Athletics Jeffrey Schulman, UVM Foundation Interim President and CEO Kathleen Kelleher, and Executive Director of Government Relations Wendy Koenig

¹Joined the meeting via remote conferencing.

²Joined the meeting at 3:15 p.m.

Executive Session

At 3:03 p.m., Chair Barnhart entertained a motion to enter into executive session to discuss contracts and the evaluation of a public officer. She noted the session would last for approximately one hour and no action is anticipated following.

Everyone was excused from the meeting with the exception of Trustees, Interim Provost Linda Schadler, Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel Sharon Reich Paulsen, Vice President for Finance and Administration Alicia Estey, Chief Communications and Marketing Officer Lauren Griswold, and Chair of the UVM Foundation Board of Directors Rob Brennan.

Rob Brennan was excused from the meeting at 3:28 p.m. and Director of Athletics Jeffrey Schulman, UVM Foundation Interim President & CEO Kathleen Kelleher, and Executive Director of Government Relations Wendy Koenig were invited to join.

The meeting re-opened to the public at 4:12 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Cynthia Barnhart, Chair

Cynthia Barnhart
UVM Board of Trustees Chair's Report
February 6, 2026

Welcome to the winter Board of Trustees meetings.

This morning, trustees will hear from the governance leaders and receive a report from the Interim CEO and President of the UVM Foundation. The university's Strategic Plan –including new vision and mission statements – will be presented for adoption. I want to thank Katie Shepherd for her leadership of the Strategic Planning Committee, and its members, for gathering community perspectives and shaping a vision for UVM's future.

After lunch, the Educational Policy & Institutional Resources (EPIR) and Budget, Finance & Investment (BFI) Committees will meet to conduct annual reviews, receive routine reports, and hear a presentation on UVM's Cancer Center. BFI members will preview fiscal year 2027 budget assumptions, and the administration will seek authorization for bond refunding.

This afternoon, the Committee of the Whole will meet in executive session to discuss the UVM Foundation CEO/President search and the Multipurpose Center project.

The Board will convene tomorrow morning to receive committee reports, elect university and board officers, and vote on a consent agenda of recommended action items.

I would like to thank governance leaders for the written informational reports included in the meeting materials and I encourage trustees to review reports submitted by the Provost and the Vice President for Finance & Administration.

Finally, I would like to recognize our outstanding student trustee, Jenn Ha, who is concluding her service on the Board. Jenn, we are grateful for your contributions and you will be missed. Let me also offer a note of thanks and appreciation to John Dineen, who is completing his term of service at the end of February and is unable to attend these meetings. Tomorrow's consent agenda includes resolutions honoring both Jenn and John for their service to the University.

Later today, the UVM Board will elect John's successor and fill the seat that would have been vacated by Don McCree. Don, who was scheduled to complete his second term this month, was re-elected last fall to serve the remainder of Ron Lumbr's term through 2028. Both incoming trustees will serve 6-year terms. The

Associate Directors for the Appointment of Student Trustees will select Jenn's successor for a 2-year term. All new trustees will begin their terms on March 1st.