The Honors College is one of the gems of the University, and it is with great excitement that I submit my application to serve as its Dean. Over the course of its relatively short history, the Honors College has become an integral part of the life of UVM, and with its amazing staff and an ardent and imaginative Dean, it is poised to help UVM enhance its reputation as a nationwide leader in innovative undergraduate education and cutting-edge research. I believe that my career as an interdisciplinary scholar, my proven track-record fostering relationships with institutional and community partners, my extensive experience teaching the first year seminars, and my successful year as Acting HCOL Dean have given me the experience and wisdom to succeed in the position and a vision for how to move the Honors College into the next phase of its exciting evolution.

One of the core principles of the Honors College is its commitment to collaborative learning and interdisciplinary research. That commitment is woven into the first year HCOL seminar, “The Pursuit of Knowledge,” and it is built into its mission as a learning community where students with diverse backgrounds and intellectual interests live together exchanging knowledge, ideas, and discoveries. I share the HCOL’s dedication to interdisciplinarity and collaboration. My formal training is as an interdisciplinary scholar; my research emphasizes intellectual and cultural history; and I have published in a wide range of fields, always with an eye to the communities of inquiry that form at the intersection of different disciplines. I believe that my sensitivity to intellectual and cultural diversity has helped me develop into a strong collaborator, a dedicated community builder, and a good listener. These are skills that have served me well as I have forged university and community partnerships while serving as Director of FTS and co-Director of the UVM Humanities Center. They have also proven invaluable to me in my role as a leader working with the remarkable staff of the Honors College.

During my year as Acting Dean of HCOL I was proud to be able to sustain the College’s rigorous and distinctive educational and research opportunities. I was also
fortunate to collaborate with an impressive group of partners that included the HCOL staff, its affiliated faculty, the HCOL Council and Student Advisory Group, and its external board, as well as the Council of Deans, the Provost, and the entire range of UVM academic and administrative units. These collaborations have led me to envision a future for the Honors College incorporating five related strategic emphases:

1. **Sustaining HCOL retention while improving students’ persistence-to-thesis success.** Historically, the Honors College has had great success in contributing to UVM’s first-year retention rates. Typically, more than 90% of HCOL students continue onto their second year. However, a substantially lower portion (~56%) complete their thesis and graduate as Honors College Scholars. Although UVM does better in this regard than our national peers, I believe that there are a number of strategies that the HCOL Dean can employ to promote even greater success for HCOL students including an active admissions process, proactive advising protocols, revisions to the curriculum, and enhanced support for research and fellowship opportunities.

2. **Partnering with academic units and community partners to develop a meaningful and stimulating third-year experience.** The junior year is pivotal in an HCOL student’s experience. Many have moved out of campus housing, and there is no longer a cohesive curriculum as a common element of the HCOL community. I propose, in collaboration with UVM and community partners, to develop curricular and co-curricular third-year experiences to engage students with the broader community and to sustain the HCOL experience throughout their UVM career.

3. **Enhancing diversity and inclusive excellence for HCOL’s students, faculty, and staff.** Diversity—in every register—is essential to the vitality of the Honors College. During my tenure as Acting Dean, I had the privilege of heading the HCOL committee charged with developing the College’s statement on Inclusive Excellence. In our statement, we outlined a number of curricular and professional opportunities to enhance diversity and inclusivity, and many of those initiatives are under way. However, I believe that there is even more we can do to promote inclusive excellence, and with the support of our University partners, the HCOL is well-positioned to lead the way in providing substantive curricular and professional development opportunities and attracting diverse students, staff, and faculty to UVM.

4. **Championing research and fellowship opportunities for all UVM students and promoting faculty development.** The Office of Fellowships, Opportunities, and Undergraduate Research (FOUR) reports to the Dean of the Honors College. FOUR is a thriving office whose dedicated staff members have enhanced UVM’s profile in student research and its competitiveness for national and international awards, and FOUR serves every University Student committed to pursuing these opportunities. I believe that the HCOL Dean, who interacts with all of the University’s academic units, has a unique opportunity to reach out to untapped populations of students to boost research and fellowships. Furthermore, in collaboration with OVPR, the Dean and FOUR can create the conditions of possibility for faculty members to collaborate with these extraordinary students. Robust initiatives to enhance
faculty/student partnerships and promote faculty development will be a cornerstone of my tenure as Dean.

5. **Fostering a strong relationship with the UVM Foundation and enhancing HCOL’s fundraising effectiveness.** In an environment of economic restraint, one of the best ways the HCOL can be a good partner to the rest of the University is by developing the financial resources to support its initiatives. The Honors College has a great story, one which is sure to appeal to the right donors and philanthropic organizations. With a strong partnership with the Foundation and a vigorous commitment by the Dean, the HCOL should and will be on the path to financial sustainability, and I believe that I am the person to ensure that ambition.

The Dean of the Honors College is one of the most exciting and enviable jobs at UVM. I know what a privilege it is to work with the incredible students the HCOL enrolls and to partner with the University’s faculty, staff, and alumni to help these students—and the University—achieve their potential. I embrace the possibility of bringing my energy, enthusiasm, and experience to the Dean’s position as the Honors College moves into this exciting next era, and I look forward to sharing more of my vision for the HCOL with the search committee.

With gratitude for your consideration,

David Jenemann, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, English and Film and Television Studies

P.S. I should also note, per the requirements in the call for applications, I have submitted my dossier for promotion to full professor in the current academic year and expect a decision in spring 2019.