



The University of Vermont

Office of the President

May 13, 2019

To: UVM Community

From: Tom Sullivan

RE: Dr. Darren Hitt

It is with great sadness that I share that Dr. Darren Hitt, Professor of Mechanical Engineering passed away on Thursday, May 9, 2019.

Darren embodied the teacher-scholar model of the University of Vermont. He earned his PhD in Mechanical Engineering at Johns Hopkins University, in the area of Micro-Fluid Mechanics. After a brief appointment as research fellow and adjunct faculty member in the Department of Physics at Loyola College, he joined UVM in 1998. He was promoted to Professor in 2012. He received a prestigious NSF CAREER Award in 2001 for his research on microfluidics. His scientific interests later focused on micropropulsion for nano-satellites, for which he won multiple NASA and DoD EPSCoR awards. His work has translated in technological innovations with several patents and a local company, Benchmark Space Systems, founded by a former PhD student, Dr. Ryan McDevitt. He was an Associate Fellow of the American Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics. Among his many services to the scientific community, he was an associate editor and on the Editorial Board of AEROSPACE. Dedicated to the Department of Mechanical Engineering, Darren served as interim Department Chair while still an Assistant Professor in 2003 and 2004 and later as Program Head from 2010 until 2012. Darren was a great teacher with a keen interest in fluid mechanics, heat transfer, and aerospace engineering and science. He routinely earned high scores from student evaluations. His recent course on astrodynamics was so appreciated, students petitioned the Department Chair to create an advance astrodynamics for Spring 2019. Darren saw his class through and attended all of his students' final project presentations.

Since his appointment as the Director of the Vermont Space Grant Consortium (VSGC) in 2013, Darren administered and facilitated a continuous stream of large NASA EPSCoR Research Group awards that contributed to scientific and technological advancements in many areas critical to NASA's mission, including atmospheric entry physics, biofilms, and material sciences. These awards fostered collaborations within academic institutions within the states and with NASA research centers. Darren's office funded multiple innovative research faculty awards, graduate fellowships and undergraduate internships.

Outside of work Darren could be found skiing with his son, managing his son's soccer team, hiking with his family and their dog or gardening.

In his 21 years at UVM, Darren had an outstanding impact on the teaching and research excellence of the Department of Mechanical Engineering. He was kind, supportive of his

colleagues, dedicated to his students, and enabled the research of many fellow faculty members. The UVM community lost a great colleague and friend.

As is the case when any member of our community passes away, we are bound to feel a profound sense of loss, and reactions are felt in a variety of ways. During this time, I highly encourage you to reach out to your primary support system as a source of care and connection. If you, or someone you know, are in need of professional counseling, please do not hesitate to contact UVM's Counseling and Psychiatry Services at (802) 656-3340 (for students) or Invest EAP at (802) 864-EAPØ (3270) or toll free at 1-866-660-9533 (for employee assistance).

At this time arrangements are still being finalized. We offer our deepest sympathies to his wife, Juvena, and son Gunther. He will be missed greatly at our University.