



November 9, 2020

Dear UVM Faculty Colleagues,

Attached you will find a conceptual model for reorganization that the Academic Organization Restructuring Working Group¹ is recommending and a plan for gathering input from the UVM community regarding the model.

As you know the Academic Organization Restructuring Working Group was asked to provide a recommendation to the President and Provost for academic organizational restructuring that:

- Identifies options for organizational changes that better support faculty and students by reducing complexity, redundancy and other barriers to success;
- Increases contemporary and forward-thinking academic alignments, to enhance both student outcomes and productivity in research, scholarship and the creative arts;
- Commits to a more inclusive and equitable institution;
- Promotes the strategic imperatives identified in the *Amplifying our Impact* document as well as our Academic Success Goals; and
- Reduces administrative costs, keeping paramount the overall strength of the institution.

In the current context, we must think differently about how we attract students, respond to their needs for unique academic experiences and provide interdisciplinary content that will prepare them for their future in an ever-changing world. It is timely and essential that we align our academic offerings with our institutional values in a bold new vision for UVM. I am excited about the potential for an ambitious vision that capitalizes on our efforts in sustainability, innovation, discovery, and entrepreneurship. The Working Group's recommendation, along with feedback from the academic deans, asks us to reimagine UVM 2050. It challenges us to think differently about ways to catalyze the impact of our students and our distinctive research strengths and scholarly contributions.

After considering several approaches and reviewing a number of models for academic organization, the Working Group landed on an organizational framework that considers a reconfiguration of our five colleges and two schools to a possible four-college conceptual model built on interconnected disciplines. The model builds on our liberal education core fostering an ability to think critically and solve real problems, emphasizes the synergy of the agricultural, biological and environmental sciences for ensuring a healthy environment, highlights our strength in promoting and delivering on our commitment to a healthy community at a domestic and global level, and responds to 21st Century needs in technology, business, and engineering grounded in entrepreneurship and innovation. The proposed conceptual model also attempts to de-silo the university, promote a culture of inclusive and interdisciplinary collaboration, and support innovation at multiple levels.

The recommendation from the Working Group also highlights those actions that will be necessary to move UVM to a 2050 vision. This includes but is not limited to establishing interdisciplinary research institutes, developing a strong educational model for nontraditional students and lifelong learners, engaging fully in our land grant mission, acting on our commitment to inclusion and equity, and reviewing and improving our business processes and practices.

Faculty engagement will be key to reimagining UVM 2050. Several steps are being recommended including:

- Facilitated discussions with members of the Working Group and Faculty Senate Executive Council **(December)**
- Campus wide responses to key questions regarding the model **(January)**

- Where do you see your discipline fitting in the UVM 2050 model?
- How might the four interdisciplinary areas impact students and scholarly outcomes?
- Is there anything missing in our vision for UVM 2050?
- Focus groups with faculty, staff and students (**January**)

As we are gathering input from faculty, staff and students, the Provost's office will also be 'testing' this conceptual model with an external eye toward student recruitment at both an undergraduate and graduate level as well as faculty recruitment and donor, sponsor, and peer engagement.

Following two months of input on the conceptual model, adjustments will be made based on the feedback received. A revised model will be discussed with the Faculty Senate Executive Council in February and modifications will be made as appropriate. In addition, an implementation plan will be developed in collaboration with Faculty Senate Executive Council. Both the revised organizational model and implementation plan will be presented to Faculty Senate in March 2021.

We ask all of our colleagues to engage in these discussions with an open mind and an excitement about what is possible as we reimagine UVM 2050. We have an opportunity to amplify our impact by aligning our strengths and growing our interdisciplinary collaborations. I look forward to our discussion over the next several months.

Sincerely,
Patty Prelock
Provost & Senior Vice President

¹Working Group Membership: David Jenemann (Chair), Dean—Honors College; Shari Bergquist, University Budget Director; Mary Cushman, Professor of Medicine—Larner College of Medicine; Jennifer Dickinson, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Student Success; Kirk Dombrowski, Vice President for Research; William Falls, Dean—College of Arts and Sciences; Nancy Mathews, Dean—Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources; Ernesto Méndez, Chair, Plant and Soil Sciences—College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; Linda Schadler, Dean—College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences; Jim Vigoreaux, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs; Alexander Yin, Executive Director—Office of Institutional Research