

**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, June 4, 2021, at 8:00 a.m. The meeting was held via remote conferencing due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Ron Lumbra, Vice Chair Cynthia Barnhart, Secretary John Bartholomew, Briar Alpert, Otto Berkes¹, Robert Brennan², Frank Cioffi, Kevin "Coach" Christie, John Dineen, Johannah Donovan, Carolyn Dwyer, President Suresh Garimella, Jodi Goldstein, Stephanie Jerome, Kisha Kalra, Don McCree, Carol Ode, Ed Pagano, Lucy Rogers³, Shap Smith, Berke Tinaz, Catherine Toll and Samuel Young

MEMBERS ABSENT: David Aronoff and Governor Phil Scott

ALSO PARTICIPATING: Provost and Senior Vice President Patricia Prelock, Vice President for Legal Affairs & General Counsel and Chief of Staff to the President Sharon Reich Paulsen, Vice President for Finance and Administration Richard Cate, Vice President for Research Kirk Dombrowski, Dean of the Honors College David Jenemann, Staff Council President Caleb Gilbert, Alumni Association President Afi Ahmadi, Associate Dean for Public Health and Health Policy Jan Carney and Professor and Chair of the Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics Beth Kirkpatrick

¹ joined the meeting at 8:32 a.m.

² joined the meeting at 8:05 a.m.

³ joined the meeting at 8:05 a.m.

Chair Ron Lumbra called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Approval of minutes

Chair Lumbra presented the February 5, 2021 meeting minutes for approval. A motion was made, seconded and voted to approve the minutes as presented.

Chair's report (see full report appended to minutes, beginning on page 5)

President's report

After thanking Chair Lumbra and the trustees for their support during the past year, President Suresh Garimella reported on steps taken by the university to keep the campus safe. University leaders followed the science and worked closely with public health and infectious disease experts both on campus as well as at the Vermont Department of Health. The university tested students weekly, launched a campaign regarding the necessary and rigorous safety cautions that were in place, reconfigured the classrooms, provided appropriate personal protection equipment, hand sanitizer, and miles of Plexiglas. Using tents, fire pits, and a skating rink, the university created

new ways for students to safely gather on campus. The president reported that the university saw an opportunity to tie operational work with the university's academic mission by staffing the COVID testing center with students, most of whom were pursuing medical careers.

Governance leaders' discussion regarding how they interact with and represent their constituencies

Chair Lumbra called to attention the informational reports submitted by governance leaders included in the meeting materials and noted that today the board will hear from the Staff Council and Alumni Association presidents. Staff Council President Caleb Gilbert announced that the Staff Council is celebrating its 50th anniversary. He shared some of the council's accomplishments over the years as well as future initiatives. President Gilbert expressed appreciation for the way the university administration partnered with staff to make telework possible during the pandemic. President Gilbert noted that this is his final board report and acknowledged the newly-elected officers, President Jon Reisenweaver and Vice President Laura Clayton. Chair Lumbra thanked President Gilbert for his leadership.

Chair Lumbra recognized the long-term service of the Alumni Association, charged with serving and facilitating continuing relationships with alumni. He invited Alumni Association President Afi Ahmadi to share how the association remained engaged with alumni during the severe COVID-19 restrictions of the past year and whether anything was learned that will assist them in hopefully-pandemic-free years to come. President Ahmadi reported that the pandemic required the Alumni Association to pivot their activities and maintain their connections through remote volunteerism. He thanked campus partners for helping the Alumni Association develop and deliver virtual programs and noted that many events have been recorded and are available in the new library of recorded events. President Ahmadi closed his report by announcing that the Alumni Association will welcome back the Class of 2020 for an in-person commencement ceremony on Saturday, August 14, 2021.

Academic presentation

President Garimella introduced Drs. Jan Carney and Beth Kirkpatrick, who were invited to join today's meeting to talk about their contributions during the pandemic as experts in the fields of public health and infectious disease. Dr. Kirkpatrick joined the UVM faculty in fall 1999 and currently serves as Professor and Chair of the Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics in the Larner College of Medicine (LCOM). Her work is focused on translational and clinical research. Her experience in vaccine clinical trials, clinical immunology and establishing international field sites permits her findings to be tested in a variety of clinical settings, domestic and international. Dr. Kirkpatrick established the clinical and laboratory infrastructure for the Vaccine Testing Center at UVM. Dr. Kirkpatrick reported on the efforts to keep the campus and state safe during COVID-19 through research, education, and service to UVM, the UVM Medical Center, and the Vermont Department of Health, in addition to clinical activities. Throughout the pandemic she and Dr. Carney consulted with members of the administration regarding decisions related to on-campus operations and activities and testing and vaccine strategies.

Dr. Carney, a former Vermont Commissioner of Health, has a long record for launching critical initiatives to improve community health. During her twenty-years at UVM, her contributions have extended beyond Professor of Medicine and Associate Dean for Public Health and Health Policy at the LCOM. Dr. Carney reported on her many activities during the pandemic including advising, public education and teaching, research, and advocacy for public health in medical education. Dr. Carney concluded her presentation by explaining that UVM did better than any college or university because of a portfolio of actions including pre-arrival student testing, creating a culture of social distancing and mask wearing across campus, consistent and creative campus education, ongoing collaboration with the state and city, and using the best available science throughout the pandemic.

In follow up to a trustee request to share thoughts regarding fears and plans for the fall, Dr. Carney responded that the best course of action is to continue to watch and be guided by the data when developing strategies and making decisions.

Academic reorganization update

David Jenemann, Dean of the Honors College and Chair of the Academic Reorganization Working Group (ARWG), offered an update on the working group's progress since the last board meeting. He presented the initial findings as of spring 2021. After more than 25 meetings, open forums and information sessions in which groups ranged from 10 to 400 participants, and 90+ responses sent to a survey available on the Provost's academic reorganization website, the ARWG spent over 1,000 hours analyzing all information and feedback received. The initial findings produced a number of questions, including the recurring question of why reorganize. The key reasons include: enhancing the student experience, reducing complexity and redundancy, reducing barriers to student and faculty success created by the current university structure, increasing academic alignments that are contemporary and forward thinking and responsive to the Amplifying Our Impact strategic vision, and reducing administrative costs. Dean Jenemann pointed out that reorganization is not about cutting programs. It is aimed at identifying areas of strength, aligning complementary programs, and investing in areas that correspond to the values and potential of UVM. Dean Jenemann concluded his presentation by outlining the work of the ARWG over the next six months.

Trustees collectively expressed their support for the process and appreciation to Dean Jenemann for his leadership.

Executive session

At 9:25 a.m., Chair Lumbra entertained a motion to enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing contracts, premature public knowledge of which would clearly place the university at a substantial disadvantage. He noted the session would last for approximately 15 minutes and that action is anticipated following. Everyone was excused from the meeting with the exception of Trustees; Provost & Senior Vice President Patricia Prelock; Vice President for Legal Affairs & General Counsel and Chief of Staff to the President Sharon Reich Paulsen; Vice President for Finance and Administration Richard Cate; Vice President for Research Kirk Dombrowski and Special Assistant to the Chief of Staff Erin Dickinson.

The meeting re-opened to the public at 9:55 a.m.

Other business

The following resolution was presented for approval:

Resolution authorizing a lease with United States Government, USDA, Agricultural Research Service

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Vice President for Finance and Administration, or his successor or designee, is hereby authorized to negotiate and execute a lease with a term of up to ten years with the United States Government, USDA, Agricultural Research Service for use of office and lab space for the establishment of a Food Systems Research Center, subject to material terms and conditions reported on this date.

A motion was made, seconded and it was unanimously voted to refer the resolution to the board for approval.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:57 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Lumbra, Chair

Ron E. Lumbra
UVM Board of Trustees Chair's Report
June 4, 2021

Good morning everyone and welcome to this final Board of Trustee meeting for the 2020-2021 academic year. What a year it's been. I come away grateful for all that's been accomplished, despite the myriad of challenges. I'm proud of our students, the faculty, staff, and administration for how well they have conducted themselves and adjusted with agility as required to serve our students and their families. I'm also proud of our response to the challenges of the pandemic, particularly driven by the mature behavior of our students. They set the tone for the campus and Burlington community at large and should be thanked and congratulated for their adherence to the Green and Gold Promise.

I would also like to take a moment to personally thank you my fellow trustees. We've been forced to engage many times outside of the normal cycle to take on important business on behalf of the University. I'm thankful to all of you for being so available. I'm reminded of a conversation I had with John Dineen when he was in process joining the board just before the COVID-19 pandemic. I can remember distinctly talking about how consistent and predictable the board meeting schedule was and how one can easily plan around it. John, I must apologize to you as your tenure on the board has been nothing like that with constant changes in the schedule and the need for additional meetings. Thank you all for your support and willingness to engage as needed.

Our COVID-19 response has been second to none in academia. It dovetails nicely with the performance of the State of Vermont on a national basis. I'm also pleased with the way progress has continued despite the pandemic. We've been able to maintain our focus on the student experience while taking on long-term strategic initiatives such as academic reorganization, taking a look at low enrollment/low completion programs, carefully managing through notable budget challenges brought on by a combination of the pandemic and the well known structural challenges facing higher education at large. In parallel, we have continued to keep tuition flat which is critically important to affordability for our students and their families, we've successfully committed to divest from our investments in fossil fuels, all while we maintain focus on our primary mission, the success of our students.

If anyone would like a feel for that mission, I encourage you to take a look at some of the videos from the commencement ceremonies a couple of weeks ago. Log onto uvm.edu, go to commencement videos, and pick any one to view. You will see the glow, the joy, and the happiness from our students. You will be impressed by the compelling remarks from our speakers that, while brief, were insightful and memorable. I was particularly struck by a comment from our new Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Noma Anderson, who encouraged her students to go beyond the golden rule to the platinum rule. That is, to treat others as they want to be treated. We could all benefit from Noma's wisdom as we come out of the pandemic and look forward to a brighter day.

As many of you know, I like to think of a word that captures the theme of any particular board meeting. The word that comes to mind today is "discipline". We've reacted with agility and

behaved with integrity through the pandemic. As we emerge, we are faced with a number of strategic challenges and opportunities, particularly pertaining to the budget and how we invest our limited resources. Strategic resource allocation is among the most important tasks that we must confront as an institution. We are compelled to manage our finances in a disciplined and strategic way in order to assure adherence to our mission as we serve our students, their families, and the state in the most effective way possible. I encourage you to maintain the notion of discipline and thoughtfully consider the allocation of resources as we listen and engage in conversations today both within our Budget, Finance & Investment, and Educational Policy & Institutional Resources committees. We will consider a number of issues and opportunities and associated decisions that we must face head-on for the good of the institution and must do so with appropriate discipline with an eye toward the long-term health and sustainability of our University.

That concludes my remarks.