



**Provost's Report**  
**February 9, 2024**

**Board of Trustees**  
**Educational Policy and Institutional Resources Committee**

**Prepared by**  
**Provost and Senior Vice President Patricia A. Prelock**

Our Spring semester is off to a strong start, but I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge how difficult the Fall semester was for students, faculty, and staff alike as we experienced the ongoing violence in Israel and Gaza and the shooting of three young Palestinian men near our campus. During this time, campus leaders focused on campus safety, supporting our community, articulating [Our Common Ground](#) values and responsibilities, and providing educational opportunities around the conflict. Increased security measures were enacted; we hosted special counseling sessions, listening sessions and vigils; we met with student groups and community and religious leaders; and we hosted educational sessions on the Israel-Arab conflict featuring UVM faculty experts. You can learn more about our community support activities [here](#). This spring, our division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will be offering antisemitism and islamophobia programming.

As a community, we are also grappling with the sudden death of our dear colleague and academic leader Jarlath O'Neil-Dunne. Jarlath was the founder and director of the University of Vermont's Spatial Analysis Laboratory (SAL) in the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources. You may remember Jarlath from his participation last May in the presentation to the Board celebrating 50 Years of the environment at UVM. Jarlath's work focused on the application of geospatial technology, notably drones, to a broad range of natural resource related issues such as disaster response, environmental justice, wildlife mapping, forest decline, community health, and water quality. Jarlath was a national and internationally recognized expert in his field, securing millions of dollars in external funding. Closer to home, Jarlath's work and leadership during the response to Vermont's July 2023 flooding resulted in greatly accelerated access to federal relief funds. He was deeply committed to his work and to leveraging its impact by providing our students (hundreds of them) with SAL employment opportunities and supporting their advancement to organizations across the country. Jarlath was larger than life (everyone has a Jarlath story!). His gusto, work ethic, intellect, and generosity of spirit were unparalleled. We celebrated Jarlath's life at a memorial service in the Ira Allen Chapel in January, and a scholarship fund has been created in his honor. We take some small measure of comfort knowing that Jarlath died doing what he loved, Nordic skiing, in a place he loved, the mountains of Vermont.

**SPRING UPDATES**

**Leadership Transitions**

In December, I was delighted to welcome **Dr. Jason Garvey** to the role of Executive Director of Institutional Research and Assessment. Dr. Garvey is the Friedman-Hipps Green and Gold Associate Professor of Education in the Department of Education here at the University of Vermont. He is an accomplished scholar and administrator with a Ph.D. in College Student Personnel Administration with a concentration in Measurement, Statistics, and Evaluation from the University of Maryland, College Park. He also holds an M.A. in School Psychology from The Ohio State University. Dr. Garvey is an interdisciplinary researcher specializing in student success, teaching and learning, higher education policy, and statistics and using data to drive strategic planning efforts. Throughout his career, he has successfully developed and led strategic research activities, providing valuable insights to university senior leaders and policymakers on mission progress and strategic objectives – he is passionate about working with emerging researchers. As a faculty member, he has taught graduate courses in student affairs research, student outcome assessment, quantitative research methods, teaching in higher education, college students and contexts, and student development theory. His expertise coupled with his experience and perspective as a faculty member position him to be especially effective in this new role.

This summer, **Dr. Peter Newman** will join us as Dean of the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources. Dr. Newman is an accomplished scholar and leader who earned a Ph.D. in Natural Resources from the University of Vermont and an M.S. in Forest Resource Management from the College of Environmental Science and Forestry, State University of New York Syracuse. In between his degrees, he was a member of the Backcountry Patrol, USFS in Idaho and a National Service Park Ranger in Yosemite National Park. Dr. Newman is the Suzie and Allen Martin Professor and Head of the Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management, with a joint faculty appointment in the Graduate Program in Acoustics at Pennsylvania State University. Under Dr. Newman's leadership, his department's research has grown significantly. He leads the strategic planning of a multi-disciplinary department covering focal areas in environmental and sustainability studies, park management, tourism, community recreation, leisure, and health and human well-being; oversees the development of research and outreach programs; and has facilitated the growth of research expenditures. Dr. Newman formerly served as Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at the Warner College of Natural Resources, Colorado State University, from 2009 – 2013. In this position, he worked closely with department heads from across the college and built bridges to the Dean's Office. He oversaw the college's academic programs, served on university-wide committees on academic quality, environmental sustainability, university admissions and enrollment, and Continuing Education, and was responsible for recruitment and retention of undergraduate students.

**Dr. BettyJo Bouchey** has been appointed Chief Officer for Professional and Continuing Education (PACE), bringing nearly two decades of higher education experience to UVM and our innovative [PACE division](#). Dr. Bouchey was most recently Vice Provost of Digital Strategy and Operations and a faculty member at National Louis University, where she was responsible for standards of quality and service for online programming across the institution, alternative graduation pathways, learning experience design, and academic innovation. She has research experience in the nature and future of organizational structures of online units in institutions of higher education, as well as inventive and high-impact online education practices including the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning. Dr. Bouchey holds a B.A. in Psychology from the University at Albany, an M.B.A. in Entrepreneurship from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and a Doctorate in Education from Northeastern University.

### **Spring Application Data**

Following the January 15 application deadline, the Admissions team will pour through nearly 27,000 applications for admission this Fall. UVM has seen increased interest in Vermonters, international

students, and students who come from outside of New England. The institution has received 5,300 applications from students who identify as BIPOC – a record number. There are greater numbers of students indicating that UVM is their first-choice university, with an 8% increase in students applying via Early Decision (a binding admissions plan). To date, 434 students have already secured their spot in the Class of 2028, a 50% increase over last year. These 434 students are about 15% of the nearly 3000 students who will join our community next Fall. This marks yet another year where all indicators show the demand for a UVM education is on the rise.

### **Academic Success Goals**

The Academic Success Goals (ASG) were established during the Spring 2020 semester, and are the result of ideas, suggestions, and feedback from members of the Academic Leadership Council and the faculty and staff in their respective units. Progress against these goals is measured annually by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment and is posted on the [Provost's Office website](#). A number of the original ASGs reflected 3-year goals, so it made sense to refresh them last Fall, to see what needed refinement and to determine whether anything was missing. This process included the Academic Leadership Council, the Provost's Executive Team, the Provost's Integrated Leadership Team, the Academic Planning Council, the Faculty Senate Executive Council, the Faculty Senate, Staff Council, the Student Government Association, the Graduate Student Senate, academic and student success leaders across campus, and faculty and staff more broadly through discussions within their units facilitated by deans and vice provosts. The refreshed ASGs include some important clarifications, several new focus areas, and have been reordered to reflect a general sequencing/scaffolding that will be helpful when prioritizing efforts and activities. Work on the detailed metrics/outcomes and the dashboard that will accompany the new ASGs is in process and these documents will be posted this spring in preparation for their July 1 effective date. The refreshed ASGs are included at the end of this report, and I look forward to discussing them with you at our meeting.

### **Comprehensive Inclusive Excellence Action Plan**

We have also made progress on another document that guides our work. In November, we released the university's [Comprehensive Inclusive Excellence Action Plan](#) (IEAP), a data-driven strategic plan centered on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The plan outlines the university's commitment and process for advancing inclusive excellence across the university over the next five years. The IEAP was developed as an overarching strategy supported by 25 individual unit plans. The university's IEAP integrates key elements of the administrative and academic units' plans ensuring engagement across campus, and supporting accountability in achieving a culture of inclusive excellence at UVM. The thematic areas across action plans focused on implementation of our Academic Success Goals including curricular and co-curricular activities; recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students who bring diverse ideas, perspectives, and thoughts to campus; faculty professional development; and research with an equity lens. (ASG 1.5)

### **NECHE Five-Year Interim Accreditation Report**

In January, under the leadership of Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Student Success J. Dickinson, UVM submitted a [five-year interim report](#) to its regional accreditor, the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE). Interim reports are required of all NECHE institutions, and focus on updates in the five years since the most recent comprehensive review. UVM was asked to specifically provide updates in the areas of general education, academic and career advising, institutional planning, including the [Campus Plan](#), and support for assessment of student learning outcomes. UVM has made significant progress in each of these areas, as highlighted by the launch of the Catamount Core Curriculum, the establishment of professional advising for all first-year undergraduate

students, the recent approval of the new Campus Plan, and investments in assessment infrastructure, including the hiring of a full-time Assessment Coordinator in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. Discussion of newly developed institutional plans in the areas of [Inclusive Excellence](#), [Sustainability](#), and the refresh of the [Academic Success Goals](#) also pointed to important institutional efforts that moved forward during the pandemic. The report also offered the opportunity to highlight gains across the institution in institutional updates related to each NECHE Standard, including institutional resources, Admissions and Student Affairs, and Teaching, Learning and Scholarship. In addition to outlining accomplishments, the report covers areas where the institution recognizes the need for further development, including the systematic assessment of student learning at the program and institutional level. The conclusion to the report, “Future Plans: Looking ahead to 2029” outlined key goals that UVM expects to make progress towards during the five years until the next comprehensive reaccreditation review in 2029. These plans include further development of UVM’s research infrastructure, a focus on expanding graduate education, increasing international partnerships, and the fulfilment of the first [Comprehensive Inclusive Excellence Plan](#).

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

### **Howard Hughes Medical Institute Grant**

We were proud to be awarded a \$2.5M [Driving Change grant](#), from the [Howard Hughes Medical Institute](#), that will support initiatives for faculty, staff, and undergraduate students, with the goal of creating a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all students. This five-year grant, led by Dean Linda Schadler and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Student Success Jennifer Dickinson, will provide professional development opportunities to staff and faculty who can in turn create more welcoming environments in classrooms; identify and remove institutional policies that create barriers to student success; offer programming for all students to help them develop the skills they need to create a more inclusive social culture; and create a leadership development program that will include students from groups historically underrepresented in STEM fields. This award increases the external visibility of our commitment to equity and inclusion, and provides funding to further these important efforts. (ASG 1.2, 1.5)

### **Solar Eclipse Day**

In preparation for the April 8, 2024 total solar eclipse, we have planned [a series of events](#) both preceding and on the day of the eclipse. Programming features faculty from the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences, Vermont State University, local Vermont industry, museums and both student and professional groups. Our planning committee consists of students, faculty, and staff from over 20 departments on campus, as well as partners from neighboring universities. Pre-eclipse events include space-themed trivia nights hosted by local space industry or museum partners. So far, these events have engaged 60+ students per session. The Eclipse Seminar Series began in January, and our three pre-eclipse seminars will cover: (1) sustainability in aerospace, (2) eclipses in literature, and (3) discoveries made possible by eclipses. Lastly, a Space Fair in the week preceding the eclipse will highlight UVM and Vermont local organizations, student groups, employers, and other resources for Vermonters to engage with aerospace. On April 8 itself, campus will host a variety of activities to highlight the robust academics, art, and community offered here at UVM. This includes a seminar series that touches on the cultural, natural, and scientific aspects of eclipses, student art exhibitions, sensory-friendly spaces for inclusive engagement, fully equipped eclipse viewing stations with telescopes located in 6 areas across campus, and a scavenger hunt that will require students to engage with educational content from each college across campus. Right before the eclipse, Dr. Lisa Kaltenecker of Cornell’s Department of Astronomy and the Carl Sagan Institute to Search for Life in the

Cosmos will deliver the keynote address before experiencing the eclipse alongside our students, faculty, and staff. The seminar series and keynote speaker will be livestreamed so the entire UVM community, on and off campus, can take part in these activities. (ASG 1.1)

### **Patrick Leahy Honors College**

The Patrick Leahy Honors College (PLHC) has developed strategic and administrative business plans aligned with its new name and its new resources. We are initiating additional pathways for PLHC students in research, leadership, and service, reimagining student advising to promote persistence, and belonging, and we are implementing new programs for wellness and wellbeing, integrated with the students' academic experience. The PLHC has redesigned its curriculum and has begun offering a new sequence of courses emphasizing contemporary challenges and critical solutions aimed at introducing students to high impact opportunities. Students not only see the relevance of their coursework to contemporary issues but also how their work in research, service, and community engagement has an impact on the world outside of the classroom. Additionally, the PLHC is partnering with the other colleges/schools to establish more opportunities for faculty to engage with students and provide increased support for faculty-led undergraduate research across the campus. As we look forward to celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Honors College in Fall 2024, we are excited to celebrate its contributions to UVM with alumni and friends of the PLHC and sharing our vision for the future. (ASG 1.2, 1.4, 3.1)

### **Generative AI**

As an academic community we are working and learning together about the impacts of generative AI (genAI). Over the last several months, a working group comprised of members of Faculty Senate committees, and representatives from the Writing in the Disciplines Program (WID), the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), and the Center for Student Conduct have considered some of generative AI's implications for faculty work and brought forward several recommendations. Briefly, they are:

- **GenAI and the classroom.** Faculty are strongly encouraged to state clearly—in their syllabi and at the start of class—their expectations for intellectual honesty as well as discussing how they want to use generative AI in their classes and what their expectations are for giving credit to the use of artificial intelligence.
- **GenAI in research.** Faculty must take responsibility for all knowledge created if they choose to use generative AI in their research activities. Faculty are encouraged to review journal policies (as they vary) and their professional associations for discipline specific guidance.
- **GenAI and ethics.** Faculty should be aware of the problematic genAI ethics. GenAI outputs are reflective of the data sets they are trained on and include and reflect societal prejudices.
- **GenAI and legal issues.** When data is entered into a genAI tool, it becomes the property of the company. It is essential to be aware of the legal obligations to protect data (e.g. HIPAA, FERPA).

These recommendations are meant as a starting point for thinking about generative AI in faculty work, and there will be continued discussions in colleges and schools about these issues.

Our [Center for Teaching and Learning](#) has developed programs to provide our faculty with valuable tools, skills, and insights around how we communicate with students about our expectations around AI use; ways we can foster students' inner motivation and how that can factor in students' desires to use

generative AI; and how to design assignments, activities, and assessments that consider the limits and possibilities of generative AI. (ASG 1.1, 1.4, 2.1)

## **UVM GO**

As a result of last August's successful launch of [UVM GO](#), there is great enthusiasm for UVM GO 2024! We have received 25 new proposals for 2024 programs, and we also have a number of returning faculty leaders. We are excited to expand to new locations, both domestically and internationally. Some of the locations being considered are San Francisco, New York City, Atlanta, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, and Iceland. We look forward to continuing local partnerships and strengthening those relationships. Several new faculty members have reached out with strong connections in the community and ideas for highlighting the research being done at UVM. There is a range of interesting topics emerging, from wellness and self-care to foraging and studying fungi, from entrepreneurship in the local food scene to agroecology, and the impacts of global issues, like climate change, in the local Vermont context. The team will spend the next few weeks developing program ideas with faculty members and creating promotional materials for the Admitted Student Visit Days this spring. Our goal enrollment for next summer is 750 students (more than doubling Summer 2023's enrollment) with the ultimate goal of enrolling 1,500 students annually in pre-matriculation programming by Summer 2026. Last October's annual Six-Week Survey of first-year students indicated high levels of engagement and satisfaction with their UVM experience among UVM GO participants. (ASG 1.1, 1.2, 3.3)

## **KNOWLEDGE CREATION and ENGAGEMENT**

### **Open Scholarship**

The **Higher Education Leadership Initiative for Open Science (HELIOS)** is an organization established by several university presidents to marshal universities into collective and bold stances and actions that move data and scholarship into open models for information dissemination and access. Launched in 2022 with the commitment of more than 60 American universities and colleges, including the University of Vermont, HELIOS recognizes the importance of educating faculty and university leaders in the importance of 'open science' and the critical need to share scientific discoveries and solutions to benefit all members of society.

In January, along with presidents and provosts from across the country, I attended a conference to consider how we can collaborate to develop models and standards for rewarding open scholarship within our academic cultures. Fortunately, at the University of Vermont we already have a faculty leadership working group committed to the open science and open access principles led by Dr. Meredith Niles, Associate Professor of Nutrition and Food Sciences, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; Dr. Tom Borchert, President of the Faculty Senate and Chair of the Department of Religion; and Dr. Bryn Geffert, Dean of Libraries. In fact, the University of Vermont's Faculty Senate Research, Scholarship and Creative Arts Committee (RSCA) sponsored a resolution on open access and open science that was approved by the full Faculty Senate last Spring, declaring that "the free exchange of research and scholarly information is a matter of equity and consistent with the values of Our Common Ground." The resolution offered action steps and called on our academic units to develop policies and procedures promoting open access and the sharing of scholarly input. At the national meeting, the University of Vermont and our faculty leaders were held up as models for other institutions to follow.

Many governmental agencies are committed to open science including NASA, NSF, NIH, NOAA, DOE, OSTP, and NLM. I will be collaborating with our faculty and academic leaders across campus to further the Faculty Senate resolution as well as implementing additional strategies to support faculty

understanding of open science and use of available tools to share information. I will also work with the Office of the Vice President for Research and funding agencies, like NASA, who are anxious to work with the University of Vermont to accelerate our adoption of open science. You will hear more as we continue to play an important role in this national initiative and establish the policies, procedures, and educational training and resources to support open access and open science. (ASG 2.1, 2.3)

### **Presidential Lecture Series**

The University is consolidating planning and support for its four major lecture series: Aiken, Burack, Zeltzman, and the Janus Forum. Each year, a committee (currently led by Dean of Libraries Bryn Geffert) will choose a theme and schedule speakers for each lecture around that theme. This year's theme is Social Media. Speakers include Zeynep Tufekci, a Princeton University sociologist and *New York Times* columnist who has studied the influence of social media in the Tahrir Square uprising in Egypt and protest movements in Hong Kong; Bailey Parnell, a TED speaker who lectures on social media's effects on mental health; UVM's own Chris Danforth on "[Measuring the Happiness, Health, and Stories of Society through Social Media](#)"; and Nora Draper, a political scientist at the University of New Hampshire who studies data privacy. In this year's Janus Forum, Jim Steyer, president of Common Sense Media, and John Samples of the Cato Institute will argue for and against the proposition that "Social Media should be more regulated." In the future, speakers will be asked to develop their arguments in writing, crafting an essay supporting their position and a second in response to their interlocutor's argument. The new University of Vermont Press will publish these point-counterpoint essays in a new *Janus Texts* series aimed at a wide audience and appropriate for high school and college courses.

Themes under consideration for the Presidential Lecture Series in future years include:

- **Free speech on campus.** Understandings of, regulations around, legalities of, and practices around free expression in the academy.
- **The role of companies in politics.** What happens and what should happen when companies contribute to political discourse? How does and how should the law understand corporate rights to speech? What strictures on employee speech and political activity are legal or advisable? How does corporate engagement in political issues affect corporations' bottom lines?
- **Scholarship in a fake-news world.** In a world of misinformation run rampant, where the academy and the scholarship it produces are sometimes held in low regard, and where traditional standards of evidence and argumentation strike some as quaint or irrelevant, what is the role of scholarship?

(ASG 1.5, 2.1, 3.3)

### **Tech Hub Recognition**

A consortium led by the University of Vermont, in close collaboration with semiconductor manufacturer GlobalFoundries and the State of Vermont's Agency of Commerce and Community Development, has been designated as one of 31 Tech Hubs by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA). This designation—won from among more than 200 applicants from across the US—creates a range of program supports to build a technology ecosystem around semiconductor development and commercialization in the Burlington metro area, including an opportunity to compete with the other designees for up to \$75M in federal economic, research, and development funding. The "Phase II" competition will take place this spring, with applications due February 29, 2024, and funding for winning applications arriving in early summer. The effort is being led by the Office of Research and UVM's new Regional Innovation Officer, Doug Merrill. In addition to

the Phase II funding competition, numerous economic development opportunities in workforce development, small business support, and export assistance have been made available to our consortium and will continue for the next several years. A significant number of local businesses, municipalities, and investment groups have joined the consortium, and partnership with national and international semiconductor industry partners is already taking place. By working to help develop a more robust local tech sector, UVM stands to gain significant national recognition for its research and development work, and greater national and international exposure to potential students and researchers seeking opportunities in technology R&D. (ASG 2.1, 2.2, 2.3)

### **Leahy Institute for Rural Partnerships**

It was a delight to celebrate the official opening of the Patrick Leahy Building and the launch of the [Leahy Institute for Rural Partnerships](#) in November. The Leahy Institute for Rural Partnerships was made possible by a \$9.3 million award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, with leadership and support from Senator Leahy (the USDA contributed over \$29 million to the renovation of the Leahy building). The work of the institute will result in a template that can be replicated for other rural areas across the country through a national educational consortium. The Leahy Institute will bring financial and technical assistance, UVM research, faculty expertise, student projects and internships, and established UVM startup and engagement programs together to collaborate on impactful solutions that drive positive change for Vermont and beyond. This is a powerful addition to our campus and our state and is another example of the lasting and positive impact of Senator Leahy's work. (ASG 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 1.1)

## **WELLNESS**

### **Title IX Advances**

As noted in my last report, Dr. Jennifer Demers joined UVM last fall as a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Biomedical and Health Sciences Department and has begun development of the new PIVOT (Preventing Interpersonal Violence via Outreach and Training) Peer Educator Program, and a pilot training program for campus-based professionals to improve communication skills in response to disclosures of sexual violence by students has been launched.

Also last fall, UVM welcomed trainers from the federal STARRSA, or Science-based Treatment, Accountability, and Risk Reduction for Sexual Assault program. This training enabled us to enhance our educational programming for students found responsible for violating the sexual misconduct policy and students who enter into Alternative Resolution agreements. This is a research-informed, nationally recognized program developed through a Department of Justice grant and used at universities nationwide. The program provides education about basic social skills necessary for healthy consenting sexual behavior. Its mission is to be consistent with and complement policies that are designed to address sexual misconduct; hold those responsible accountable; and assist those who have engaged in sexual misconduct in developing beliefs, attitudes and behaviors that promote healthy, consensual, and safe intimate relationships and sexual behavior.

This spring, UVM's new Project Management Office is leading an effort to refine our uniform reporting portal and improve the function and utilization of case management software that will help us ensure timely and effective response and follow-up.



## **Osher Center**

The Osher Center celebrated its first anniversary last October and it continues to build on the foundation of UVM's history of integrative healthcare work. Among many of the Center's recent accomplishments:

- The Osher Center's Comprehensive Pain Program serves as a national model in its use of an integrative, whole-person approach to addressing the challenge of chronic pain. In October of 2023, the Program finalized negotiations for a pilot with Medicaid, making it the first in the U.S. to offer this comprehensive and integrative pain care to Medicaid subscribers.
- The Center's educational programs are flourishing, with 300 healthcare professionals worldwide attending their integrative pain management conference last May.
- Their Integrative Therapies at the UVM Cancer Center and the UVM Children's Hospital continue to help relieve suffering, improve care and quality of life, support healthy lifestyles, and empower patients and families. This past year, the Osher Center received a grant from Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center for Advancing Rural Health Equity to offer farm shares and health coaching for food-insecure cancer patients and a philanthropic gift from a generous donor to expand our music therapy at the UVM Children's Hospital.
- The Center's Health and Wellness Coaching program was the top-grossing noncredit program at UVM associated with the Upskill Vermont grant this year.
- The UVM Employee Wellness program, housed in the Osher Center, is thriving, gaining more partnerships with the Center for Health and Wellbeing, Human Resources, and other units to create a health-promoting culture at UVM for all students, faculty, and staff.
- The Center has established a Planetary Health arm and will make important contributions to this university initiative.

I hope 2024 is off to a positive and productive start for you; I look forward to another year of our work together.

Be well, Catamounts!

### **ACADEMIC SUCCESS GOALS for the University of Vermont Office of the Provost ~ May 6, 2020 Updated January 17, 2024**

The Academic Success Goals are intended to support President Garimella's [strategic areas of impact](#), and reflect priorities in Teaching and Learning, Knowledge Creation, and Engagement. They were developed during the Spring 2020 semester and were updated in Fall 2023. They are the result of ideas, suggestions, and feedback from the members of the Academic Leadership Council and the faculty and staff in their respective units, the Academic Planning Committee, Staff Council, the Faculty Senate, the Graduate Student Senate, the Student Government Association, and academic and student success leaders across campus. [Progress against these goals](#) will be measured by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. The Academic Success Goals should guide the work of all members of our

community – faculty, staff, and students – who participate in, support, and contribute to our academic mission.

Unless aimed at a particular student audience, as appropriate, the Academic Success Goals (ASG) apply to students at all educational levels: undergraduate, graduate, medical, and continuing education/non-degree.

All of the ASGs are important. As part of the Fall 2023 update, their order/numbering has been revised to reflect a general sequencing/scaffolding that may be helpful in organizing efforts and activities in support of the ASGs.

Specific metrics/outcomes for the goals can be found on the companion Metrics/Outcomes [\[TBA LINK\]](#) and ASG Dashboard [\[TBA LINK\]](#) documents.

## Priority 1: TEACHING & LEARNING

### Academic Success Goal 1.1: Increase the diversity of perspectives, experiences, and thought

- A. Identify and implement strategies to recruit and retain students from diverse backgrounds
- B. Identify and implement strategies to recruit and retain faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds
- C. Implement strategies and assess outcomes outlined in units' Inclusive Excellence Action Plans and the university-wide [Comprehensive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan](#)
- D. Ensure an inclusive learning environment developed and implemented by faculty and staff
- E. Establish an enrollment and educational engagement strategy for increasing international student enrollment and retention

### Academic Success Goal 1.2: Develop a unified and impactful framework for undergraduate education

- A. Promote a culture of academic engagement and integrative learning
- B. Encourage and assess student participation in high impact practices that enhance curricular priorities, support integrative learning, and encourage career exploration and skill building (i.e., research opportunities, writing intensive courses, experiential learning, learning communities, problem-based learning)
- C. Implement the [Catamount Experience](#), including [Catamount Global](#) and [Catamount Venture](#)
- D. Continue implementation and launch assessment of Catamount Core

### Academic Success Goal 1.3: Develop graduate programs with rigorous curricula, relevant and valuable experiential opportunities, and that enhance research and scholarship and prepare students for diverse careers

- A. Increase enrollment of research graduate students and funding mechanisms in keeping with very high research activity universities (e.g., training grants, fellowships)

- B. Develop a suite of professional certificates and master's programs, especially online, to meet workforce needs, increase access, and generate revenue in support of the broader graduate endeavor
- C. Expand faculty involvement in graduate education through new inter-disciplinary and non-STEM doctoral programs and the institutional infrastructure to support them, including data infrastructure
- D. Continue the development of contemporary, competitive graduate-level curricula
- E. Improve professional development opportunities to prepare all graduate students for diverse career trajectories

#### Academic Success Goal 1.4: Improve retention, progression, and graduation rates

- A. Ensure that students have access to high-quality academic and student life support services including academic success and wellbeing
- B. Build a high-quality, effective, and accessible system of academic advising that empowers and enables both advisors and advisees to increase agency and aptitude in academic development
- C. Implement strategies to support success in foundational academic experiences, community building, and opportunities for integrative learning
- D. Reduce identified achievement and degree completion gaps

#### Academic Success Goal 1.5: Increase faculty and staff participation in impactful professional development

- A. Increase and coordinate faculty and academic administrator participation in comprehensive faculty development and mentoring programming and assess the effectiveness of these initiatives
- B. Develop and offer high-quality faculty and staff development to promote inclusive excellence through coordination among units and the Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- C. Collaborate with the Chief Human Resources Officer and academic and student success leaders to ensure staff participation in strategic professional development opportunities that support institutional goals

#### Academic Success Goal 1.6: Support post-graduation success for students

- A. Develop a comprehensive career advising system that empowers academic and career advisors and advisees to access and utilize supports
- B. Decrease student indebtedness by reducing time to graduation and increasing scholarship funding
- C. Increase external student recognition via major awards and/or prestigious assistantships/fellowships/internships
- D. Build capacity for effective connections between the Career Center, Alumni Relations, and PACE leading to positive career outcomes and sustained opportunities for upskilling or reskilling

### Priority 2: KNOWLEDGE CREATION

#### Academic Success Goal 2.1: Raise the University's research, scholarship, and creative arts profile

- A. Invest in improving and cultivating staff talent, research facilities and space, infrastructure and administrative capacity to facilitate faculty research, scholarly, and creative activities and support the research mission
- B. Support increased engagement of undergraduate and graduate students in the research enterprise in all disciplines
- C. Develop strategies for implementing workload policies that enhance research productivity and scholarly and creative arts excellence
- D. Identify and grow areas of research, scholarship, and creative arts strength through strategic hiring
- E. Provide coordinated mentorship and support for junior and mid-career faculty research, scholarship, and creative activity
- F. Increase the number of post-doctoral positions and fellowships
- G. Create a systematic review process to increase faculty external recognition and impact
- H. Educate faculty and students on the importance of open access publishing and open science and facilitate faculty participation in open access and open science practices

**Academic Success Goal 2.2: Increase interdisciplinary research in areas of distinctive strengths**

- A. Provide sustained funding for interdisciplinary research collaborations including institutes and centers
- B. Incentivize, evaluate, and reward interdisciplinary and collaborative research, scholarship, and creative activity
- C. Create opportunities for increased faculty interaction and collaboration across disciplinary and unit boundaries

**Academic Success Goal 2.3: Enhance success in external funding**

- A. Increase faculty fellowship opportunities for developing large-scale grant proposals and/or proposals in high priority areas
- B. Further centralize external-funding infrastructure that draws on faculty effort for academic proposal content and professional staff effort for administrative proposal content
- C. Expand infrastructure that leads to more substantial corporate and foundation relations and an increase in related funding proposal success

**Priority 3: ENGAGEMENT**

**Academic Success Goal 3.1: Prepare students to be engaged citizens**

- A. Provide and support community-engaged experiential learning activities for students that address community priorities and challenges
- B. Develop learning opportunities and assess outcomes in intergroup dialogue for students, faculty and staff that improve civil discourse and civic engagement
- C. Establish goals and pathways for global learning opportunities

Academic Success Goal 3.2: Use an evidenced-based engagement approach, including regional partnerships, to address contemporary challenges with an emphasis on service to and partnership with rural and other underserved communities

- A. Develop centralized programs to coordinate research/scholarly/creative arts activities with broad impact
- B. Promote funding opportunities and increase logistical support for community engagement projects
- C. Expand culturally responsive participatory action projects and research with the community and measure the outcomes
- D. Encourage and facilitate translation of faculty research, scholarly, and creative innovations

Academic Success Goal 3.3: Serve as a driver of community and economic development for the state of Vermont

- A. Increase direct engagement activities with the public on campus and in local communities to make connections and build awareness of university offerings
- B. Expand internship programs that connect students with prospective employers and other organizations in Vermont
- C. Establish regular, substantive interactions with community partners
- D. Increase faculty research, scholarly, and creative partnerships with non-academic entities in Vermont
- E. Increase non-credit offerings and enrollment
- F. Increase graduate and professional for-credit distance and hybrid offerings



The University of Vermont

*Office of the Vice President for  
Finance and Administration*

## **Vice President's Report**

**February 9, 2024**

**Board of Trustees  
Budget, Finance and Investment Committee**

**Prepared By  
Richard H. Cate, Vice President for Finance and Administration**

Included in my Vice President's written report are updates on the Green Revolving Loan Fund and building projects.

### **Annual Green Revolving Loan Fund Update**

The Vice President for Finance and Administration is required to provide an annual update on the \$13.0 million Green Revolving Loan Fund. The appended list of projects represents those that have been initiated, are underway, or are completed. The University has committed \$5,496,104. The University received \$280,488 in rebates from the utility companies for projects, for a net cost of \$5,215,616. The projects have an average annual savings to the general fund of \$858,953. Utilities savings from the Chiller Plant expansion has already resulted in \$3,000,000 of which \$600,000 has been paid back to the fund in 2023. The balance in the fund as of December 31, 2023, is \$11,898,719.

### **Building Projects**

Construction projects costing less than \$2 million do not require Board approval, but those costing more than \$1 million do have to be reported to the Board. Among the many building renovations and upgrades going on across campus within that cost range, here are status updates on the most significant projects.

#### ***Howe Library Building Envelope***

**Project Description:** Building envelope reconstruction including removal of brick façade to improve connection detail and add additional insulation.

**Project Cost:** Now estimated over \$2M; resolution to be brought forward in October 2024.

Status: Under design

Schedule: To be bid Fall 2024

Estimated Construction Timetable: Spring 2025-Fall 2026.

### ***Main District Energy Plant, Central Campus***

Project Description: Provide and install two additional cooling towers at the Chilled Water Plant to meet demand.

Project Cost: \$1.7M

Status: Out to bid.

Schedule: Lead time for materials may affect construction timeline.

Estimated Construction: Calendar year 2024.

### ***Fleming Improvements***

Project Description: South Entrance reconstruction

Project Cost: \$1.5M

Status: Bid February 2024

Estimated Construction date: May 2024-September 2024

### ***University Heights Siding Replacement***

Project Description: Replacement of defective siding at the University Heights complex, multiple buildings, Phase 1. Siding covered under warranty; labor costs paid for by Residential Life.

Project Cost: \$1.5M

Status: Out to bid

Estimated Construction dates: May 2024-September 2024; May 2025-September 2025

### ***Horticultural Farm Pavilion***

Project Description: Construction of a new pavilion at the Horticultural Farm

Project Cost: \$1.3M

Status: Received bids

Estimated Construction Timetable: Spring/Summer 2024

### ***Swim Locker Room Renovations, Athletic Complex***

Project Description: The project site is more than a 1700 sq. ft. area located on the ground level of the Forbush building in the Patrick-Gutterson-Forbush athletic complex. It is immediately north of the pool/natatorium. The space includes the women's NCAA swim team locker room, public locker room

areas for pool use, toilet and pool showering areas. The project shall expand/improve the locker room areas, which includes new phenolic lockers, new lighting, new plumbing, new fire protection services, added outlets, re-painting, new flooring in indicated areas, creation of ADA accessible toilet, ADA sinks, and new mirrors.

Project Cost: \$1.3M

Status: Bid February 2024

Estimated Construction Timetable: Spring/Summer 2024



**\$13M Green Energy Revolving Fund Project Tracking (01-00001-110-105501-601-0000-0000-0000)**

Project Number	Project Description	Type	Lifespan (Yrs)	Project Create Date	Project Completion	Project Start Year	First Payback Year	Initial Total Project Cost	Initial Rebate	Enter Final project cost less final rebate, i.e. final from Loan Fund, if diff from original plan	Initial Total From Loan Fund	Total Interest	Total Payback	Est. Cost Per Unit	No. Units (MCF for Gas, kWh for Electric)	Annual Savings Estimate	
026909	LUMEC Ext Lighting Phase I	Electric	15.00	3/5/2012	9/30/2012	2012	2014	31,237.78	21,525.00		9,712.78	742.56	10,455.34	0.148	34,932	5,169.94	
026916	Simpson Hall Insulation HVAC	Gas	20.00	3/6/2012	7/31/2012	2012	2014	16,160.00	8,221.00		7,939.00	467.93	8,406.93	5.15	1,343	6,916.45	
026971	L/L Mech/Elect THERMAXX	Gas	20.00	3/28/2012	5/31/2012	2012	2013	24,633.00	7,883.00		16,750.00	2,141.96	18,891.96	5.15	919	4,732.85	
027168	Shoebox LED Ext Lighting	Electric	15.00	4/26/2012	9/30/2012	2012	2014	26,615.00	17,675.00		8,940.00	447.00	9,387.00	0.148	69,365	10,266.02	
027261	Bollard LED Ext Lighting	Electric	10.00	5/25/2012	7/31/2012	2012	2014	6,353.27	-		6,353.27	445.38	6,798.65	0.148	27,815	4,116.62	
027262	UH South-Thermal Blankets	Gas	20.00	5/25/2012	8/31/2012	2012	2014	18,315.92	4,560.00		13,755.92	2,929.91	16,685.83	5.15	456	2,348.40	
027263	KIM LED Exterior Lighting	Electric	15.00	5/25/2012	7/31/2012	2012	2014	8,088.80	3,325.00		4,763.80	1,346.96	6,110.76	0.148	4,322	639.66	
027264	UH North-Thermal Blankets	Gas	20.00	5/25/2012	6/30/2012	2012	2013	14,751.00	6,390.00		8,361.00	816.05	9,177.05	5.15	639	3,290.85	
027475	LUMEC Ext Lighting Phase II	Electric	15.00	7/26/2012	8/31/2012	2013	2014	24,668.00	17,080.00		7,588.00	519.27	8,107.27	0.148	34,932	5,169.94	
027481	Christie - Blankets Phase I	Gas	20.00	7/30/2012	9/30/2012	2013	2014	19,498.05	4,925.00		14,573.05	2,144.90	16,717.95	5.15	695	3,579.25	
027482	Christie-Blankets Phase II	Gas	20.00	7/30/2012	9/30/2012	2013	2014	13,065.03	3,300.00		9,765.03	1,142.95	10,907.98	5.15	602	3,100.30	
031072	Energy Improvements Waterman	Gas/Electric	various	7/28/2015	6/30/2016	2016	2017	467,095.00	119,680.00	241,899.52	347,415.00	-	241,899.52	See notes	See notes	55,623.00	
032767	Miller Research Farm Solar	Electric		10/24/2016	6/30/2018	2017	2019	42,000.00	25,000.00		17,000.00	-	17,000.00			2,437.00	
031749	Attain Net Metering	Gas		3/3/2016	6/30/2018	2016	2017	800,000.00	-		800,000.00	-	800,000.00			114,285.71	
029781	Chiller Plant Expansion	Gas/Electric	25.00	6/11/2014	6/30/2016	2014	2018	3,000,000.00	-		3,000,000.00	-	3,000,000.00			600,000.00	
035941	Stafford 2nd Fl Fume Hood Upgr	Gas		3/20/2019		2019	2023	298,112.00	40,924.00	115,013.91	257,188.00	-	115,013.91			37,277.00	
038582	CRF 13M Revolving Fund Project	Gas/Electric				2021					966,000.00	-					
<b>Subtotal Active Projects</b>								<b>4,810,592.85</b>	<b>280,488.00</b>	<b>356,913.43</b>	<b>5,496,104.85</b>	<b>13,144.87</b>	<b>4,295,560.15</b>			<b>858,952.98</b>	
<b>Subtotal Planned Projects</b>																	
<b>Total - Active &amp; Planned Projects</b>								<b>4,810,592.85</b>	<b>280,488.00</b>		<b>5,496,104.85</b>	<b>13,144.87</b>	<b>4,295,560.15</b>			<b>858,952.98</b>	



The University of Vermont

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Enterprise Risk  
Management



**Enterprise Risk Management Update**

**February 9, 2024**

**Prepared By**

**Tessa Lucey, Director of Compliance and Chief Privacy Officer**

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In February 2023, the Board of Trustees received a biennial report on Enterprise Risk Management assessment results. Throughout the year, committees will receive status updates on risks and opportunities that fall under their purview. Included in this report is the update on the following:

- Risk: Ability to Recruit and Retain Talent (Staff & Faculty)
- Risk: Culture and Morale
- Opportunity: Advance UVM's Land Grant Mission

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

### **Risk - Ability to Recruit and Retain Talent (Staff & Faculty) (NEW)**

This was a new risk identified in the 2022 biennial risk assessment. That assessment observed the trend of the post-COVID “great resignation,” which impacted employers across all industries, including higher education. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data reflected voluntary resignation rates of nearly 3.5% of the workforce and estimated that nearly 50 million workers left their job in 2022. (Bureau of Labor Statistics, Job Openings and Labor Turnover Report, December 2022).

Nationally, employers have struggled to hire. The national labor shortage has been acutely experienced in Vermont, where BLS estimates there are 36 available workers for every 100 open jobs and a decline to below the national average of those who are actively working or actively seeking work.

UVM is impacted by these challenging trends. UVM has experienced an average voluntary turnover rate of 13.4% (of which 2.1% is attributable to retirements) among full-time Staff employees and 6.1% (2.5% attributable to retirements) among full-time Faculty employees.

For the first six months of the year, from July 1<sup>st</sup> 2023 to December 31<sup>st</sup> 2023, UVM has experienced so far a voluntary turnover rate of 5.6% among FT Staff employees (0.7% attributable to retirements) and 1.9% among FT Faculty employees (0.5% attributable to retirements).

Under the direction of UVM’s new Chief Human Resources Officer, Human Resources (HR) has created a Talent Acquisition Center of Excellence to centralize recruitment strategies and practices and provide guidance to campus partners tasked with recruiting efforts. This will allow for strategic approaches to filling difficult-to-hire positions and streamline onboarding practices to improve the new employee’s experience. The Career Path Development initiative currently underway provides employees an opportunity to visualize their career progress within the University. This project will continue through summer 2024. A new position, Talent Development Leader, will be responsible for developing transformative and experiential learning programs to keep pace with changing organizational needs. Partnering with Professional and Continuing Education (PACE), this position will lead staff development initiatives and drive the strategy for successful career outcomes for our diverse staff population. The Talent Development and Talent Acquisition Centers of Excellence will build efforts and best practices in their respective areas.

### **Risk – Culture and Morale**

This was a new risk identified in the 2022 biennial risk assessment. The risk is intended to evaluate and respond to how the recruitment and retention challenges identified above impact culture and morale. Anecdotally, UVM knows one consequence is temporarily increased workloads. Sustained inability to hire could result in department/unit reorganizations or other strategies aimed at getting the necessary academic and administrative work of the university accomplished. These factors reduce employee security and, therefore, lead to unwanted turnover, perpetuating the recruitment/retention dilemma outlined in the above risk.

In August 2023, a new CHRO was hired. This position is dedicated to our employees, and the CHRO position’s direct reporting line to the President signifies the value of our employees and the necessity of attention to their satisfaction and effectiveness. A primary goal is developing accurate measures of employee engagement and tracking improvements of those measures over time.

The structure of HR has been re-envisioned to highlight specific centers of excellence for HR practice. Additionally, within HR, the Labor and Employee Relations (LER) team will be shifting focus to

provide more intentionally proactive consultation with people leaders with an emphasis on effective and engaging HR strategies. In addition to the structure changes, UVM Staff Council and administration work closely together on matters of importance to staff generally, including recognition and reward initiatives, and the CHRO and other leaders are working with all staff representation organizations to identify and develop employee engagement opportunities.

As part of the HR Inclusive Excellence Plan, our Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity is in the process of forming employee affinity groups which will provide employees an opportunity to connect with colleagues. These groups are formed around shared connections such as gender, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. These groups aim to support underrepresented employees, promote diversity, and foster understanding among coworkers.

### **Opportunity – Advance UVM’s Land Grant Mission**

The opportunity embedded in the University's identity as one of the nation's first land-grant institutions and its mission of service to the State of Vermont is persistent and perpetual. The increased focus on fulfilling our land-grant mission as part of the Amplifying Our Impact strategic vision has enhanced the opportunity for the university and elevated awareness across the state that the success of Vermont and the success of UVM are interconnected. The Board has been informed routinely about new and existing efforts to bring the expertise and energy of UVM to all areas of Vermont through rural partnerships, internship programs, and community-engaged learning opportunities. Through programs such as the UVM Promise, six years of frozen tuition for in-state students, and Upskill VT, supporting Vermonters enrolling at the institution for nondegree, professional, undergraduate, and graduate programs remains an institutional focus as part of UVM’s contribution to workforce development, as is the university's role as a key talent magnet for the state, attracting students from around the country who choose to stay in Vermont for their careers after graduation. These goals will be supported by expanded partnerships with the State of Vermont as well as with local governments, non-profits, and corporations, and through the vital research activities at UVM that contribute to the health of Vermont's people, communities, and the environment.



# UVM ALUMNI ASSOCIATION UPDATE

## Board of Trustees

Friday, February 9, 2024

**Prepared by:** Cathy Tremblay '85, Alumni Association President  
Deb Mignucci '82, Alumni Association Vice President

The UVM Alumni Association is pleased to present this report reflecting recent accomplishments and areas of focus in the first half of the year. While we are still offering virtual engagement opportunities, constituents have returned to engaging with us in person. Our volunteer leadership consists of more than 150 individuals representing eight decades of graduates, and we continue to build our representation from historically underrepresented communities and special interest affinity groups. This report contains a small sample of the diverse array of engagement programs we offer to our global UVM community.

## Strategic Priority Updates and Program Highlights

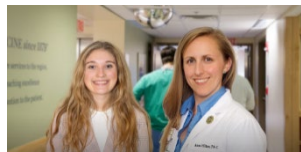


### UVM Connect reaches new milestone

UVM Connect—the University’s networking platform—continues to flourish in this virtual space, engaging alumni across generations as well as current students—“Experience is

good no matter what type of experience it is. If you make an effort, UVM Connect can help," says Claire Evans

'25. Students journey from curiosity to capability through job shadows, internships, and wisdom from our dynamic alumni network. UVM Connect serves as a bridge to the professional world – explore profiles, understand career trajectories, and connect with Catamounts who can provide career perspective and guidance. Evans '25 (left)

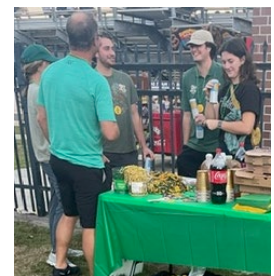


utilized UVM Connect as a networking tool to set up job shadowing, leading her to Anna Hilton '12 (right), a General Cardiology PA at the UVM Medical Center. If you have not done so already, we encourage you to join the platform at [uvmconnect.org](http://uvmconnect.org) and help us grow the UVM network.

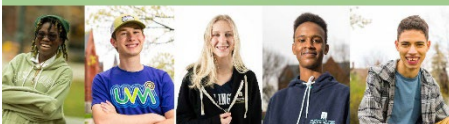
### Catamounts in Action



This past fall, over 30 student-athletes and 15 local alumni came together for a career networking night. Alumni represented each of the seven career interest groups as defined by the UVM Career Center, and were able to share personal experiences on how they pivoted from being varsity student-athletes to being full-time employees at a variety of companies. In addition to providing career networking opportunities,



the UVM Alumni Association hosted pre-game gatherings this fall ahead of UVM Men’s Soccer games in Hartford, Connecticut, Orlando, Florida, Morgantown, West Virginia, and Burlington, Vermont. These alumni fan gatherings are a great way to engage with fellow Catamounts and cheer on our student-athletes.



### Flexible. Affordable. Distinguished. UVM for High Schoolers

In partnership with the office of Professional and Continuing Education (PACE) and the office of Enrollment Management, we have worked to create a unified space to promote all of the opportunities the next generation of Catamounts can engage in prior to applying to UVM. Programs include pre-college courses, attending summer academy, being

referred by an alumnus through Refer-a-Catamount, and participating in the Vermont Pitch Challenge. This past fall, we had over 30 students engaging in programs who had ties to UVM. We believe that exposing the next generation to UVM early and in unique ways will be a successful recruitment tool. We are looking forward to sharing end-of-cycle statistics in late spring of this year.

## Student Alumni Association



The Student Alumni Association (SAA) is a student run club whose mission is to encourage current students and alumni to actively participate in the UVM community and foster a sense of **pride** in our university. This past fall, SAA provided opportunities to connect current students to alumni. On the left is a photo of students with UVM Alumni Deniz Sehovic '15 who shared tips on how to land your dream job-on the right is Angelika Karapetian '24



who spent the day in New York at Nielsen with Adam Levy '98 Chair, Alumni Association Career Committee, and bottom right SAA enjoyed a holiday meal together with members of the UVM Foundation staff. These meaningful relationships between students and alumni helped to leverage mentorships, alumni networks, and strengthen a stronger culture of philanthropy amongst our community. The Student Alumni Association hopes that the engagement opportunities that all students engage in help to instill a feeling of **tradition** in Catamounts and present and create a sense of **home** that lasts beyond graduation.



## Affinity Celebrations strengthens ties back to UVM



During the fall, the UVM Alumni Association helped the College of Education and Social Services (CESS) and the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources (RSENR) celebrate their golden reunions. The fiftieth anniversary of the merging of the schools of education and social work offered a moment of reflection and gratitude for the CESS community, while the Rubenstein fiftieth



celebration gave current students the chance to share the exciting news with alumni that the Aiken Center, home to many RSENR classes, is now UVM's first net-zero energy building on campus! With such incredible milestones to recognize, alumni enjoyed coming back to campus during UVM Weekend to reminisce and reconnect to the place that they love.

## UVM is in the line of TOTALITY- Total Solar Eclipse

On April 8, 2024 at exactly 2:14 pm, a total solar eclipse will begin in Burlington. From 3:26 - 3:29 p.m. EST, the Sun will be completely blocked by our Moon as it passes between the Sun and Earth, darkening the skies as if it were dusk. The UVM Alumni Association is offering free branded glasses to safely view the eclipse. Please visit [www.alumni.uvm.edu](http://www.alumni.uvm.edu) to learn more and request your glasses. Make sure to share your photos on our social media accounts.



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**Engage with Us!** Our volunteer webpage and upcoming events calendar are a hub for alumni to find event offerings, including campus-wide events: [alumni.uvm.edu/events](http://alumni.uvm.edu/events).



## **Staff Council President's Report**

**Board of Trustees  
February 9, 2024**

**Prepared By  
Monika Donlevy, Staff Council President**

Members of the Board,

I am delighted to share that our Staff Council committees have been inspired to develop and plan some great initiatives for this academic year. Our members are thoughtful in their approach and have worked hard to select action items that are relevant and impactful to our UVM family.

Our Community Engagement Committee continues to provide fun activities on campus, such as a tour of the greenhouses and a walk around campus to learn who and why buildings were named after. Our Social Committee held another successful Bazaar in early December. This featured vendors who are local artisans, many of which are UVM staff. The Bazaar is our primary revenue stream for events Staff Council either hosts or subsidizes throughout the year. I encourage you to drop in if you are ever in town on the first Wednesday in December! Both the Professional Development and Compensation, Benefits and Budget (CBB) Committees are working with our Human Resources team to build out programs that we feel will be beneficial to all UVM staff. Professional development opportunities were compromised during the Covid period, and we are working hard to rebuild them to help staff learn and grow. At UVM we have over 600 staff that are not served by a Union and the Staff Council Compensation, Benefits & Budget committee is both honored and privileged to represent this population to UVM Leadership.

As Staff Council President I had the privilege to serve as Chair of the Our Common Ground Award selection committee (the most prestigious staff award at the university). The committee identified several areas for improvement in the nomination and selection process. A proposal for changes to both the nomination process, and the selection process, was submitted to President Garimella which he has approved. These refinements will ensure a more staff appropriate nomination and a more objective selection process, further enhancing the significance of this award.

Early this year Ellen Brennan with the UVM/NASA team met with Staff Council to talk about campus events on Monday April 8<sup>th</sup> when Burlington will experience a total eclipse of the sun around 3:30pm. All students, faculty and staff will be issued special glasses to ensure safe viewing of the solar eclipse and there will be multiple celebratory and educational events on campus. Staff Council will be volunteering across campus during this event.

I am excited about the upcoming events for the Spring and Summer and grateful to serve alongside such hard-working council members to make UVM a place where we all thrive. We greatly appreciated Chair Ron Lumbra meeting with Staff Council in the spring of 2023 and invite him and any other interested board member to join us again this year at a meeting.



## **Student Government Association (SGA) President's Report**

**Board of Trustees  
February 9, 2024**

**Prepared By  
Olivia Eisenberg, SGA President**

UVM Student Government Association was excited to carry out another successful Week of Kindness in November. We enjoyed connecting with the community and spreading kindness throughout the week, and we are looking forward to this semester's week of events!

SGA has greatly benefited from the Strategic Plan, a bi-annual report conducted to gauge where student concern lies throughout campus. The feedback we received from students has given us a strong direction as we carry out our projects, making sure every goal we have is grounded in student concern. We have taken on numerous project as direct responses to requests and concerns brought up in the Strategic Plan report.

This past semester, the UVM community has faced difficult issues to which SGA has responded with great support for our students and the greater Burlington community. I am very proud of the determination of each of our senators to create a safe and supportive UVM environment.

Looking ahead, we are preparing for both Sexual Violence Awareness Month and Earth Week in April, booking speakers and planning events to make educational and empowering experiences for students.

This report does not encompass all of the amazing work that each and every senator has been doing but know that we are all working hard to ensure every student at UVM has the best college experience that they can. We have many more projects in their beginning stages as well and are excited to see them create lasting change on campus.

This will be my last report as SGA President, as my successor will take office in April. So, thank you all for the support you have given SGA throughout the past year.

Thank you.





FACULTY SENATE

**Faculty Senate President's Report**  
**February 2024**

**Prepared By**  
**Thomas Borchert, Faculty Senate President**

The Faculty Senate is responsible for the effective management of the academic affairs of the University, a responsibility it shares with the administration.

For my report, I want to share with the Board of Trustees our response to a set of events that represent an important challenge in higher education right now, related to a tension between campus safety, academic freedom, and free speech.

On October 26, 2023, a Palestinian writer and activist, Muhammed el-Kurd was scheduled to give a lecture on the UVM campus. El-Kurd's primary host was the Will Miller Social Justice Speaker Series, an organization that is not formally a part of UVM but has close connections with members of the campus community (Will Miller as you may already know was a member of the UVM Philosophy Department). The lecture was sponsored by two UVM entities, the English Department and the Sociology Department. The lecture was arranged far in advance of its scheduled date, with no exceptional concerns raised. However, in the wake of the October 7 events in Israel, the context around giving the lecture changed. Citing security concerns, the administration decided to rescind use of University space for the lecture (which was ultimately given in an online format).

While the University cited security concerns for its decision, a number of Senators and other faculty raised concerns within the Senate and to me directly about this decision. To them, the decision seemed as if it were a violation of academic freedom. These faculty were concerned that the administration's decision was driven by complaints that the speaker was antisemitic, a point made in [New York Times](#) article in December of last year. Moreover, these faculty were concerned that the administration was partly about responding to the politics of the moment in relation to last year's Office for Civil Rights investigation into the University's response to complaints of antisemitism on campus. As a result of these concerns, I invited the University's General Counsel, Trent Klingerman, to address the Senate on November 27 about the University's decision. Mr. Klingerman stated clearly that the University's purpose is to hold events whenever possible, consistent with statements within University policy which describe the importance of free expression. However, Senators also requested that the Senate conduct a review of how the decision was made and communicated. I have followed this request, and also

asked that the administration participate in the review to which the President and Provost agreed.

The purpose of this review committee is forward looking. It is to ensure that the University's policy and procedures on academic freedom and speakers on campus are robust and clear, that our communication practices are also clear, and that when such a decision is made, the administration's criteria are as clear as is possible while also preserving appropriate confidentiality around security concerns. The committee is comprised of Provost Prelock, Jennifer Strickler, chair of Sociology one of the departments that originally co-sponsored the lecture, Tom Sullivan, President Emeritus and a free speech expert, Lizzy Pope Associate Professor of Nutrition and Food Sciences, and a member of the Faculty Senate Executive Council and myself.

Normally, an ad hoc committee is not a matter that the Board of Trustees should be concerned about. However, academic freedom is among our most important ideals and among the issues over which the faculty have direct authority, as articulated in the constitution and bylaws approved by the Board of Trustees. Moreover, just last May, the Board of Trustees accepted a revision to the statement on Academic Freedom, after it was approved by both the Faculty Senate and the administration.

It is clear that there are real challenges for institutions like ours to navigate the current conditions. We want to preserve academic freedom, and campus safety; we want to help our students learn how to work through complicated issues in ways that are respectful and critical. We do not want to become the target of outside entities or have our ideals weaponized against us. I think that the only way that we manage this is to prepare for when these conflicts arise, and to do so as part of a shared process with the faculty and the administration.