



The University of Vermont

Office of the Provost
and Senior Vice President

TO: University of Vermont Faculty

FROM: Jim Vigoreaux, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs
Thomas Chittenden, President, Faculty Senate
Cathy Paris, Immediate Past President, Faculty Senate

DATE: July 18, 2019

SUBJ: Campus-Wide Faculty Conference

We write to invite you to a faculty conference to take place on **August 19, 2019**, from 8:30 AM to 10:45 AM, with optional breakfast beginning at 7:30 AM. The event, held in conjunction with New Faculty Orientation, launches the fourth annual *UVM Faculty Development Series* and provides an opportunity for returning faculty to welcome new colleagues. The [Faculty Development Series](#) is a year-long program designed to assist faculty in acquiring the knowledge and skills to succeed as 21st century educators and maintain excellence in research and scholarly activities.

The theme for AY19-20 series is *Liberal Arts and the Meaning of a UVM Education*. We anticipate that lectures, discussions, and workshops will be presented throughout the year to further develop the conference theme.

We are pleased that Mark D. Usher, PhD, Lyman-Roberts Professor of Classical Languages and Literature, and a faculty member in The Environmental Program, will be the keynote speaker for the faculty conference. The title for the keynote address is *The Roman Villa Project: Archaeology, Paleobotany, and Sustainable Agriculture in Italy's Sabine Hills*. Professor Usher will discuss the multidisciplinary research and new UVM student internship he is overseeing at a unique archaeological site in Italy's Sabine Hills. That site comprises an ancient olive plantation at Agriturismo Le Mole sul Farfa in Mompeo, where substantial remains of a Roman *villa rustica* have been uncovered intact.

The multidisciplinary venture springs from a chapter on Roman agronomy in Professor Usher's forthcoming book on sustainable systems in classical antiquity. Usher, who also happens to run a farm of his own, describes his work on the new UVM initiative as that of a "general contractor" and liaison between the various audiences interested in the results of research of this kind—not only Classicists and archaeologists, but botanists, ecologists, agriculturalists, and foodies.

Following Professor Usher's presentation, faculty are invited to participate in a book discussion group related to the First Year Reading Program. Each one of the nine Residential Learning Communities has chosen a book that speaks specifically to the theme of their community. Groups will meet from 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM and the discussion will be facilitated by Faculty Associates of each community.

A preliminary agenda of the day's event and a list of the books selected for each community is found [here](#). **We kindly request registration by Noon, August 12, 2019** for the Campus Wide Faculty Conference and/or the book discussion group by clicking [here](#). Space in the book discussion groups is limited and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. A free copy of the book will be provided to the first five registrants of each group.

You may address any questions to Jim.Vigoreaux@uvm.edu.