



**FRANK BRYAN**

An insightful political analyst with a special understanding of the Vermont character, Dr. Frank Bryan says Vermont values are alive and well at the University of Vermont.

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## UVM PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

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*Professor of Political Science, College of Arts and Sciences*

Ask Frank Bryan about Vermont values and he'll tell you **geography is destiny**. The smallness of Vermont's towns and their isolation amid the hills "create a necessity of dealing with the people you're stuck with. This breeds civic tolerance and a sense of civic duty." Bryan knows whereof he speaks, having grown up in Newbury, a town so tiny he continued playing cards with someone even after discovering he was a cheat. It was either that or quit cards altogether.

At a time when Robert Putnam's book, *Bowling Alone*, has popularized the notion of **social capital**—the organizations and institutions that create community—Vermont leads the nation in many measures of civic engagement. Dr. Bryan has just completed a book, *Real Democracy: What It Looks Like, How It Works*, about town meetings, which are alive and well in Vermont and the very embodiment of civic engagement.

Because Vermont was, in Dr. Bryan's words, "America's first frontier," it cherishes **individualism**, and because it has never been a rich state, it values the **work ethic**, practicality, and frugality. All these values are alive and well at the University of Vermont.

"In Vermont the question is seldom whether an institution is **big enough to accomplish** this mission or that, but whether it's **small enough**." Classes are small at UVM and the professors **accessible**. "Any student can walk in my door and talk to me," says Dr. Bryan, though he adds that appearances can be deceiving. With **eighteen** full-time professors, UVM's Political Science Department is actually bigger than those of many large universities.

"UVM is really an incredible luxury for Vermont. We couldn't afford it if we had to pay for it," Dr. Bryan says.