



The University of Vermont

Office of the President

February 26, 2018

Dear Members of the University of Vermont Community,

Recent events on campus have focused our attention on important and pressing issues: racial equality, diversity, and justice. Any great university embraces open, critical discourse. As we discover and learn from each other, we often find ourselves engaged in vigorous debate and heartfelt disagreement. The process is often messy. It is important that we never lose sight of the core elements that make UVM a vibrant intellectual community of which we all can be proud: diverse perspectives, meaningful dialogue, mutual respect, and civility. These are fundamentals that should guide all of our actions as we move forward as a community.

Over the weekend, I met with the deans to discuss recent events and specifically identify ways to expand our longstanding commitment to building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive university. As a direct result of this meeting, we developed positive action steps which will have clear timelines to ensure successful, systematic completion:

- Provide required professional development for all faculty who teach D1/D2 courses. The training will focus on curriculum development and managing classroom conversations and interactions related to diversity.
- Create a centralized position dedicated to assisting the colleges with the development and implementation of diversity-related curriculum, and required professional development of faculty for D1/ D2 faculty described above.
- Create a centralized recruiter position to assist the colleges and divisions with developing diverse candidate pools for faculty and other national search processes, and provide sufficient financial and institutional resources to recruit, hire, and retain diverse faculty and staff.
- Identify and provide continued support for the existing diversity-related positions in each academic unit.
- Each college will formalize faculty-wide professional development in diversity and cultural competency, through faculty meetings, special seminars, or faculty retreats, and will continue to promote the importance and visibility of these sessions with faculty.
- Before the next academic year, each dean will ensure that a systematic approach to documenting demonstrated commitment to diversity is included in the annual faculty review process. The Provost will incorporate demonstrated commitment to diversity into

the review process for each dean, and will share best practices obtained from these annual reviews. These efforts mirror the diversity elements that are already included in the annual staff review process.

Every school and college is fully on board with these additional steps. We are re-energizing our continuing commitment to these issues, putting these initiatives in concrete terms, and requiring systematic implementation throughout the University.

Our University embraces racial equality, diversity, and justice as core values that inspire our lives. By uniting in our collective resolve, we have the opportunity to become a national model.

With respect and appreciation,

Tom Sullivan