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**For immediate release**

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## **United Academics at the University of Vermont Statement Regarding UVM's Budget Problems**

Along with the entire UVM community, United Academics AFT/AAUP--the union representing most faculty at the University of Vermont--is concerned about the recently announced \$22 million budget shortfall. We are committed to working with the administration and the rest of the University to develop and implement institutionally responsible solutions that maintain UVM's commitment to its core missions: quality teaching, research, and service. Towards that end, United Academics articulates the following guiding principles and commitments:

- UVM's ability to provide close and high-quality interaction between students and faculty has been a key to its success and to its ability to attract students and tuition dollars. UA is committed to maintaining and working to improve high-quality interaction, and is concerned that solutions based on simply increasing the size of the student body without appropriately increasing or maintaining faculty numbers will be harmful to the quality of education we can offer.
- Openness and participation in decision making at all levels is the best way to achieve institutionally responsible solutions. It is a simple matter of practicality that faculty be directly and broadly involved in the decision-making. Faculty do the research and teaching and many of them have much longer experience at UVM than upper administrators; they are likely to know best what kinds of solutions will and will not work in their respective areas. Given this, it is disappointing that President Fogel rejected United Academics' request to be included on the Ad Hoc Committee of Strategic Budget Advisors. If any hard decisions are going to gain legitimacy, they can only do so if the community has full confidence that input from those who do the core work of the university was taken seriously.
- Transparency is also necessary for a viable solution. If people are going to cooperate and continue to work hard for the University under difficult conditions, they must fully understand why certain actions were necessary and be convinced that the choices made were the best possible ones. UA appreciates President Fogel's recent releases of information regarding the budget, and we especially applaud Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration Richard Cate's frank, open, and disciplined approach to the budget so far. We note, however, that in Mr. Cate's analysis, much of the problem was created, not by the national financial crisis, but by errors in judgments and in budgetary practices over the past several years. UVM's administrators, from the deans to the president, are in no position to say "trust us" and then make decisions behind closed doors.
- UA believes that the faculty and staff are the core and heart of UVM, and is committed to solutions that value and support the work of all employees at UVM, including staff and faculty not represented by a union. Any solution based on cuts in faculty and staff, or that asks more of an already hard-working faculty and staff, will not be workable. Being told that cuts are being "shared" across the university is not enough; solutions must be based on developing a sharper focus on UVM's core missions of quality teaching, research, and service, and with an eye towards changing the administrative practices and structures that helped create the problems in the first place. Given these concerns, UA calls for the establishment of procedures and processes by which other members of the university community can participate in the decisions that will affect us all, and calls for the UVM administration to redouble its commitment to protecting academic quality and the faculty and staff positions needed to deliver it.