

Dear Faculty:

I am writing to provide additional information and clarification regarding UVM's legislative initiative to remove the "40% Rule" for graduate student tuition. As you may know, the present rule prohibits setting Vermont tuition any higher than 40% of out-of state tuition. The result is that Vermont students get a 60% discount on tuition, and the rule requires UVM to charge out-of-state students at least 2.5 times what Vermonters pay. Our intent by having more discretion within the 40% rule with regard to graduate students is to lower the cost of tuition for out-of-state graduate students so that we can be much more competitive in the national market in recruiting very talented, bright graduate students. By having the ability to lower the price on tuition, we believe that we will have a much more robust application pool. We will be able to compete for students that we now cannot.

This change is not designed to increase tuition for Vermont graduate students over and above the normal annual changes. We have no intention of increasing, through this new discretion, tuition for Vermont graduate students who are presently enrolled save for the normal annual adjustments.

As you know from previous discussions throughout the University for the last year and a half, we have a goal of increasing enrollment in graduate education. This new strategy will permit us to have a larger pool of talented students applying for admission. The faculty will have greater choice in the selection of those students because of the larger talent pool. Overall, we are confident that we will see an increase in quality and talent within the graduate student enrollments that, in turn, benefits the faculty and the University overall, including the University's reputation.

I am pleased to report that the Vermont House passed overwhelmingly, with all of UVM's public Legislative Trustees in support, the language changing the "40% Rule". We are hopeful that the Senate will follow suit in a few weeks. This change is consistent with our strategic goal of making the college experience more affordable for our students as demonstrated this year, regarding undergraduate students, with a 0% increase of tuition for Vermont students, a historic low tuition increase for nonresidents, and a 30% cut in tuition for summer school classes.

My best wishes for a productive conclusion to the semester,

Tom Sullivan,  
President