



THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT'S PLAN FOR

# ENHANCED ENGAGEMENT WITH THE STATE OF VERMONT

January 2020

The University of Vermont is requesting support to fund workforce preparation programs and to expand engagement and partnerships with private, public, and nonprofit entities throughout the state. The focus of these efforts is to respond directly and comprehensively to the challenges clearly articulated by Gov. Phil Scott—an aging population, the need for additional skilled workers to meet the needs of new and existing businesses, and inadequate growth in the number of well-paying jobs.

UVM is uniquely positioned to help Vermont evolve and efficiently capitalize on its many resources. In addition to tackling the challenges outlined by the Governor, the proposed initiatives are fully consistent with the university's land grant mission, identified by President Suresh Garimella as one of three overarching strategic priorities of his administration (the others being student success, and enhanced focus on areas of UVM strength).

To increase its effectiveness in partnering with the state in the areas of workforce development, retention, and growth, UVM is requesting a \$2M investment. These targeted funds will assist in accomplishing the following:

## SUPPORTING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INTERNSHIPS

- ▲ Better alignment and coordination across campus will ensure students are introduced early to internship opportunities with private industries, non-profits, and other organizations in the state. Students often wait until their senior year to begin a job search, and are unaware of employment opportunities within the state. The proposed effort will help our students become aware of the job opportunities within Vermont from their very first year, and help them imagine and plan for future lives and careers in the state.
- ▲ Many employers in the state are not well versed in what it takes to engage students, introduce them to opportunities at their organizations, and cultivate them as future employees. We will focus on mentoring a broad range of organizations to better connect with our students—in areas ranging from agriculture to manufacturing, biotech to defense, and non-profit to governmental/public sector opportunities.
- ▲ Our alumni in Vermont and elsewhere are anxious to play a role in helping the state. They are eager to give back to the university and assist students, and we need to be better-positioned to channel these energies in service of our interest in workforce training, retention, and growth.
- ▲ Outcomes of this effort will be measured by tracking the increase in connections and internships for UVM students in companies based in the state, the financial support provided by organizations targeted at hiring interns, and job offers and retention data.



## ATTRACTING OUT-OF-STATE ALUMNI BACK TO VERMONT

- ▲ Another aspect of alumni engagement is demonstrating to those who have left the state the benefits of returning. There are proven methods to accomplish this, but it will require a concerted effort involving specialized staffing, which the state funding would support.
- ▲ Outcomes of this effort will be measured by the number of alumni of all higher education institutions in the state who return to work in Vermont.

## PURSUING COMPREHENSIVE INDUSTRY-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

- ▲ Examples of such partnerships include work with Agilent (to build on the Biotek connection), Unilever (to build on the Ben & Jerry's and Seventh Generation connections), GlobalFoundries (to ensure the company stays in Vermont and to assist in educating its workforce), and National Life (to offer a partnership to help meet workforce as well as research and development needs). This will require a dedicated corporate-partnerships focus within the university, to be brought about with support from the state funds.
- ▲ Outcomes will be measured by tracking the number, quality, and depth of partnerships established; the number of students engaged; the number of workers educated; and the amount of funds committed by companies to support this effort.

With support from the state funds requested, UVM will create an "Office of Engagement" that will serve as the front door for the entire state. President Garimella led a similar, highly successful operation at Purdue University. Likewise, the UVM office will field all inquiries from across the state and connect them to the appropriate resources and expertise at UVM. This office will be central to actualizing the university's solemn commitment to its land grant mission.