



The University of Vermont

**Suresh Garimella**

*President*

March 10, 2021

Mary Hooper  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Vermont State House  
Montpelier, VT 05633

Dear Representative Hooper,

First, I want to thank you and your fellow legislators for your dedicated work on behalf of Vermont throughout this pandemic. You have all rendered exemplary service to the state of Vermont, and gratefully received support for UVM, during an unprecedented time in our history.

While UVM has certainly been challenged by Covid, we have also been able to rise to new heights. Our aggressive testing program coupled with a robust health pledge, intensive communications about the disease, and above all, stellar commitment by our students, faculty and staff to follow health and safety guidelines, has allowed us to offer arguably the most successful and safe in-person campus experience in the nation. We are deeply proud and thankful to our community, and for our partnership with the state, in facing this adversity.

During the summer of 2020, the legislature supported all of these efforts with generous appropriation of CRF funding to assist UVM with our Covid-related preparations and steep one-time expenses. Thanks to the state's significant contribution, UVM has been able to provide tuition assistance to Vermont families impacted by pandemic job loss, equip classrooms with new technology to facilitate remote and hybrid learning for students, fund room and board refunds to students, and stand up a critical office of engagement to serve the state of Vermont. Without these investments, the university could not have performed as we did in service to our community. We are truly grateful.

With the imminent passage of the American Rescue Plan, we now come to you again seeking pandemic relief. While the University of Vermont is working diligently to keep up momentum, we continue to face serious financial hardships due to Covid. As you know, we are mitigating these circumstances to the best of our ability by additionally imposing hiring freezes, travel restrictions, and other difficult cost-cutting measures. However, the pandemic has endured longer than anyone anticipated, and we face intense and immediate financial need due to these unusual circumstances. The attached table outlines elements of the urgent financial support we seek. As you review the funds flowing to Vermont from the American Rescue Plan, I hope that you will support Vermont's second-largest employer, its greatest source of a qualified workforce inflow from out of state and retention of the in-state workforce, and one of the state's oldest institutions that brings great cultural, social and intellectual vibrancy to the state.

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Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer

I know that we are but one institution among many seeking support from the Rescue Plan, and respectfully ask that you consider using this one-time money to invest in your state's public flagship and land-grant university. We are a careful steward of state dollars and provide the greatest return on investment: by investing in UVM you are investing in the future of Vermont. Each of the investments we seek will buoy Vermont and Vermonters during Covid recovery, whether by supporting student tuition for Vermonters for the long-term, furthering vital research that could halt the next pandemic, or enabling us to enhance the work environments in our buildings. You have my personal commitment that these one-time investments will show long-lasting returns. These unique stimulus dollars will spur innovation at UVM for decades to come.

I sincerely appreciate your willingness to consider these asks, and for your partnership and support of UVM. While this request is focused on short-term, one-time costs, I assure you the university separately continues to work on addressing long-term, structural financial challenges. Please let me know if a conversation about these asks would be helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Suresh Garimella". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'S'.

Suresh V. Garimella

<b>UVM Request for American Rescue Plan Funding</b>	
<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Requested Funding</b>
<p><b>Scholarship Aid for Vermont Students:</b> In partnership with the UVM Foundation, UVM has initiated the Student Opportunity, Access, and Recruitment Initiative (SOAR) to create an endowment to fund scholarship aid for students. As part of that initiative, and to further educational advancement and increase the college-going rate of Vermont high schoolers, a permanent endowment would be created to fund need-based aid. This would provide nearly \$1M annually in perpetuity for Vermonters.</p>	\$22M
<p><b>Support for UVM's Affordability and Accessibility Mission:</b> Support for FY 21 lost revenue from COVID impacts, including from zero increases in tuition, room, board and comprehensive fees, as well as lost parking, athletics and event fees.</p>	\$20M
<p><b>Expanded Technology for Remote Learning:</b> The pandemic forced the University to leap forward in its remote learning approaches and modest technological improvements were made quickly to enable this work. Now, there is a need for further expansion, both because the needs and expectations of students have been permanently altered and to be prepared should another emergency force us to go back to full remote instruction. The needs range from a new learning management system to the additional hardware required to retrofit classrooms to facilitate multi-modal instruction.</p>	\$10M
<p><b>Wiring for Internet Connectivity:</b> As we improve our remote academic offerings and allow students the freedom to access a UVM education from all corners of Vermont and the world through advanced modalities, we must improve our hardware to allow state-of-the-art, quality academic instruction to students electronically. UVM has many older academic buildings, some of which were built a century before the Internet age. The 25+ year-old wiring in them is inadequate to handle current bandwidth demands from devices used by students, faculty, and staff. The massive masonry walls in some of these buildings also pose challenges for wireless transmission. Modern wiring and switches are necessary to transmit wide-band wireless signals throughout these historic buildings.</p>	\$7M
<p><b>Research on Communicable Diseases and COVID-19:</b> Researchers at UVM are engaged in a wide range of research that will inform strategies for disease prevention in the future, including a better understanding of the variants of COVID-19. This funding would supplement existing NIH funding to help accelerate the pace at which life-changing pandemics can be confronted and prevented.</p>	\$8M

<p><b>Air Quality Amelioration for the Given Medical Building:</b>  This funding will be devoted to HVAC and energy efficiency improvements that will enhance the environmental conditions and air quality in the building, which Covid has illuminated as even more critical to health and safety. Nearly 60 years after the construction of the Given Medical Building, a new medical laboratory building (Firestone) is being constructed, which will house state-of-the-art labs to replace some of the labs in Given, further expanding UVM's contribution to the Vermont economy. Once researchers move to the new building, the goal is to renovate and convert the old labs into space that will house the Department of Psychology, which is currently located in obsolete space in Dewey Hall (built in 1906).</p>	<p>\$15M</p>
<p><b>Green Energy for Vermont:</b> UVM has ongoing relationships with local power companies, Sandia National Laboratories, and private firms, collaborating on solar energy projects, most of which are located on University property. In addition to generating renewable power, these projects provide a means for faculty and students to engage in critical research in areas such as how to maximize the production of electricity from a solar source in the Northeast where direct sunlight is often in short supply. To further this research an expansion of UVM's solar generating capacity is necessary and a \$3M project would further this goal, with benefit to the university, State of Vermont and beyond, particularly as we increase our need for clean, reliable power in a new and clean post-pandemic knowledge economy.</p>	<p>\$3M</p>
<p><b>Improving Air Quality, Ventilation and Energy Use Campuswide:</b> Covid has forced us to examine the health and safety needs of everyone on our campus, and shone a light on the need to improve HVAC systems throughout the university. Air quality and ventilation systems are critical for mitigating this pandemic and whatever comes next. UVM has an estimated deferred maintenance backlog of \$380M. The University dedicates funds from its operating budget, facilities reserves, and its modest State capital appropriations to maintain the condition of its facilities as well as possible. In many cases, HVAC improvements are the most critical needs for buildings. One-time funding for such projects would significantly improve environmental conditions and air quality in buildings that were built in another era.</p>	<p>\$13M</p>