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**Remarks by Professor David Shiman, President, United Academics (AAUP/AFT 3203)
to the University of Vermont Board of Trustees, Saturday, February 9, 2013**

On the subject of the UVM-State of Vermont Relationship:

I wish to comment on the recent advisory report to Governor Shumlin on the Partnership between the State of Vermont and the University of Vermont. We are pleased to read that the Report supports that UVM remain a public university and acknowledges the important role UVM plays as a land-grant institution in the development of the state. The Report appreciates the challenges confronting us caused by the low state appropriation and recognizes that the question of affordability for Vermonters must be addressed.

However, we have concerns and questions about some of the recommendations in the Report.

First, the Report focuses almost exclusively on the role of UVM in meeting the economic development challenges of the State. While we recognize the importance of this role, we must never lose sight of the traditional liberal arts mission of the university, and we need to reaffirm it, particularly at a time when the instrumental purposes of education are dominating the conversation.

Second, the Report proposes that the Legislature provide targeted allocations to UVM that would require the University to spend money in specific curricular areas, e.g. STEM, and to increase enrollment in certain disciplines, e.g. engineering. While we acknowledge these curricular needs, we have questions about the degree to which the Legislature should be inserting itself into curricular and enrollment affairs at the University. We have seen too many examples of governors and legislators across the nation trying to prescribe and proscribe curriculum for universities. In some of these places, the humanities are under attack for not contributing to the state's economic development. I would hate to see Vermont move down this path.

Third, the Report's proposal to substantially change the balance between public and private trustees raises questions. Trustees elected by legislators are the ones to whom the Vermont citizenry have access. These elected members of the Board of Trustees have a special sense of accountability to Vermont citizens. Private trustees, while they care about UVM and are in many instances important contributors to the institution, have a different relationship to the Vermont public. Reducing the Vermonter presence on the Board of Trustees flies in the face of reaffirming the importance of keeping UVM a public institution.

Finally, the Report's proposal to lift the 40% tuition cap on what Vermonters can pay needs careful scrutiny. UA strongly believes that no proposal should be implemented that would make UVM less affordable for Vermonters.

I hope these remarks are helpful.