

Statement by Justin Morgan Parmett to UVM Board of Trustees, September 25, 2020

Thank you for letting me speak today. Before I start, I just want to stress one thing and that is that I love UVM.

I came here as an undergrad in mid nineties and I found my home when I joined the Lawrence debate union. And when I say, I found my home, I really mean it. My lifelong friends come from the LDU, I met my partner for life at the LDU, I made it through the loss of my mother because of the support of the LDU. As a result, UVM has always been a special place for me.

After graduating UVM, I went on to complete my Masters in Communication Studies. I came back to UVM as a lecturer and assistant debate coach with my partner Helen in the early 2000's. We left but always planned on returning, which we did in 2016. Now I am a lecturer in the Theatre, Dance and Speech Department as well as GSWS. Additionally, I am the assistant director the LDU and am the chair for the UA, State and Higher Ed Issues Committee.

All of this is to say that I am deeply involved in the university, but I am just one of many faculty members here at UVM that has a long history and deep love for this university. It is under this backdrop that I am here today and please take this statement as one of love and commitment to constantly working to make UVM the best it can be. And know that I have talked to a great deal of faculty, both TT and NTT, and this has been echoed in every conversation. We are here because we are committed to excellence and committed to UVM.

In this regard, there is one key theme to my statement today and that is one of faculty inclusion. The UVM faculty are a significant resource that does not get utilized. We can help solve the problems that higher education in general, but UVM specifically are facing.

We know our students, we know this community, and we know how to ensure the future success of the university. What we need is more collaboration.

As a member of the UA leadership, specifically working on issues related to the State and Higher Ed, it is hard to understand why this 3 minutes is the only time that my committee has the opportunity to talk to you.

I don't understand why there is not regular communication between my committee and the BOT and I am respectfully requesting now that we open our lines of communication with each other and we create opportunities for you to hear more from the faculty, not so we can express grievances or complain, but so we can work together to solve the challenging problems that are facing the university.

I have a great respect for your work as leaders in ensuring the long term success of our beloved university and believe strongly that it can only be improved by having you all

hear more regularly, and not just hear, but interact with faculty representatives for the UA, which make up over 80% of full time faculty.

Looking at recent decisions, whether they be faculty cuts, teaching modality questions, or campus safety, our faculty are experts on all of this and with more inclusion, these decisions can be made in ways that empower and lift up everyone. This and only this is going to be the way to move our university forward and I sincerely hope that you will take me up on the opportunity to open lines of communication and ensure that faculty can aid in the process of healing the university and ensuring its future success.