

From: [Finance](#)
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Subject: Appointment of Elizabeth Palchak, Ph.D. and UVM's Next Milestones in Sustainability
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**VICE PRESIDENT FOR FINANCE AND
ADMINISTRATION**

October 18, 2021

UVM Students, Faculty, and Staff,

Responsible stewardship of our environment is central to UVM's identity. As an early leader in sustainability education, research, and practice, UVM gained global recognition. A few of the many milestones credited to UVM are establishing the first cross-college environmental program in the US (1972); launching energy management (1980), recycling (1989), and composting (1997); and, last year, committing to [divesting from fossil fuel-related investments](#).

As our commitment to campus sustainability advances further, I am pleased to announce the appointment of a new Director of the Office of Sustainability, Elizabeth Palchak, Ph.D. Elizabeth most recently worked for five years at Vermont Energy Investment Corporation (VEIC), a non-profit dedicated to reducing the cost of energy to people and the planet. She earned her bachelor's degree at the College of Wooster and her Ph.D. in UVM's Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources.

With Elizabeth's appointment to this expanded post, UVM will benefit from the synergy of combining several sustainability functions under one leader, including staff with operational expertise in recycling, fleet management, electric vehicles, and renewable energy projects. The Office of Sustainability is now the center of the university's commitment to operate with minimum negative impact on our environment. President Garimella directed me to reinvigorate UVM's position as a leader in the sustainability arena, while ensuring that all goals and targets are achievable within a reasonable amount of time and the financial capacity of the institution. With Elizabeth leading the University's sustainability efforts, I am confident that we can be successful in doing so.

The university's next goal is to create a comprehensive sustainability plan (CSP) for our campus, with broad input from members of our community. As a first step, we will convene a Campus Sustainability Work Group (CSWG). The CSWG's first task will be to further develop and recommend themes and topic areas that could be included in the CSP.

By February, the CSWG is expected to present proposed goals, aspirations, and performance metrics for stakeholder feedback throughout the balance of the spring semester. Benefiting from diverse feedback, the CSP will be finalized by the end of June, so that it can be used to inform the work of the University

beginning in the next academic year.

Ongoing updates of the CSWG's progress and early development of UVM's CSP will be [available from the Office of Sustainability](#). Success in setting and achieving new sustainability goals is essential for the long-term viability of UVM and our planet. The more community voices we can include in this work, the more successful we can be.

Richard Cate
Vice President for Finance and Administration

