The University of Vermont Foundation received total commitments of $44.5 million for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2013, just shy of last year’s record-setting total of $45.1 million. The past fiscal year also set a new record of $37.0 million in total receipts from more than 20,000 donors.

Foundation President and Chief Executive Officer Richard Bundy said the results are “solid indicators that UVM is headed in the right direction in terms of its fundraising capacity.” Total commitments include new outright gifts as well as indicators of future giving, like new pledges and new bequest provisions. Cash receipts are a measure of funds received during the year, including new gifts, realized bequests, and payments against previous years’ pledges.

“The successes we’ve seen in these first two years of the Foundation’s existence bode very well for UVM’s financial future,” Bundy said. “We are incredibly grateful to the more than 20,000 donors this year whose vote of confidence in UVM will have a lasting impact on our ability to provide access and affordability for our students and to serve as a talent magnet for outstanding faculty, which UVM President Tom Sullivan identified early in his presidency as top priorities for our fundraising efforts.”

Donors responded positively to these core fundraising messages from President Sullivan over the course of the last fiscal year. Private donors contributed more than $7.6 million in new scholarship support that will directly benefit students in fields as far-ranging as nursing, plant biology, romance languages and linguistics, medicine, and interdisciplinary education. International students and those in the Universitywide Honors College also will benefit from new endowed scholarship support.

Established new chairs and professorships in business administration, engineering and mathematical sciences, German and Russian studies, and medicine. Endowed faculty positions give the University important resources to attract and retain outstanding scholars to UVM, where their teaching, research, and outreach to the community enhance the overall strength of the institution and contribute to an outstanding student experience.

“It is very gratifying that my first year as president has been such a good year for UVM fundraising,” said UVM President Thomas Sullivan. “We are tremendously appreciative to all of our donors for their generous support. These gifts are an expression of thanks for all that UVM has achieved, confidence in the direction we’re headed, and a measure of our future potential as an economic engine for Vermont and beyond.”


defining excellence, page 4
Momentum is Building

Summer is a great time to be in Vermont. While the pace of life on campus slows down significantly, the Burlington community is abuzz with activities—from tourists who flock to Church Street and the Lake Champlain waterfront, to an abundance of outdoor activities and cultural events to satisfy any interest. Summer also brings the end of the Foundation’s fiscal year, and with it comes a rush of activity as our fundraising and alumni staff work extra hard to meet their goals by June 30. As you can see from the cover story, the extra effort worked! We are pleased and proud to be able to report on another very strong year in terms of donor support to the University, which notably included near record-setting total commitments and an all-time record for receipts. The impact of this strong private giving is felt campuswide, from the more than $7.6 million in new scholarship support that helps to make our campus financially accessible for all talented students, to the seven new endowed faculty positions that give the institution powerful resources to recruit and retain outstanding faculty to our campus. And, of course, that impact is felt as a result of the many wonderful gifts we feature and celebrate in the rest of this newsletter.

On July 1, we set new goals for the upcoming fiscal year and work is already under way to build on the momentum you helped us achieve over the last 12 months. We thank you—and the 20,000 other donors who supported UVM in the last year—for helping to advance the University now and into the future. Enjoy the rest of summer!

Sincerely,

Richard Bundy, President and CEO

Alumnus and Family Establish $1 Million Fund for Vermont Cancer Center

A 1952 alumnus of the University of Vermont College of Medicine and his family have established a $1 million endowed fund at the University to support the work of the Vermont Cancer Center at UVM and Fletcher Allen Health Care. Arthur J. Perelman, M.D. ’52, of Summit, N.J., sons Robert, Jon, and Carl and their children established the Charlotte E. Perelman Cancer Research Fund in honor of their late wife, mother, and grandmother. Nearly 50 family members and friends were on campus in June to celebrate the gift and honor the late Mrs. Perelman.

“We are very grateful to the Perelman family for this generous and thoughtful gift in memory of Charlotte Perelman,” said UVM President Thomas Sullivan. “She was a valued member of our community and a strong advocate for the mission of the Vermont Cancer Center. She admired the center’s devotion to patient care, clinical research, and education. It is fitting that we honor her memory in a way that will support and advance breakthrough cancer research at the Vermont Cancer Center.”

Mrs. Perelman had a keen interest in the work of the Vermont Cancer Center and her husband’s alma mater. The Perelman family designated the fund to support a wide range of research, educational, and advocacy activities.

“My family and I are delighted to make this gift to the Vermont Cancer Center in honor of our beloved Charlotte,” said Perelman. “This was our wish together, and I am so happy to share in this remarkable day to honor such a beautiful person. She wanted to make a real difference, and she knew that the Vermont Cancer Center was the place she could do that.”

Vermont Cancer Center Directors Drs. Claire Verschraegen and Gary Stein, along with UVM College of Medicine Dean Frederick Morin and Fletcher Allen Health Care President and CEO John Brumsted, were at the celebratory event to offer thanks on behalf of their institutions and speak on the impact of the gift. In acknowledgment of the family’s gift and the legacy of Mrs. Perelman, a painting by Helen Shulman, the Perelmans’ niece, titled “With a Following Wind,” and memorial plaque were unveiled in the Larner Medical Education Center at the June 22 event.

The Vermont Cancer Center at the University of Vermont and Fletcher Allen Health Care is a not-for-profit comprehensive clinical and research cancer center, the only such organization in the state of Vermont. Founded in 1974, the Vermont Cancer Center comprises more than 120 scientists and physicians dedicated to providing state-of-the-art cancer diagnosis and treatment, delivering compassionate care to maximize the quality of life for the patient and family throughout the disease, improving the human condition as it is affected by cancer, through fostering and sustaining innovative research in the laboratory that optimizes capabilities in the clinic, and advancing cancer prevention, control, and early detection through education and research programs in a rural setting.
ACCESS: ACCOMMODATIONS, CONSULTATION, COLLABORATION, AND EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

New Award Defines Excellence

Nicoleta Rosa ’14 is used to hearing about all the things she can’t do. Rosa was born with spastic diplegia, a type of cerebral palsy that rendered her unable to walk. She relies on a wheelchair as her primary means of mobility, but Rosa never lets her disability define her ambition. “Although I sometimes have to work harder to achieve a goal that may come easily to others, I remind myself that anything worth having is worth fighting for,” she explains.

As a recipient of the inaugural Defining Excellence Award, Rosa was selected in part for her role as an advocate for students with disabilities on campus. The Defining Excellence Award is conferred through the UVM ACCESS Program, which was established in the 1980s to provide accommodations, consultation, collaboration, and educational support services to UVM students with documented disabilities. The award, established by alumnus Don Nelinson ’76, acknowledges students with disabilities who demonstrate academic excellence and understand the responsibility to serve and give back to their community. Nelinson, whose daughter was born with a genetic disease that made her deaf and is progressively causing her to go blind, believes strongly that everyone has an obligation to give back. “In spite of her challenges, we have always raised our daughter to believe in herself and to never lose sight of the community she lives in.”

Sarah Lyon ’14, another recipient of this year’s Defining Excellence Award, is no stranger to community service. As a high school student she travelled to Mississippi in the wake of Hurricane Katrina to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity. She credits her experience there with igniting a strong desire to help those less fortunate than her. While she admits that her primary focus at UVM has been on academics, Lyon says her most rewarding experiences have been through her volunteerism with Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports, an organization that empowers individuals with disabilities through sports and recreation. Next year she will serve as an officer in UVM’s Adaptive Sports Club, and next winter she’ll be hitting the slopes again. “Every time I go to the mountain to teach a lesson, I feel an extremely strong sense of privilege and appreciation for having the opportunity to share my love of skiing with people who are disabled.”

2013 Defining Excellence Award winners are Nicoleta Rosa ’14, Sarah Lyon ’14, and Nian Wan (not pictured).

Involving and engaging key donors in fundraising activities carried out on behalf of the University of Vermont is a key objective of the University of Vermont Foundation. That takes leadership, and the UVM Foundation is fortunate to count among its assets James R. Keller ’72, who is vice chair of the UVM Foundation Board of Directors.

JAMES R. KELLER ’72

UVM Foundation Vice Chair Jim Keller is a great friend of the University. A longtime supporter of UVM and a 1972 College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences alumnus, he and his wife, Judy, visit campus four or five times a year, even though they live across the country in Washington State. Keller, who earned a degree in mechanical engineering at UVM and an MBA from Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth, began coming back to campus regularly when his son, James Jr. ’03, was a student here in the late ’90s. Impressed with the quality of not only his own education, but also his son’s, Keller said that UVM was the only school his son considered. “My son had an unbelievably good experience with the Finance-Honors Seminar during his senior year,” he said of the School of Business Administration course. The invitation-only class applies financial theory to stock and bond valuation. His son and a team of four other students traveled to New York City to present their project and defend their analyses and recommendations before a panel of seasoned investment professionals.

“It was that exceptional experience for my son that reignited my interest in UVM,” Keller said in his most recent visit to campus in July. A member of the School of Business Administration Board of Advisors since 2005 and current co-chair, Keller retired after 34 years of service as senior vice president of Containerboard Packaging and Recycling for Weyerhaeuser Company, one of the largest forest products companies in the United States. He is past president of International Corrugated Case Association and owner of Green Mountain Business Consultants, which provides general business strategy and positioning, manufacturing, and sales and marketing advice for businesses. He is also chairman of the Newark Group, which makes recycled paperboard and converted products.

Since re-engaging with UVM, Keller has seen the leadership team grow. “President Tom Sullivan, BSAD Dean Sanjay Sharma, and Foundation President and CEO Rich Bundy are such great additions to UVM. Each time a new leader is hired, the University just gets better and better. It’s an exciting time to be involved. The momentum is building.”
Celebrating Scholarship Building the Future

A t the crowd of 320 took their seats last April for the eighth annual Celebrating Scholarship: Building the Future event, the house lights dimmed, and a single spotlight focused on student Dennis Mahoney ’14.

The room quieted and Mahoney said into a microphone, “When I opened the letter, I was filled with relief, excitement, and exhilaration. I ran into the kitchen and hugged my mom. … ‘I got a scholarship! I’m going to UVM!’”

Mahoney, who is studying finance and marketing, and several other scholarship recipients set the stage for the evening by sharing their personal scholarship stories with the invited guests, all of whom have sponsored UVM student scholarships. The dinner in the Davis Center Grand Maple Ballroom was a chance for students to thank their benefactors and for donors to meet those who have benefited from their generosity.

Guest speaker Adam Clymer gave an emotional account of the motivation behind his scholarship support. Clymer, a retired New York Times reporter, and his wife, Anne, established the Jane emily Clymer Scholarship to support female students in the College of Arts and Sciences. Their daughter was a UVM student when she was tragically killed by a drunk driver during her junior year. The Clymers won a lawsuit against the establishment that served the drink that killed her and used the settlement money to establish the scholarship in memory of their daughter. “It keeps a little flavor of Jane emily in our lives,” Clymer said. “Our scholarship has helped SI women stay in school. We have always been delighted with these young women and how much the scholarship has meant to them … and to us.”

Class of 1941 Scholarship recipient Tracie Ebalu ’13 came to UVM from Nigeria. “I did not have a computer, a cell phone, or a decent winter coat to survive the Vermont winter,” she told the audience. What she did have was a driving force to accomplish her goals, a force she attributes to her older sister’s unexpected death just one month shy of her own journey to the United States to pursue her dream of becoming a doctor. “Her dream is still alive in me today,” Ebalu said. Fueled by her sister’s ambition, Ebalu plans to earn a Ph.D. in clinical psychology. A finalist for the Fulbright Award, Ebalu said that scholarship assistance relieved her of many anxieties or other difficulties so that their UVM experience is as successful as it can be.

“I got a scholarship! I’m going to UVM!”

Tracie Ebalu ’13 spoke to the crowd of 320 invited guests at the gala dinner and said that scholarship assistance allowed her to focus on her dreams.

Endowment Preserves Pringle Herbarium

On the second floor of Torrey Hall, rows of tall wooden and metal cabinets packed with pressed plants fill a high-ceilinged room with gracefully arched windows. This room is UVM’s Pringle Herbarium, home to 300,000 plant specimens collected by botanists dating back to Fanny Allen, widow of Revolutionary War leader Ethan Allen. The herbarium was started in 1902 with a generous endowment from the founder of Shelburne Farms, William Seward Webb.

Richard Bundy, president of the UVM Foundation, sees that first endowment as an important legacy for the University. “William Webb’s gift is a great example of how donors can have an impact that far exceeds their natural life,” he said.

In the late 1800s, an explosion of scientific activity in the eastern United States centered around the discovery of new species on the western frontier. Cyrus Pringle, a native of Charlotte, Vt., joined the vanguard of botanical explorers out west, braving rugged terrain, malaria, and stage coach robbers to press, dry, and ship specimens to scientists in the east. By the end of his life, he had collected hundreds of thousands of specimens, 12 percent of which were entirely new to science.

Although the U.S. National Herbarium and Middlebury College clamored for Pringle and his remarkable collection of plants, in 1902, Pringle’s collection was moved by horse and buggy from his farmhouse in Charlotte to Williams Science Hall on the UVM campus. Webb’s $10,000 endowment paid Pringle’s salary of $750 a year and funded his collecting trips in Mexico. Pringle died in 1911, but the Webb endowment lives on, currently providing $4,500 a year, a small but important part of the herbarium’s annual budget of $90,000.

“There’s a deep history here that has yielded a fund that’s really sustained the herbarium for a century,” said David Barrington, professor and chair of the plant biology department in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the director of the herbarium since 1974. The Webb endowment also has positioned the Pringle Herbarium to be successful in securing additional funding.

A recently established endowment supports the herbarium’s role as a hotspot of fern research, and four grants currently fund the creation of an online herbarium to foster cutting-edge research on climate change.

Bundy sees the Webb endowment as part of a Universitywide tradition. “At a University that’s 220-plus years old, the history of private philanthropy here is long and rich. The Pringle endowment is one special example of the long, long history of philanthropic support that helps to make higher education, scholarship, and research available in Vermont.”
COHEN SCHOLARSHIP IN NURSING

A Meaningful Career and a Life Well Spent

Growing up on Burlington’s North Williams Street, Professor of Nursing Judy Cohen ’75 can’t remember a time when UVM wasn’t a part of her life. “I knew at an early age that nursing and education would be my career,” Cohen said from her office on the second floor of Russell. Cohen, who earned a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing from UVM in 1975, has spent 32 years teaching nursing students at UVM and feels fortunate to have had the opportunity to do work she loves. To repay the debt that allowed her to take care of patients and teach thousands of students, Cohen recently made a $100,000 gift to establish the Dr. Judith A. Cohen Scholarship Fund in Nursing. “I’m a first-generation student. My parents, Barney and Ruth, valued education, though they didn’t have college degrees themselves. But they did have the means to put their three children through school.” Cohen’s twin brother, David, is a pediatrician; and her other sister, Doris, is a nurse (who likely influenced Cohen’s career choice, she said). “I wanted to help students who were not as fortunate as me—whose circumstances may not otherwise let them attend UVM—have the chance to pursue an education and a career that will allow them to do meaningful work. This gift is my legacy and will make a tangible difference in students’ lives.”

Upon graduation from UVM, Cohen, who was commissioned an ensign in the Navy, spent six weeks in officer training school in Newport, R.I. Her first tour of duty was Bethesda Naval Hospital. After serving three years active duty, she joined the Naval Reserve—and stayed for 50 years, retiring as a captain in 2004.

With the help of the G.L. Bill, she earned a master’s degree in medical-surgical nursing with a sub specialty in cardiovascular nursing from the University of Michigan in 1981. Cohen then began teaching in UVM’s Department of Technical Nursing as an instructor, eventually becoming associate professor and acting chair. Lorri Welch, associate professor emerita of nursing, hired Cohen in 1981. “She has always been so much more than I could have imagined when I hired her. She is a wonderful teacher—at ease with students, but with extremely high professional standards.” Cohen taught in the graduate program and also served as professor and general program coordinator in the baccalaurate and graduate programs in the School of Nursing. While teaching, she spent summers working on a Ph.D. in nursing that she received from Wayne State in 1994.

Now a professor in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Cohen looks back on her tenure at UVM with fondness and gratitude. “I loved clinical teaching,” she said. “When you are with a small cadre of students eight hours a day twice a week for six years, you get to see rapid growth in their skills, confidence, decision making, and theoretical knowledge. The rotations allow them to collaborate with other health care disciplines, and it was so gratifying to watch them really advocate for their patients. I wanted my students to know that it is not enough to be compassionate, one must act.”

Over the years Cohen has been an active participant on numerous governance committees, both in Vermont and at UVM. Serving as president of the Vermont State Nursing Association in the mid-1990s, she believes that patient advocacy is important, and voices on their behalf should be heard in policy arenas. She also was active in the UVM Faculty Senate, serving seven years as its vice president and more than 20 years on the Senate Executive Council.

Not surprisingly, Cohen has received many awards and honors, but is most proud of receiving the 2010-11 Kroepsch-Maurice Excellence in Teaching Award. Nominated by students, the award cites Cohen as being widely recognized among her colleagues and students for her knowledge and genuine love of the nursing profession and for her dedication to the education of future nurses. “You aim to educate the whole person, head and heart, so that they will have the skills to participate actively in their profession, the world around them, and their own personal lives with curiosity, respect, and humor,” the citation read.

ANNETTE R. PLANTE, DAUGHTER OF CLASS OF 1915 ALUMNUS, FUNDS SCHOLARSHIP

A diversity scholarship fund at the UVM College of Medicine, established by Annette R. Plante in 2008, will receive an additional $198,000 thanks to a generous provision she established. Annette, the daughter of College of Medicine alumnus Ulric R. Plante, Class of 1915, created the scholarship to honor her father and her brother, Joseph Plante, a UVM alumnus from the Class of 1915. The Dr. U.R. and Joseph Plante Endowed Scholarship Fund supports medical students “with financial need who help advance the UVM College of Medicine’s goal of creating a diverse community.” In her late 80s when she died in February 2012, Annette Plante ensured the scholarship fund will continue to help generations of students achieve their goals. The Plante family has a strong presence at the college. Annette also honored her father in 2007 through the naming of the Ulric Plante Student Lounge near the Given Courtyard. Thanks to her generosity, medical students enjoy a space to study, relax and chat with classmates, cook a snack, or watch some television. Ulric Plante practiced medicine for over 60 years; it is believed he delivered some 10,000 babies in rural northern New York over the course of his career. He died his days at the College of Medicine as the setting of some of his fondest memories.

Fellowship Gift Helps Advance Palliative Care

Palliative care has been one of the fastest growing trends in health care in the last decade or so, with an increase of approximately 148 percent in the number of palliative care teams with hospital settings during that time. However, recruiting such practitioners has been a challenge for hospitals nationwide. In 2013, a $100,000 gift to the University of Vermont from Holly and Bob Miller of Burlington, Vt., funded an Advanced Practice Nursing Fellowship within the Palliative Care through the College of Nursing and Health Sciences to help advance the Vermont Palliative Care Collaborative, which provides access to quality palliative care for all Vermonters.

Now, an additional $100,000 gift from the Millbank Foundation for Rehabilitation of Princeton, N.J., is further helping to meet the significant need for Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Fellowships as an important component of the palliative care paradigm. The Palliative Care Collaborative is made up of representatives of the UVM College of Nursing and Health Sciences, the UVM College of Medicine, Fletcher Allen Health Care, and the Visiting Nurse Association of Chittenden and Grand Isle counties, as well as individual community members. It was created in 2007 thanks to a $325,000 gift from an anonymous donor. The group has overseen distribution of funds to support medical student events such as Palliative Care Week and a physician fellowship program at UVM/ Fletcher Allen, enhancements in UVM’s nursing programs in end-of-life care, and support for VNA’s community outreach through its Madison-Deane Initiative. The Advanced Practice Nursing Fellowship is a critical educational and clinical care component made possible by the Millers, and now the Millbank Foundation, who recognize the needs of end-of-life and palliative care patients. The availability of palliative care is a priority service goal for the Palliative Care Collaborative and for the College of Nursing and Health Sciences at UVM, which prepares advanced practice nurses.
The Thoreau Foundation Grant Transforms GreenHouse

By Sarah Zobel

The GreenHouse Residential Learning Community annually provides some 250 UVM students the opportunity to learn about sustainability while living in an interdisciplinary community. Residents agree to abide by an "Ecological Code of Values" that encourages the efforts at conservation, energy efficiency, local food choices, and reuse that are staples of green living everywhere. But students who live in the GreenHouse—something all undergraduates are invited to do for up to two years—must also enroll in courses on ecology of place and ecological citizenship that reinforce the concepts of conscious living and place.

Now, thanks to a $500,000 grant from the Henry David Thoreau Foundation that was matched by the Rubenstein School for a total of $700,000, the GreenHouse is poised to become an ecological design "collaboratory." Coined by Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources Dean Jon D. Erickson, the term underscores the association that will take place among resident students and three community partners: Shelburne Farms, Vermont Design Institute, and Yestermorrow Design-Build School. Shelburne Farms is already collaborating with UVM through the Place-based Landscape Analysis and Community Engagement (PLACE) Program, whose goal is to promote sustainable relationships between people and their local landscapes and is currently focused on Burlington. Professor Walter Poleman, GreenHouse faculty director and PLACE program director, said both programs focus on "how we live well locally," which is the essence of ecological design.

Under the grant, the three community partners will provide skills-based mentorships and source materials for the many anticipated student projects that will become part of the GreenHouse infrastructure, including new furniture. A design competition will give students the opportunity to work in teams of four with guidance from a mentor in tackling challenges such as construction of a greenhouse from recycled materials.

"There's been a strong interest in ecological design at UVM," Poleman said. "It just hasn't had a home, per se, so we will use the construction of a greenhouse from recycled materials. Poleman is already planning beyond the grant year, which begins August 1.

"The Thoreau grant will be key seed money for a first year," he said, "but we're looking at this as a five-year initiative." The funding will help efforts to galvanize the design community at UVM. "There's a really dedicated group of students here, and this will give them a home base," Poleman said.

"The UVM program is visionary—providing hundreds of students across a range of academic majors with access to learning about place-based ecological design. It merges academic gusto, practical hands-on experience, and dedicated mentorship," Poleman said. "That's the advantage of GreenHouse, said Poleman. "It's not housed within a department—it's University-wide."

That inclusiveness was appealing to the Thoreau Foundation, which offered the grant by invitation only and had provided funding in 2005 for UVM’s Sustainable Forestry Education Initiative. The foundation's goal is to allow undergraduates direct experience in the environmental arena, said Dr. Jennifer Galvin, director of programs and trustee of the Thoreau Foundation, adding that the choice of UVM as grant recipient was unanimous.

"The UVM program is visionary," Galvin said, "providing hundreds of students across a range of academic majors with access to learning about place-based ecological design. It merges academic gusto, practical hands-on experience, and dedicated mentorship." The UVM program is visionary, Poleman said, "providing hundreds of students across a range of academic majors with access to learning about place-based ecological design. It merges academic gusto, practical hands-on experience, and dedicated mentorship."

JENNIFER GALVIN, Thoreau Foundation trustee and program director

Helping Keep a UVM Education Affordable

With two children currently in college, Adam Strochak '87 and his wife, Valerye, know full well about the rising costs of a college education. Their son, Joseph, is currently a sophomore at Pennsylvania State University, and their daughter, Sarah, is a freshman at the University of California, Berkeley. A partner in the Weil, Gotshal & Manges law firm in Washington, D.C., and a member of the UVM Alumni Association’s Washington Regional Alumni Board, Strochak said he and Valerye feel fortunate to be in a position to fund their own children’s education, but they realize that many families are struggling to meet those costs, and they want to help.

"Whatever schools can do to reduce that sticker shock through financial assistance will help match the students they want the most with the school that’s right for them," said Strochak. Moreover, he knows that institutions like UVM are in a highly competitive marketplace for top students, so the couple has very generously established the Adam and Valerye Strochak Scholarship with a $100,000 commitment to make financial assistance available to highly qualified students, regardless of need, who might not otherwise attend UVM. The Strochak Scholarship can be awarded to any undergraduate student at the University.

After conversations with UVM President Tom Sullivan and Dean Antonio Cepeda-Benito in the College of Arts and Sciences, Strochak was convinced that scholarship support was vital to the University’s future success and wanted to enlist in that effort. A political science and Russian major during his student years, Strochak mentions Ken Nun造福, Wolfgang Mieder, Kevin McKenna, Jan Feldman, and Roger Cook as among the most influential teachers while at UVM and later in his professional career. He and his wife met while on an overseas study program in Russia. Valerye was an administrator at Georgetown University prior to their starting a family and has since devoted herself to volunteer community work and a fulfilling life as a full-time mom. Strochak’s legal work centers primarily on financial restructuring and corporate bankruptcy. He said his political science degree at UVM was “a traditional path if you had law school in the back of your mind as an undergraduate.”

His decision to enroll at UVM, he said, was influenced by a number of factors, including its size, location, and proximity to Vermont’s ski areas. “It had a good reputation and Burlington seemed like the kind of place where I’d be pretty happy spending four years,” he said. “UVM was starting to get a national reputation, and its national reputation has grown since I was there.”

Of his involvement with the Alumni Association’s regional board in Washington, D.C., he said he enjoys the contact with other UVM alumni and especially the fact that board members span such a wide range of classes. “I think the board is great because you meet people who attended UVM at very different times at both board meetings and events sponsored by the Alumni Association. As the parent of high-school-aged kids who recently went through the college admissions process, it’s interesting to work as a regional board member with admissions and area students who are considering UVM. “The University of Vermont has been very important to me,” Strochak said. "I felt like I got a very good education at UVM. It’s just a great place … I know a little extra money can help the University attract really good students, and we’re quite happy to help.”

Helping Keep a UVM Education Affordable

Adam and Valerye Strochak with children Sarah and Joseph

W ith two children currently in college, Adam Strochak ’87 and his wife, Valerye, know full well about the rising costs of a college education. Their son, Joseph, is currently a sophomore at Pennsylvania State University, and their daughter, Sarah, is a freshman at the University of California, Berkeley. A partner in the Weil, Gotshal & Manges law firm in Washington, D.C., and a member of the UVM Alumni Association’s Washington Regional Alumni Board, Strochak said he and Valerye feel fortunate to be in a position to fund their own children’s education, but they realize that many families are struggling to meet those costs, and they want to help.

"Whatever schools can do to reduce that sticker shock through financial assistance will help match the students they want the

"The UVM program is visionary—providing hundreds of students across a range of academic majors with access to learning about place-based ecological design. It merges academic gusto, practical hands-on experience, and dedicated mentorship."
Meet the Chatty Cats

Ever wonder who is on the other end of the phone when the call comes in to make a donation to UVM? The UVM Chatty Cats, our student callers, come in every night throughout the school year to connect with our alumni, parents, and friends. Last year the Chatty Cats spoke with more than 13,000 members of the UVM family and raised $1,053,715 for UVM! We asked two of them to share why they call for UVM:

“Giving back is a very important part of any healthy community. I think it’s incredibly important to contribute to the organizations that you have benefitted from, so others can reap those same benefits in the future.”

“It is nice being able to help raise funds for UVM. It makes me feel like I am making a difference. Plus, who doesn’t love to chat?”

MEGAN ’15
HOMETOWN: Stratford, Conn.
MAJOR: Biochemistry

ROB ’14
HOMETOWN: Newton, Mass.
MAJOR: English/Political Science