

Good morning fellow graduates, faculty, staff, family and loved ones. For those whom I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting, my name is Olivia Eisenberg and I have had the honor of serving as the President of the Student Government Association for the past year. I would first like to extend my warmest congratulations to the University of Vermont Class of 2024.

You all have faced an unprecedented college experience and should be incredibly proud of the determination, care and passion you have poured into your degree, relationships and communities.

I also want to express my support and pride for the students who have used their voices to demand and create change at UVM and around the world.

In the past few weeks, I have seen a new community blossom and it has made me think about what community means at the University of Vermont.

It is not like other universities with a football team or a vibrant tailgate culture. At UVM, students create community on smaller scales, rich with passion for hiking, hacky sacking, art, or in my case, student government.

Think back to rail jam, BSU fashion show, the bike ride, even your friends' intramural sports games. Each of these joyous and memorable events were driven by students excited to share their passions with the school.

We have met our people in these seemingly niche communities and created an interwoven network of interests and care for one another. This is where our university has built its school spirit - by spending our time doing the things we love with people who matter to us.

The class of 2024 started at UVM at a time in which community was difficult to come by. Yet, in these four years, we have faced moments as a student body that have brought us together. We helped our school rebound from COVID. We reveled in the opportunity to make Burlington our home. We even got to experience an eclipse in our own backyards!

We have been there for each other during hard times too. We have lost classmates. We have had to contend with the repercussions of global issues right here in our city. The

shooting of three Palestinian men in November served as a stark reminder that we must stand together as a community in the face of hate and adversity.

The importance of standing up for one another has never been more significant. Time and again this student body has inspired me by using its voice and sparking social movements that benefit our campus, our community, our city. Us Catamounts have never been afraid to voice what we believe in, and this courage will take us far in life.

As we move on from college towards whatever lays ahead, the groups we have formed and the connections we have made will stick with us, not only through the relationships themselves, but also what we have learned from them.

We move out into the world with more knowledge, compassion, and understanding than we had when we first stepped on to campus four years ago, and we have our robust circles of friends and mentors to guide us as we seek to make the world a better place.

So this is for every school day that should've been a snow day. For every late night studying until the Howe Library bell. For every Central lunch and Harris-Millis dinner, for every North Beach day, for every creemee at the waterfront.

You did it, University of Vermont Class of 2024. I can't believe how far we've come, and I can't wait to see how far we'll go! Congratulations!