

Ron E. Lumbra, '83, Chair of the University of Vermont Board of Trustees
Commencement Greeting (as prepared) – Sunday, May 19, 2024

President Garimella, distinguished members of the platform party, special guests, family, friends, faculty, staff, and especially graduates of the class of 2024, on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the University of Vermont, I welcome you to this celebration!

I would like to begin this morning by getting right to the heart of the matter: Will you please join me in congratulating the incredible UVM class of 2024!

Graduates, as I look out across all of you here today, with so many of your friends and mentors, family and other loved ones gathered to celebrate you, I know how happy you are to be here. How long you've been waiting for this. Every class of graduates looks forward with anticipation to commencement. But for those of you who finished high school in 2020, we know today is special.

So let me say it again: I welcome you to this celebration. We are so happy for you.

Today you join the proud ranks of UVM alumni – there are lots of us out there, over one hundred thousand, in fact, and each of us is always happy to meet a fellow Catamount.

And I am proud to know that you are setting forth today into a world that needs the leadership, the wisdom, the heart of this class of Catamounts. From the start, you've studied, learned, and grown together in the face of immense global challenges.

Reaching the important milestone of your degrees, arriving at this ceremony, not only have you persevered, you have thrived.

Your accomplishments are many, your grit is impressive – and I'm pleased to see this morning that your smiles are wide. You have earned those smiles. And you have earned our pride.

I know I speak for all of us here to celebrate today when I say: We are so proud of you.

We are proud to know that you have been deeply engaged in our Vermont communities, as volunteers, as interns, as student-teachers, and as mentors for young people hoping to follow your footsteps at UVM.

We are proud to know that you have excelled as researchers in our world-class laboratories, as performers in brilliant plays and recitals, and as championship-level student-athletes, representing UVM with distinction across the country.

And we are proud to know that you are – truly – ready for whatever is next. Among you today are new UVM alumni headed off to become business leaders and public servants, social workers and graduate students, physicians and politicians. Some of you have

earned fellowships to study around the world and some of you have earned positions in the small Vermont businesses that make this state so special.

I hope that you feel ready to step courageously out into the world. And I hope that as you do, you remain connected to UVM. I know that there are many friends, faculty, coaches, counselors and others who helped you along the way, and I know that they are proud of you.

Take care of yourselves, care for each other, be ready to change the world.

You've earned this celebration. Have an amazing commencement day.

Congratulations and best wishes. Go Cats!