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Thank you very much for including me in this celebration to mark a new inflection point at the university of Vermont, under the leadership of Dr. Suresh Garimella, to fulfill with new energies and probably in new ways, the tall and noble mission of a land grant university.

No doubt your search committee expended unsparing efforts and rigor in the review of Suresh. You are now acquainted with his prolific research and patents, excellence in teaching, his love for the arts, impressive growth in research grants that bucks the national trend, and the string of recognition by peers both in and outside of Purdue.

But these considerations recede into the background as your focus is not about the past. Today we stand at the precipice of the future. It is only natural to

wonder how Suresh will be worthy of you (students, faculty, trustees, alumni, donors, neighbors), your collective accomplishments with and from which he will build, your talents and energies, and most important your aspirations, both institutional and personal. How will you be better together? How will you jointly step up to make the world more livable, more prosperous and more compassionate? What value and values does Suresh bring as a leader?

These questions boil down to the singular requirement for leadership : **TRUST**.

Trust around 2 questions: Where will Suresh lead you and how will he lead you?

How will he create value from your work and open doors that expand the impact of your scholarship? Who is he as a person whose words and actions can build up or tear down people, enable or hinder progress, energize or dampen spirits?

Let me take up these two question. Where will Suresh lead you? I hope you like to travel: as you will surely cross geographic lines: those which **cross traditional disciplinary lines which divide laboratories from seminar tables;** administrative suites from faculty offices and student residences; town from

gown; Burlington from Vermont, or U.S. from the world. He will coax you beyond comfort zones and venture across sectors to build relationships between academia, government, practitioners, and civil society. Suresh is unmatched at connecting dots!!!!

Connecting dots is the signature of Suresh's leadership. This has enabled him, an engineer, to harvest the largest growth in funding for the life sciences at Purdue in collaboration with the natural and physical sciences, engineering, veterinary medicine, other universities and multiple companies. It is this same skill that brought about the highly productive and multi-faceted partnership between Purdue University and my organization, Catholic Relief Services, which operates in over 100 of the poorest and most vulnerable countries. Together, through new technology and proven know-how, we formulate holistic solutions to address the economic, social, political and technological drivers for long term, sustained success. Suresh's vision similarly underlies the joint partnership between Arequipa in Peru and Purdue social scientists, economists, agronomists,

engineers, education faculty, etc. to utilize mining revenues towards a just and prosperous transition for the Peruvian people.

This capacity stems from personal values and traits. Suresh has an appreciation for the contribution of each person, each discipline and organization. He welcomes the richer perspectives that emanate from differences in people and disciplines. This understanding is complemented by a deep sense of how the whole is more powerful than the parts. Suresh's own passion and compassion inspire parties to come together for common cause and greater good. He has an innate wisdom that sees how people and Institutions can win together. Because he works for the good of the institution and for the mutual benefits of each partner, people trust Suresh and are willing to take on the obstacles.

The colleagues who worked for Suresh described him as “delightfully demanding.” At his farewell gathering, all speakers remarked on his ability to truly listen and incorporate advice without getting bogged down in decision paralysis. He is optimistic and at the same time pragmatic; he asks a lot and gives

a lot; his handshake is fortified by clear articulation of objectives and systematic review of progress.

To you, my Vermont friends, I have two pieces of advice. First, seek opportunities to work with Suresh as people who have done so in the last cannot hold back their gratitude for how he empowered them, supported them, drew out their strengths, and helped them transcend their own expectations. Suresh will make you better: for your own development, for the university and for humanity.

Second: take care of him as I know he will give everything he has to take care of you.