CASTLETON UNIVERSITY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF VERMONT
NORTHERN VERMONT UNIVERSITY
VERMONT TECHNICAL COLLEGE

VERMONT
STATE COLLEGES SYSTEM

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR
PO BOX 7
MONTPELIER, VT 05601
P (802) 224-3000

To: Vermont State College System Communities

From: Chancellor Sophie Zdatny

Re: **Transformation Update #14**

Date: October 11, 2021

Dear Vermont State Colleges Community,

Our regular updates to you throughout the Transformation process can be found on the VSCS website at www.vsc.edu/transformation.

The Transformation Page is transforming - Based on the feedback received from the recent Town Hall meetings, the transformation page itself will be transforming as it has outgrown its existing format. It will take a few weeks to get the new site up and running but it will be more user friendly and provide ready access to a host of transformation-related information, including a searchable blog post of prior transformation updates, general transformation information, links to historical documents, information on the transformation teams (their work and their membership), Student Advisory Council updates, and FAQs.

We have also heard from students who have many questions about what transformation means for them. Castleton University, Northern Vermont University and Vermont Technical College will be coming together to form one new university, **Vermont State University**, in the summer of 2023. For current students at these three institutions, here are:

Seven Things to Know About the New University

1. **You will be able to complete your current program.**
   Current students will be able to complete their degree programs with their current requirements. Starting in Fall 2023, majors or minors might get new names as we unify departments and offerings across the current schools, and existing students will have the choice of staying with their current program or changing to the new program requirements if they wish.

2. **Most of the courses you currently have at your campus will continue to be offered in-person or as a hybrid course.**
   A wide variety of courses will continue to be offered in-person at your campus. In the future, you may have classmates joining you remotely or you may have the option to take a new or different course as a remote student accessing an in-person, online, or hybrid class offered at a different campus. The bottom line is while many of your offerings will continue as they are, you'll have more choices moving forward.

3. **We intend to maintain the in demand Athletic program options on your campus after unification.**
   We understand the critical importance athletics play as part of the student experience and in recruiting students to our universities. We are doing some significant analysis and planning as part of transformation to ensure students have access to a wide array of programs with the coaching, facilities, and support that are needed to make them successful. We are not able to make guarantees about specific sports at this time, but we will have more details to offer in the coming months. As has been the case for many years, athletic programs are added and removed at all VSC institutions in large part based on student interest, recruitment potential, and participation. While individual programs might eventually change at some campuses, we are also looking at adding additional options at those same campuses that align with student interest and facilities.

4. **If you enroll in one of the three institutions before Fall of 2023, you can choose to have your diploma reflect the name of your current institution.**
   If you are already enrolled before the beginning of the 2023-2024 academic year, you will have the option to choose to receive a diploma from the name of your current institution or Vermont State University.

5. **The requirements for liberal arts or general education in our technical associate's or bachelor's degree programs will evolve as we move to a consolidated general education offering, but the new requirements will only affect new students or those choosing to change to a new program.**
   By design, undergraduate programs across all disciplines currently include courses in liberal arts or general education as a way of ensuring that students graduate with the non-technical knowledge, skills, and abilities that are needed in the 21st century workplace. As we work to align and unify our general education offerings, students will have a more diverse and larger selection of courses to choose from to meet their program's general education requirements.

6. **There will continue to be programs that focus on workforce development, innovation, and technology.**
   The state recognizes the critical role Vermont Tech and the other VSCS schools play in building a skilled workforce in Vermont, as well as in supplying the workforce of the future. We will continue to meet this need through unification and look forward to this being reflected in the mission, vision, and brand identity of the new institution.

7. **All the existing campus locations will remain open and investments will be made to support our future mission.**
   The Vermont State Colleges System and its Board of Trustees is committed to our campus locations. Strong academic programs will continue to be offered at all our campuses and the State of Vermont and the VSCS are committed to keeping our campuses open.

Quick Hits

- **Why are we transforming?** Check out this clip from the September 29th Board meeting - Chancellor's Update - YouTube (11 minutes)

- **How are we managing the process of transformation?** Check out this clip providing an update on the transformation projects - Transformation update: Sept 2021 - YouTube (starts at 4 mins 30 seconds and runs through to minute 17). A more in-depth presentation on the overall project management approach is available at Virtual Town Hall Meeting on Transformation - July 26, 2021 - YouTube.

- **Who is serving on the transformation teams?** The current composition of the project teams and sub-teams is attached. The membership is a work in progress as some teams have launched while others have not. In addition, there are pre-existing groups with specialized subject matter knowledge (such as Registrars, Financial Aid, and Student Accounts), as well as faculty groups (such as the Program Array Group and Academic Governance Planning Group). Also, other individuals with subject matter experts are invited to team meetings. For example, the Public Safety Directors recently attended a meeting of the Student/Residence Life group. The membership of the teams is determined in consultation and collaboration with the Presidents, with an eye towards equal representation from the three institutions (and CCV where appropriate).

- **Update from the Student Advisory Council on Transformation** – The Student Advisory Council had its second meeting on Thursday, September 30th. The topics included the academic program offerings and related topics like instructional modalities (face-to-face, online, hybrid), scheduling, and registration. Here are some of the key takeaways from the session:
  - Academic programs and selection are core issues for students when deciding where to attend, although some are undecided or change after starting.
  - A significant number of students at all institutions have cross-registered for courses at other VSC institutions.
  - Issues related to course availability and the systems needed for students to plan and register for programs and courses across campuses need to be addressed.

  - There was enthusiasm, even from students at primarily residential campuses, for the availability of courses through other modalities, online and telepresence in particular.
  - Regardless of modality, students expect faculty to use the technology that is available to help them stay on track. Usage by faculty is inconsistent at best, and at worst is seen as an impediment for student success.

- **Presidential Search Update** – The Search and Screen Committee is in the process of being formed and the Committee's members will be announced once this has been finalized.

Useful background resources on the need for transformation

1. State Treasurer's Report to the Speaker of the House, the Senate President Pro Tempore, and the Chief Fiscal Officer, Joint Fiscal Office, dated June 8, 2020, providing a system financial review of the VSCS - State Treasurer's Report

2. Report to the Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office Concerning Vermont State Colleges System Funding for FY20 and FY21, dated June 8, 2020 by James Page - Page Report

3. Final Report of the legislatively-created Select Committee on the Future of Public Higher Education in Vermont, dated April 9, 2021 – Select Committee's Final Report

4. The Board adopted the recommendations of the Select Committee (as contained in the Committee's December 2020 Report) at its meeting in February 2021. *See* Approved Minutes of 2-22-21 Board Meeting and Resolution 2021-007 (Transformation of the VSCS).

5. Subsequently, in Act 74 of the 2021 legislative session, the state mandated system transformation and integration while also committing to stronger funding of the system, the member institutions, and Vermont students. *See* Act 74 (as enacted) at pp. 177-182 (including specifically, at p. 181: "The Chancellor shall establish policies and procedures to implement the Board approved transformation plan as developed by the Select Committee on Higher Education.").

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION – Definitions and Anti-Racism Pledge

Thank you to all those who have shared their feedback on the proposed definitions of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The Board of Trustees' Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee will be meeting on **Friday, October 15th at 2:00 p.m.** The Committee will take public comment on the proposed definitions at the meeting.

The Committee will also be hearing from student representatives from each of the institutions who have come together to draft an **Anti-Racism Pledge**. The students will be sharing why they drafted the pledge, how it was drafted, the support it has received, and their plans for the pledge. The Committee will take public comment on the pledge at the meeting.

OTHER UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

Agenda and meeting materials for upcoming meetings are available at https://www.vsc.edu/board-of-trustees/meeting-materials/. These are typically posted ahead of the meetings.

October 15th	**1:00 p.m.**	EPSL Board Committee Meeting (Zoom)
October 15th	**2:00 p.m.**	DEI Board Committee Meeting (Zoom)
October 18th	**1:00 p.m.**	Audit Board Committee Meeting (Zoom)
October 18th	**2:30 p.m.**	Finance & Facilities Board Committee Meeting (Zoom)
October 25th		Board of Trustees Meeting (Zoom)
December 6th		Board of Trustees Meeting at Vermont Tech-Randolph

Additional information about Board and Committee meetings, including information on how to access the meetings may be found **here**.

PUBLIC INPUT

We will continue to solicit broad input as our transformation continues. **We encourage you to share your feedback at this link.** This feedback is reviewed and posted monthly on the transformation website.

With kind regards,

Sophie

Scope of Transformation Initiative

Student Experience

- Admissions
- Financial Aid
- Registrar
- Marketing/Branding
- Student/Resident Life
- Athletics
- Alumni and Development

Academic Operations

- Academic Programs
  - Program Array
  - Scheduling
  - Policies/Catalog
- Advising/Academic Support
- Career Services
- Teaching and Learning
- Libraries

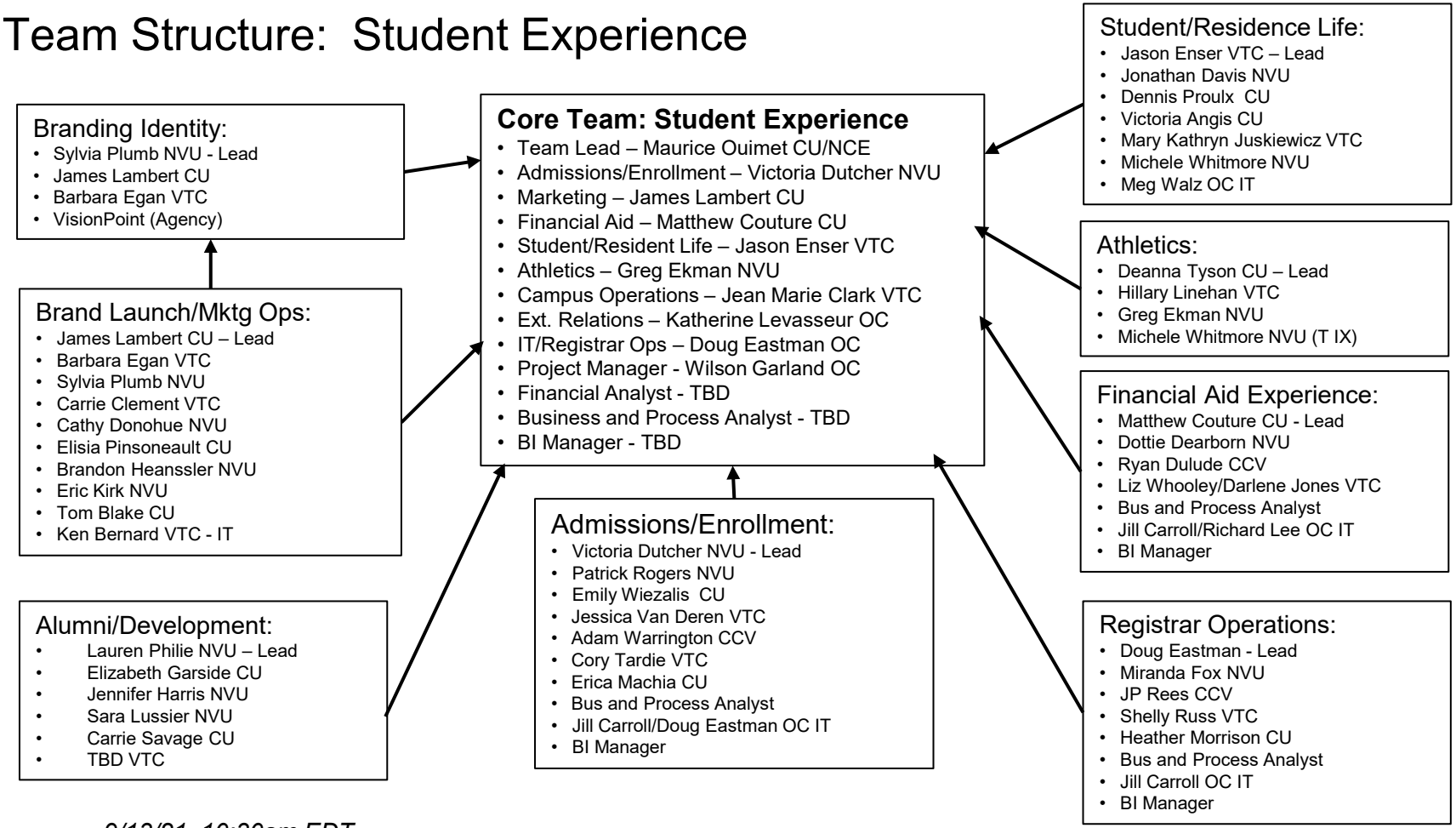
Administrative Operations

- Facilities Planning and Management
- Business Affairs/ Finance
- IT Services
- Human Resources
- Procurement
- Legal/Compliance

Workforce Development

- Industry Engagement
- CE Program Portfolio
- Customized Training/ Apprenticeships
- Registration & Student Operations

Team Structure: Student Experience



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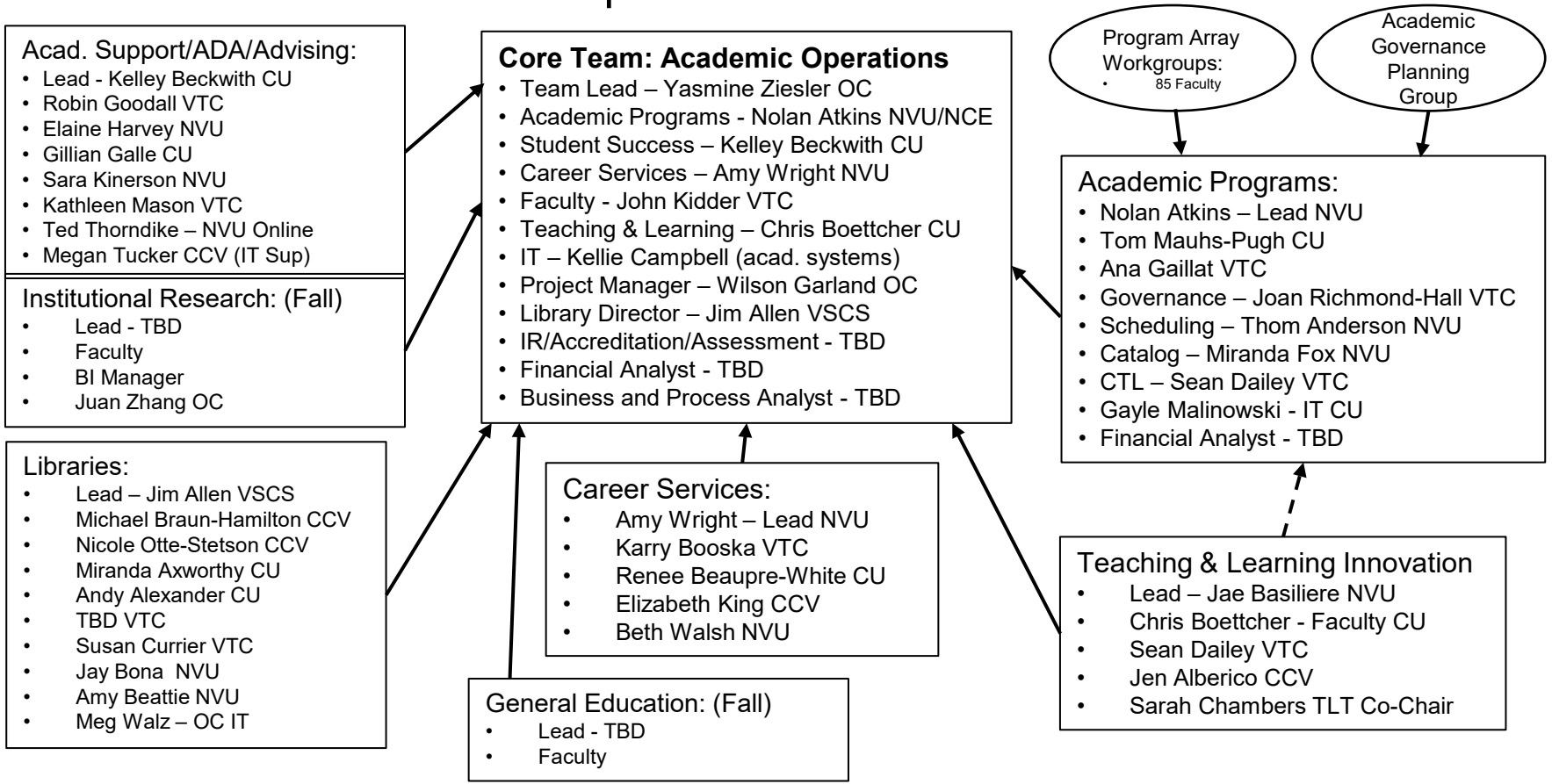
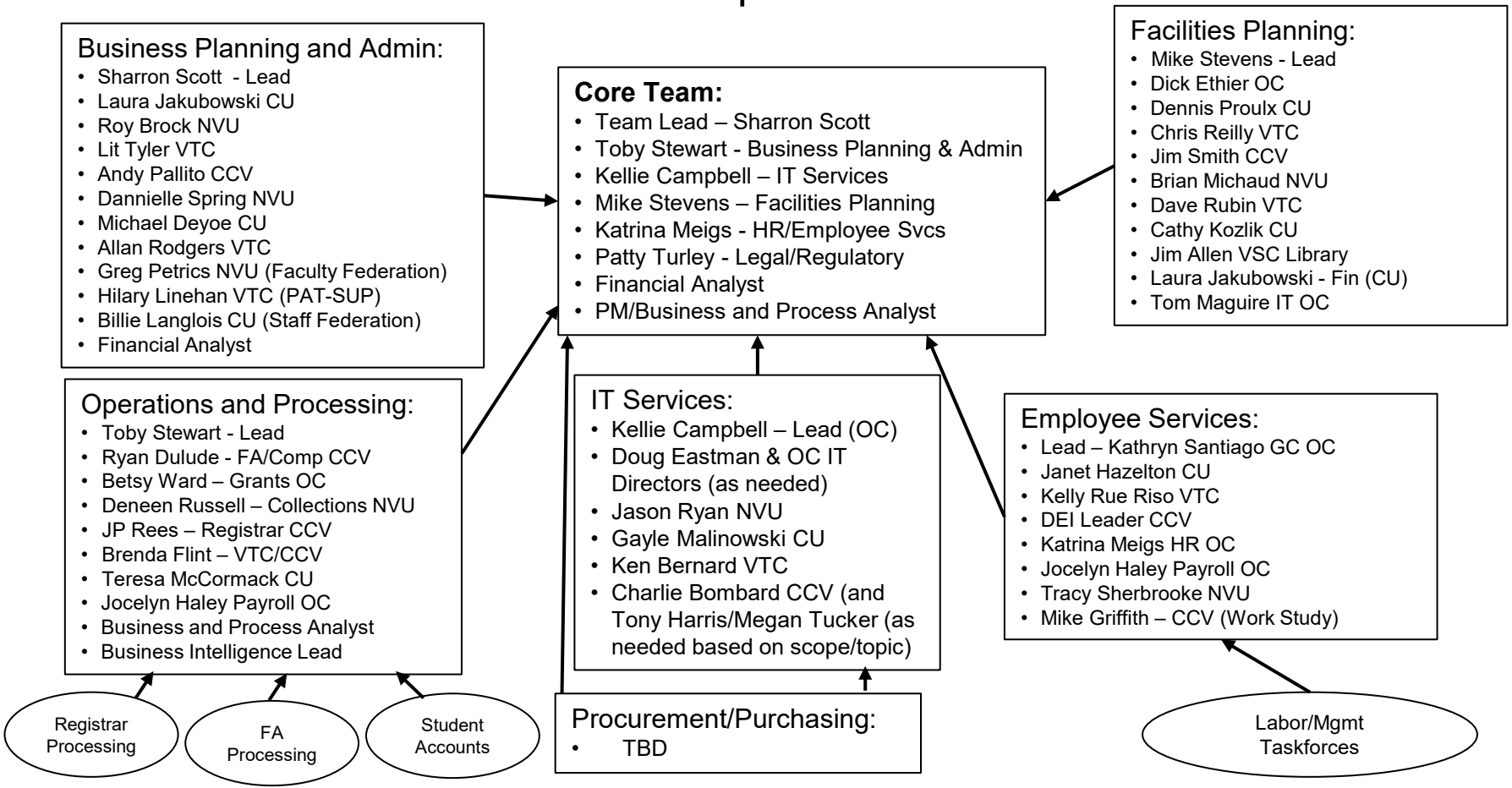
Team Structure: Academic Operations



10/5/21 12:30pm

10/11/21 5:00pm EDT

Team Structure: Administrative Operations



Team Structure: Workforce Development

Core Team: Workforce Development

- Pat Moulton – Team Lead
- Tiffany Walker CCV
- Maureen Hebert VTC
- Melissa DeBlois CCV
- Vin Favoroso NVU
- Ann Nygard NVU
- Ric Reardon CU
- Francesca Catalano CU
- Carrie Wright VTC
- Doug Eastman IT (Colleague, Website, Portal)
- Mike Stevens - Project Manager
- Business and Process Analyst

Other Experts Will be Consulted as Needed:

- Program Portfolio
- Registration and Operations
- Grants and Funding
- Marketing
- Employer Outreach
- Credit for Prior Learning

10/10/21 7:30pm EDT