

To: Vermont State College System Communities  
From: Chancellor Sophie Zdatny  
Re: **Transformation Update #17**  
Date: November 22, 2021

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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](http://www.vsc.edu/transformation).

### **Launch of the Search for the First President of Vermont State University**

On Friday, the Presidential Search website was launched (<https://www.vsc.edu/presidential-search/>), along with the [Official Presidential Search Profile/Candidate Prospectus](#). The website includes the charge to the Search and Screen Committee from the Chair of the Board, the members of the Committee, the timeline for the search, and a host of resources about the Vermont State Colleges System and the three institutions that will be coming together to form the new university.

The President will be an essential transformation team member, as well as the chief executive officer of the new university. Subject to approval by our accreditor (NECHE), from July 2022 until July 2023, the President of Vermont State University will also serve as President of the three separately-accredited institutions. The substantive change proposal for the creation of the new university and the request for approval of this proposed governance structure are scheduled to be submitted to NECHE in March 2022, for consideration at its April 2022 meeting.

### **Transformation Projects - Discovery Gate Meetings**

The Academic Operations Discovery Gate meeting was held on November 10<sup>th</sup> and the Student Experience Discovery Gate was held on November 12<sup>th</sup>. At these meetings, the Project Sponsors and Stakeholders<sup>1</sup> met with each of the Core Teams and the sub-teams in these two areas to understand the work that each has put into the Discovery Stage<sup>2</sup> and to review and approve the

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<sup>1</sup> The Project Sponsors are the Council of Presidents (Chancellor and four Presidents). Stakeholders include other key leaders, such as the Provosts for Academic Operations, the Deans of Admissions and Enrollment, as well as the Chief Financial Officer, Chief Information Officer, and General Counsel of the System.

<sup>2</sup> The Discovery Phase is the first step in the project development process and involves considering what is working, what is not working, and what the best practices are in a particular field or area.

Design Principles that each team will use in the upcoming Design Phase.<sup>3</sup> This was also an opportunity to identify the applicable cross-dependencies.<sup>4</sup>

Each sub-team, with the support of the Core Team, presented:

- Team overview (who participated)
- High-level summary of what is working/not working
- Examples of best practices considered
- List of design principles for each product/process area within their scope
- Key cross-team dependencies identified
- Strategic alignment summary (how the design principles meet our strategic objectives)

Feedback from these meetings is being compiled and will be provided back to the teams during the week of December 6<sup>th</sup>. Based on the completed Discovery work, the teams will work with the Sponsors and Stakeholders to develop high-level strategic design proposals that will inform the more detailed Design work of the teams. For example, based on our mission and vision, what types of students are we prioritizing for enrollment? How do we define campuses and locations in our future model (*i.e.* what services, amenities, and supports will be provided)? What will the academic structure look like?

### **Launch of the Portal Project**

Over the past year, over 40 members across our communities have been working on our portal project. We are getting ready to release our new portal in January of 2022 and are very excited to be able to provide you with a sneak preview to just how different and exciting this new portal experience will be for you – watch the sneak peek [here](#) (3 minutes). We hope you will take a few moments to watch and consider joining us for some of the upcoming user feedback sessions outlined in this video. If you are not able to attend a feedback session and hope to give feedback in a remote way, please email: [meg.walz@vsc.edu](mailto:meg.walz@vsc.edu).

In other Information Technology news, two Requests for Proposals have been issued for assistance in streamlining our business processes, reducing the current high level of customization in Colleague, merging our separate Slate environments, and fully leveraging both products for consistent and student-centered delivery of services. The RFPs are available [here](#).

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<sup>3</sup> The Design Phase is the second step in the project development process and is where the teams will consider potential solutions and narrow down the choices to determine the most efficient and effective way forward.

<sup>4</sup> Cross-dependencies are those project tasks that are dependent on the completion of another task. It is the relationship between two separate activities within one larger project.

## **Student Advisory Council Update from November 18, 2021 Meeting**

The November 18 meeting focused on technology-related issues. In addition to a demo of the new portal, digital equity and the technology needs of non-traditional students were discussed. Key takeaways from the session included:

- Students were excited that the new portal is also an app and suggested that the following be added:
  - A list of clubs, club contacts, and a calendar of campus events
  - A tile with the student's course schedule
  - A map or directory for finding campus offices
  - A list of work-study and student employment positions available on campus
  - Easy access for academic support services for traditional and non-traditional students
- Inconsistent course design and limited Canvas utilization continues to be an issue for students, and the Council would like to devote an entire session to this important topic.
- Recording of in-person courses provides flexibility that is important to both traditional and non-traditional students.

### **UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS**

Agenda and meeting materials for upcoming meetings are posted [here](#).

<b>December 6, 2021</b>	EPSL Board Committee Meeting (Zoom)
<b>December 6, 2021</b>	Board of Trustees Meeting (Zoom)
<b>December 13, 2021</b>	Finance and Facilities Committee Meeting (Zoom)
<b>January 24, 2022</b>	Board of Trustees Meeting (Zoom)

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