

To: Vermont State College System Communities
From: Chancellor Sophie Zdatny
Re: **Transformation Update #23**
Date: February 14, 2022

Dear Vermont State Colleges Community,

Thank you to all of those who participated in the recent Town Halls. It was wonderful to be able to visit the campuses in person and to see people face to face (or mask to mask!).

When will we have answers?

Based on the feedback we received at the Town Halls, first and foremost, I want to acknowledge how challenging it is to wait for answers and how we all want to know what things will look like once Vermont State University is launched and we become a two-institution system. While the reality is that Transformation is a multi-year project, there are many decisions about the scope and nature of Vermont State University that will be made over the next few months as we complete the Design stage of the Transformation work. Other decisions will follow over the next year as we close in on the launch date for Vermont State University.

Faculty are actively working with administrators to determine and approve the configuration and scope of different academic programs. The transformation teams are actively working through projects to design the student experiences, services, and supports that will be available to students. And throughout all of this, the Council of Presidents and key transformation leaders are working together based on the Discovery and Design work to help determine campus-based program configurations, including athletic offerings and residential options, that build on the strengths of our current institutions.

We do not have a specific date when these decisions will be communicated, but we are trying to work through them in an organized way that considers the many different interests of students, faculty, employees, and our campus communities, as well as the need to create something that is sustainable for years to come.

What do we know about the roles and responsibilities of the Board, the Chancellor, and the Presidents post-transformation?

In preparation for the upcoming screening of candidates to serve as the inaugural President of Vermont State University, the Board of Trustees had requested clarification as to the respective

roles and responsibilities of the Board, Chancellor, and Presidents. Accordingly, at today's meeting of the Board of Trustees (February 14, 2022), the Board reviewed those sections of the legislatively created Select Committee's Report addressing the role of the Chancellor's Office and the consolidation of administrative services, see [here](#), plus a high-level summary outlining the respective roles in certain key areas. See [here](#). As part of the discussion, the Presidents shared their thoughts and the Board heard from Dennis Jones, President Emeritus of NCHEMS.

The Chair of the Board reminded everyone that no decisions have yet been made as to the organizational structure for the delivery of administrative services and noted that there will be further discussion within the parameters of the roles and responsibilities set forth in the summary. Decisions as to what exactly this will look like will be informed by the ongoing transformation work regarding people, processes, and systems, as well as the ongoing financial analysis work. The Board also emphasized that, in providing funding and directing the transformation, the state is focused on the students served by Vermont State Colleges.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT – Tuition Freeze

Affordability and accessibility of the Vermont State Colleges are two top strategic priorities of the Board of Trustees. At today's meeting (February 14, 2022), the Board voted to freeze tuition and Board-approved fees for the upcoming 2022-2023 academic year. This is the second year we have been able to keep tuition flat, thanks in large part to the significant additional support we have received from the State of Vermont over the past two years.

The Board did vote to increase the cost of room and board by 3%. Many factors were weighed in this decision, including the impact this will have on our students and the rising costs of these services on our campuses. The VSC falls on two ends of the spectrum when compared to our state, regional, and national peers. Our tuition is comparatively high and our room and board costs are significantly lower. Our goal this year was to hold our tuition flat to move us closer to our peer institutions and provide some stability for our students in a time of a shifting economic landscape.

UPDATES FROM PROJECT TEAMS

Message from the Student Experience Team

The student experience team is grateful for all the work that the faculty and academic leaders have been doing for academic program optimization. The list of fully optimized programs is growing each day and this is allowing the admissions and marketing teams to begin collecting the information that prospective students will want to know.

Even though we will remain three individual institutions until July 2023, the admissions and marketing teams of CU, NVU, and Vermont Tech are already working together to develop

unified materials and information needed for the new website and printed materials, as well as on the creation of the Vermont State University application for admission. Additionally, staff are working incredibly hard in other key student service and support areas to bring admissions and marketing what is needed to launch a recruitment campaign in the coming months.

We know that you are all incredibly busy. The time and effort that everyone is making for transformation work does not go unnoticed and is so crucial for the future enrollment success of Vermont State University. Thank you all so much!! The student experience teams continue their progress into the design phase of transformation. Many projects are currently underway or will be in the coming weeks. The project management coordination team continues to work with each sub-team to finalize their list of projects and will begin moving them into Wrike (Project Management System).

Message from the Administrative Operations Team

The 10-Year Strategic Facilities plan was presented to the Finance and Facilities Committee of the Board of Trustees on Monday, February 7, and approved by the Board of Trustees today (February 14, 2022). See [here](#). This plan identifies the Vermont State College System's path forward for sustainably managing its facilities while meeting the needs of Vermont's learners. This plan will be presented to the House and Senate in March.

The Operations and Processing team presented their discovery stage gate findings to the Project Sponsors and Stakeholders. The team focused their attention on sponsored projects (grants), accounting, financial aid, registration, and student accounts. The group's primary emphasis throughout their presentation was on compliance, efficiency, and accuracy.

Message from the Information Technology Sub-team

As shared by our Chief Information Officer, Kellie Campbell, at the recent Town Hall meetings, we are underway with an exciting project around our Ellucian Colleague environment. Project governance has been put in place, along with the process of starting to scan and unpack our years of customization. Business Process Reviews are being scheduled and more information will be added about this work to the transformation website by the end of the week (stay tuned) about who on your campus is involved and where you can learn more. Check out [Administrative Operations – VSCS Transformation](#).

STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Student Advisory Council will be convening for its next meeting on Thursday, February 24th at 6:00 p.m. As a reminder, information about the Student Advisory Council, including powerpoint slides and transcripts from the Council's most recent meeting on February 3rd (discussing design options for admission and service experiences), are now available on the Transformation website at <https://transformation.vsc.edu/student-advisory-council/>.

UPCOMING BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

March 7, 2022, at 2:00 p.m.	Finance and Facilities Committee (Zoom)
March 7, 2022, at 3:00 p.m.	Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee (Zoom)
March 19, 2022, at 9:00 a.m.	Regular Board Meeting (Zoom)
March 21, 2022, at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Personnel & Student Life Committee (Zoom)

Additional information about Board and Committee meetings, including information on how to access the meetings may be found [here](#).

Feedback

If you would like to submit your thoughts regarding the ongoing system transformation or offer suggestions to a specific team, please send your questions or comments to VSC-Transformation@vsc.edu, and we will make sure it gets to the right place. This email address is monitored twice a week.

With kind regards,
Sophie