

To: Vermont State College System Communities
From: Chancellor Sophie Zdatny
Re: **Transformation Update #25**
Date: March 14, 2022

Dear Vermont State Colleges Community,

Today's update leads with an update on the ongoing Presidential search for the first President of Vermont State University, followed by transformation updates, and information on the Student Diversity and Inclusion Task Force's anti-racism pledge and a proposed system diversity statement. As a reminder, the new Transformation website is now live (see <https://transformation.vsc.edu/>) and is a good resource for information on transformation.

UPDATE ON THE PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH

The search for the inaugural President of Vermont State University is well underway. We are seeking to hire a President for Vermont State University effective July 1, 2022. We will be asking our accreditor (New England Commission on Higher Education) to permit the incoming president to serve as the president of Castleton University, Northern Vermont University, and Vermont Technical College during the 2022-2023 transitional year, prior to the July 2023 launch of Vermont State University. Our existing presidents are either on short-term contracts or will be transitioning into new roles.

The members of the 15-person Search and Screen Committee are:

Trustees

Megan Cluver, Chair
Ryan Cooney, Student Trustee
Adam Grinold
Bill Lippert
Mary Moran
Shawn Tester

Faculty & Staff

Sherill Blodget (Castleton, faculty)
Tyrone Shaw (NVU, faculty)
Sharron Scott (OC, staff)
Tiffany Walker (CCV, staff)
Roger Weeden (VTC, faculty)

Community Partners

Kathleen James, House of Representatives (Bennington-4)
Michael Pieciak, Commissioner of the Department of Financial Regulation
Michael Solimano, President and General Manager at Killington Resort & Pico Mountain
Armando Villaseca, former Commissioner of Vermont Department of Education

The Search and Screen Committee have been working over the past couple of days to conduct preliminary, first round interviews with candidates, with the goal of identifying 2-4 candidates to come to Vermont for in-person and on-campus interviews and meetings with faculty, staff, and students during the weeks of March 21st and March 28th. More information about the campus visits will be shared later this week once the details have been finalized.

With the logistical challenges of providing candidates with opportunities to meet with all members of the campus communities over a two-day period, given the number of campuses, the distances between them, and the limited time available, a considerable amount of thought and effort is being given to developing a realistic schedule. With each finalist expected to be available for two full days, the schedule anticipates both in-person and hybrid meetings, which is consistent with the vision for Vermont State University. For example, the finalists will visit the Castleton, Randolph, Lyndon, and Johnson campuses, each of which will hold a community event of their choosing. On the second day of each finalist's visit, it is anticipated that an all-faculty zoom town hall and an all-staff zoom town hall will be scheduled. In addition, we are seeking to schedule an all-community evening zoom town hall to be held with each candidate.

The Board will take time to review the input and feedback of the campus communities before making its hiring decision in mid-April.

UPDATES FROM PROJECT TEAMS

Message from the Student Experience Team

Spring is near! Yes, we have a few more snow events and mud season to get through, but you can tell it is right around the corner based on the number of visitors to our campuses! March and April are very important months for prospective students. Each of our campuses will be hosting admitted student events throughout the next several weeks and into the summer. Collectively between Castleton, NVU, and Vermont Tech, there are thousands of students who have been offered admission for the incoming class this August. Many of them will be visiting us, some for the first time, to experience what we have to offer before they make a decision on where to enroll this fall. These students are aware of the transformation to Vermont State University and are excited about the future opportunities that will come their way. This excitement about transformation and a bright future extends to many others too, including parents and other mentors, who are helping students pursue higher education. As always, thank you all for making these students feel welcome and at "home" on our campuses! We appreciate everything you do to contribute to the success of our enrollment efforts. Finally, thank you to the many faculty who have shared program highlights and talking points with the Admissions and Marketing teams. This information is being used to train admissions staff so they are well-informed about your programs when speaking to potential students.

Message from the Brand Launch and Marketing Operations Sub-Team

The Brand Launch and Marketing Operations Sub-Team is moving forward on a mid-April brand launch, complete with a press event, social media campaign, and the launch of an admissions microsite. Stay tuned for ways you can continue to participate and contribute to Vermont State University with this launch. In addition, the team is reviewing proposals in response to the RFP for Vermont State University's website, which is scheduled to be launched next Spring.

Message from the Academic Operations Team

Academic Operations sub-teams are working on process mapping and design of their projects. A focus for all work guided by the Core Team is to develop a working definition of Student Success for Vermont State University and key metrics to be used to track progress.

The Board's Education, Personnel and Student Life (EPSL) Committee will be continuing its focused oversight of academic transformation work at its upcoming meeting on March 21, 2022. The committee will receive updates on high-priority projects including the program array, academic organization structure, and the collaborative work by faculty leaders to support the development of effective governance and curriculum review through this transition period leading to the launch of Vermont State University.

Message from the Workforce Development Team

The Workforce Development Core Team continues with discovery, as well as reviewing future tools for use when in the design phase. Specifically, Helen Linda has briefed us on process mapping as a tool to assist with the discovery work. Workforce activities at each college are very different as they address different audiences with different education solutions. The process mapping will help the team to visualize the various processes used now to determine how to bring them together. We are looking forward to moving forward to the design phase.

UPDATE FROM THE BOARD'S DEI COMMITTEE

Anti-Racism Pledge

At the DEI Committee meeting on March 7, 2022, the trustees received an update from the Student Diversity and Inclusion Task Force on their anti-racism pledge. The Task Force has been working closely with Meg Walz (Director, IT Project Manager) in drafting the landing webpage for the VSCS Anti-Racism Pledge. As it stands, the drafted webpage includes an introductory paragraph followed by the full pledge. The 'sign the pledge button' is currently deactivated but, when ready, it will link to a signable form that VSC participants can use to support the pledge. The Task Force welcomes inquiries and constructive suggestions for the landing page that can be taken into consideration as it continues its work. The draft website is located at <https://www.vsc.edu/antiracism-pledge/>. Please reach out to students Kevin McGreal

(kwm04160@ccv.vsc.edu) or Sabra Anne Snyder (Sabra.Snyder@NorthernVermont.edu) to share any feedback you may have, as well as your questions and comments.

Proposed VSC Diversity Statement – Message from the DEI Transformation Task Force

The Board’s DEI Committee also received numerous updates from the DEI Transformation Task Force, including the presentation of a draft Diversity Statement for the VSC. See [Meeting Minutes](#).

The Task Force notes that the challenges that came from continuing to provide quality education during a public health crisis have forced all of us to grapple with and reassess our core values as they relate to inclusivity, equity, and accessibility. The Task Force has been impressed with the ability of our colleagues to engage in the challenging and often uncomfortable process of committing to the importance of equitable access to education and the creation of a just society. As we continue our work with transformation, we are also working to draft a system-wide diversity statement that captures the momentum of this work. The draft statement is available at [DEI Committee Meeting Materials](#) at p. 10. If you would like to provide feedback on this statement, please send your comments to Jae Basiliere (jae.basiliere@northernvermont.edu), Mary Brodsky (Mary.Brodsky@ccv.edu), or Kathleen Mason (kfm09260@vtc.vsc.edu).

UPCOMING BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

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)
April 11, 2022, time TBD	Finance and Facilities 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 [Updated Way to Provide Input and Feedback – VSCS Transformation](#).

With kind regards,

Sophie