

To: Vermont State College System Communities
From: Chancellor Sophie Zdatny
Re: **Transformation Update #26**
Date: March 28, 2022

Dear Vermont State Colleges Community,

This is the 26th transformation update which means that our next update will celebrate the first anniversary of the launch of these biweekly transformation updates. You can find all the past transformation updates on the updated Transformation website at <https://transformation.vsc.edu/>, along with other resources on transformation.

PRESIDENTIAL CAMPUS VISITS

The search for the inaugural President of Vermont State University is well underway! The final two candidates will be on campus March 28-30 and March 29-31, and the final two community Zoom Town Halls will be held on March 30 and April 1, at 6:00-7:00 p.m. For more detailed information and access to the resumes of the four candidates, please go to <https://www.vsc.edu/presidential-search/> or click on the Presidential Search tile on the VSC portal.

Please share your feedback on the candidates – the forms for the first two candidates are now available on the portal (*click on the Presidential Search tile and scroll down for the link to the feedback form for 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.

UPDATE FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

At its Board meeting on March 19th, the Board received a transformation update, laying out the Campus Direction for Vermont State University. See [here](#). The objectives of the campus vision are to build on the distinctive identity and strengths of each campus and to use the vision for each campus to identify necessary strategic investments that better meet the needs of students and programs. This will also help to set priorities in planning how to re-size our current campus footprint and infrastructure to meet our needs moving forward, while simultaneously demonstrating the commitment to our existing locations and communities.

The Board recognized that athletics serves as a core element of the student experience and is a source of diversity and energy. Accordingly, the update made clear that **there will be no immediate changes to athletic offerings at Castleton University, Northern Vermont University, or Vermont Technical College** and that, post-transition, **the existing mascots will be retained and will be incorporated into the branding standards for Vermont State University.**

The Frequently Asked Questions page on the Transformation website has been updated to reflect this and other information shared at the Board meeting. See [Frequently Asked Questions – VSCS Transformation](#).

UPDATES FROM PROJECT TEAMS

Message from the Student Experience Team

The Student Experience sub-teams are continuing their design work, and several projects should be ready to go through a design review with sponsors soon. One additional project the team has been working on (with the Administrative Operations Team) is the tuition pricing analysis. We have been working with our partner, Maguire Associates, to do an in-depth analysis of our tuition and fees structure to determine what the best approach will be for Vermont State University. As a foundation for this project, the group has done a competitive analysis of similar institutions in the region, as well as primary research with prospective students to understand the value of different factors they consider when making their school choice. In keeping with the mission of Vermont State University, we are being intentional to include the voices and perspectives of non-traditional students in the analysis. We look forward to sharing the outcomes of this work later this spring.

Message from the Academic Operations Team

The Academic Operations teams are excited to be moving several significant projects forward through the design stage. A model for Vermont State University's academic organization will be voted on at Faculty Assemblies in April. Designs for the Connections General Education program and an advising model will also be presented to Faculty Assemblies in April for discussion and feedback. The Libraries sub-team has completed its design for a new system-wide library website and is now moving that project forward into development. As part of the design of library services, the sub-team is requesting feedback from faculty on library databases by April 1st via this survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3MVG3WC>.

Additional information on all the work currently being undertaken by faculty in anticipation of the launch of Vermont State University was shared with the Education, Personnel and Student Life Committee of the Board of Trustees at its meeting on March 21, 2022. See [EPSL Committee Meeting Materials](#).

Message from the Workforce Development Team

The Workforce Team is currently taking its first pass at process mapping to identify the flow of the work as well as points of divergence across the system. This work will help the team identify where differences lie which will be the areas of focus for future process alignment. Over the next few weeks, the team will be focusing on these areas and ultimately will propose a foundation from which the entire workforce group can build upon. In addition, the workforce team is circling back for additional Discovery with the Advising-Academic Support-ADA sub-team and the Career Services sub-team. As those sub-teams move through design, their decisions will impact the elements the Workforce Team may need to include in its work to support the desired outcomes. We are also adding Jessica Duncan from CU to the team to include her workforce work. Welcome aboard Jessica!

STATE AND FEDERAL RELATIONS UPDATE

President Biden signed the Fiscal Year 2022 omnibus federal appropriations package, which includes Congressionally Directed Spending, earlier this month. The Vermont State Colleges has three projects that were funded:

- Northern Vermont University at Lyndon will receive \$250,000 to support student persistence and retention of first-generation, low-income students, and students with disabilities. This was a priority funding request of Congressman Welch.
- Community College of Vermont will receive \$4.5 million to support educational opportunities for incarcerated Vermonters and for corrections officers. This was a priority funding request of Senator Sanders.
- The Vermont State Colleges system will receive \$3.7 million to support system transformation, specifically in the areas of unified libraries, institutional research, and workforce development. This was a priority funding request of Senator Leahy.

We are incredibly grateful to the many individuals across the VSC who worked on these proposals and with our Congressional Delegation to see them to fruition. We appreciate the thoughtfulness, prioritization, and support provided by our delegation.

In Vermont, the Budget Adjustment Act for Fiscal Year 2022 was signed into law earlier this month. The bill contains an additional \$7.35 million in scholarship funding for VSC students for the 2022-2023 academic year. Many VSC students will benefit from these funds and we are thrilled by this support from the state. Announcements about these scholarships will be made soon.

Finally, the Fiscal Year 2023 budget work is underway. The House has completed its work on the bill and has committed to a \$10 million dollar increase to the annual base appropriation for the VSC. This is remarkable achievement for the VSC and puts us just \$2.5 million shy of the

\$48 million annual appropriation recommended by the *Select Committee on the Future of Public Higher Education in Vermont*. Several VSC faculty, staff, students, community partners, and trustees provided public comment during the January public hearings on the budget, and I want to thank everyone who has shown up and voiced the importance of supporting the VSC. While this bill still needs to make it through the Senate and Governor, if it crosses the finish line, this will be the largest single-year base appropriation the VSC has ever seen. As the legislature and the Governor continue their work in the coming months, we will be continuing ours to ensure the VSC has the resources needed for success.

UPCOMING BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

April 11, 2022, 1:00 p.m.	Finance and Facilities Committee (Zoom)
April 11, 2022, 2:00 p.m.	Board of Trustees (Zoom)
April 18, 2022, TBD	Board of Trustees (Zoom)
May 9, 2022, TBD	DEI Committee (Zoom)
May 9, 2022, TBD	Audit Committee (Zoom)
May 16, 2022, TBD	Board of Trustees (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