

To: Vermont State College System Communities  
From: Chancellor Sophie Zdatny  
Re: **Transformation Update #27**  
Date: April 11, 2022

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Dear Vermont State Colleges Community,

Happy anniversary! This is the 27<sup>th</sup> transformation update – the first one went out on April 12, 2021. I encourage everyone to take this opportunity to look back and to take pride in all that collectively has been accomplished in the past year. If you want to take a trip down Memory Lane, 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**

Thank you to all those who participated in the campus visits of the four Presidential candidates. It was a hectic schedule but you evidently made a good impression on the candidates, all of whom reported feeling welcomed and appreciated the opportunity to learn more about the VSC and the new university. We hope to be able to announce the new President within the next couple of weeks.

### **UPDATES FROM PROJECT TEAMS**

#### **Message from the Student Experience Team**

Student success is the number one priority for the student experience teams. For prospective students, finding the right fit gives them their best chances for success. With the variety of academic programs, flexible learning modalities and campus options, Vermont State University will provide every student, regardless of type, the opportunity to find the right fit for them.

As the teams dive deeper into design, additional help is needed to move the work forward. We are so appreciative of the support we are receiving from staff and faculty. Several members of the admissions team have recently joined in the transformation effort and are kicking off projects related to recruitment travel, event planning, and the visitor experience. All these project designs are crucial to helping students find their fit.

Discussions are also underway to design an improved process for those students with prior credits but no degree seeking to enroll at Vermont State University. This is a population that is expected to make up an increased percentage of enrollments in the future. Whether the credits

were earned through an assessment of prior learning/life experience, dual enrollment/advanced placement tests, or at a previously enrolled institution, students will want to know how their credits will fit with their intended degree program. Providing timely and accurate information on time to degree completion is a top priority for these students.

Finally, the core team meeting this past week was expanded to include all the sub-teams to participate in a presentation by the advising team from academic operations. The design for advising and student support services was shared and included a great discussion. Overall, it was a wonderful experience to see what the future might look like and begin to envision the integration of other student service areas with this model. There was a lot of positive energy in our “Zoom Room” and excitement about building a strong advising and support network ensuring student success.

The proposed **Advising Model for Vermont State University** is spotlighted in this week’s update – see attached.

### **Message from the Academic Operations Team**

The Academic Operations teams have made significant progress in many areas and are now bringing designs forward for discussion and review. This includes the final proposed design of the **academic organization structure** for Vermont State University. The structure being voted on by the four Faculty Assemblies at their April meetings was the majority preference expressed in a recent Faculty Federation poll. The design is for five cross-campus schools and a graduate programs division with cross-campus departments and programs under each. The five schools are:

- Arts & Communication
- Business & Professional Studies
- Education, Psychology, and Social Sciences
- Nursing, Movement and Healthcare
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.

The Advising team will also be presenting its design for a **new advising model** (again, see the spotlight feature attached) to the Faculty Assemblies.

In addition, the General Education team will be presenting its design of a **Connections General Education program** for discussion at upcoming Faculty Assemblies.

### **Message from the Workforce Development Team**

The Workforce Development Team has begun examining design principles in four major areas for our work going forward. These areas are:

- Systems improvement and integration
- Program Development and Student Services
- Communications and Engagement
- Financial sustainability.

This work is in preparation for an upcoming presentation to the Project Sponsors and key stakeholders. It is also helping to identify specific areas for additional discovery.

### **STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The Student Advisory Council will be meeting on **Thursday, April 14, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.** The topics scheduled to be covered are Library Services and Information Technology.

### **UPCOMING BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

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

<b>April 18, 2022, 2:00 p.m.</b>	Board of Trustees (Zoom)
<b>May 9, 2022, 1:00 p.m.</b>	DEI Committee (Zoom)
<b>May 9, 2022, 2:00 p.m.</b>	Audit Committee (Zoom)
<b>May 16, 2022, TBD</b>	Board of Trustees (Zoom)
<b>May 23, 2022, TBD</b>	Finance & Facilities Committee (Zoom)
<b>May 23, 2022, TBD</b>	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 [Updated Way to Provide Input and Feedback – VSCS Transformation](#).

With kind regards,

Sophie

# Spotlight Feature

## VSU Advising Model & Approach

### Vision

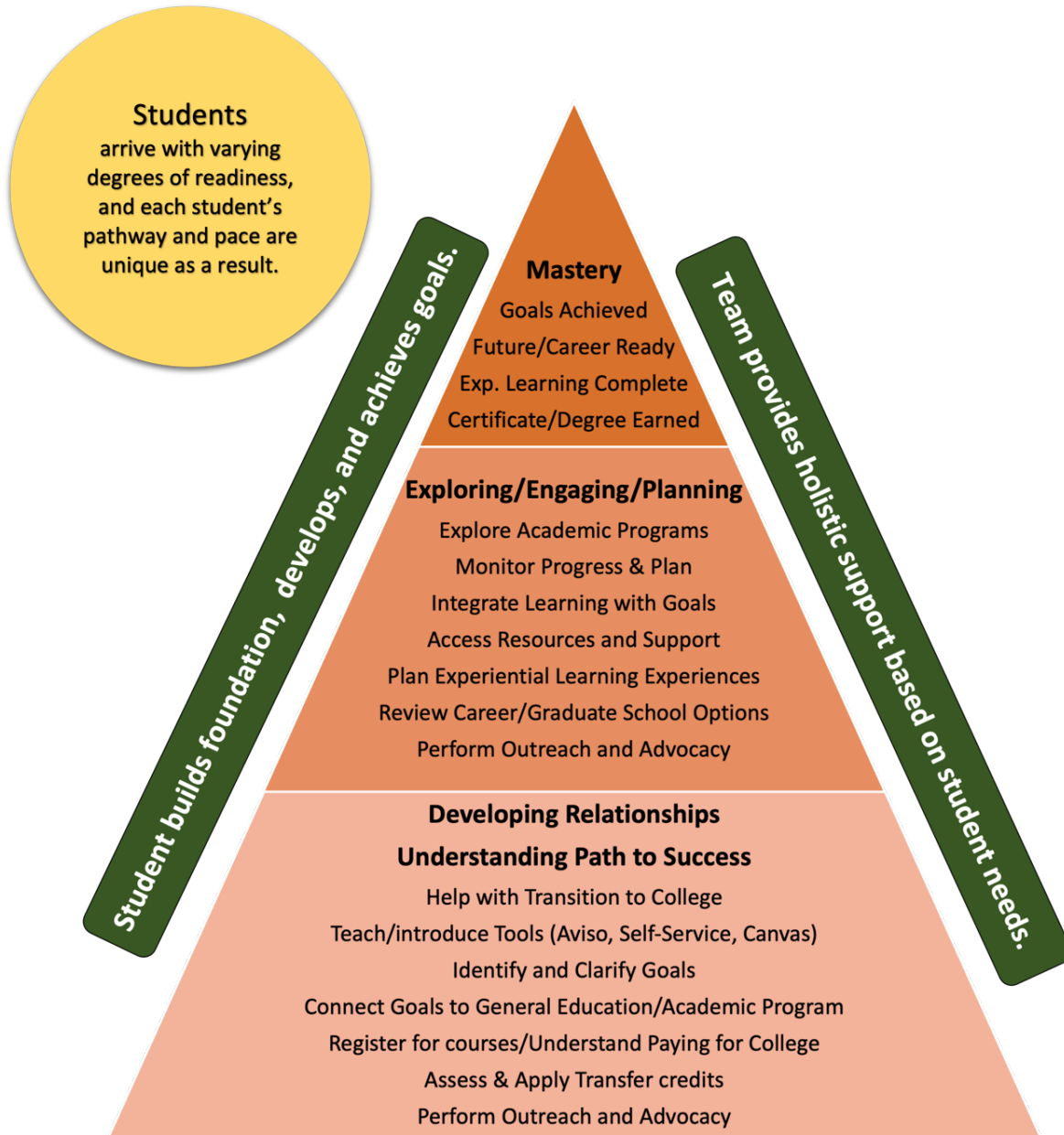
- **Student First**
  - Equitable advising for all students: online, in-person, and hybrid
  - Unique pathway and pace for each student
- **Purpose First**
  - Students identify, clarify, and attain educational and career goals
  - Students monitor progress, view options, and make informed decisions
- **Digital First**
  - Streamlined and consistent with one digital front door for all students
  - Flexibility for students to choose when, where, and how
  - Personalized self-service and universal design

### Mission

How is the new advising concept different than the current practice?	Current practice at CU, NVU, and VTC.
<b>Shared advising model</b> with both faculty and staff having formal advising responsibilities.	Faculty advisors are advisors of record with some professional staff serving as advising support or advising certain populations.
<b>Relationship-based approach</b> with a focus on intentional transformational interactions to help students meet goals, make informed decisions, and prepare for their futures.	Advisors tend to equate advising with course registration and other transactional tasks; some advisors are also focused on transformational interactions and building relationships (inconsistent for students).
<b>Streamlined, accessible, digital first systems and information</b> for transactional aspects of advising such as schedule changes, major changes, verifying progress toward degrees, other academic forms, etc.	Mix of paper forms, electronic forms that work to varying degrees, and email options. Web sites sometimes conflict or are out of date or cannot be found.
<b>Clear roles and expectations with robust professional development</b> for faculty and staff advisors.	Students tend to combine all support into one category including advising, student success, academic support, etc. There are no consistent expectations for students or staff regarding what advising is.

## Advising Approach: Student Advising Hierarchy of Needs

The advising approach is developmental and holistic to accommodate all student needs. Each student will have both a faculty advisor and a staff advisor for holistic support as they navigate their unique path to success. The student-centered, relationship-based approach is designed to increase each student’s sense of belonging, support each student’s overall wellbeing, and result in greater student success outcomes than realized through current practices.



## Advising Model

Students prefer fewer departmental silos, a single “front door” (whether remotely or in-person) where common questions can be addressed, and the flexibility to choose when, where, and how they access advising. The advising model provides a “one-stop” Student Success & Advising Center with expanded hours and digital and physical “front door” access.

The investment in additional staff will reduce, and strive to eliminate, existing achievement gaps among underserved student groups while increasing retention and graduation rates for all students and resulting in increased VSU revenues. Staff additions are projected to result from a combination of reassignments and new hires. Due to shared goals, integrated functions, and common professional development needs, the team recommends including advising, career and experiential learning, academic support, and disability services together organizationally.

The advising team envisions common web-based functionality and access for all services included on the concept map.

