

To: Vermont State College System Communities

From: Chancellor Sophie Zdatny

Re: **Transformation Update #29**

Date: May 9, 2022

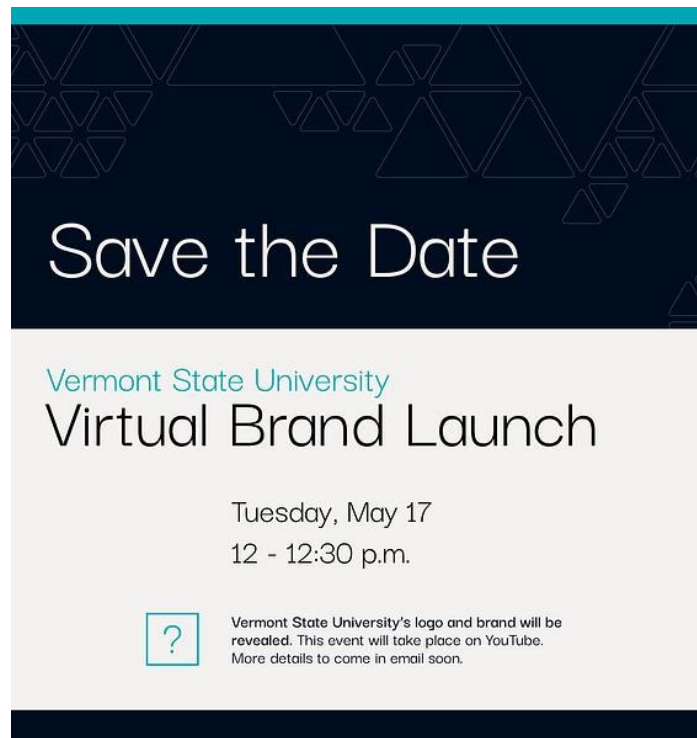
---

Dear Vermont State Colleges Community,

As we come to the end of the Spring semester, I know it is one of the busiest times of year. To all those taking exams, good luck! To the students graduating, congratulations!

Transformation work continues and we have some exciting updates this issue. You can [find all the past transformation updates](#) along with other resources on the [Transformation website](#). It is an ongoing work in progress, but the Transformation website also includes the names of the team members serving on the various transformation teams so you know who to reach out to if you want to contact someone directly to find out more about a particular area's transformation work.


### BRAND LAUNCH NEXT WEEK



Save the Date

Vermont State University  
Virtual Brand Launch

Tuesday, May 17  
12 - 12:30 p.m.

 Vermont State University's logo and brand will be revealed. This event will take place on YouTube. More details to come in email soon.

Mark your calendars for **Tuesday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, 12-12:30 p.m.!**

We are very excited about sharing the logo design and branding out with everyone. When students are back on campus in the fall, there will be additional launch parties scheduled. Faculty assemblies will also be receiving additional information about the brand over the coming months.

## **UPDATES FROM CORE TEAMS**

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

The student experience teams have been busy with their project designs. Admissions and Financial Aid presented to the sponsors (Council of Presidents and key stakeholders) last week and shared their vision for the new student enrollment process: from prospect student through to enrollment. This vision includes a draft enrollment plan, high-level process map, and a proposed staff design for admissions.

The Student and Residence Life team presented some of their conceptual designs for residential life and new student onboarding to the Student Advisory Council on April 28<sup>th</sup>. They received great feedback from students, which will be incorporated into their work going forward.

A team representing cross-functional support areas for international students had their initial discovery meeting this past week. The group reports that it plans to continue to meet to learn more and begin looking at a design for recruiting and supporting international students throughout Vermont State University.

Finally, the three admissions teams from CU, NVU, and VTC came together at Vermont Tech today to get to know one another and focus on team building for the future. The team heard updates on all the admissions transformation projects that are currently underway, enjoyed a very nice lunch together, and was able to learn about and tour the Vermont Advanced Manufacturing Center. We would like to extend a special thank you to Kathleen Mason who helped us with some DEI focused ice breakers that helped everyone learn a little more about each other. It was a great day!

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

The Academic Operations teams are working on bringing together interconnected aspects of project designs in career development, advising, general education, libraries, and teaching and learning innovation in preparation for design gate presentations later in May through early June. The Face to Face Plus (F2F+) faculty development pilot project, supported by the Teaching & Learning Innovation team, kicked off last week with 27 faculty sharing plans to test new technologies and teaching strategies in Fall 2022 courses. A cross-functional project focused on academic scheduling needs involving faculty and staff is conducting software discovery this week.

### **Message from the Administrative Operations Team**

The Business Planning team completed their Discovery Stage Gate presentation last week. They presented on four key deliverables covering long range financial planning, operational budgeting, state appropriation allocation, and allocation of shared revenues and expenses. Employee Services, the last team from Administrative Operations, will go through its discovery stage gate presentation next week.

### **Message from the Chief Information Officer, Kellie Campbell, regarding upcoming IT cyber-security changes**

As part of our discovery efforts in the Information Technology area, one specific service area that has surfaced as a priority for us is around information/technology security initiatives. As an outcome of COVID, in addition to the current cyber market, we need to ensure we are implementing solutions to keep the Vermont State Colleges System as safe as possible. I will be working with IT teams across the system to level up priority projects and efforts. On the horizon are a few key initiatives, including implementing a multi-factor authentication (MFA) system. You will be hearing more about these initiatives very soon. I want to make our community aware of their importance and I appreciate your attentiveness to them. We all play a critical role in keeping our system safe and you are always welcome to send emails or questions of concern to the VSC Cyber Security Team at: [cybersecurity@vsc.edu](mailto:cybersecurity@vsc.edu).

### **DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

As we work through the design stage of the transformation work, we are carefully considering the best way to organize the new university to deliver on its mission. Throughout this process we have tried to let the designs and processes recommended by the teams drive the structure and to avoid a top-down approach. Now that a new president has been hired and we have gotten initial approval to merge the institutions from the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE), we are close to making some decisions about the structure of the new university.

We expect to communicate more in the next several weeks, but it is important to remember that the transformation is a multi-year process. In the short-term, we have committed to NECHE that we will maintain our three separately accredited institutions until July 1st of 2023. Once the transition is complete, we will have a more streamlined and sustainable administrative structure for both the university and the system. In my last update, I shared the Substantive Change Request that was submitted to NECHE. The section on Standard 3 (beginning on page 10) provides a high-level overview of the proposed organization and governance structure, as well as some key milestones. While some of the details continue to evolve, this is the most complete and up-to-date explanation of our plans at this point.

## VSCS DIVERSITY STATEMENT and ANTI-RACISM PLEDGE

Today, the DEI Committee of the Board of Trustees received and reviewed the revised proposed VSCS Diversity Statement. *See [DEI Committee Materials](#)* at p.21. Mary Brodsky, Kathleen Mason, and Jae Basiliere shared the outreach each had undertaken to solicit feedback from across the system, as well as the changes that were made in response to the feedback. While the feedback was generally positive, each expressed concern at the small number of people who participated and stressed the importance of ongoing, tangible action to live up to the aspirational statement. For one example of such action, see the Spotlight section below. The statement will be considered by the full Board at its upcoming meeting on May 16<sup>th</sup>.

Tajae Edwards shared an update on the student-created anti-racism pledge on behalf of the Student Diversity and Inclusion Task Force. The Task Force is working with Erik Kirk to create a promotional video for an official roll-out of the pledge next semester. Work is also ongoing to create a landing page with resources for the pledge, plus plans to for its launch during welcome week and orientation in the fall. The Task Force has an email address at [pledge@vsc.edu](mailto:pledge@vsc.edu) so people can contact them with questions and support. As several of the Task Force members will be graduating, any students who would be interested in continuing the work on the pledge are encouraged to send an email.

The Student Diversity and Inclusion Task Force has been invited by Monica Flippin Wynn to speak at the Gardner Institute's social justice panels. Their first panel is coming up on June 3<sup>rd</sup> where the team will talk to many other college students across the nation about their work on creating, forming, collaborating, and finalizing the anti-racism pledge. This will specifically help college students getting their feet in the door of DEI work to help them see the steps, organization, and networking involved to get such a task done. Achieving such national recognition is a significant accomplishment – congratulations to all those on the Task Force!

## VISIT TO JOHNSON SELECTBOARD

On April 18<sup>th</sup>, I met with the Johnson Selectboard along with Sharron Scott and Katherine Levasseur, to address the Selectboard's concerns about the future of the NVU-Johnson campus. The campus is important to the village not just as a part of its economic landscape but as part of its identity. This is not going to change with the ongoing transformation to Vermont State University. In partnership with the state, we are committed keeping our campuses open and staying in our host communities like Johnson. With additional funding from the state and increasing access for all learners in Vermont, the new University is reimagining higher education to meet the needs of Vermont communities.

**News Coverage:** News & Citizen "[State reassures local officials on Johnson college's future](#)"

## “SPOTLIGHT”

The Mission Statement of Vermont State University states: *Vermont State University prepares all students for meaningful work and responsible citizenship by fostering their intellectual, personal, and creative growth in an accessible, caring, and inclusive community. As Vermont’s regional public university, our technological, professional, and liberal arts programs engage with partners throughout Vermont and beyond to provide students with rich real-world learning while meeting the needs of our communities and the state.*

This spotlight features students who are doing the hard and important work that will make this mission a reality. [On the NVU Johnson campus, the new Mamadou N’Diaye Resource Center](#) has opened and brings the campus community together to celebrate the new space for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) students. This space was created through the work of the Coalition of Minority Students (COMS) to be a safe place for people of color in a predominantly white campus community, as well as a place to host events open to all students, faculty, staff, and community members interested in learning more about Diversity, Equity and Inclusion principles. The resource center is named in memory of a former NVU student. Mamadou was a rising sophomore pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Media Arts and a basketball player for the Badgers. He died in a drowning accident in July of 2020.

Devyn Thompson, COMS co-president and third-year English major from Waldorf, Md. who is also pursuing licensure in secondary education, spearheaded this effort. Thompson has also put many hours of work into the successful adoption of the Anti-Racism Pledge by the Vermont State Colleges System Board of Trustees. Thank you to Devyn and the other members of COMS, as well as the NVU administration, for supporting this concept and turning it into a reality.

## UPCOMING BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

<b>May 16, 2022, 1:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Board of Trustees (Zoom)</b>
<b>May 23, 2022, TBD</b>	<b>Finance &amp; Facilities Committee (Zoom)</b>
<b>May 23, 2022, TBD</b>	<b>Education, Personnel &amp; Student Life Committee (Zoom)</b>
<b>June 16, 2022, TBD</b>	<b>Board of Trustees (in person at Castleton)</b>
<b>August 3, 2022, TBD</b>	<b>DEI Committee (Zoom)</b>
<b>August 3, 2022, TBD</b>	<b>Board of Trustees (Zoom)</b>

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 this form on [the Transformation website](#).

Are there items related to Transformation that you would like to see more of? Is there work by colleagues or students you would like to elevate? Do you have ideas for Spotlight features?

Please send suggestions to Aurora Hurd at [aurora.hurd@vsc.edu](mailto:aurora.hurd@vsc.edu)

With kind regards,

Sophie