CASTLETON UNIVERSITY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF VERMONT
NORTHERN VERMONT UNIVERSITY
VERMONT TECHNICAL COLLEGE

VERMONT
— STATE COLLEGES SYSTEM —

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR
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April 4, 2022

New England Commission of Higher Education
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100
Burlington, MA 01803-4514

Dear Commissioners:

We respectfully submit our substantive change proposal to unify Castleton University, Northern Vermont University, and Vermont Technical College into a new **Vermont State University** with a single institutional accreditation.

This proposal is the result of over one year of significant preparatory work since our Board of Trustees approved of an initial transformation plan in February 2021. That plan is inclusive of both the creation of this new single institution and overall transformation at the system level to support this new institution's success. Our work is being conducted collaboratively and transparently, as we hope is reflected in this proposal and in our projections for a final transition year ahead before Vermont State University officially begins operations on July 1, 2023.

In that spirit, we jointly submit this request and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tom Mauhs-Pugh, Interim President
Castleton University

Patricia Moulton, President
Vermont Technical College

John Mills, Interim President
Northern Vermont University

Sophie Zdatny, Chancellor
Vermont State Colleges System

COVER PAGE FOR SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE REQUESTS

Name of Institution	Castleton University, Northern Vermont University, and Vermont Technical College
Type of proposed change (See https://www.neche.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Pp72_Substantive_Change.pdf)	Change in legal status, control, or ownership
Effective date of implementation	July 1, 2023
Date of institutional governing board approval	February 22, 2021
Is state approval required?	_X_ No ___ Yes, approved (date) _____ (Attach verification.)
Contact Person:	Name: Yasmine Ziesler Title: Chief Academic Officer Phone: ████████ Fax: (802) 224-3035 e-mail: Yasmine. Ziesler@vsc.edu
Please summarize the proposed change	CU, NVU and Vermont Tech, members of the Vermont State Colleges system, seek Commission approval to unite the three institutions and become Vermont State University, with the intention of delivering unified academic programs across their existing locations.
Signature of CEO:	████████ Chancellor, VSC
Date:	April 4, 2022

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE REQUEST
for the Unification of
Castleton University, Northern Vermont University, and Vermont Technical College
as
Vermont State University

Introduction

Castleton University, Northern Vermont University (with two campuses, Johnson and Lyndon), and Vermont Technical College (also with two primary campuses, Randolph Center and Williston), members of the Vermont State Colleges System (VSCS), seek Commission approval to form a new **Vermont State University** that builds on the existing strengths of each institution with the intention of delivering unified academic programs across our institutions' primary and secondary locations and via distance learning. This unification plan is the result of a multi-year strategic planning effort that both predates the pandemic and responds to the new pandemic-generated circumstances and opportunities that have emerged.

Pending Commission approval, Vermont State University will come into existence on July 1, 2023. It will have a single accreditation status, operating budget and be governed by one board, the current Vermont State Colleges System Board of Trustees, which also has (and will retain) responsibility for the Community College of Vermont. A president, for whom a search is currently underway and who, when selected, will have a primary office located at our most centrally located campus (the main campus of Vermont Tech in Randolph Center), will be the chief executive officer of the new institution. Its constituent five primary campuses will be known as Vermont State University at Castleton, at Johnson, at Lyndon, at Randolph Center, and at Williston.

Strategic planning to address years-long structural challenges was initiated by the VSCS Board of Trustees and former Chancellor in 2019 with the publication of a whitepaper, *Serving Vermont's Students by Securing the Future of the Vermont State Colleges System*. With the onset of the pandemic, the system was pushed to the brink of insolvency. The former Chancellor put forward a proposal to shutter three of our rural campuses in April 2020. The Governor and legislature rejected this plan and instead provided emergency bridge funding to sustain our institutions while the legislature established expectations for a complete and transparent system overhaul. As established by Act 120 of 2020, the legislative *Select Committee on the Future of Public Higher Education in Vermont* (*Select Committee*) was tasked with making recommendations for how the VSCS could continue to deliver its mission to Vermont and achieve financial stability. The final report and unanimous recommendations of the *Select Committee* called for a five-year plan to increase funding to the VSCS by over 57%, provide

continued bridge funding to backfill the VSCS budget deficit, and fund the $20 million necessary to sponsor the transformation work. An additional $16 million in one-time funds were appropriated for direct student aid for FY2022 with the intention of strengthening the system's operating revenues. The expectation for the VSCS, as established in Act 74 of 2021, was that it would commit to a system-wide transformation effort to include: unifying Castleton University, Northern Vermont University, and Vermont Technical College into a single university; consolidating administrative services across the system; and eliminating the system's structural budget deficit at a rate of $5 million per year for five years by the end of fiscal year 2026 through a combination of expense reductions and revenue enhancements.

Following closely the work of the *Select Committee*, the VSCS Board of Trustees (BOT) voted on February 22, 2021 to adopt the *Select Committee* plan as outlined. The plan was subsequently endorsed by the state via Act 74, the Fiscal Year 2022 State Budget, which charged the Chancellor and Board with executing the plan and provided funds recommended by the Select Committee to sponsor the transformation work and backfill the VSCS budget deficit. This amounted to a 16% increase in annual state support for the VSCS for FY2022 and prefunded $20 million of transformation expenses.

Since BOT approval of the project plan in February 2021, the VSCS has launched a comprehensive approach to transformation project planning with the creation of four Transformation Teams and over twenty sub-teams representing all aspects of Student Experience, Academic Operations, Administrative Operations, and Workforce Development as well as a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Working Group. A high-level timeline calls for careful staging of the transformation work over the next five years, with the primary focus of effort prior to and during AY 2021-22 and 2022-2023 on preparations for the launch of Vermont State University. Other projects, such as establishing a system-wide comprehensive workforce development division and facilities transformation, are to be phased in subsequently.

Honoring a commitment to transparency and engagement with all stakeholders, the Chancellor sends out bi-weekly updates to the entire system, meets monthly with leadership of the system's unions, and has convened a Student Advisory Council to seek regular input and feedback on transformation work. The Chancellor and transformation team leaders have held virtual and campus-based town hall meetings and regularly review input submitted via an informational website.[1]

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[1] See generally https://transformation.vsc.edu/.

VSCS Transformation Timeline
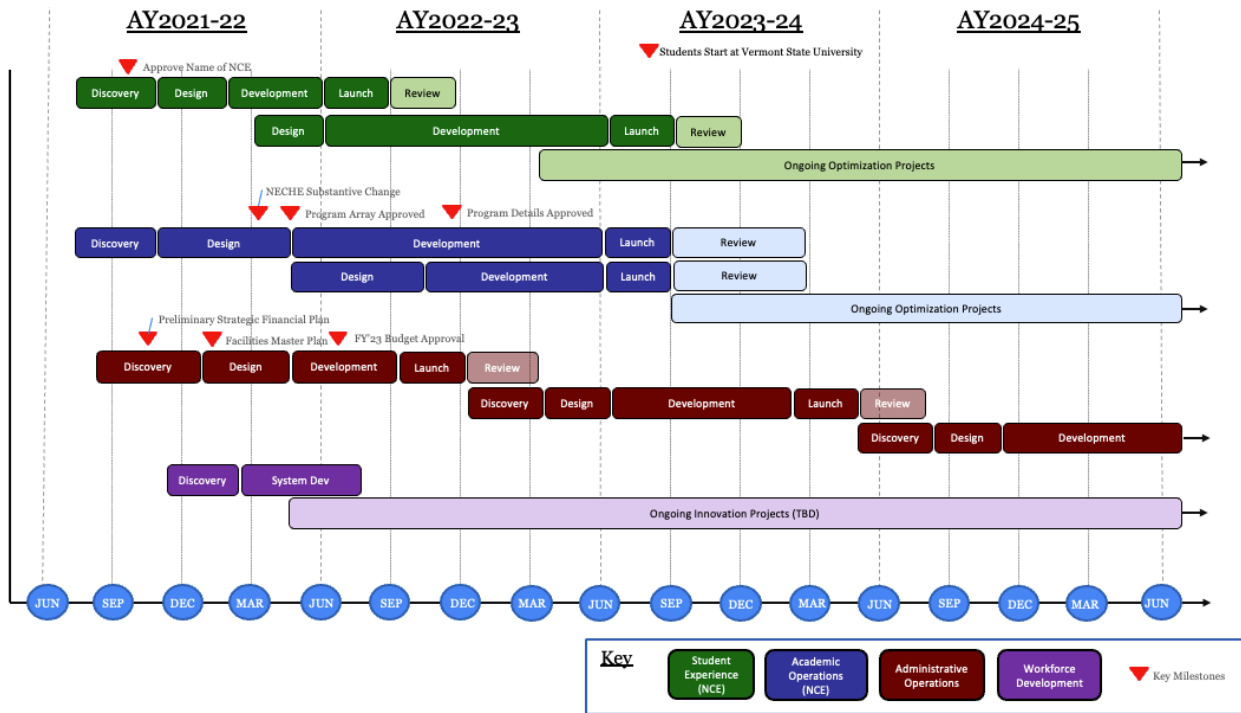
Completed major milestones of the transformation work include:

- Initial proposals developed by more than 85 of our approximately 220 total full-time faculty in August 2021 for a single, optimized array of liberal arts, professional, and technical academic programs to be delivered through a combination of in-person, hybrid, and distance learning modalities across Vermont State University's primary and secondary locations.

- Approval by the BOT on September 29th of the name **Vermont State University** for the new university, following an extensive research process that included internal and external stakeholder surveys, workshops, and community meetings with various stakeholder groups.

- Approval by the BOT on October 25th of Mission and Vision statements for Vermont State University, drafted by a group of representatives from all three institutions and led by Provost Nolan Atkins. The group considered feedback received from faculty assemblies, the Council of Presidents, institutional Town Hall meetings at all three institutions, and background marketing and brand identity research.

- Review in December 2021 by the existing Faculty Assemblies of a new Common Course Schedule Block to be implemented beginning in Fall 2022.

- In December 2021, the four Faculty Assembly leaders and the President of the Faculty Federation approved a plan and timeline for coordinated review of the proposed academic program array by existing curriculum committees and faculty assemblies.

- Development of a Vermont State University "Connections General Education Program," with its vision and goals, which is currently under review by general education committees at each of our institutions.
- Development of an academic organization structure consisting of university-wide programs, departments, and schools, which is currently under review by our Faculty Assemblies.
- Initial analysis undertaken for completion of a 10-year facilities strategic plan.

Institutional Overviews

The creation of the new Vermont State University and indeed all the work of the VSCS to transform its operations, while initiated from a moment of crisis, builds on considerable recent progress and expertise within our system and the strengths of our individual institutions. Although each institution that will become Vermont State University has its own unique origin and institutional culture, all three share a common early history as State Normal Schools before diversifying in mission and programming; all became members of the Vermont State Colleges System with its creation in 1961.

Northern Vermont University

In 2018, two institutions forty-three miles apart within the VSCS, Johnson State College and Lyndon State College, successfully unified to form Northern Vermont University, a substantive change reviewed favorably by NECHE in 2019. The lessons from this endeavor, as well as pioneering initiatives such as Northern Vermont University's Learning and Working Communities model, have provided an important foundation for our planning. Today the two campuses and an online division serve 1,495 undergraduate and 251 graduate students in liberal arts programs centered on the Johnson campus and focused professional programs (atmospheric sciences, digital communications, mountain recreation management, music business and industry) on the Lyndon campus, with a combined full-time faculty of 64. Since unifying, the faculty and programs have become increasingly interconnected, with students taking advantage of new opportunities to access courses offered in distance learning formats.

Vermont Technical College

Vermont Technical College diverged from the teacher preparation focus of its sister institutions in 1910 when the legislature established it as a School of Agriculture and then later as an Agricultural and Technical Institute. Today it serves 1,452 undergraduate students, approximately 40% of whom are over age 25, in certificate, associate, and bachelor's degree and one master's degree programs, with a full-time faculty of 78. Its operations include a primary residential campus location in the central Vermont village of Randolph Center. Its facilities support diversified agriculture, advanced manufacturing, computer engineering technology, veterinarian technology, construction management, auto/diesel technology, business, nursing, and engineering technology. A secondary limited-residential campus in Williston serves the greater Burlington area, the most densely populated part of the state. The Williston campus

facilities support our dental, radiologic science, respiratory therapy, nursing, and engineering technology. In addition, Vermont Tech has twelve additional sites for delivery of nursing instruction and one additional site for respiratory therapy. Most of Vermont Technical College's programs are externally accredited. Its programs in dental hygiene, radiologic science, respiratory therapy, professional pilot technology, engineering technologies, licensed practical nursing, registered nursing, and RN re-entry are unique within the system and the state and serve critical workforce development needs. Vermont Technical College completed its ten-year comprehensive review in 2020 amidst the pandemic and a significant internal transformation effort that has resulted in better alignment of resources to goals, particularly with respect to its physical and technological infrastructure.

Castleton University

Most recently and subsequent to the BOT's approval of the transformation plan, Castleton University completed its ten-year NECHE self-study and site visit in October 2021, in which it identified key strengths and opportunities as it becomes part of Vermont State University. Among these are its attention to program outcomes assessment, including its newly launched general education "Connections" seminar portfolio approach, and its cultural focus on fostering student success through personal relationships and caring, expressed locally as "The Castleton Way." In recent years Castleton has expanded its campus footprint and educational offerings at the master's degree level, including fully online programs. Most recently, the closures of nearby institutions have resulted in Castleton expanding to add a location in Killington for a Resort & Hospitality Management program and a site in Bennington for Nursing. Castleton currently serves a total of 1,742 undergraduate and 625 graduate students with 80 full-time faculty in a blend of liberal arts and professional programs.

The remaining sections of this substantive change proposal address each of the *Standards for Accreditation* and, following the Policy on Substantive Change, will "provide evidence of how, through the proposed change, the institution will continue to fulfill the Standards." Each standard also includes a "Projection" section, indicating items that will be addressed between now and the proposed formal launch of Vermont State University in July 2023, as well as those that will remain outstanding after the launch date.

Standard 1: Mission and Purposes

The Vermont State University mission and vision statements were approved by the BOT on October 25th, 2021 as follows:

> *Mission*

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.

Work to develop the mission and vision began the previous summer, led by Provost Nolan Atkins, with the creation of a vision concept paper and research that explored themes related to the projected academic program array to be offered, the critical role of partnerships with the rural communities Vermont State University will serve, and the diversity of learners to be supported. Contained within the vision for Vermont State University is a commitment to foster a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion, a vision that is explicitly guiding our transformation work. The mission and vision were also intentionally crafted to fit within the mission of the VSCS, be complementary to its sister institution, the Community College of Vermont, and fulfill the state's expectations for the system's transformation. The vision for Vermont State University thus incorporates key themes from the individual identities and missions of the institutions coming together and projects an aspiration for the new kind of institution to be achieved through this transformative work:

Vision
Vermont State University's commitment is to the success of every student. We will stand as Vermont's regional public university with interconnected campuses and sites dispersed throughout the state, a community dedicated to providing accessible and affordable higher learning. Our innovative, relevant programs will focus on student success and career readiness and will meet students where they are on their educational journey. We will support students' academic, social, and personal growth, as well as their futures as skilled leaders and lifelong learners through an integrated academic and extracurricular experience. A culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion will be fostered and endure. Our students' transformational experience will be nurtured through intentional interactions and relationships. The University will provide globally relevant programs spanning the technological, professional, and liberal arts and designed to address the needs and challenges facing Vermont and our world. Students will be drawn to an academic experience that reaches beyond the classroom into our communities with our Green Mountain State as a living laboratory. We will embrace public engagement and partnerships as our civic responsibility, actively contributing to the vibrancy of our communities and their relevance in the global economy. In doing so, our students will gain understanding of community and self and their impact in the world. Our purpose will live on for generations in the positive contributions of our alumni.

Following the development and review of the vision concept by all the institutions' Presidents and senior staff, a mission and vision drafting team representing all three institutions was convened. This team of eight faculty and staff was selected from a larger group of thirty representatives, including students and alumni, who served on an institutional brand identity workshop group and provided input on the vision concept's themes. Feedback on draft concepts for the mission and vision was solicited at live and virtual Town Hall meetings held at each institution and at Faculty Assembly meetings, and final drafts were reviewed by our transformation project core teams and approved by our existing presidents before being considered and approved by the BOT.

Projections: We are energized by the bold concepts articulated in the mission and vision statements, which affirm the best of each of the individual institutions being joined as Vermont State University. Since receiving BOT approval, the Vermont State University mission and vision have provided guidance for the work of our Transformation Teams and the search for the first President. The continuing focus will be to ensure the programs, processes, and strategic priorities of Vermont State University align with and further its mission. Recognizing that the overall institutional vision is one of interconnected campuses re-organized to offer a single array of programs and services, the transformation teams are charged with engaging our existing institutions and campus communities to ensure that points of distinction across cultures and missions are understood and, to the extent possible, preserved.

Key Milestones	Timeline
BOT approval of mission and vision	October, 2021
Review of draft Vermont State University policies and programs for alignment with mission and vision, including aspirations for diversity, equity, and inclusion.	AY 2022-2023
Develop first strategic plan, with metrics, to advance mission and vision	AY 2022-2023
Evaluate progress on strategic plan metrics	Annually after July 1, 2023 launch

Standard 2: Planning and Evaluation

Strategic planning for the new Vermont State University is directed by VSCS Board Policy 505, which defines roles and responsibilities for regular communication, coordination, and review of strategic planning efforts at the institution and system level. Institution presidents have responsibility for institution-specific strategic planning, both short- and long-term, that is informed by system mission, vision, and strategic priorities established by the Board. Board policies also currently govern the existing three institutions' systematic evaluation of academic programs for continuous quality improvement (Policy 101), achievement of general education

graduation standards (Policy 106), and enrollment and cost effectiveness (Policy 109). Financial planning and evaluation activities are governed by the System Annual Operating Budget (Policy 403). Vermont State University's approach to strategic planning and evaluation is thus grounded in a foundation of system-wide coordination and policy-driven planning and evaluation activities.

The transformation process described previously has established a systematic and comprehensive approach to planning for the creation and launch of Vermont State University, an effort supported also by system-wide efforts designed to leverage efficiencies in the production and analysis of data. For example, the system has recently established and filled business intelligence analyst and strategic financial analyst positions and is participating in the National Student Clearinghouse's Postsecondary Data Partnership (PDP) to inform efforts to improve student success at each institution in the system. Production of IPEDS data and maintenance of data reporting software have been a shared system-wide service since the early 2000's. With these additional system positions and commitment to common data sets such as the PDP, the system's capacity to meet business intelligence data needs for key performance indicators and data dashboards has been strengthened and will provide standardized data sets and tools for further focused institutional research and planning at the institution level. Specific to Vermont State University, we expect to create a Director of Institutional Research and Strategic Planning position by July 2022 to guide work on Vermont State University's Strategic and Student Success plans.

Anticipating the state's transformation recommendations for a single institution, in early 2021 the BOT approved the development of a comprehensive framework for analysis of academic programs by rpk GROUP consultants. In June 2021, the BOT adopted the resulting recommendations to optimize the academic portfolio as a unified array and implement the framework for ongoing evaluation. Two critical areas of focus have already been prioritized for development as part of system-level transformation planning, with the initial analysis focused on the operations of Vermont State University: a Strategic Financial Plan and a 10-year Strategic Facilities Plan. A Strategic Enrollment plan is scheduled to be developed by September 2022. A Student Success plan will be developed during 2022-2023 for Vermont State University and will include draft definitions and metrics, such as those used by the PDP.

Recognizing the numerous challenges and varying concerns of our three existing institutions as they come together to form a new, single institution, change management has been identified as a critical focus of transformation planning. All transformation teams are structured with representatives from each institution and begin their work with a process of discovery about the current practices, areas of strength, and areas of recognized need at each institution. Team members are explicitly charged with communication back to their functional area and institutional communities. Subsequent stages of the work will include design and development,

with each stage requiring a formal review and approval of plans by the Chancellor and current institution Presidents before the team proceeds to the next stage. Major milestones are communicated regularly via transformation updates.

Strategic initiatives undertaken in the past two years at the three institutions are also informing the planning of Vermont State University, and this ongoing work is now being aligned to better support the system's transformation priorities. Castleton University's Pathway to Graduation retention plan, which was begun in 2020, for example, is informing the design of an academic advising model for Vermont State University. Northern Vermont University's newly launched Learning and Working Communities program, which evolved from goals developed in its 2018-2023 strategic plan, is informing designs for Vermont State University's academic programs and career development supports. Vermont Technical College, responding rapidly to the challenges of Spring 2020, launched a Transition Advisory Taskforce to develop plans to ensure stability and sustainability of its unique infrastructure and programs that have now been aligned with system transformation work.

Projections: With the adoption of the mission and vision for Vermont State University, the transformation teams are now poised to ensure alignment of programs, processes, and resources with the new institution's mission as we enter the design phase of transformation. In addition to the now-established framework for the ongoing evaluation of Vermont State University's academic portfolio, the BOT has reviewed high-level financial (October 2021) and facilities (February 2022) plans. A high-level strategic enrollment plan is scheduled to be completed by September 2022. The anticipated arrival of the inaugural President for Vermont State University in July of 2022 and the hiring of a Vermont State University Director of Institutional Research and Strategic Planning will mark the starting point for the development of the institution's first overall strategic plan and focused student success plan. This work will be supported by the system's growing expertise using a formal project management structure that is agile, favors innovation, and enables change through a process that continues to engage multiple stakeholders and communities. This strategic planning process will intentionally reflect the new strategic realities of higher education in today's environment and the need for a long-term strategic outlook, as well as shorter cycles for planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Key Milestones	Timeline
Complete academic portfolio analysis	January 2021-June 2021
Complete high-level financial, facilities, and enrollment plans for Vermont State University operations	October 2021-September 2022
Hire Director of Institutional Research and Strategic Planning	August 2022
Develop data analysis infrastructure for ongoing academic portfolio, enrollment, facilities, and financial analysis	AY 2022-2023
Develop first strategic plan with metrics	AY 2022-2023
Develop data dashboards for each area of strategic plan	After July 1, 2023 launch

Standard 3. Organization and Governance

Although the creation of Vermont State University will necessitate some changes in organizational structures, as described below, the overall system of governance will remain in place. The VSCS, a public corporation and instrumentality of the State of Vermont, is currently comprised of the Community College of Vermont (CCV) and the institutions that will form Vermont State University – namely, Castleton University (CU), Northern Vermont University (NVU), and Vermont Technical College (VTC). The VSCS is a public corporation and was established in 1961 by Act 247 of the Vermont Legislature. The operations of the system and its constituent institutions are governed by state statute, the corporation's bylaws, policies adopted by the BOT, and the authority it delegates to the Chancellor, institution presidents, and other staff. The system's operations are further governed by collective bargaining agreements; the three institutions that are coming together to form Vermont State University share a common set of collective bargaining agreements. Significant for the creation of Vermont State University, the agreement with the VSCS Faculty Federation recognizes Faculty Assemblies as a means of democratic faculty governance, as well as the final determining authority of the President in areas of academic concern.

Additional organizational and governance provisions to support the transformation plan approved by the BOT have been established by the Chancellor and are outlined below.

Governing Board
The seriousness with which the BOT is discharging its responsibilities for the transformation of the system and the creation of Vermont State University cannot be overstated. Recent actions by the BOT include the development of strategic priorities, approval of the system transformation plan, approval of recommendations for optimization of the future Vermont State University's academic portfolio, approval of a mission and vision for Vermont State University, the launch of a search for Vermont State University's first President, and approval of the 10-Year Strategic Facilities Plan. To support and enhance its effectiveness in ensuring the success of the system's transformation, the BOT has consulted regularly with Dr. James Page, former chancellor of the University of Maine System, over the past 18 months. The BOT also received a joint presentation from Dr. James Page and Dr. Barbara Brittingham, former NECHE President, in December 2020. The BOT is actively engaged in transformation via its oversight role as well as in its communications with our institutional communities. In the summer of 2020, the BOT heard numerous proposals on how to transform the VSC from several internal and external groups. The BOT has held public listening sessions and received extensive written feedback on the overall transformation plan and, most recently on September 29, 2021, on the name for the new university. The BOT includes time for public comment at each BOT and committee meeting. Oversight activities by the BOT include an August 2021 review of plans for a system accountability matrix with metrics and review of an initial strategic financial plan in September 2021. Through these frequent reviews of progress, the BOT is exercising its fiduciary

responsibilities to assure effective management by senior officers. For example, at its December 2021 meeting, after monitoring progress through the fall on optimization of the Vermont State University program array and reviewing the timeline goals developed by the four Faculty Assembly leaders, the BOT charged the Chancellor and VSCS Chief Academic Officer with providing administrative direction to faculty leaders to meet those goals.
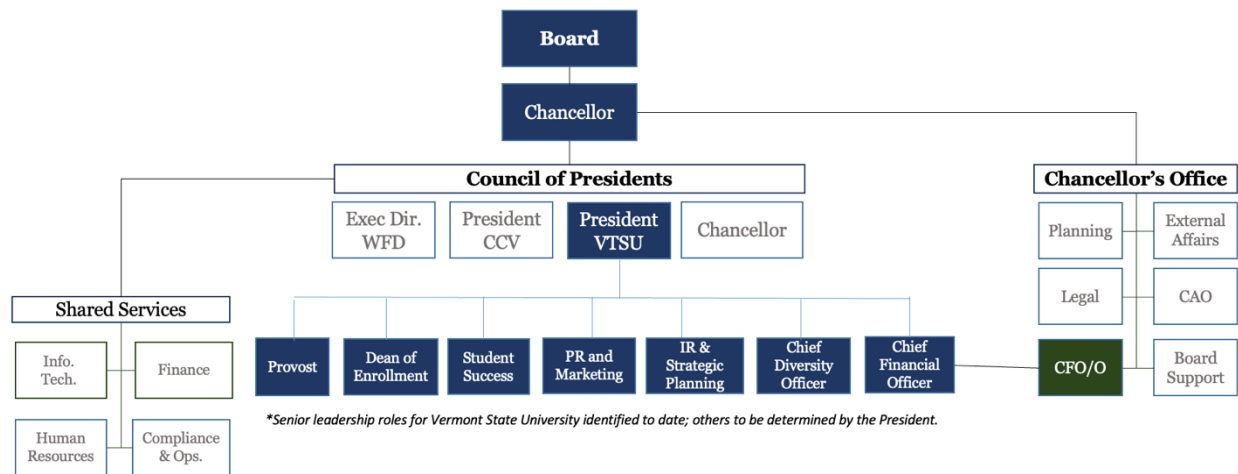
Internal Governance

As outlined in the corporation's bylaws, and elaborated in system policies, there is a clear segregation of duties and responsibilities between the BOT, the Chancellor of the VSCS, the Chief Financial Officer of the corporation, and the Chief Executive Officer (President) of each institution. In launching the search for Vermont State University's first President, the Chair of the Board of Trustees announced the BOT's intention that, from July 2022 until July 2023, the President of Vermont State University will oversee the last year during which the three institutions are separately accredited. Subject to the Commission's approval, the BOT intends that the Vermont State University President will serve simultaneously as the President of Castleton University, Northern Vermont University, and Vermont Technical College in 2022-2023, while delegating executive operational responsibilities to one-year interim Executive Directors of Operations at each institution. We expect the Executive Director roles during this transitional year to be filled by existing senior administrators at each institution.

The VSCS transformation plan approved by the BOT creates a system with two institutions, Community College of Vermont and Vermont State University, and seeks additional sharing and consolidation of administrative operations and resources between the two. At its February 14, 2022 meeting, the Board of Trustees discussed executive roles and responsibilities as the system transitions to this new two-institution system model with sharing and consolidation of administrative operations and resources. This model, which defines governance, management, and operational roles and responsibilities accruing to the BOT, Chancellor, and institutional Presidents, is intended to support the distinct mission and governance needs of the Community College of Vermont and Vermont State University. Functions core to institutional mission such as strategic planning, student success, academic programs, and community and alumni relations will be directed, designed, and owned by the Presidents, with final approval authority residing with the BOT.

The Chancellor's role with these functions includes supporting BOT development of system priorities and policies, standardizing metrics and reporting, and ensuring coordination and compliance on academic programs and policies. System-wide shared support functions in the areas of legal services, human resources, facilities, and technology will be directed by the Chancellor, consistent with BOT policies, and managed by the Presidents, who will also provide service level expectations and governance perspective to the Chancellor for these functions. Specific to financial functions and the fact that the system is a single corporate entity, the role of the BOT is to establish financial policies, priorities, and investment strategies; approve budgets,

contracts, and other financial agreements; and monitor financial progress. The role of the Chancellor, as delegated to the System Chief Financial Officer with direction to institutional Chief Financial Officers, is to manage the overall finances of the system, including strategic and annual budgets; resource allocations; investments, cash, and debt instruments; and procurement. Presidents will be responsible for supporting development of and compliance with system financial policies and the development and management of institutional budgets and activities. Functions related to the overall mission of the system, including governmental relations and statewide workforce development initiatives, are directed by the Chancellor, in accordance with policies set by the BOT and supported by the Presidents.

Several functions within the system already operate in a shared services model. These include Institutional Reporting, Legal Services, system data center, system-wide software, network services, IT security, Payroll and benefits, Accounting, Cash Management, and corporate Financial Operations. Further shared services are on the horizon. We are in the process, for instance, of creating a single, system library serving Vermont State University and its sister institution, the Community College of Vermont. A system library director has been appointed to lead development of the unified approach and currently reports up to the Chancellor, via the system Chief Academic Officer, in consultation with institutional CAOs. The Director will oversee library operations, budget, and ultimately personnel while ensuring the service expectations and needs of each institution are being met and costs are allocated appropriately to the two institutions.

*Senior leadership roles for Vermont State University identified to date; others to be determined by the President.

In order to move forward with the successful launch of Vermont State University, the Chancellor has appointed two current senior leaders to serve as Vermont State University's first Dean of Enrollment (filled by the Dean of Enrollment at Castleton) and Provost (filled by the Provost at Northern Vermont University). To support these two leaders during this transitional period, as they are temporarily serving in dual roles, a temporary Interim Academic Dean has been appointed at Northern Vermont University and additional resources have been provided to

Admissions at Castleton. This summer, a Chief Diversity Officer will be hired for the new institution, consistent with the mission and vision to foster a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion at Vermont State University.

Subject to additional appointments and final configuration of a senior leadership team as determined by the incoming Vermont State University President, senior administrators will be flexible with respect to location, using travel as needed, as well as videoconferencing and other communication technologies to facilitate their leadership, supervisory, and management functions. We expect the President to occupy primary administrative offices at our most central location on the Randolph campus. As is the case currently, our campuses and extended site locations utilize different strategies to ensure effective oversight and management of local operations. In some cases there is a dedicated position and in others an additional duty is assigned to a senior administrator. We expect Vermont State University will continue to utilize this strategy. To ensure adequate attention to the individual needs of each of our five primary campuses, we anticipate a direct-line report to the President from the person designated with this responsibility.

As a first transformation priority, the Chancellor has established a project management governance structure. Four core teams (Student Experience, Academic Operations, Administrative Operations, and Workforce Development), with over twenty sub-teams, report to the Chancellor as final decision-maker, in consultation with the Council of Presidents. The four Core Teams are charged with developing programs, processes, and designs consistent with the vision of Vermont State University as a single technology-enabled hybrid university that will work for students regardless of their specific location. The teams' designs, many of which are currently projected to be completed by June 30, 2022, will inform subsequent organizational and staffing structures for Vermont State University.

Academic Organization Structure and Governance
Given the focus on establishing a new, single program array for Vermont State University, its academic organizational structure and shared governance are primary foci of attention. Members of all collective bargaining units came together in the summer of 2020 to form a Labor Task Force to make recommendations on the future of the system, including conceptual recommendations for a unified governance model with cross-campus departments and schools, plus a faculty and staff senate. This governance model and its alignment with the single program array described below has informed development of an academic organization structure with cross-campus programs, departments, and schools, which is currently on track for final review by our four separate Faculty Assemblies in April. These structures are not new to any of our existing institutions, as each has had a longstanding practice of program-level faculty leadership, department chairs with duties and compensation defined in the contract, and nascent larger units (Schools at VTC and NVU, Colleges at CU) intended to foster innovation across departments.

Faculty Assemblies are currently constituted at CU, VTC, and the Johnson and Lyndon campuses of NVU with rights to initiate and consider matters of academic concern codified in the collective bargaining agreement. Recognizing the need for collaborative and coordinated action through the transition to a new single institution with a single academic program array, the four current leaders of these Faculty Assemblies have been meeting as a group since June 2021. They have established coordinated procedures for their respective Assemblies to consider academic program changes and other matters of academic concern prior to the launch of Vermont State University. Working closely with the leadership of the full-time faculty collective bargaining unit (Faculty Federation), the Faculty Assembly leaders have also reviewed the proposed governance model put forward by the Labor Task Force. They have identified a first draft of design principles, as well as a process and timeline for the creation of a new unified governance structure that will go into effect with the launch of Vermont State University, subject to approval by the existing four Faculty Assemblies and codification as necessary in the bargaining agreement.[2] These design principles center on the need for a single cross-campus organizing structure; a primary governing body such as a Faculty Senate with inclusive representation of faculty at all five primary campuses; an executive-level body and leadership role; a means for local campus-specific issues to be addressed and communicated to the governing body; and a discipline-based approach (perhaps at the School level) to curricular design and review.

Each of our institutions currently has a Student Government Association (SGA) with representative members also serving on a system-wide SGA. In discussions about transformation and the future Vermont State University, current SGA representatives have identified the value of local campus-based student governing groups. The SGAs at each of the three institutions plan to work together during the 2022-2023 academic year to determine a structure and process for representing the student body of Vermont State University as a whole.

Projections: The incoming Vermont State University president will finalize an administrative structure and lead the establishment of additional institutional governance structures (including, for example, some form of cross-campus Staff Council) and procedures to ensure effective management of the institution by the end of June 2023. While the three institutions will continue to be separately accredited during 2022-2023, an incoming single president with final executive accountability for all three institutions will provide critical leadership and decision-making to ensure consistency and maintain progress towards a new, unified institution in culture and processes, as well as programs and accreditation. The system's prior experience with the

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[2]As noted in Standard 3, the agreement with the VSCS Faculty Federation recognizes Faculty Assemblies as a means of democratic faculty governance in areas of academic concern, with the President having final determining authority.

unification of Johnson and Lyndon State Colleges into Northern Vermont University has provided a vivid illustration of the value of a single President serving a year in this transitional role with respect to the unifying institutions. The challenges Northern Vermont University has faced by only partially unifying its academic programs and not unifying its two faculty assemblies prior to its launch has highlighted the importance of establishing a single program array and a single faculty governing body prior to the launch of Vermont State University.

Based on majority preference in a cross-institution faculty poll conducted in late March by the Faculty Federation, a final academic organizational model for Vermont State University will be presented for review by the Faculty Assemblies in April 2022. Faculty Assembly leaders will continue their work on governance with a review of draft design proposals by May 2022, identification of a cross-campus committee to draft bylaws during Summer 2022, and review, revision, and approval of the new governance structure and bylaws to be completed by May 2023.

Key Milestones	Timeline
Hire Vermont State University President	April 2022
Complete design of academic organization structure	May 2022
Complete design of administrative leadership structure	May 2022
Install Vermont State University President	July 2022
Design unified faculty governance structure	AY 2022-2023
Determine and establish other internal governance structures needed (e.g. student government, staff councils)	AY 2022-2023

Standard 4: The Academic Program

A spring 2021 evaluation of existing programs at the three institutions conducted by rpk GROUP consultants resulted in recommendations to optimize the academic portfolio for the projected single new institution. These recommendations, approved by the Board, guided work over the summer of 2021 by over 85 faculty in cross-institution working groups organized in broad programmatic and disciplinary focus areas. Each of these working groups developed program-specific optimization recommendations utilizing strategies that included:

- consolidation of duplicative programs into single offerings to be made accessible at multiple locations around the state;
- identification of courses that could be shared across locations to increase delivery efficiency;
- reduction in program concentrations to those with projected enrollments sufficient to sustain them; and

- use of new delivery modes to expand access to programs currently offered at only one location.

The work to date by faculty to develop an optimized program array for Vermont State University, based on our existing 170 discrete major programs (concentrations within those majors bring the current total to approximately 280) and existing faculty expertise, has resulted in proposals for approximately 100 majors from the associate degree through post-graduate certificate levels. A list of all programs including delivery changes described below and anticipated closures are detailed in the appendix.

The proposed changes do not alter existing types of degree programs, which are approved under current NECHE accreditation for the three institutions. The changes will enable Vermont State University to maintain sufficient program breadth and range of degree type for its regional public mission. While predominantly focused on bachelor's degree programs, the breadth of the array includes some "stackable" associate and bachelor's degree programs, where the associate degree offers a valuable initial workforce credential, and a limited number of graduate programs consistent with regional workforce needs. Through the optimization process, the three institutions have also addressed the sustainability challenges of a small number of low-enrolled programs through planned suspensions of new enrollments, planned transformations contingent on external resources to be confirmed in Spring 2022, and planned teach-outs of programs identified for closure.

More transformative in the vision for Vermont State University are the goals of increasing student access to common programs across our existing campus locations via new delivery strategies and enhancing the distinctiveness of programs requiring substantial in-person learning primarily at one campus location. Given our small overall scale—most of the optimized programs are projected to have statewide annual headcount enrollments of 25-75 students—the use of distance learning technologies to aggregate enrollments of students around the state into single course sections will be critical. Also critical, as outlined below for Standard 6, is the faculty professional development and testing of new technologies and pedagogical strategies to support this approach. The optimization proposals faculty have been working on since June 2021 include curricular plans detailing learning outcomes, anticipated course delivery modalities, and specific learning requirements. All students will be clearly informed of both program availability by instructional location as well as course delivery modalities in use by each program, including at the course level.

At present, the vision for the academic programs and five primary, residential campuses is intended to aid students in choosing the programs and experiences that are right for them. For each residential campus, we have identified unique programs that define each campus and are aligned with the facilities, culture, and geographic distinctions important to students. For

example, the Johnson campus has unique visual arts facilities and an integrated performing arts program, while the Lyndon campus offers atmospheric and climate change science and outdoor education and leadership, with regional partners offering applied learning and working experiences for students. The Williston campus houses dental hygiene and a professional pilot program primarily for commuter students, while the Randolph Center campus supports lab facilities for engineering and veterinary technology among other programs. The Castleton campus combines a robust NCAA athletics program with several unique programs, including physical education and athletic training.

Most of the primary residential campuses also support a core of high-enrollment programs in business, education, and psychology that will now be offered in both in-person and remote access formats, offering campus-based students continued in-person learning with their peers while increasing scheduling flexibility and expanding access to post-traditional student populations. In addition to these high-enrolled core programs, Vermont State University's program array will also include fourteen liberal arts programs which are now optimized to sustain access for on-campus student populations, primarily at the Castleton, Johnson, and Lyndon campuses. These multi-campus programs will be described to students as "face to face plus" (F2F+) programs and will be delivered via a combination of in-person and remote access courses at each campus designated to offer the program. As the delivery of these F2F+ programs is developed and refined, this strategy is expected to strengthen enrollments by expanding the flexibility of access to commuter and non-traditional students.

The planned delivery of liberal arts programs and individual courses in modalities that expand access to students should also improve the quality and diversity of both general education and unrestricted electives. Early innovations and partnerships have preceded the program optimization work. For example, Vermont Technical College's School of Engineering has been piloting hybrid delivery of its first-year engineering curriculum to students unable to access courses at its Randolph campus, and Northern Vermont University and Castleton University faculty in several liberal arts programs have been collaborating to provide students access to select courses via distance delivery as a complement to in-person instruction. All three existing institutions also have experience offering a select number of fully online programs. As described below in Standard 6, based on this work and experience to date, clear definitions of the major types of program and course delivery modalities have been established, which will guide further program design and delivery and allow these modalities to be clearly communicated to matriculating and prospective students.

Assuring Academic Quality
VSCS Board policies and processes currently governing the planning, evaluation, continuous improvement, quality, and integrity of programs will continue to define Vermont State University's approach to systematically evaluating and improving its academic programs and

ensuring the integrity of its credits and degrees awarded. Policy 101 provides a detailed process for program outcomes assessment and continuous improvement, including (since 2019) the use of detailed curriculum and assessment mapping tools. Policy 109 provides a parallel process for annual enrollment and cost effectiveness reviews, and Policy 111 governs academic data management, which, in conjunction with the single student information system (Colleague) and academic transcripts that have been in use across the system since 2002, establishes a common grading scheme, academic and graduation honors standards, and definitions related to academic standing, probation, and dismissal. Additional policies governing all programs include Policy 102 for approval of new programs; Policy 106 for common general education requirements including graduation standards in writing and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, and information literacy; Policy 108 for minimum standards for credit transfer; and Policy 110 for course challenges and prior learning assessment. Current variations in institution-level policies and procedures at the three institutions are being reviewed by multiple teams with cross-institution representation, including registrars, faculty, academic programs administration, and a diversity, equity, and inclusion task force as part of the process of developing a single set of academic policies and procedures for Vermont State University consistent with its mission and vision, with the goal of completion by December 2022.

Castleton and Northern Vermont Universities have previously received NECHE approval to offer distance education programs; Vermont Technical College has had longstanding approval for its innovative, statewide distributed delivery of nursing education programs by both NECHE and its external nursing education accreditor and is in the process of seeking general approval to offer distance learning programs. Other individual programs with specialized accreditation are in the process of consulting with those accreditors to confirm procedures and requirements to maintain those accreditations through the transition to Vermont State University. All three of the institutions also offered extensive remote learning during the pandemic, including the entirety of Castleton's curriculum for more than a semester.

CRF funds were used to support faculty development in delivering high quality education using a variety of modalities during the pandemic in addition to Title III funds at Castleton and NVU-Johnson. Existing resources of instructional technologists and centers for teaching and learning have enhanced instructional technology equipment and software, as well as faculty expertise in their use. With the faculty's existing and growing expertise, Vermont State University will expand access to its programs using these new delivery modalities, utilizing expanded supports from a Center for Teaching and Learning, as detailed under Standard 6, and from Canvas, which is a powerful Learning Management System (LMS) for multiple modalities. Canvas is currently used by all three institutions and is well understood by faculty.

General Education
In 2020 the BOT charged the creation of a system-wide framework of general education requirements at the associate degree level to improve transparency and ease of student transfer

within the system. This framework, which established learning outcomes for seven core requirements representing both foundational academic skills and disciplinary breadth, was approved by all Faculty Assemblies, as well as the Community College of Vermont, at the end of the 2020-2021 academic year. This 21-credit common framework is serving as the foundation for creating a single general education program for the merged institution and is anticipated to be approximately 21 credits at the associate degree level and 40 credits at the bachelor's degree level.

The work now underway to create a single General Education program for Vermont State University also builds on a considerable foundation of complementary innovations at both the institution and system level. Northern Vermont University is now in its third year of focusing on the assessment of integrative learning outcomes in general education. In fall 2021 Castleton University launched its new Connections Program for general education, which integrates the student's experience of a chosen major, general education, and co-curricular activities. Vermont Tech has similarly defined integrative, Educated Person Outcomes mapped to its general education courses and is in the process of creating new tools and faculty development for assessment of these integrative outcomes. Castleton is also implementing a portfolio-based student learning outcome assessment system tied to three core general education seminars. This system was lauded in the final report of the 2021 NECHE visiting team as "an outstanding example of holistic, authentic assessment of student learning . . . [that] should lead the way as the system transforms."

Using the common, 21-credit framework adopted in 2020, building on the integrative approach all three institutions are pursuing, and combining successful innovations such as Castleton's portfolio, the faculty are in a favorable position to create a strong, shared general education program. Faculty representatives from all three institutions' respective General Education programs are now serving on a General Education Working Group charged with creating that program. To date, the group has drafted a mission and vision for the general education program for Vermont State University that reflects its distinct mission and vision, encompasses the foundational system-wide core requirements adopted last year, and creates a common integrative learning requirement building on the general education goals and aspirations of the existing three institutions. That integrative requirement is currently envisioned as a 9-credit series of "Connections Seminars" with portfolio-based assessment.

Mission
The Connections General Education Program promotes the development of curious, thoughtful, and engaged global citizens with a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and the intellectual, social, and professional skills to meet the challenges of a complex and changing world.

Vision
We recognize that each Vermont State University student comes to their college education with unique life experiences. While studying at Vermont State University, each student pursues a course of study focused in a particular discipline. Each student will also take part in a variety of co-curricular experiences that impact

their development as a student and a person. The Connections program is the one academic program that all Vermont State University students have in common, and as such it embodies what it means to be a Vermont State University student and graduate, across all campuses and course modalities. The Connections program helps students to integrate their experiences at several different levels: connections among different academic disciplines; connections among a student's academic, co-curricular, social, and professional lives; connections among students, faculty, staff, and all members of the VSU community; and connections among the VSU and other communities, locally and globally.

The Connections Program:
- Develops essential academic skills that students will use in critical analysis and communication;
- Engages students in an intentional and meaningful way in a wide range of disciplines, cultural events, and co-curricular activities;
- Encourages students to experience the transformational power of integrating their learning in the Connections Gen Ed program, their major or professional program, and their co-curricular experiences;
- Fosters student commitment to the value of diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- Promotes responsible, informed and engaged citizenship in the university, local, and global communities;
- Cultivates curiosity and stimulates a commitment to life-long learning.

Graduate Programs

All three institutions currently offer at least one graduate program in areas consistent with regional workforce needs. While some programs have a longstanding history, particularly the master's degrees in education and counseling, graduate programs also represent an area of recent innovation, and as such, are in early phases of evaluation and iterative improvements. Graduate programs were included in the initial program array evaluation by rpk GROUP. Faculty responsible for graduate programs have been involved in further optimization work and in defining potential organizational structures for Vermont State University that will foster both the ongoing disciplinary connections among faculty who teach in both undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as the distinct needs of graduate programs.

Projections: There is significant work to be accomplished to launch Vermont State University's array of programs, as well as a new general education program for its first cohort of students entering in Fall 2023. Faculty are currently completing the curriculum development work to prepare the optimized programs for governance reviews, which are expected to be completed by the end of Fall 2022. The General Education Working Group will seek feedback on a proposed design of the General Education program from all existing Faculty Assemblies by May 2022, develop that design into a full detailed proposal by the end of Summer 2022, and bring the final proposal for governance review in Fall 2022.

The existing institutions have some established "direct admissions" pathways from the Community College of Vermont, and these have informed the design of optimized programs. Once the new program array is finalized, a comprehensive review and revision of these existing transfer pathways will be undertaken to ensure consistency with the new optimized programs.

Similarly, all three institutions currently offer dual enrollment and Early College programs that are expected to continue with the launch of Vermont State University, with single procedures and policies to be established by the spring of 2023. The increasingly robust program assessment practices at our existing institutions, guided by system Policy 101, will require alignment with the new optimized program array and associated transfer pathways and dual enrollment programming. Similarly, the initial Program Evaluation Framework recommended by rpk GROUP will need to be implemented in accordance with system Policy 109 for annual review of the program array. Implementation of organizational structures, standards, and processes to ensure quality and consistency in delivery of courses and programs in each modality will be necessary and is among the deliverables for the Academic Operations transformation teams.

Key Milestones	Timeline
Begin unified curriculum review process	April-May 2022
Complete design and faculty review of General Education Program	September 2022
Complete substantive change procedures for all programs with specialized accreditation.	As identified by accrediting entities
Complete unified curriculum and academic policy reviews	December 2022
Complete unified dual enrollment procedures for AY2023-2024	April 2023
Publish Vermont State University academic catalog for AY2023-2024	April 2023
Review transfer pathways and articulation agreements	After July 1, 2023
Implement annual program evaluation framework	After July 1, 2023

Standard 5: Students

In becoming a hybrid university with a unified array of programs and general education program, Vermont State University will continue to serve the existing student populations historically represented at CU, NVU, and VTC, namely traditional-age residential students and commuting Vermonters, while expanding capacity to serve non-traditional students. Development of a shared vision for Vermont State University as a hybrid institution serving students across the existing locations is an active area of effort guided directly by our Board, Chancellor, and current Presidents, notably in the Board's search prospectus[3] for the first President and a January 17, 2022 memo[4] from the Council of Presidents. Due to well-known demographic trends that are particularly acute in Vermont, combined with the rising costs of tuition and mounting pressure from regional competitors, enrollment has declined across all three institutions. The current aggregate footprint and operational designs of the three existing institutions are not sustainable. Likewise, even as the institutions in recent years have worked to serve more non-traditional students, functions such as academic support, advising, career services, disability services, financial aid, registration, and student life have been challenged to expand beyond traditional

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[3] See https://www.vsc.edu/presidential-search/.
[4] See https://transformation.vsc.edu/message-from-the-council-of-presidents-the-state-of-transformation/.

Monday through Friday workday hours and in-person service models. For Vermont State University to thrive into the future, the BOT has adopted the creation of a new hybrid operational model that continues to serve the traditional residential populations, who arrive expecting to develop strong in-person relationships and access services digitally, while increasing the enrollment of a greater diversity of students for whom flexibility and remote access to services and programs is essential.

Developing clear communications about Vermont State University, its academic programs, admissions procedures, and student services has been a key priority of all transformation work to date. Fortunately, transformation is not the first time that CU, NVU, and VTC have worked together. The Vermont State Colleges have shared the *Datatel Colleague* student information system since 2002 and *Technolutions Slate* customer service management system for admissions since 2017. Through the years, teams from across the institutions have worked together on various projects so there is a pre-existing sense of collegiality among staff at the three institutions and a general spirit of unity across student services and support departments. The three institutions have more in common than differences when it comes to how students are served. All share the same philosophy of putting students first, but varying business practices have evolved from one campus to another. The system has recently contracted with Ferrilli to deconstruct and rebuild our *Colleague* environment to establish single consistent core operating processes in admissions, financial aid, and registrarial services across the system. This work, which is projected to be completed by fall of 2022, will support a consistent set of policies and procedures for students.

Admissions

To begin the recruitment cycle for the fall of 2023, the admissions and marketing teams[5] of the three institutions are coming together to promote Vermont State University to high school sophomores and juniors beginning this spring.[6] In addition to this specific population, a general marketing and awareness campaign to preview the new university, both in Vermont and regionally, is being planned along with a preliminary microsite for the new university. The admissions and marketing teams from all three institutions take pride in the long history of ethical recruitment practices that have offered the highest level of transparency. Anticipating the many questions current and prospective students and their families are likely to ask, the transformation website contains FAQs that are updated as more information becomes available.[7]

The system has contracted with Maguire Associates to evaluate current tuition and fee pricing models for students across the three institutions, to research trends in the region, and to survey

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[5] We do not anticipate adjusting the staffing levels in the Admissions and Marketing teams, although some re-alignment of functions and reconfiguration is expected to best meet the needs of Vermont State University.

[6] The microsite and all marketing materials identify Vermont State University as launching July 1, 2023 pending approval by NECHE.

[7] See https://transformation.vsc.edu/home/frequently-asked-questions/.

prospective students of all types. Based on data collected through this engagement, a price-setting strategy will be developed by senior enrollment and finance team members from all three institutions and Maguire & Associates for presentation to the BOT for approval by June 2022. This team is also researching and evaluating the current merit scholarship and need-based aid awarding parameters at the three institutions. The goal is to establish a final, consistent approach to pricing and aid offers across all the primary campuses and other locations so that the admissions and marketing team can effectively recruit, and the financial aid team can create a new single financial aid offer letter for Vermont State University by November 2022.

Admission standards are consistent across the three institutions and reflect VSCS Board Policy 303, Admissions and Transfer of Credit. Use of standardized test scores in the admissions process currently varies across the three institutions and will be evaluated by the admissions team and faculty by May 2022 as a potential requirement for admission to specific academic programs only. The admissions team will be considering historic enrollment data from each institution when evaluating the success of different student populations and how to best recruit and serve them in the new university. Vermont State University will be focused on student success and will evaluate learning outcomes and student experiences from multi-modal/hybrid instruction to make informed recruitment decisions so as to ensure the success of future students.

Student Services and Co-Curricular Experiences
All three existing institutions have similar one-stop shops for students to access billing, financial aid, and registration information. Fundamentally, they all serve the same purpose, but given staff attrition and recent budget adjustments, each institution currently has a distinctive approach. One of the major goals of the student experience transformation teams is to expand on these one-stop service models to potentially include advising, academic support, and career services and to move to a digital-first format, thereby making them accessible from anywhere throughout Vermont State University.

The most challenging aspect of transforming to a hybrid university model will be the work of the student life teams across the three institutions. Not surprisingly, each institution has relied heavily on face-to-face services for new student orientation, residential life operations, health, and wellness services, and in-person co-curricular activities. The pandemic certainly challenged all these areas of student life and learning and forced some areas to innovate faster than others. For example, with the onset of the pandemic, the system accelerated the already-planned implementation of Aviso advising software to facilitate targeted advising communications with students and the use of Zoom videoconferencing to provide personal advising and student support services. There is much work to be done in the coming months to transform these student service areas to a point where all students at all locations and in all modalities can be served in ways appropriate to their needs. The work to date has identified that the top priority need is the

adoption of consistent policies and procedures across our campuses and locations and implementing these in a digital format accessible to all students. Individual transformation teams responsible for these functions will be designing, developing, and testing these "digital first" approaches over the coming year in preparation for the first incoming class in fall 2023.

Athletic programs, student government associations, residential life, and other student activities currently exist in various forms and scale at four of the current residential campuses--Castleton, Johnson, Lyndon, and Randolph--with more limited residential life and student activities also available at the Williston campus. Consistent with our vision for a statewide hybrid university with campuses that become increasingly distinctive over time, we are currently undertaking a holistic approach to developing new designs. With a common foundation and digital processes supporting all student services, the long-term view of Vermont State University's future includes strategic investments in campus-specific programming and facilities that strengthen the distinctive experience each campus can provide students, for example through unique constellations of athletic programs, student organizations, short-term and non-traditional residential living and dining options, and learning and working community partnerships. Transformation teams in the areas of athletics, student and residential life, and student services have identified best practices and potential new opportunities as part of the development of a long-term vision. Objectives and principles for this Vermont State University multi-campus vision were reviewed by the BOT on March 19, 2022 and will guide continued planning and development. Work on expanding learning and working community partnerships will continue over time as opportunities are identified by the faculty and potential community partners. For example, for the coming year, the BOT has approved a faculty fellowship in psychology to support research and development of potential models specific to this program.

Projections: During this period of transition, a Vermont State University micro-site will be launched in April 2022, linking the three existing institutional websites, while a brand-new Vermont State University website is built. Cheryl Marotta,[8] an Institutional Review Specialist with the Department of Education in Boston, has been the primary point of contact for establishing a timeline for authorization to award Title IV aid as a single institution under a single OPEID, following NECHE's approval. After securing NECHE and U.S. Department of Education approval, we expect to launch the new full website for Vermont State University in late spring of 2023 and will undertake detailed planning to ensure continuity and accuracy of information contained on the existing three institutional websites through the transition period.

Work is currently underway to collect information from faculty on the optimized program array. This information is being used to create marketing materials and train admissions staff. This work is scheduled to be completed in time for the creation of the inaugural application for

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[8] Ms. Marotta is familiar with the Vermont State Colleges System as she also served as the point of contact when Johnson State College and Lyndon State College came together to form Northern Vermont University.

admission that is intended to go live in September 2022. The admissions application will present students with the programs available at each location that are: a) unique and primarily in-person; b) offered as multi-campus, "face-to-face plus" programs with a blend of in-person and remote-access courses; and c) available fully as remote access or asynchronous online. This information will also inform the design and development of a new approach to course scheduling and student registration to be launched in early 2023 in time for returning student to register for Fall 2023 classes by April 2023. Parallel work led by the registrars' team, in consultation with faculty, is underway to develop a single academic catalog and set of academic policies for Vermont State University to go into effect with the 2023-2024 academic year.

Following the development of a new tuition and pricing model, the BOT at its June 2022 meeting is expected to approve tuition and fees for the first year (2023-2024) of Vermont State University. This information will inform development of one unified financial aid offer letter for AY23-24 to be ready to launch for new students in November 2022.

The transformation teams will continue their work of designing the student services and co-curricular programming for the new university and defining the flexible learning and student experience options available at Vermont State University to prospective students, all of which will ultimately be codified in a single academic catalog and a single student handbook. The transformation teams will continue to receive ongoing professional development and training from the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Workgroup, which was formed in September 2021 to ensure that the values of diversity, equity and inclusion are fully-integrated into the foundations of Vermont State University.

Key Milestones	Timeline
Design and develop "digital first" and "one-stop" approaches for advising, career services, and other student supports	January 2022-May 2023
Set Vermont State University tuition and fees for AY2023-2024	June 2022
Determine program-specific admissions requirements	May 2022
Complete Colleague rebuild for admissions, financial aid, and registrarial services	October 2022
Complete design of financial aid packages for AY2023-2024	November 2022
Complete U.S. Department of Education institution merger	January-April 2023
Publish unified academic catalog and student handbook	April 2023

Standard 6: Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship

Faculty and Academic Staff

CU, NVU, and VTC currently employ full and part-time faculty who provide the requisite instruction consistent with their institutional missions. Full and part-time faculty at the three

institutions are represented by the same union (AFT-CIO), and all faculty and staff at the three institutions are covered by common bargaining agreements. Currently, there is an informal agreement to extend the current full-time faculty bargaining agreement from August 31, 2022 to August 31, 2023, recognizing that a new contract, and possibly interim side-letter agreements to address specific issues, will need to reflect changes resulting from the merger process. An additional part-time faculty unit was recently created covering part-time faculty teaching in NVU's online division.

As discussed in Standard 4, significant changes are not expected in the types of degree programs that will be offered by Vermont State University compared to those presently available at CU, NVU, and VTC, aside from those recommended for closure by rpk GROUP. Therefore, no significant changes in the number, expertise, or location of the full-time faculty are anticipated. A reduction in the number of campus-based part-time faculty over time is expected, given the consolidation in the number of programs and new delivery modalities that will be used to provide student access to programs across multiple locations.

One of the rpk GROUP recommendations to the system was to adopt a Program Evaluation Framework to assist with an ongoing assessment of program efficiency. rpk GROUP identified metrics, such as student credit hours generated per faculty FTE and the ratio of student headcount per faculty FTE, to help monitor program effectiveness and staffing needs. Foundational data elements for these metrics are currently under development by the system data reporting team with the goal of providing foundational data for further analysis to Vermont State University's Director of Institutional Research and Planning. Beginning in Fall 2023, these metrics will be calculated for faculty assigned within a new academic organizational structure where programs are placed within departments and departments within schools. The departments and schools will be geographically dispersed across existing campuses. The new academic organizational structure, currently scheduled for final review by Faculty Assemblies in April 2022, seeks to achieve greatest efficiency in use of administrative resources and relative balance across department and school units (programs, faculty, students); clearly define responsibilities, training, and support needs for management roles for each organizational level (school, department, program); create structures and processes to foster trust and relationship building across locations; strengthen graduate programs within the program array by developing a cross-department entity for graduate programs focusing on implementation and service for students, admission standards, and curriculum review; ensure faculty membership will remain in academic departments offering both undergraduate and graduate programs; and create a structure based upon providing quality academic and personal student experience, as well as using a decision-making lens that is socially equitable and inclusive.

The transformation discovery work has surfaced variability in academic functional area staffing and approaches to student support across the three institutions. Beginning steps have been taken

to reduce these differences, for instance in academic advising. CU and NVU-Johnson have active Title III grants that are helping both institutions realize student success and support objectives. Since September 2021, the Title III Directors have been collaborating and working with relevant transformation teams to align similar objectives in a manner that will support Vermont State University students while also advancing short-term institutional initiatives. For example, the Title III grants collaboratively supported a site visit by National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) staff to all three institutions. As a result of this visit and interviews with faculty and staff, a recommendation report was generated for a Vermont State University advising model that clearly delineates staff and faculty responsibilities. These recommendations have now been incorporated into a proposed new advising model that will be discussed and reviewed by Faculty Assemblies in April and May 2022.

While the final structure of many areas for Vermont State University will be determined following the upcoming design phase of the ongoing transformation work, an early decision by all system Presidents and the Chancellor was made to establish a single system-wide library, with a digital first orientation and remote branches that utilize existing facilities and collections. Though the staffing and full reporting structure for the integrated library will be determined over the next several months, the Library Director and Assistant Director have been hired to lead the creation of the library's vision. These positions currently report to the system Chief Academic Officer (CAO) in consultation with all the institutional CAOs.

Candidates applying for currently available positions at each of the three institutions are being made aware of the current merger work and, to the extent possible, how their position will fit into the new institution. With respect to full-time faculty positions, conversations between the CAOs at the respective institutions ensure that a potential hire is needed, given existing expertise on the other campuses or that a position is crafted to ensure the expertise being sought within a disciplinary area complements existing faculty at all campuses.

With respect to full and part-time faculty assignments, rights, responsibilities, and evaluation, any changes will be negotiated with the respective bargaining units which cover all three of our campus-based institutions. Currently these agreements are negotiated collectively, with representation from all three institutions led by the system's General Counsel. The agreements provide the requisite detail concerning faculty qualifications, salaries, professional development opportunities, full-time faculty expectations for teaching, service, and scholarship, evaluation, and their role in advising students. The current full-time and part-time faculty agreements will be in effect through the point at which Vermont State University has secured the requisite approvals to operate as a regionally accredited institution (July 1, 2023).

Teaching and Learning

Aside from a handful of degree programs that are offered entirely online, the primary instructional delivery mode at all three institutions has historically been face-to-face. The onset of the current pandemic in early 2020 changed how instruction was delivered and, more importantly, it changed the perceptions that many faculty had about the efficacy of virtual delivery modalities compared to the more familiar face-to-face experience. This shift in thinking and the developing expertise that has accompanied it are critical as the Vermont State University program array is being designed so that the majority of degree programs, including general education, will be taught through multiple modalities in order to increase access, improve quality, and reduce cost in a manner consistent with the vision and mission. To increase access, the program array will contain the breadth of academic degree programs that one would expect at a regional public university and will be accessible at multiple locations around the state through synchronous and asynchronous delivery modes. To ensure quality, the consolidation to single degree programs currently offered at more than one of the three institutions (e.g., Math, English, Political Science, etc.) will allow the institutions to share resources, provide faculty with an expanded pool of disciplinary colleagues, and provide a richer academic experience to students with access to more full-time faculty teaching within a degree program and a wider range of courses. Finally, to address cost, a multi-modal approach to program delivery will increase program efficiency by increasing section sizes with students enrolling from multiple locations in a single course.

During the discovery phase of transformation, a scan of the literature and current practices in higher education revealed that standard section and program modality definitions do not exist to clearly articulate for students how courses and programs will be delivered. As a result, the following definitions have been developed at the course level: (i) traditional in person instruction; (ii) hybrid instruction that blends synchronous and asynchronous, as well as in-person or remote-access meetings; and (iii) online instruction that may be synchronous or fully asynchronous. At the program level, the following terminology will be used: (1) in person for programs offered in the traditional format in specific locations; (ii) face-to-face plus for programs offered in specific locations with a blend of courses that may include some in person classes in some locations, remote access courses, low-residency labs, and/or online courses; and (iii) online programs with a potential blend of synchronous and asynchronous course components.

A transformation sub-team of faculty and staff have been considering how best to support teaching and learning within the Vermont State University program array. Building on the strengths and expertise at existing Centers for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at CU and NVU, a new CTL will be developed, effective with the launch of Vermont State University, to realize the following three goals:

1. Create a unified vision for support of Teaching and Learning and develop a plan to implement it with the launch of Vermont State University;
2. Support the plan for quality curriculum delivery by program with descriptions of specific modalities and expectations, with support for faculty and students; and
3. Contribute to a culture where faculty explore innovative pedagogies that explicitly support student success.

A complementary transformation sub-team is focused on the technology that will be required to create effective learning and teaching environments for all the modalities that will be offered at Vermont State University. This work is building on the experience gained by faculty and students who pivoted to remote teaching and learning during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as upon research on effective models that have been implemented by other colleges and universities. The sub-team is also looking at several technology solutions to ensure students have equitable access to courses, their degree program, and support services.

Projections:
Staffing and accompanying responsibilities in academic functional areas will be determined in the design phase over the next six months and will be guided by the final academic organizational model, which is being reviewed by Faculty Assemblies in April 2022. The hiring, review, promotion, and tenure processes for full and part-time faculty, while defined by our existing single contracts, will need to be aligned in practice to ensure they are consistent with Vermont State University's mission and vision. Based on rpk GROUP's recommendation, a new Program Evaluation Framework will be implemented beginning in 2023-2024 to generate data that will help inform future faculty hiring decisions for Vermont State University. Attention to applied learning in Vermont communities and a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion consistent with our mission and vision will be priorities.

While Vermont State University's vision and mission statements have been approved by the BOT, we recognize the need to build a shared culture across our locations and programs. Initial steps in this direction include ensuring representation from all locations on each of our transformation teams, coordinated communications by our institution Presidents, and ongoing discussions and planning by Faculty Assembly and Curriculum Committee chairs to build in common meeting times and approaches to be used across all three separate institutions for the final transitional academic year (2022-2023). In addition, an accompanying statement of values that establish expectations and processes will be created to guide the responsible and ethical actions of all faculty and staff consistent with our mission and our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We expect this work to be led by the first Vermont State University President during 2022-2023.

This spring, a faculty professional development plan is being finalized with implementation scheduled to start Summer 2022 to ensure faculty have the requisite training for equitable multi-modal course delivery. At present, the plan, which will be funded from the $20M legislative appropriation for transformation described in Standard 7, includes enhancing faculty expertise in remote course delivery and building faculty capacity to serve as peer trainers and mentors. It also includes partnering with an external organization such as Quality Matters or the Online Learning Consortium to ensure the requisite quality standards for distance education are being met.

A first analysis of classroom spaces on our five primary campus locations, both for utilization and physical and technology quality, has been completed. The Information Technology transformation team is currently researching best practices for engaging remote participants in face-to-face classes. This work will inform, and be informed by, faculty participants in the first phase of our professional development plan who will be developing courses to be piloted in new delivery modalities during AY2022-2023.

Key Milestones	Timeline
Complete design of academic organization structure	May 2022
Establish faculty development plan for multi-modal delivery	Summer 2022 launch, AY2022-2023 pilot, and continuing after July 1, 2023
Establish system-wide library staffing model	August 2022
Establish staffing model for all academic functional areas	August 2022
Develop academic advising model for launch with first incoming class	AY2022-2023
Align retention, promotion, and tenure processes with Vermont State University mission and vision	AY2022-2023
Implement Center for Teaching & Learning	After July 1, 2023
Implement initial annual program evaluation framework	AY2023-2024

Standard 7: Institutional Resources

The creation of Vermont State University builds on existing experiences with the institutional consolidation of NVU and system-wide shared services in payroll and benefits administration, accounting, finance, accounts payable, large-scale software management, data center operations, information security, and wide area network management. The creation of the new Vermont State University, as well as further system-wide administrative consolidations, will allow the VSCS to steward its resources at an operating scale that maximizes benefits for students and enables the system to meet its mission of serving the state of Vermont.

Additionally, the VSCS will expand its portfolio of system-wide shared services to reduce costs, streamline activities, improve access, and increase compliance. Shared services will be expanded to include such items as the library, human resources, networking, hardware support, consolidated purchasing, and back-office compliance functions. Consolidating these functions into shared services operations with personnel distributed among the system's institutions will reduce operating costs, improve accuracy and timeliness, and increase efficiency. A jointly developed service level agreement, between Vermont State University and the shared services organization, will allow Vermont State University to establish service expectations and monitor progress. As described in Standard 3 above, the President of Vermont State University, as a member of the system Council of Presidents, will share oversight of the shared services organization.

Human Resources

Uncertainties following the previous Chancellor's closure announcement, the stresses of the pandemic, and operating budget shortfalls have resulted in undeniable impacts upon our human resources. The total decline in full-time employee headcount of 7% between Fall 2019 and Fall 2021 needs to be interpreted, however, within the context of a total student headcount enrollment decline of approximately 14% in the same period. Where academic program enrollments have remained strong, such as in nursing, the institutions have continued replacement hiring for full-time faculty. In other program areas, particularly liberal arts, full-time faculty vacancies due to retirements and departures have been offset by strategies to increase average class sizes rather than to hire new, full-time faculty or increase reliance on part-time faculty, as shown in the table below. The activities both of faculty as well as staff are governed and will continue to be governed by readily accessible policies and bargaining unit contracts. Professional development, periodic personnel evaluations, and the adjudication of grievances are among the areas covered by their provisions.

Employee Headcount: CU, NVU, VTC
Fall 2019 to Fall 2021

Employee Group	Fall 21	Fall 20	Fall 19	% Change 2017-2021
Full-Time Faculty	227	222	240	-5%
Full-Time Staff/Administrators	459	452	495	-7%
Total Full-Time Employees	686	674	735	-7%
Part-time Faculty	199	237	292	-32%
Student Headcount	5,566	5,782	6,477	**-14%**

At the executive level, Castleton University and Northern Vermont University are currently led by interim presidents. Additionally, several other leadership positions are currently vacant, or filled by interim appointees, or those on a limited term contract to allow for a seamless transition to the new university when the time comes. Recent hires all reflect our planned creation of Vermont State University as well as system expansion of shared services. Within the past year the system has added business intelligence and financial analyst positions to support transformation work related to the creation of Vermont State University and system shared services operations. The VSCS Council of Presidents has also defined a system-wide libraries director and assistant director positions in lieu of hiring library directors at each institution. As planning for Vermont State University continues, existing personnel have been deployed, wherever possible, to assist with key functions, for example in the redeployment of a facilities director with project management skills to assist with system-wide transformation projects and a dean of administration in the role of lead financial analyst. Where the three institutions do not have dedicated roles or expertise in-house, for example a Chief Diversity Officer to support Vermont State University's mission and vision for a culture of inclusion and a dedicated Director of Institutional Research and Strategic Planning for Vermont State University, we are moving ahead to establish and fill new positions.

Financial Resources

Each institution within the system has employed different strategies over time to manage their resources consistent with their respective missions and institutional priorities. The following table presents a recent history of total results inclusive of the three institutions that will become Vermont State University:

Entity	Net Assets FY14-FY19	Net assets FY14-FY21	FY21	FY20	FY19	FY18	FY17	FY16	FY15	FY14
CU	(11,906)	(11,032)	105	769	(1,718)	(2,014)	(3,567)	(2,612)	(2,191)	196
NVU	(7,521)	(5,749)	2,706	(934)	(2,861)	1,273	(2,491)	(3,408)	(600)	566
VTC	(6,039)	2,618	5,651	3,006	(1,009)	2,035	(1,021)	(532)	(2,781)	(2,731)
Total Entity	(25,466)	(14,163)	8,462	2,841	(5,588)	1,294	(7,079)	(6,552)	(5,572)	(1,969)

As shown above, when reviewing total entity performance between FY2014 and FY2019 (the last year before the pandemic), none of the institutions had a total net increase in assets. For the institutions forming Vermont State University, the combined reduction in net assets was $25.5M with each institution seeing a decrease in net assets of between $12 million and $6 million over this period. FY2021 total entity performance saw an increase in net assets across all institutions with the greatest improvement at VTC due to the sale of facilities. However, all institutions saw an increase with the receipt of Higher Education Emergency Relief and Coronavirus Relief Funds. Additionally, performance for FY2021 was improved by the sale of property at Vermont Tech in FY2021, a $3M gift to Northern Vermont University in support of its Learning and Working Communities model in FY2021, and focused efforts at Castleton University since

FY2019 to improve instructional efficiency. Since the onset of the pandemic, one-time HEERF/CRF funds and state bridge funding have substantially offset operating results.

The creation of Vermont State University, with its unified delivery of a single academic portfolio and re-envisioned hybrid campus operations, and the expansion of system-wide shared services are expected to address the human, financial, physical, and other resource challenges that have predominantly faced the three institutions. The expected results of the creation of Vermont State University, coupled with other system transformation work, are codified in state statute, which specifies that the VSCS will achieve $25M in structural savings over five years through a combination of expense reductions and modest growth in revenue. These savings will be distributed across areas including senior management, administrative and operational efficiencies, program optimization, facilities rightsizing, system-wide administrative consolidations, overhead reductions, and revenue improvements through persistence, retention, and workforce development.

Revenue/Expense Category	Estimate
Unified University Leadership	$3M
Algined & Consolidated Functions & Processes	$2.5-5M
Campus Operating Expenses	$5-7M
Program Array & Schedule Optimization	$5M
High Demand Program Growth	$1M
Shared Services Consolidations	$1M
Employee Benefits	$6-9M
Chancellor Space Utilization	$300K
Administrative Consolidation	$500K
Estimated Structural Savings	$22.05 - 31.8M

Given our experience with unifying two institutions, we project $3M in savings through consolidation of senior administration. The optimized academic portfolio has already resulted in operational efficiencies and is projected to achieve a total of $5M in efficiency gains through the delivery of shared courses, as well as strategic realignment of the portfolio to match student demand. With the two newly established VSCS positions of strategic financial analyst and business intelligence analyst, Vermont State University will also have the capacity to implement a framework for annual evaluation of the program array to prioritize resource investment, as developed by our consultants rpk GROUP and approved by the BOT in June 2022.

Administrative and operational efficiencies, by the use of technology and streamlined processes, is expected to result in savings of between $3 and $5M annually. Another $5-7M in savings is anticipated from the reduction of overhead costs related to employee acquisition and retention. Revenue enhancements, in the form of a consolidated workforce development division and

improvements to persistence and retention will account for approximately $3M reduction in the structural deficit.

The last major component of the structural deficit reduction is the rightsizing of the Vermont State University facilities portfolio. Recently concluded studies, one on space utilization and the other on return on physical assets, indicate that the total physical footprint of the three institutions is at least 25% larger than is currently sustainable and underspends the amount necessary to hold deferred maintenance at bay by $7M per year. Reducing the physical footprint will reduce the structural deficit by $5 to $10M annually by lowering direct costs and eliminating deferred maintenance over time.

The work of transformation is funded by a generous $20M appropriation from the state of Vermont. These funds, appropriated during the FY2022 legislative session, are scheduled for release to the VSCS over four years.

Overall, the State of Vermont is committed to increasing the system's base appropriation by $17.5M, a more than 57% increase in the base appropriation since FY2020, and to provide the bridge funding necessary to support the system through the period of transformation. To date, the VSCS has received $49.8M in bridge funding, a $5M increase in base appropriation, and a one-time appropriation of $20M to support the transformation work. For FY2023, the Governor has recommended an additional $5M increase to the base appropriation. The State Legislature is expected to meet or exceed the Governor's recommendation, and the House of Representatives just put forward their proposal to increase the annual base appropriation by $10 million, for a total annual appropriation of $45 million dollars or 25% of our operating budget. This unprecedented investment in the VSCS is in recognition of the long-standing underfunding of the system by the state, as well as the vital role the system's institutions play in the lives of rural Vermonters.

In October 2021, the BOT reviewed the key financial ratios for public institutions for the first time. The ratios, which include the primary reserve, net operating reserve, viability ratio, and return on net position, show that, except for FY2021, the system is universally weak across all ratios dating back to 2012, suggesting that the system's structural issues have been years in the making, and further underscoring the need for transformation.[9]

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[9] Due to the nature of the Vermont State Colleges (a single corporate entity), it is not possible to disaggregate performance of Castleton, Northern Vermont University, and Vermont Technical College from the system's overall performance on these measures. Thus, this chart also includes the Community College of Vermont.

	CFI Score									
Measure	FY21	FY20	FY19	FY18	FY17	FY16	FY15	FY14	FY13	FY12
Primary Reserve	1.35	0.65	0.54	0.53	0.46	0.46	0.48	0.49	0.48	0.59
Net Operating Revenue	1.00	0.49	(0.12)	(0.20)	(0.17)	(0.44)	(0.17)	(0.38)	(0.74)	(0.35)
Viability Ratio	0.67	0.32	0.26	0.25	0.21	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.22	0.24
Return on Net Position	2.00	0.66	(0.11)	(0.13)	0.05	(0.30)	(0.40)	(0.28)	0.84	0.75
Composite Financial Index	5.02	2.11	0.59	0.45	0.55	(0.05)	0.14	0.06	0.79	1.23

Although FY2021 and FY2020 performances are significantly stronger than the previous nine years, this improved performance is due to the receipt of Higher Education Emergency Relief, Coronavirus Relief, and bridge funding and is not reflective of ongoing operations; again, the results point to the need for transformation.

Obviously, Vermont State University cannot be considered in financial isolation from the remainder of the system. Looking ahead, the VSCS forecasts a balanced budget by FY2026 as required by Act 74. However, most of the structural deficit for the system resides with the institutions that will form Vermont State University. Reducing the structural deficit for those institutions is the VSCS's most critical fiscal need moving forward. Although as public institutions, a portion of this imbalance can, and should, be addressed by the state appropriation, overall expenditures for these three institutions are larger than the VSCS can responsibly maintain into the future; hence the plans for structural savings that have been outlined in this section.

Information, Physical, and Technological Resources
Much of the underlying information and technological resources are already shared across the system and will continue to serve as the infrastructural backbone for Vermont State University. Primary resources include a single learning management system (Canvas), videoconferencing (Zoom) and video storage (Yuja), advising software with predictive analytics (Aviso), helpdesk ticketing, HR (Ultipro), student information and enterprise resource planning system (Colleague), admissions CRM (Slate), and office applications (Office 365). Of these resources, the system has prioritized and launched investments in redesigning its use of Colleague and Slate to better serve Vermont State University as a single institution within a two-institution system, as these systems are currently configured to support varying business practices across the existing institutions. With the need to increase efficiencies and improve transparency of course scheduling for students in Vermont State University's hybrid university model, an RFP has been issued for software that will provide increased functionality over our existing systems.

With the longstanding expertise in the system with the Hartness Library, a single shared library for the Community College of Vermont and Vermont Technical College, the VSCS is currently in the process of designing a new system-wide library to serve Vermont State University and the Community College of Vermont. Notably, the Hartness Library model already includes

"embedded librarianship" in online courses, chat-based reference services, and a system for mailing books and other physical resources to students at home and then collecting them via drop-off locations at all academic centers statewide. Work to design a new single library is being led by the system library director. Priorities for the new library include a commitment to being "digital-first", maximizing digital access to content and student-centered services, and support for open educational resources. The system-wide library will support physical collections, services, and spaces relevant to Vermont State University's academic programs whose value cannot be meaningfully replicated in a digital or online context.

Significant work has already been accomplished by the three institutions that will form Vermont State University to better align facilities with the needs and scale of each campus's operations. For example, the facilities analysis work established that only 26% of the teaching space is being used between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Additionally, the overall residential room occupancy at three of the five residential locations is less than 50% suggesting there is too much teaching, residential, and co-curricular space. At present, we are targeting a 25% reduction in space for the locations that will form Vermont State University based on the best estimates from Gordian, the facilities consultant, and the anticipated programmatic needs across the university.

Projections: The pro-forma multi-year budget below is conservative in that it assumes no increase in tuition and fees or other revenues, except for the pending increases to the state appropriation. While the estimate assumes the volume of students will remain constant over time, we recognize that the mix of students will change, as will enrollments by program. Further, some locations, with a smaller physical footprint, may see a reduction in students in residence. In those instances, however, reductions in maintenance costs should more than compensate for any potential loss in revenue.

The process of transformation is a multi-faceted endeavor that requires the partnership of the system, the legislature, and governor. Already the state has stepped up with increased base appropriation and bridge funding and there is every indication that the state will continue to honor the commitment established in the *Select Report on the Future of Public Higher Education in Vermont*. These considerations make the following budget forecast a realistic one.

Key Milestones	Timeline
10 Year Vermont State University Strategic Facilities Plan Approved	February 2022
Launch Vermont State University Facilities Divestment Phase 1	March 2022
Hire System Chief Human Resources Officer	May 2022
Launch Vermont State University Beta Learning Environment	May 2022
Implement Vermont State University Leadership Structure	Summer 2022
FY2023 System and Institutional Budgets Approved by BOT	June 2022

Develop System-wide Strategic IT Roadmap	August 2022
FY2024 System and Institutional Budget Development	Spring 2023
Launch System-wide Library	May 2023

Vermont State University Multi-Year Budget Pro-Forma

REVENUES	FY22B	FY22Q2	FY23E	FY24E	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E
Tuition and Fees	76,337	80,820	78,929	78,929	78,929	78,929	78,929
Net Room and Board	16,247	21,912	18,658	18,658	18,658	18,658	18,658
Sales and Services	2,578	4,093	3,251	3,251	3,251	3,251	3,251
Gifts	775	1,064	1,130	1,130	1,130	1,130	1,130
Other Revenue	753	1,058	699	699	699	699	699
TOTAL REVENUES	96,690	108,947	102,667	102,667	102,667	102,667	102,667
EXPENSES							
Salaries and Benefits	85,577	82,629	83,876	80,271	76,666	73,061	69,456
Services, Supplies, Travel	28,490	28,299	27,311	25,811	24,311	22,811	21,311
Scholarships	17,916	19,667	19,475	19,767	20,064	20,365	20,670
Utilities	5,895	6,252	7,229	7,590	7,970	8,368	8,787
Other Expenses	10	14	10	10	10	10	10
Debt Service	6,177	6,178	6,179	6,179	6,304	7,386	7,139
Chancellor's Office	7,505	7,504	8,362	8,529	8,700	8,874	9,051
Other Transfers	2,272	567	2,420	2,420	2,420	2,420	2,420
TOTAL EXPENSES	153,842	151,110	154,862	150,578	146,444	143,295	138,844
NET REVENUES/(DEFICIT	(57,152)	(42,163)	(52,195)	(47,911)	(43,777)	(40,628)	(36,177)
STATE FUNDS							
Appropriation	28,560	32,290	32,435	35,394	37,333	37,333	37,333
Bridge Funding	21,000	21,000	14,900	16,500	10,000	5,000	0
TOTAL STATE FUNDS	49,560	53,290	47,335	51,894	47,333	42,333	37,333
NET AFTER STATE FUNDS	(7,592)	11,127	(4,860)	3,983	3,556	1,705	1,156

Standard 8: Educational Effectiveness

Among the energizing aspects of the ongoing transformation work is the opportunity to establish intentional processes and measures to evaluate the effectiveness of academic programming consistent with Vermont State University's mission and vision. This work is led at the highest level by our BOT, which has established strategic priorities aligned to a set of high-level dashboard metrics. As part of the project management approach to transformation work, all teams are expected to identify specific ways their planned projects will contribute to the BOT's strategic priorities of affordability, accessibility, educational quality and relevance of academic programs, as well as DEI. This intentional focus builds on the recent gains our existing institutions have made in strengthening the academic program assessment cycle via VSCS Board Policy 101 Program Review and Continuous Improvement Process (PReCIP). Vermont State

University will sustain attention to educational effectiveness as a critical component of all programs, but especially those with existing program accreditations, which includes most of the engineering technology, nursing, exercise science, allied health, social work, and teacher education programs.

To date, the various academic affairs transformation teams have established specific outcomes, measures, and/or processes intended to support the evaluation of educational effectiveness, further the mission of Vermont State University, and drive planning and resource allocation. First and foremost, as part of the work to create a single optimized program array for Vermont State University, all approved programs have documented program learning outcomes and applied learning experiences. These outcomes and experiences will become the new framework guiding annual program assessment activities by faculty as directed by Policy 101. The Connections General Education Program for Vermont State University has draft outcomes (see Standard 4) and anticipates use of an e-portfolio to support a holistic approach in assessing student outcomes, including those achieved through co-curricular and applied learning experiences. The draft Connections program also builds on a system-wide framework, approved in 2021-2022, that contains course-level learning outcomes for each of seven requirements.

In 2021, the system joined the National Student Clearinghouse's Postsecondary Data Partnership. Various transformation teams are now focused on reviewing this standard set of metrics on retention, credit accumulation, gateway course completion, transfer, and degree completion with disaggregation by important intersectional factors including age, full-time/part-time attendance status, race/ethnicity, gender, Pell recipient status, and college-readiness in math and English. This data, together with existing and more fine-grained efforts at each of the three institutions to understand and address barriers to student success, will be used to develop a first comprehensive student success and retention plan with defined metrics to guide and evaluate Vermont State University's efforts. As envisioned, the plan will connect efforts already identified by the three institutions in dimensions critical to student success: "purpose-first" developmental advising for first-year students, corequisite approaches to core academic skill development, design of general education and program gateway courses, and structured career development and applied learning experiences.

The three institutions currently collect a variety of information from graduates including initial employment, field of employment, graduate program enrollment, and licensure passage rates. Vermont Tech, with its focus on career-ready technical programs, for example, has invested significant energy in providing support to students and graduates and is justifiably proud of its resulting high job placement and licensure pass rates. The blend of liberal arts and pre-professional programs offered at Castleton University and Northern Vermont University has focused attention on understanding the range of graduates' initial employment experiences and opportunities. This information is used for prospective and current student advising as well as continuous improvement of programs through the PreCIP process. As these individual efforts

come together with a single program array with embedded applied learning expectations, our Career Development transformation team, comprised of career development staff from all three institutions, is designing a comprehensive approach to evaluating career readiness and post-graduation outcomes to inform academic and career development programming for Vermont State University.

The vision for Vermont State University includes an explicit commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). This commitment is embedded in the project management approach, which includes an intentional review of projects at each stage to determine how DEI efforts will be advanced. These reviews are guided by the New England Resource Center for Higher Education's *Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion* and are informing subsequent goals, including projected adoption of an institution-wide campus climate assessment tool.

Projections: As part of the continued work of the transformation teams in areas beyond the academic program, including student advising and academic support, career services, libraries, student life, and teaching and learning innovation, the three institutions will establish measures and evaluation processes to understand students' experiences and achieve improvements in student success and retention. Once Vermont State University's Connections General Education program is approved, work will begin to create a portfolio-based assessment plan for the program. With increased capacity of the system's institutional reporting functions, Vermont State University will leverage this standardized data in its own institutional research efforts. Vermont State University's planning and continuous improvement efforts will be aligned with priorities and dashboard metrics established by the BOT.

Key Milestones	Timeline
Design Connections General Education portfolio assessment plan	Summer 2022
Design Career Readiness and post-graduation outcomes assessment plan	April-June 2022
Develop Student Success and Retention Plan and associated metrics	2022-2023
Begin Policy 101 (PReCIP) reviews for optimized programs	2023-2024

Standard 9: Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure

Vermont State University will continue to meet this standard with a new single set of policies and procedures supported by VSCS-wide policies, labor contracts, and the personnel handbook for non-bargaining unit personnel. Common system-wide documents are available on the system website and are currently supplemented by individual institution catalogs, student handbooks, and institutional websites. The VSCS transformation process to date has been characterized by a commitment to integrity and transparency, including bi-weekly email updates from the Chancellor, a dedicated website with all related documentation, the use of online Teams sites for

transparent and open collaboration by faculty and staff across the system, and periodic in-person and virtual Town Hall style meetings. Since the onset of the pandemic, VSCS BOT meetings, which adhere to Vermont's Open Meeting Law, have been primarily conducted via Zoom with live-streaming, opportunities for public comment, and recordings available on the internet, which has fostered greater access for internal and external members of our communities to BOT discussions and decision-making. Given the significant scope of change being planned and executed, over the past year the BOT has elevated its expectations for the depth of information it reviews. All such informational materials reviewed by the BOT, including detailed financial analyses, academic program analyses, dashboard data on student success and retention, and facilities assessments are posted on the system's public website.[10] The Office of the Chancellor ensures timely responses to public record act requests, provides opportunities for public input on transformation, and maintains a whistleblower hotline.

Each existing institution currently works to maintain the currency, accessibility, and consistency of its individual academic program information and policies. These efforts will be improved through the creation of Vermont State University, which will have a single website, academic catalog, and student handbook, and one set of policies and procedures to be maintained. Work is currently underway to establish a transitional microsite for Vermont State University with an anticipated launch in April 2022, which will operate in conjunction with the existing three institutional websites with clear links between them explicitly identifying the status of the transition and accreditation until a permanent single website is completed. This transitional website will continue to evolve and, over time, will provide critical information about the specific programs, delivery modalities, faculty, academic supports, co-curricular and non-academic opportunities, and system-wide library and information technology resources offered at each location and virtually.

Projections: As the VSCS enters the design, development, and launch phases of transformation, we expect to utilize additional strategies to provide timely and accurate information to our stakeholders and to maintain our inclusive and transparent approach to the creation of Vermont State University. Such strategies are likely to include additional listening sessions, input polling, and open office hours with senior leaders. In addition, updates on the transformation are provided regularly at public BOT meetings, which include an opportunity for public comment. The Chancellor continues to meet regularly with the leaders of the four full-time bargaining units. Faculty Assembly leaders are planning for coordinated meetings and joint sessions with the Vermont State University President. With the vision and commitment to fostering a culture of DEI at Vermont State University, and in conjunction with system-wide work guided by the BOT's DEI Committee, discussions are currently being held across the VSCS's various communities and transformation teams to finalize a VSCS-wide Diversity Statement for anticipated adoption by the BOT in May 2022.

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[10] https://www.vsc.edu/board-of-trustees/meeting-materials/.

By the end of December 2022, the design of a single set of academic program and course requirements and institutional policies for Vermont State University is expected to be completed. These will be incorporated into Vermont State University's 2023-2024 academic year catalog, student handbook, and website publications by April 2023 in preparation for the anticipated launch of Vermont State University on July 1, 2023.

Key Milestones	Timeline
Launch Vermont State University microsite	April 2022
Publish unified academic catalog and student handbook	April 2023
Launch Vermont State University website	April 2023

APPENDIX

Vermont State University
Projected Program Array*

School **Department** Program	Castleton	Johnson	Lyndon	Randolph	Williston	Online / Remote Options
Arts & Communication						
Arts, Humanities, and Communications						
Animation & Illustration (BFA)	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Art (BA)	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
Art (BFA)	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
Art (MFA)	Not available	In person	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
Communications (BA)	F2F plus	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Creative Writing (BFA)	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Graphic Design (AA)	F2F plus	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Graphic Design (BA)	F2F plus	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Graphic Design (BFA)	F2F plus	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Literature & Writing (BA)	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Media Arts (BA)	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
Woodworking & Fine Furniture Design	Not available	In person	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
Music and Performing Arts						
Music (BA)	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
Music Business & Industry (BS)	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Music Education (BM)	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
Performance, Arts, & Technology (BA)	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
Theater (BA)	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	No

Business and Professional Studies						
Agribusiness and Land Management						
Forestry (AAS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	In person	Not available	No
Landscape Contracting (AAS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	In person	Not available	No
Business Administration						
Applied Business Online Degree Completion (BS)	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	Yes
Business (AS)	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	Yes
Business (BS)	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	Yes
Business Administration (MBA)	Online only	Online only	Online only	Online only	Online only	Online only
Outdoor Education & Leadership (BS)	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Resort and Hospitality Management (BS)	at Killington	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
Transportation						
Automotive Technology (AAS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	In person	Not available	No
Diesel Power Technology (AAS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	In person	Not available	No
Professional Pilot Technology (BS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	No
Education, Psychology, and Social Sciences						
Education						
Early Childhood & Special Education (BA)	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Early Childhood Education (birth-5) (BA)	Online (90%)	Online (90%)	Online (90%)	Online (90%)	Online (90%)	Online (90%)
Education (MA)	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Education (MEd)	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Education (MS)	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Inclusive Adolescent Education (BA)	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Inclusive Childhood Education (BA)	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Interdisciplinary Academic Unit						
General Studies (AA)	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	Yes
Interdisciplinary Studies (BS)	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	Yes
Professional Studies (BS)	Online only	Online only	Online only	Online only	Online only	Online Only

Psychology						
Applied Psychology & Human Services (BS)	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Forensic Psychology (BS)	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
Human Services (AS)	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Psychological Science (AS)	F2F plus	F2F plus	Online only	Online only	Online only	Yes
Psychological Science (BS)	F2F plus	F2F plus	Online only	Online only	Online only	Yes
Social Sciences						
Anthropology, Archaeology, Geography (BA)	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
Criminal Justice (BA)	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
History (BA)	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Political Science (BA)	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
Social Work (BSW)	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
Sociology (BA)	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
*Graduate Programs Unit***						
Clinical Mental Health (MS)	Not available	In person only	Not available	Not available	In person	In person multiple remote locations
Leadership Studies (MA)	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
School Counseling (MA)	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
School Psychology (MS)	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
Nursing, Movement, and Healthcare						
Health and Exercise Sciences						
Athletic Leadership (MS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	Online only
Athletic Training (MS)	In person	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
Exercise Science (BS)	F2F plus	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Health Promotion (BA)	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
Health Science (BS)	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Holistic Health (BS)	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	Yes

Physical Education (BS)	In person	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
Sport Management (BS)	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
Healthcare Professions						
Dental Hygiene (BS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	In person	No
Dental Hygiene Online Degree Completion (BS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	Online only
Paramedicine (CT)	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	In person	In person at Bennington site
Radiologic Science (AS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	In person	No
Respiratory Therapy (AS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	In person	No
Veterinary Technology (AAS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	In person	Not available	No
Nursing						
Nursing (AS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	F2F plus at multiple remote sites
Nursing (BSN)	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
Nursing (MS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	Online only
Nursing Online Degree Completion (BSN)	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	Online only
Practical Nursing (CT)	Not available	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus at multiple remote sites
Science, Technology, Engineering and Math						
Computer Science and Math						
Computer Engineering Technology (AE)	Not available	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	F2F plus	No
Computer Engineering Technology (BS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	F2F plus	No
Computer Information Systems (AS)	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	No
Computer Information Systems (BS)	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	No
Data Science (BS)	Not available	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Information Technology (AS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	F2F plus	No
Information Technology (BS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	F2F plus	No

Mathematics (AS)	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Mathematics (BS)	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Software Engineering (AS)	Primarily remote	Primarily remote	Primarily remote	F2F plus	F2F plus	No
Software Engineering (BS)	Primarily remote	Primarily remote	Primarily remote	F2F plus	F2F plus	No
Statistics (BS)	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
Engineering Technology						
Architectural & Building Engineering Technology (AAS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	No
Architectural Engineering Technology (BS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	No
Civil & Environmental Engineering Technology (AE)	Not available	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	No
Construction Management (AAS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	No
Construction Management (BS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	No
Electrical Engineering Technology (AE)	Not available	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	F2F plus	No
Electrical Engineering Technology (BS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	F2F plus	No
Electromechanical Engineering Technology (BS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	No
General Engineering Technology (AAS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	No
Manufacturing Engineering Technology (BS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	F2F plus	No
Mechanical Engineering Technology (AE)	Not available	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	F2F plus	No
Renewable Energy (BS)	Not available	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	No
Natural Sciences						
Atmospheric Sciences (BS)	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Biology (BS)	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
Climate Change Science (BS)	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Environmental Science (BS)	F2F plus	F2F plus	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Natural Science (BS)	Not available	Not available	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	No
Wildlife & Forest Conservation (BS)	F2F plus	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	No
Anticipated New Programs Still in Development						

Program						
Agriculture & Food Entrepreneurship (AAS)						
Aviation Maintenance Technology (AAS)						
Programs suspended for new enrollment until after Vermont State University launch (*current location)						
Agribusiness Management (AAS)				*		
Software Engineering (MS)				*	*	
Music Education (MME)	*					
Technical Theater (AS)		*				
Musical Theater (BA)	*					
Photography (AA)		*				
Programs closed and in teachout (*current location)						
Dairy Farm Management (AAS)				*		
Diversified Agriculture (BS)				*		
Chemistry	*					

*Projected programs, delivery modalities, and organizational structure. "F2F plus" is defined as programs offering 25-75% of program courses with instruction originating with faculty in person at that location and students from other locations joining remotely, in contrast to "in person" programs offering 100% of program courses with instruction in person.

**Graduate program organization currently projected to include some programs located within disciplinary departments and others in a separate academic unit.