

NEK

University Students Break New Ground With Cross-Campus Excavation Project

Officials: Summer Program
A Sign Of Opportunities
To Come At Vermont
State University

BY AMY ASH NIXON
Staff Writer

Castleton University, Northern Vermont University and Vermont Technical College won't officially unify into Vermont State University until July 1 next summer.

But cross-campus collaboration is already underway.

One of the recent collaborations was the Hidden History project at Castleton University, for which Northeast Kingdom native and NVU student Nicole Tucker, 22, of Lyndon got to spend a month in southern Vermont.

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Students from Castleton University, NVU and the Community College of Vermont collaborated on a historical archaeology dig this summer at Castleton. (Courtesy Photo)



Above left: Nicole Tucker, front row, wearing white baseball cap, is a student at Northern Vermont University-Lyndon who participated in a Hidden History project at Castleton University this summer, earning college credits and gaining experience in the field - she worked with 26 other Vermont State University students who came from Castleton, NVU and the Community College of Vermont system. The project is an example of the increasing cross-campus collaboration opportunities that will soon be happening with greater ease when Castleton, NVU and the Vermont Technical College merge July 1, 2023 into the new Vermont State University. (Courtesy Photo)

Dig

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Tucker added, “The professors are incredible and having access to the programs Castleton offers that NVU doesn’t have without having to transfer or anything is exciting.”

She is now considering more time on the Castleton campus after NVU-Lyndon phases out its geology program.

The increased opportunities for students within the VSCS because of the ability to enroll in courses across the new university system will expand student opportunities, explained Tucker this week. “I am eager to have my course options expand,” she said.

Tucker was one of five NVU students to take part in the summer history immersion course at Castleton.

The project enrolled a total of 27 students from NVU, Castleton and the Community College of Vermont to work together on a project that uses 3D technology and virtual reality modeling with a

hands-on archaeology dig.

The project saw a cistern excavated along with two outhouses dating from the 1800s, and the group used ground-penetrating radar and virtual reality modeling of the site for their investigations.

Work was done at a dig at the Granger House on the campus of Castleton University, supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The project wrapped up on June 16th.

“I loved it,” Tucker said. “I had never done anything with archaeology before. We all were able to take on our own projects, and the group was just amazing... I looked through death records and compiled a spreadsheet for people who died in Castleton in the 19th century to make statistics of life expectancy and health at the time.”

Castleton Professor Touts Expanded Opportunities

Dr. Andre Fleche, Professor of History at Castleton University, explained the recent project is breaking new ground.

“We believe the Castleton field school pioneered a bold new approach to education in the humanities,” said Dr. Fleche. “Through

research and application of technology, the students developed job-ready skills that will serve them well after graduation. The experience offered a strong reminder that the humanities will continue to play an important role in the career preparation of the state university students of the 21st century.”

Maurice Ouimet, Vice President for Admissions and Enrollment Services for Vermont State University, said “The archaeological project that is underway on the Castleton campus is an excellent illustration of how Vermont State University will serve students statewide.”

All the students were paid as interns and lived on the Castleton campus.

“They are learning, having fun, and making connections with fellow students and faculty in the program that will last a lifetime,” shared Ouimet. “This is the type of applied learning opportunity students can expect to continue to see as we bring together these three amazing institutions. It is an example of why we truly are stronger together.”

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By Amy Ash Nixon, Staff Writer

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