

Second Progress Report
on the Unification of
Castleton University, Northern Vermont University and
Vermont Technical College
as

Vermont State University

March 29, 2023



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Progress Summary

(*Items reported in progress from September, 2022 report.)

Standard One: Mission and Purposes

No additional progress updates requested by the Commission.

Standard Two: Planning and Evaluation

Completed	*High-Level Financial, Facilities, and Enrollment Plans for VTSU Completed
Completed	*Director of Institutional Research and Planning Hired
Completed	A Strategic Plan with Metrics Is Being Developed
In progress (Pilot Developed)	A Data Analysis Infrastructure is Being Developed

Standard Three: Organization and Governance

Completed	*VTSU Leadership Structure is Being Implemented...
Completed	*...and a “Statement of Values” Has Been Established
In progress (May, 2023)	Unified Faculty Governance Structure is Under Development

Standard Four: The Academic Program

Completed	*Unified Curriculum Review Process Has Been Completed
Completed	*General Education Program Has Been Approved
In Progress (July 1, 2023)	*Progress Made to Move Specialized Accreditations to VTSU
Completed	Unified Dual Enrollment Procedures for AY2024 Have Been Completed

Standard Five: Students

Completed	“Digital First” and “One Stop” Approaches to Advising, Career Services, and Other Supports are Being Developed
In progress (July 1, 2023)	Colleague Software Has Been “Rebuilt” for Admissions, Financial Aid, and Registrarial Services
Completed	Financial Aid Packages for AY23-24 Have Been Designed
Completed	Unified University Handbook is Under Development

Completed	Progress is Being Made to Secure Authorization from the U.S. Department of Education for VTSU to Award Financial Aid
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Standard Six: Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship

Completed	*System-Wide Library Staffing Model Established
Completed	*Staffing Model for all Academic Functional Areas Established
Completed	Academic Advising Model is Being Developed
In progress (May, 2023)	Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Processes are Being Aligned with the VTSU Mission and Values

Standard Seven: Institutional Resources

Completed	*VTSU Tuition and Fees for AY2024 have Been Set
In Progress (10-year plan)	Facilities Plan is Being Implemented, and Facilities Divestment Continues
In Progress (June 30, 2023)	FY2024 System and Institutional Budgets Are Under Development

Standard Eight: Institutional Effectiveness

Phased Implementation Designed (2023-2027)	*Portfolio Assessment Plan for the General Education Program Designed
In Progress (2023-2024)	*Assessment Plan for Career Readiness and Post-Graduation Outcomes Designed and Being Developed
Completed	Student Success and Retention Plan and Associated Metrics Are Being Developed

Standard Nine: Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure

Completed	Institutional Policies for VTSU Have Been Developed
In Progress (September, 2023)	VTSU Website Is Being Developed
In Progress (May, 2023)	Unified Academic Catalog Is Being Developed

Appendix: Leadership Organizational Chart

Introduction

On April 22, 2022, the Commission took action to accept a substantive change proposal from the Vermont State Colleges System (System) to unify Castleton University, Northern Vermont University (with two campuses, Johnson and Lyndon), and Vermont Technical College (also with two primary campuses, Randolph Center and Williston) into one institution, **Vermont State University effective July 1, 2023**, and advised the system to proceed with its plans. The Commission further approved the System's request that the inaugural president of Vermont State University serve as president for each of the three institutions during the 2022-2023 academic year. Vermont State University, contingent upon the Commission's determination that the plans outlined in the substantive change proposal have been successfully implemented, will launch and welcome its first students on July 1, 2023.

This is the second progress report requested by the Commission to document the goals and tasks achieved in the transformation to create **Vermont State University (VTSU)**, per the Commission's June 17, 2022 and October 24, 2022 letters to System Chancellor Sophie Zdatny. The Commission accepted the first progress report on September 23, 2022, confirmed the second progress report for March 24, 2023, and confirmed a focused evaluation scheduled for Fall 2023. In its October 24, 2022 letter the Commission specifically requested updates on **1) "enrollment and budget projections of VTSU and progress towards eliminating the System's structural deficit and achieving the anticipated \$25 million in structural savings,"** and **2) "the development of a hybrid operational model for VTSU."** The Commission further requested evidence of the System's success in achieving specific goals and tasks specified for Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 in the substantive change proposal and an update on progress to accomplish tasks and goals not completed at the time of the first progress report; these are enumerated in the report below.

Institutional Overview

Under the leadership of President Grewal and his team significant progress continues to be made to prepare for unified, hybrid operations as Vermont State University effective July 1, 2023. Critical milestones have been achieved this fall, including completion of an enrollment plan, establishment of 23-24 tuition rates, design of aid packages, and faculty review and approval of a unified curriculum and a new General Education Program. Leaders appointed to each of the functional areas this fall have developed staffing plans to support the key work and goals identified by the original Transformation teams, modifying as needed to account for financial constraints and institutional priorities. Reassignment of staff to positions in the new unified organizational structure in all areas is nearing completion, and with these reassignments, progress is accelerating on the development of VTSU's operations necessary for its July 1, 2023 launch and first incoming class in Fall 2023. President Grewal and his leadership team are developing a strategic vision with aligned draft priorities and metrics. Work on Vermont State University's first operating budget for FY24 is also underway.

The vision and priorities being developed include building specific campus identities to guide academic and student experience programming and making investments in resizing and repurposing facilities. Initial plans to support these directions were announced in early February

and will include re-envisioning the library spaces to better meet student needs as part of an overall transition to a digital academic library and staffing model for the system. Also planned is an adjustment to collegiate athletics programming to better fit the student populations on individual campuses, with a transition from the NCAA to the USCAA for the Johnson campus and transition of the Randolph Center campus from USCAA to a club sports model planned for Fall 2024.¹ The announced changes have generated passionate discourse both internally and publicly, as the communities of Vermont State University grapple with challenging tradeoffs associated with realizing the transformation of three residential institutions into a single multi-campus, hybrid university while eliminating a structural deficit. The announced changes were discussed in a series of town hall meetings at all campus locations with dedicated time for students and for faculty and staff. Initial internal responses following these meetings included a no-confidence vote by faculty assemblies and statements from student government associations at the Castleton and NVU campuses. President Grewal, Provost Atkins, and other senior leaders have continued discussions since these initial responses with faculty leadership, students, staff, and community stakeholders. Based on feedback to date, the VTSU leadership team has drafted refined plans for a New Library Model, the AVP for Institutional Research and library leadership have developed and shared additional data with various stakeholder groups, including the libraries transformation sub-team and the Faculty Assemblies. These key stakeholders have been asked to provide consultation on the refined plans and provide additional feedback and recommendations on the implementation of these changes. Details of the refined library operations plan and staffing are described further below.

Area of Focus 1: Budget and Enrollment Projections for VTSU and Progress Toward Eliminating the System's Structural Deficit and Achieving the Anticipated \$25 Million in Structural Savings

Budget Projections

Current second-quarter results and projections for the remainder of FY23 for the three institutions becoming VTSU show in aggregate net student revenue to be approximately 4.3% better than budgeted, due to a sharp increase in out-of-state enrollment coupled with steady in-state enrollment, and compared to budget, room and board revenue is currently projected to be 8.9% better than budget. The operating deficit projected for FY23 is thus lower than anticipated (currently projected to be \$15.500M instead of \$22.245M), resulting in less reliance on the state-appropriated bridge funding for FY23, the unused portion of which will be applied towards the operating deficit for FY24.

With the creation of Vermont State University and expanded system-wide shared services including IT and libraries, over the last twelve months the Vermont State Colleges system has worked to update its policy regarding System Annual Operating Budget. This policy encompasses the annual budgeting process, reporting requirements, the allocation of general fund state appropriation, the setting of tuition and fees, the establishment of reserves, and the use of carry-over funds. The revised policies were adopted by the Board of Trustees on January 23, 2023, and place a stronger emphasis on the strategic financial health of the Vermont State

¹ See <https://transformation.vsc.edu/announcing-changes-to-vermont-state-university-athletics-and-libraries/>.

Colleges, fair and equitable distribution of system resources – both state general fund revenues and shared expenses – and give greater opportunity for Board of Trustees oversight.²

As part of the system-wide annual operating budget overseen by the system's CFO, President Grewal and his leadership team developed a first-pass budget for FY24 and projections as documented below. Additional iterations of system and institutional FY24 budgets will be developed over the next two months as key budget assumptions are refined, with a goal of presenting a final budget for Board of Trustees approval by June 30, 2023. Working from that restated VTSU FY23 budget, the key assumptions behind VTSU's first-pass budget for FY24 include an estimated 10% decline in new student enrollment and a reduction in net student tuition and fees revenue based on the new tuition pricing and scholarship model. With a high degree of variability in historical enrollment patterns across the three existing institutions relative to the new unified pricing model and admissions procedures, the first-pass estimate uses a 10% decline in new student enrollment as a midpoint estimate between best and worst likely outcomes. With anticipated enrollment declines as part of the transition process of creating VTSU and board-approved room and board rate increases of 4%, the current budget estimates no change to room and board revenue from the currently forecasted results for FY23. Additional assumptions driving budget development include full funding of the system's FY24 appropriations requests, which include an increase of \$2.5M to the system's annual general fund appropriation consistent with the Select Committee's original recommendation³ and \$9M in one-time bridge funding for FY24. These appropriations requests were included in the Governor's 2024 Budget proposal and are expected to pass in the House budget on March 31st and then move to the Senate for consideration. State general fund appropriation decisions are expected by June 2023.

As part of the five-year plan to eliminate the structural deficit, the target deficit for VTSU for FY2024 is \$17.693M, which represents a \$5M reduction from the FY23 budgeted deficit of \$22.673M. VTSU has submitted its first pass budget and based on enrollment projections, staffing, and operational costs expects to achieve the targeted deficit of \$17.202M. In achieving this target, President Grewal and his leadership team have worked to streamline administrative functions and consolidate administrative positions in alignment with a larger institution. As of January 2023, VTSU is down 17 administrative positions across the three merging institutions, including consolidation to a single business operations team from what were originally duplicated CFO and various other administrative positions across campuses. Other functional areas with similar reorganizations to university-wide leadership and redesigned, streamlined operations include enrollment communication (supporting a single university website and marketing), financial aid (a single director and team to administer aid and provide financial services), registrar (supporting a single academic catalog and course schedule). In addition, VTSU has made strategic decisions to move to a digital academic library resulting in increased access and equity while saving an estimated \$500K annually. To further institutional sustainability, VTSU will be shifting the Johnson campus from NCAA to United States Collegiate Athletic Association (USCAA) sports and the Randolph Center campus from the

² See agenda, materials, and minutes for January 23, 2023 at <https://www.vsc.edu/board-of-trustees/meeting-materials/board-trustees-meetings-2022-23/>.

³ See <https://ljfo.vermont.gov/assets/Uploads/c2ef482057/Final-Report-of-the-Select-Committee-on-the-Future-of-Public-Higher-Education-in-Vermont-Submitted.pdf>.

USCAA to club sports. This change won't result in immediate savings but will allow for better prioritization of long-term investments.

In anticipation of the FY24 budget, the financial team and admissions have been working in alignment to develop enrollment projections. Presently enrollment projections have a wide range of variance with current projections estimating the incoming class somewhere between level with FY23 and a 20% decline in new starts year-over-year. The significant variability in these projections was expected given the launching of VTSU and its new brand, as well as the delay in enrolling students due to the ongoing transformation of Admissions. VTSU is presently increasing marketing strategies directly related to enrollment to grow Fall 2023 admissions with a targeted emphasis on graduate and online programming as the path towards revenue growth long-term.

VTSU remains focused on achieving sustainability and is making a significant investment in its new student advising model with the hiring of 15 Student Success Advisors. These advisors will work directly with students to address their individual needs through a holistic approach. VTSU has established benchmarks and clear expectations for these roles with the anticipated outcome being a direct increase in student retention and a corresponding increase in student revenue. As VTSU moves forward it recognizes strategic investments will be needed in high-demand program areas, instructional methodology, and other areas to grow and stabilize student revenue.

Vermont State University FY23 Q2 Forecast, FY24 First Pass Budget & Projections

	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027
Revenues	Forecast	Budget 1.0	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
Tuition & Fees	79,966	64,289	64,289	64,289	64,289
Room & Board	20,764	20,912	20,912	20,912	20,912
State Appropriation	32,215	27,709	27,709	27,209	27,209
Sales & Services	2,715	2,580	2,580	2,580	2,580
Gifts	1,055	1,055	1,055	1,055	1,055
All Other Revenue	341	326	326	326	326
Total Revenues	137,056	116,871	116,871	116,371	116,371
Expenses					
Salaries & Benefits	79,419	71,758	68,084	63,614	60,120
Services, Supplies & Travel	27,036	25,877	24,552	22,940	21,680
Scholarships & Aid	20,166	8,155	8,155	8,155	8,155
Utilities	8,215	8,782	8,782	8,782	8,782
Debt Service & Capital Support	6,179	6,304	6,304	7,386	7,139
Shared Services		11,191	11,191	11,191	11,191
Chancellor's Office	8,412				
Other Transfers	2,897	2,006	2,006	2,006	2,006
Total Expenses	152,324	134,073	129,074	124,074	119,073
Net Revenue / (Deficit)	(15,268)	(17,202)	(12,203)	(7,703)	(2,702)
One-Time Funds					
CY Bridge Funding	14,900	9,000	10,000	5,000	-
Prior Year Bridge Funding	368	8,202	2,203	2,703	2,702
Total One-Time Funds	15,268	17,202	12,203	7,703	2,702

Remaining deficits currently projected through FY2027 will be addressed through continued budget development this spring and through future budget cycles, attending to both revenue growth and continued efficiency gains. Currently VTSU is pursuing a variety of strategies including optimization of full-time faculty with course offerings, reduction of reliance on part-time faculty, reduction of debt payments, and administrative efficiencies. These estimates will be further refined through the budget development process this year and in future years.

Enrollment Projections

As noted above, VTSU's current first-pass budget for FY24 is based on a 10% decline in new student enrollments, which is estimated to be a midpoint between a best-case scenario of flat enrollment and worst likely scenario of a 20% decline. Projecting the first year of VTSU's enrollment is challenging to assess at this stage, as historic enrollment patterns for each independent institution no longer apply, and a new reduced tuition pricing model has been implemented. In addition to implementing new admissions processes and supports for the traditional first-year student admissions cycle, VTSU is attending to additional populations, particularly online, transfer, and other non-traditional students in its marketing and recruitment efforts.

Progress Towards Eliminating the System's Structural Deficit

The current system budget forecast for FY23 shows a net positive operating result compared to the original budget and incorporates the first \$5M in structural deficit reduction.⁴ With full state funding of the system's base appropriation as currently requested from FY24 forward, incorporating VTSU's first-pass FY24 budget scenario for a midpoint enrollment estimate, and utilizing conservative assumptions of level net student revenues in subsequent years, achieving continued progress towards eliminating the structural deficit by \$5M per year will require continued expense reductions and/or revenue to close the system's deficit by FY27. To date, these expense reductions have been largely achieved through consolidation of administration positions and reduction in the system's office of the chancellor space. For FY24, structural deficit reduction is expected via aligned and consolidated functions and processes including libraries and campus operations.

Multi-Year Forecast Using FY2024 First Pass Budget and Revised System Budget Policy

	FY2023 Budget	FY2023 Forecast	FY2024 Budget 1.0	FY2025 Forecast	FY2026 Forecast	FY2027 Forecast
Total Revenues	182,772	193,101	163,982	160,482	160,482	160,482
Total Expenses	184,278	187,212	182,875	173,013	167,673	163,483
Net Revenues/(Deficit)	(1,506)	5,888	(18,893)	(12,531)	(7,192)	(3,002)
Use of One-Time Funds						
PY Bridge Funding	1,506	-	8,693	1,631	1,592	2,702
CY Bridge Funding	-	-	9,000	10,000	5,000	-
IT Equipment Reserve	-	-	1,200	900	600	300
Total One-Time Funds	1,506	-	18,893	12,531	7,192	3,002

⁴See <https://www.vsc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/2022-05-23-F-and-F-Meeting-Materials-final.pdf>

As shown above, the Vermont State Colleges anticipates declining deficits between FY25 and FY27. The current forecast reflects a \$3.002M deficit in FY27. This deficit is the result of the creation of the system's new "economic stabilization fund" and the planned funding of IT equipment replacements. It is expected the system will reduce continue right-sizing efforts to bring the anticipated deficit down with each budget cycle.

Area of Focus 2: Development of a Hybrid Operational Model for VTSU

The completed review and approval of the unified curriculum has confirmed that the majority of VTSU's degree programs will be offered with greater flexibility of access, a signature dimension of VTSU as a hybrid university.⁵ Each program is now designated as a) "In-Person" with in-person instruction only at a specific campus, b) "In-Person Plus" at specific campuses where instruction will include a combination of in-person, hybrid, and other course delivery modalities, and/or c) fully online. One of the important course delivery modalities to support this program flexibility has been defined as "Face-to-Face Plus," (F2F+) a modality that includes students and the instructor in the physical classroom and additional students connecting remotely, typically through Zoom, a strategy that requires both specific technologies including web-based software and collaboration applications and new classroom pedagogies. Over the course of a F2F+ pilot project this past summer and fall, a leading cohort of 26 faculty have been developing expertise in the F2F+ modality, offering redesigned classes this past fall and 25 of them are doing so again during this spring semester. An additional 50-60 faculty are projected to begin teaching in the F2F+ modality in the Fall of 2023. These faculty will have access to a professional development program this summer that will include a kickoff retreat, a four-week F2F+ design course during the month of June, access to a new F2F+ teaching guide, and ongoing support via a mentor, workshops, and consultative support provided by VTSU's Center for Teaching & Learning Innovation.

Much has been learned thus far by the pilot faculty, a few of whom are also experimenting with a 1:1 technology strategy that includes use of an iPad bundle by students and faculty to facilitate equitable participation. This aspect of the pilot has proven to be quite successful for the faculty and students involved to date and is informing plans to bring use of 1:1 technologies to scale over the next two years. This spring, the Teaching and Learning Innovation team is introducing 1:1 technologies to an additional 60 student-facing staff, faculty, and professional librarians, with workshops on virtual collaboration strategies and use of video, audio, and information sharing tools. The team is planning expanded course pilots using 1:1 technologies for Fall 2023, and a broader launch is currently anticipated to include the full incoming class of students in Fall 2024.

With completed organizational structures and staffing, the fully hybrid nature of VTSU's model is being operationalized. Teams such as admissions, advising, academic support, career services, and the library are operating as single units with staff who have a blend of university-wide and campus-affiliated responsibilities. For example, the Career Development team has members from four different campuses, each with specialized responsibilities for the entire university, including community partnerships, applied learning, curriculum integration, and career readiness. Teams

⁵See <https://vermontstate.edu/academic-programs/>.

utilize videoconference, file-sharing, and messaging technologies to work together on routine operations and meet as needed in-person for more intensive planning and collaboration.

VTSU is also moving forward, in a collaborative partnership with its sister institution in the system, the Community College of Vermont, to adopt a new shared digital library overseen by a system library director. For VTSU's primary campus locations, the refined plans under consideration include deaccessioning the majority of the physical collection and repurposing library spaces to better meet student and university needs, including the need for greater study and small group meeting spaces and expanded access to non-library resources. VTSU's libraries will transition to a digital-first model effective July 1, 2023 with six professional librarians affiliated with each primary campus and collaborating with an additional three professional librarians affiliated with the Community College of Vermont. As noted above, the initial announcement of the plan has generated significant discussion and concern; consultations with stakeholders including faculty assemblies, librarians, and employee unions to inform a refined plan are now underway. The refined plan in its current draft form calls for maintaining access to special and academically valuable in-use physical collections and print reserve resources specific to individual campuses and has been made publicly available at <https://transformation.vsc.edu/refined-plan-for-the-vermont-state-university-libraries/>. Similarly, student forums are currently being scheduled to provide additional input into plans for immediate improvements to physical library spaces to meet the goal of providing usable, inviting library spaces by the Fall 2023 semester.

The academic scheduling team, working with faculty, department chairs, deans, and academic staff, expects to complete VTSU's first schedule of courses for Fall 2023 by April 7th. The goal for VTSU's new schedule is to support VTSU's unified program offerings and meet the diverse needs of residential, online, and working students through a variety of course modalities, including in-person courses, asynchronous online courses, remote synchronous courses, and the new "face-to-face plus" (F2F+) modality that combines both in-person and remote synchronous access options. General education program requirements will be offered in sufficient modalities so that they can be fulfilled entirely in-person or 100% remotely through asynchronous online or remote synchronous options. Individual program requirements will be scheduled consistent with the program learning format options—"in person," "in person plus" for in person programs with options for some remote access courses, or fully online--for each program and campus location and posted on the programs page of the website at <https://vermontstate.edu/academic-programs/>. Detailed modality definitions and guidance for faculty has been provided as part of course schedule planning.

Standard One: Mission and Purposes

No additional progress reports requested.

Standard Two: Planning and Evaluation

High-Level Financial, Facilities, and Enrollment Plans for VTSU Completed (update from first progress report)

As reported in our first September 1, 2022 report, high-level financial and facilities plans were completed and work was nearly complete on the enrollment plan. VTSU's enrollment plan inclusive of a unified pricing model and aid for 2023-2024 was approved by the Board of Trustees at its September 21, 2022 meeting.⁶ An updated system budgeting model and associated policies were approved by the Board of Trustees at its January 23, 2023 meeting. These policies will guide financial planning and budget development for the system and VTSU going forward.⁷ The budgeting model and policies establish an economic stabilization fund, an information technology capital fund, and a new system strategic initiatives reserve. The facilities team's planning is entering a new phase with the goal of developing a master plan of prioritized capital projects and investments by September 1, 2024. An RFP for this work has been issued.

A Director of Institutional Research and Planning Has Been Hired (update from first progress report)

Dr. Irene Irudayam began her appointment as VTSU's Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research and Planning and Chief Data Scientist in October, 2022. Among her first tasks has been to establish new historical baseline data for VTSU to inform the development of enrollment and retention goals and to support the VTSU leadership team in identifying metrics for strategic priorities.

A Strategic Plan with Metrics is Being Developed

Following a series of listening sessions, campus community envisioning forums, an initial presentation of draft priorities at a university-wide town hall, and review of received feedback, VTSU's leadership team has finalized a set of four strategic priorities and begun work to identify objectives and specific initiatives aligned with these priorities as follows. Initial draft metrics to track progress on objectives are currently under development by members of the leadership team working with the AVP of Institutional Research and Planning and Chief Data Scientist.

1. **Become the nation's first statewide hybrid university that expands access, increases affordability and improves student achievement:** Objectives include increasing access via flexible modalities, including in-person-plus and online delivery of high-demand programs; increasing affordability through innovative program structures, operational efficiencies, and sustainable enrollment growth; and realizing student achievement through engagement in holistic success programs, services and support.

⁶ <https://www.vsc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2022-015-Approval-of-Vermont-State-University-Tuition-and-Fees-for-AY-2023-2024.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.vsc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2022-01-23-Board-of-Trustees-Minutes-UNAPPROVED-final.pdf>

2. **Become a university that produces career-ready, civic-minded students:** Objectives include embedding industry-recognized micro-credentials and real-world applied learning opportunities in every degree program and building innovative, need-inspired certificate and degree programs.
3. **Become a community-engaged university that serves as a catalyst for rural advancement:** Objectives include building mechanisms to expand faculty, staff, and student engagement with community leaders for co-envisioning solutions to local and global problems; creating mutually beneficial partnerships; and igniting innovation and entrepreneurship for building new start-ups in rural areas.
4. **Become an employee centric university:** Objectives include fostering wellbeing with a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, increasing professional development, and fostering a culture of innovation, data-driven decision-making, and continuous improvement.

A Data Analysis Infrastructure is Being Developed

As part of the system's longer-term strategy to support business intelligence (BI), the system shared services IT staff have created an initial technical architecture proof of concept that is currently being evaluated for implementation. As part of the colleague and data systems transformation team's work, existing individual institutional data sets are now being reviewed and revised to align with VTSU's new coding schemata in the Colleague student information system. The data analysis infrastructure will utilize Power BI for end-user data exploration and visualization. VTSU's AVP for Institutional Research and Planning and Chief Data Scientist is currently in the early stages of developing VTSU's institutional data dashboards using Power BI.

Standard Three: Organization and Governance

VTSU Leadership Structure is Being Implemented (update from first progress report)

At this time, all senior leadership roles reporting directly to the President have been filled other than one recent vacancy. With direction from the leadership team, all additional work has been completed to define university-wide teams reporting up to these leaders. Most appointments of permanent division deans, assistant vice presidents, and directors have been completed. The remaining positions are all posted as detailed in the Appendix. Transitions of staff in each functional area to revised or realigned roles and reporting relationships are complete in areas such as admissions and enrollment and continuing in others including academic affairs. As needed to support the hybrid operational needs of Vermont State University and its mission and vision, personnel adjustments including total positions in a functional area, revisions to position responsibilities and specializations, and supervisory relationships have been made consistent with the provisions of collective bargaining agreements and system personnel policies.

A "Statement of Values" Has Been Established (update from first progress report)

The inaugural statement of values was communicated by President Grewal in a Vermont State University-wide news update on December 14, 2022 and posted on the VermontState.edu

website.⁸ The seven values and associated statements of commitment will support further work to establish university-wide practices for collegial interactions and communication.

Unified Faculty Governance Structure Is Under Development

A faculty governance design group consisting of the leadership of all four Faculty Assemblies and the Faculty Federation has worked over the past year to review existing governance models, practices, and proposals from a Labor Task Force, and has developed a draft governance model that is currently available for all faculty to review, with faculty assembly discussions, any revisions, and final votes expected before the end of the academic year. The draft model strives for true unification of the existing four faculty assemblies in a way that supports multidisciplinary collaborations, equitable representation given existing variation in faculty numbers across campuses, efficiency and simplicity in a size-appropriate scale, and effective interaction with other university constituents.

The proposed model offers two alternatives for an overall structure aligned with VTSU's academic organizational structure with university-wide departments and schools. The schools--an administrative structure to support departments, programs, and faculty and also some governance functions--include Arts & Communication; Business and Professional Studies; Education, Psychology and Social Sciences; Nursing; Health Sciences; and STEM. One alternative for faculty governance defines a single Faculty Assembly with representative members coming from all standing committees and councils; the other is a Faculty Assembly inclusive of all full-time faculty at VTSU plus a Senate consisting of the membership on committees and councils. Both alternatives include two committees operating at the school level (curriculum and reappointment, promotion and tenure), with remaining committees or councils serving VTSU as a whole (including faculty development, student experience, general education, program assessment, structure and governance). Equitable representation on school-based and university-wide committees would be achieved by including one member per department plus one member for each campus, with no more than 1/3 of committee members coming from a single campus; service on such committees is proposed to be scheduled in overlapping two- or three-year terms. Leadership via an Executive Council is proposed to include a board of moderators from the four campuses with rotating chair responsibilities, a secretary, two school-level council chairs, 8-9 VTSU-level committee chairs, and a representative of the Faculty Federation.

Standard Four: The Academic Program

Unified Curriculum Review Process Has Been Completed (update from first progress report)

Since Summer 2021, the faculty have been creating an optimized program array for VTSU. This work consolidated over 250 programs into just over 100 undergraduate and about 20 graduate degree programs. Many of the programs were designed to be delivered in an "In-Person Plus" mode to ensure state-wide access while attending to quality, efficiency, and relevance. The process was detailed and rigorous involving program review and use of a shared rubric by the

⁸ <https://vermontstate.edu/about-us/vermont-state-university-community-values/>

four Faculty Assembly curriculum committees at the existing institutions. Following a governance process coordinated by the moderators and curriculum committee chairs of the four Faculty Assemblies, all programs put forward by faculty were approved jointly by the four Assemblies, reviewed by VTSU's Provost, and final program offering decisions made by President Grewal. The programs offered represent a blend of liberal arts, technical, and pre-professional degree programs that are aligned with the VTSU mission and vision.

General Education Program Has Been Approved (update from first progress report)

A foundational "Connections General Education" program for Associate's and Baccalaureate students and a phased implementation plan has been approved using the same coordinated governance process as described for the unified curriculum above. The core of the program consists of three Connections Seminars intended to help students develop essential academic skills and understand the connectivity between the General Education program, their major, and co-curricular activities and how they all contribute to their personal and professional goals including civic engagement and career readiness. The program also includes seven breadth categories that are shared with the Community College of Vermont to facilitate transfer. Notable elements of the Connections General Education program include the infusion of DEI outcomes across the breadth categories, the inclusion of co-curricular events and activities as part of the Connections seminars, and an e-portfolio that will be used to curate the student experience. A group of faculty and staff will begin working on a phased implementation plan this spring with the goal of full program implementation by the Fall of 2026.

Progress Made to Move Specialized Accreditations to VTSU (update from first progress report)

With completion of the review and approval process for all academic programs and the general education program in December, deans and coordinators for all 22 programs with specialized accreditation and other specialized regulation have now contacted these accreditors and regulators. These include the Vermont Agency of Education (all educator licensure programs), Council on Social Work Education (Bachelors of Social Work), Vermont Board of Nursing (all nursing programs), Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (Bachelors and Masters in Nursing programs), National League for Nursing Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation (Practical Nursing Certificate, Associate Degree, and RN-BSN program), Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (Exercise Science, Paramedicine), Engineering Technology Accreditation Commission of ABET (8 Engineering Technology Programs), National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (Automotive Technology), Commission on Dental Accreditation (Dental Hygiene), Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (Respiratory Therapy), the American Veterinary Medical Association (Veterinary Technology), and the Federal Aviation Administration (Professional Pilot Technology). To date, all programs have submitted program change notifications or are otherwise on track to meet the remaining required actions necessary to transition their accreditations to VTSU.

Unified Dual Enrollment Procedures for AY2024 Have Been Completed

Under the new VTSU division for student success and as part of VTSU's new holistic advising model, a unified process for admitting, onboarding, and enrolling high school dual enrollment

and full-year Early College students for the upcoming 2023-2024 academic year has been created. This process is consistent with admissions and placement standards established for all VTSU undergraduate students and improves upon local variations in past practices by ensuring all dual enrollment students are assigned an advisor at the time of enrollment.

Standard Five: Students

“Digital First” and “One Stop” Approaches to Advising, Career Services, and Other Supports are Being Developed

An initial draft of a portal environment for VTSU students has been designed and will be developed and tested over the next month. The new portal contains links to all internal digital resources organized in student-oriented functional categories: advising, class registration, student finances, career connection, academic support, health and wellness, and graduation. Within each of these categories, links to a variety of digital-first resources and services are provided. For example, the advising category will include an online “Vermont State 101” orientation, links to contact a student’s assigned advisor, and student success and advising services. The Career Connection category will include links to a Canvas course site for career guidance and Handshake, a new job search tool, among other resources. Users can customize their portal environment to highlight tools and categories of greatest personal relevance. The draft design currently includes categories tailored to specific populations such as residential, online, and commuter students. Implementation of the new portal is planned for May 1, 2023 for the first incoming class of VTSU students, and July 1, 2023 is the planned transition date for the existing three student portal environments to the VTSU portal for returning students. The newly designed VTSU portal environment will also apply to all faculty and staff effective July 1, 2023.

Colleague Software Has Been “Rebuilt” for Admissions, Financial Aid, and Registrarial Services

Admissions and Financial Aid processes have now been redesigned and “rebuilt” in the Colleague student information system with new coding schemas as necessary and are now operational. This rebuild and recoding included improved integration of admissions software (Slate) with colleague. The work to rebuild registrarial services continues and includes integration with new scheduling software (AdAstra) currently being used to support creation of VTSU’s first course schedule for Fall 2023. To date all major policy decisions to support the rebuild of registrarial services (e.g. unified add/drop and transfer policies), coding schemas (e.g. definitions of terms, departments, instructional methods, and locations), and process alignments (e.g. use of Aviso software for advising and Colleague self-service functionality for transactional registration and course-planning activities) have been accomplished. Rebuilt self-service registration functions are on track to be completed by the start of registration on April 17th. Remaining functions including degree audit building, transcript production, unified transfer credit processing, graduation processing, and consolidated enrollment reporting will be phased in from April through June.

Financial Aid Packages for AY23-24 Have Been Designed

Financial aid packages for VTSU students for AY23-24 have been designed and awarding of aid for new students began at the end of January. All financial aid officers are following one

awarding policy for new students. Returning students will receive aid packages consistent with previous awards. Complete information about financial aid including scholarships and grants is provided on the public website at <https://vermontstate.edu/admission/financial-aid/>.

Unified University Handbook is Under Development

Under the leadership of VTSU's VP for Student Success and her Student Success Core Team, a draft outline for a unified university handbook was reviewed in February and individual elements are now under development. These elements include a student code of conduct, policies on disabilities, housing, advising, grievances, excused absences, leaves of absence, freedom of expression, immunization, public safety, campus visitors, and pets. Unified academic policies for inclusion in the academic catalog have already been developed and reviewed by the Academic Programs team and shared with Faculty Assemblies this past fall and will be incorporated by reference into the university handbook. Relevant system-wide policies such as those on non-discrimination, alcohol and substance use, and student publications will also be incorporated by reference.

Progress is Being Made to Secure Authorization from the U.S. Department of Education for VTSU to Award Financial Aid

VTSU is making good progress towards securing authorization from the U.S. Department of Education to award financial aid effective July 1, 2023 according to the timeline and direction provided by its assigned contact, Institutional Review Specialist Jacqueline Blue. All information requested to date has been submitted and is under review by DOE staff, and VTSU's AVP for Financial Aid remains in weekly communication with Ms. Blue.

Standard Six: Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship

System-Wide Library Staffing Model Established (update from first progress report)

With the announced transition to a digital library, a system-wide library staffing model has been established. The model includes a single director, an assistant director and electronic resources and systems management librarian, a web services librarian, an interlibrary loan specialist, and a team of nine professional liaison librarians. The liaison librarians will have responsibilities aligned to meet the particular needs of the two institutions in the system, the Community College of Vermont and VTSU. Six VTSU-aligned liaisons will further have assigned responsibilities to each of the campus-based communities. The liaison librarians will work as a team to develop and provide reference and instruction services and digital resources aligned with the system's academic programs statewide; a supplemental 24/7/365 chat service will provide off-hours support and guidance in using resources developed by the liaison librarians. Digital infrastructure and operations will be supported by a statewide interlibrary loan coordinator for digital materials, a web services librarian, and an assistant library director and electronic resources and systems management librarian. As noted above, VTSU leadership is currently consulting with key stakeholders on a refined plan for physical library operations and associated staffing at VTSU campuses.

Staffing Model for all Academic Functional Areas Established (update from first progress report)

The staffing model for all academic functional areas has now been established with single functional area units and leaders overseeing staff distributed across locations. The units include a single university registrar, a center for teaching and learning innovation, a graduate programs unit, and a unified academic department and schools structure led by school deans. All remaining staff are currently being transitioned to roles within these units and supervisory structures following processes specified in relevant collective bargaining agreements.

Academic Advising Model is Being Developed

The VTSU team-based advising model will provide students with a faculty advisor in their major and a professional student success advisor. Team-based advising incorporates coordinated efforts to promote student success, including the new student onboarding process, goal-setting, an early intervention process, academic support, career advising, and developing connections to foster a sense of belonging. With overall direction from the VP for Student Success and her core team, the AVP for Advising and Career Development is leading the development of processes, training, and resources to implement the model with the first incoming class starting in May. As part of the onboarding process, a registration questionnaire has been developed to guide the course registration process and initial advising conversations. A comprehensive training program is being developed to ensure all student success advising staff are knowledgeable about academic programs, career readiness, VTSU policies and procedures, advising and registration tools, financial aid and billing, supporting international students, study abroad, and more. Training will also focus on development of connections with students through active listening and good question-asking. Digital resources for advising are being developed and will become part of a Canvas advising course site in which all students will be enrolled.

Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Processes Are Being Aligned with the VTSU Mission and Values

Consistent with the published criteria for faculty evaluation that are explicitly laid out in the full-time faculty Bargaining Unit Agreement, the Provost and President will work with faculty to clearly articulate the evaluative guidelines in all three evaluative areas related to key elements of the mission and values that include community engagement, applied learning, infusing micro-credentials into degree programs, and creating an accessible and equitable learning experience in and outside of the classroom. The evaluative guidelines will be developed by the President and Provost, refined in consultation with the Faculty Federation and Faculty Assembly evaluation committee, all to be completed by the end of the Spring 2023 semester for AY 2023-2024 implementation.

Standard Seven: Institutional Resources

VTSU Tuition and Fees for AY2024 Have Been Set (update from first progress report)

Tuition and fees were approved by the Board of Trustees at its September 21, 2022 meeting.⁹ The approved pricing model establishes a base tuition for all Vermont State University students, dependent upon program level, and a differential program fee for programs requiring lower

⁹ See <https://www.vsc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/2022-9-21-Board-of-Trustees-Minutes-APPROVED.pdf>.

faculty-student ratios or specialized technology and equipment. The model further incorporates adjustments to institutional aid for current students, resulting in a net cost of attendance for a combined tuition plus program fee that is level or lower than a student's 2022-2023 cost.

Facilities Plan is Being Implemented, and Facilities Divestment Continues

The next major step in the Facilities Plan is the development of a Campus Master plan. A request for proposals was issued earlier this year and those proposals are now under review. Included as part of the Campus Master Plan project is a specific subset of work to create a Utility Master Plan. This subproject will include a review the current conditions of campus wide utility distribution systems and development of a recommendation on strategic investments for aligning with the region's changing energy portfolio. The final Facilities Condition Assessment has also been completed. This work was focused on the Williston campus and identified deferred maintenance, code upgrades, and energy improvement needs. Specific to facilities divestment, legal counsel has now been engaged to evaluate various property deed requirements, and survey crews have been engaged to establish new property boundaries in advance of permitting for any potential divestments.

FY2024 System and Institutional Budgets Are Under Development

As detailed above, System and Institutional Budgets for FY24 are currently under development and the "first-pass" budgets were presented to the Finance and Facilities Committee of the Board on February 13, 2023.¹⁰ Second-pass budgets will be presented April 17 and third-pass budgets on May 22, to provide ample time for oversight, adjustment, and inclusion of approved FY24 state appropriations prior to a final full board review on June 12, 2023.

Standard Eight: Institutional Effectiveness

Portfolio Assessment Plan for the General Education Program Designed (update from first progress report)

The approved Connections General Education program contains a set of overarching goals and a series of three "Connections Seminars," the first two of which will be required for associate degrees and all three for bachelor's degrees. The General Education working group has defined outcomes for each of the three seminars, and work on a detailed plan for phased implementation of e-portfolios for use by students in the seminars and by faculty and staff for subsequent program assessment is beginning. As designed, in Connections Seminar 1, with its focus on engagement with university resources and development of academic skills, students will begin to create their Connections portfolio; in Seminar 2 students will develop and document proficiency with the University's writing standards; and in Seminar 3 students will articulate how they have met the learning goals of the Connections program and reflect on their growth and learning. The phased approach to the program's implementation will begin with the breadth categories and the first two seminars in 2023-2024 and expand to incorporate the e-portfolio into Seminar 3 by the fall of 2025, which will be the third year of VTSU's first incoming class.

¹⁰ See <https://livevsc.sharepoint.com/sites/BOT/Documents/F&F%202013%202023%20materials%20final.pdf>

Assessment Plan for Career Readiness and Post-Graduation Outcomes is Designed and Being Developed (update from first progress report)

The assessment plan for career readiness and post-graduation outcomes has been designed to be included in the overall student success and retention plan described below and will be based on completion and evaluation of specific career development program tasks. Career development is included within the overall objective of implementing the team-based advising model, with tasks embedded in advising, General Education, and other career development programming. With support from the AVP for Institutional Research, career readiness and post-graduation success outcomes are being developed and will be included in an initial pilot student success dashboard. Development and implementation of a master plan for student surveys including collection of student success and post-graduation outcomes data is an anticipated next step for the 2023-2024 academic year.

Student Success and Retention Plan and Associated Metrics are Being Developed

Establishing an innovative student success model that includes continuous improvement based on measurable goals is one of the overall priorities in VTSU's draft strategic plan. The VP for Student Success and her core team have identified three immediate objectives associated with this student success priority: 1) integrating all student success functional areas under one unit with baseline training and consistent operational procedures; 2) implementing the team-based advising model; and 3) development of a comprehensive set of benchmarks and yearly goals for student success measures. Draft metrics associated with these objectives and detailed projects are under development by the AVP for Institutional Research & Planning and Chief Data Scientist and include disaggregated retention, persistence, credit accumulation, completion, job placement, and other effectiveness measures of VTSU's comprehensive student success model.

Standard Nine: Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure

Institutional Policies for VTSU Have Been Developed

The Academic Programs Core Team led by the Provost spent considerable time through the summer and fall directing the work of aligning variations on more than thirty academic policies that were in place at the three institutions. The registrar's team created initial unified draft policies that were then reviewed by a VTSU Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion working group, and Student Success teams. Proposed policies were also shared with an ad hoc policy working group of faculty across the three institutions with feedback collected by Faculty Assembly leadership. The registrar's team synthesized the collective feedback and made revisions for review and final approval by the Academic Programs Core Team and Provost. Policies will be published in the inaugural VTSU catalog for 2023-2024.

VTSU Website is Being Developed

Content for the VTSU website, <http://VermontState.edu>, is being developed in phases and incorporated on an ongoing basis under the direction of the Director of Enrollment Communication. To date, completed content includes information about the creation of Vermont State University and its mission, vision, values and leadership; all admissions information; all tuition and financial aid information; academic program availability; student success and advising resources and opportunities; student and campus life; and athletics. An FAQ section continues to be provided to address questions related to the transition. Through June 30, 2023 all required data and information for public disclosure will be maintained on the three existing institutional websites. VTSU's AVP for Institutional Research & Planning and Chief Data Scientist is currently developing a unified set of data and information that will be published on the site as of July 1, 2023. A new permanent website with a different look and feel than the current site is simultaneously being developed with a goal of transitioning completed content from the current website to the new permanent format by September.

Unified Academic Catalog is Being Developed

The Academic Programs Core Team is working with a catalog project team to codify and edit course and program information for inclusion in the 2023-2024 VTSU academic catalog. This information will include all VTSU academic programs offered and all courses for the 2023-2024 academic year as well as the unified set of academic policies. Publication of the digital academic catalog is expected by May to support incoming student registration.

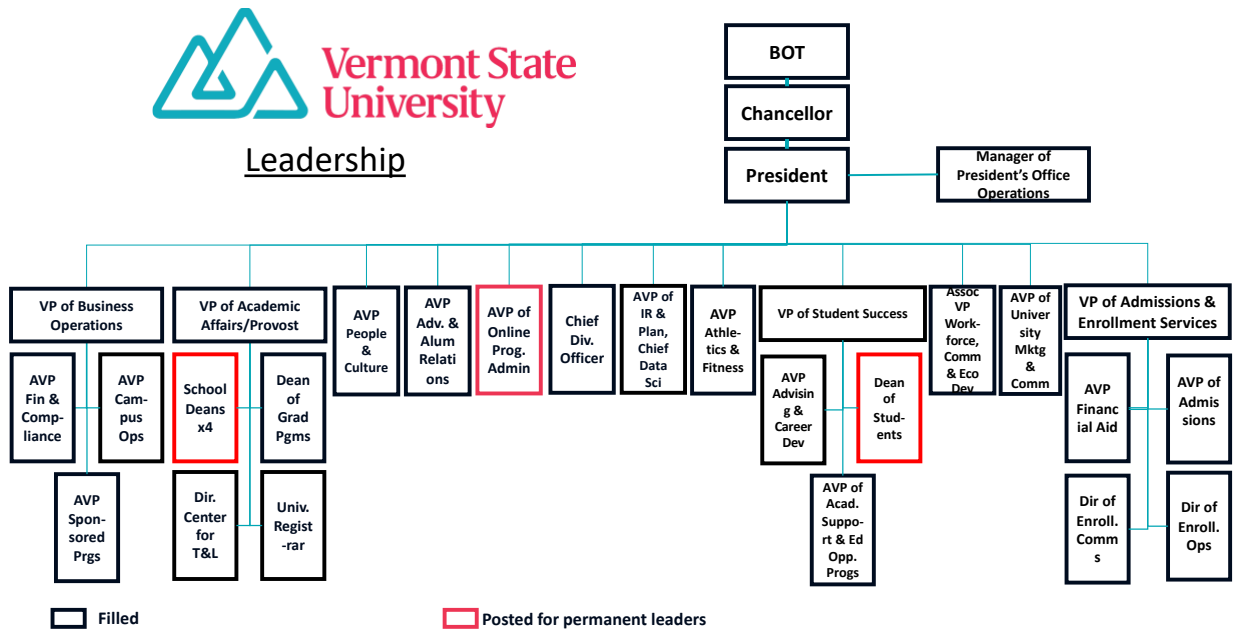
Appendix



Vermont State University

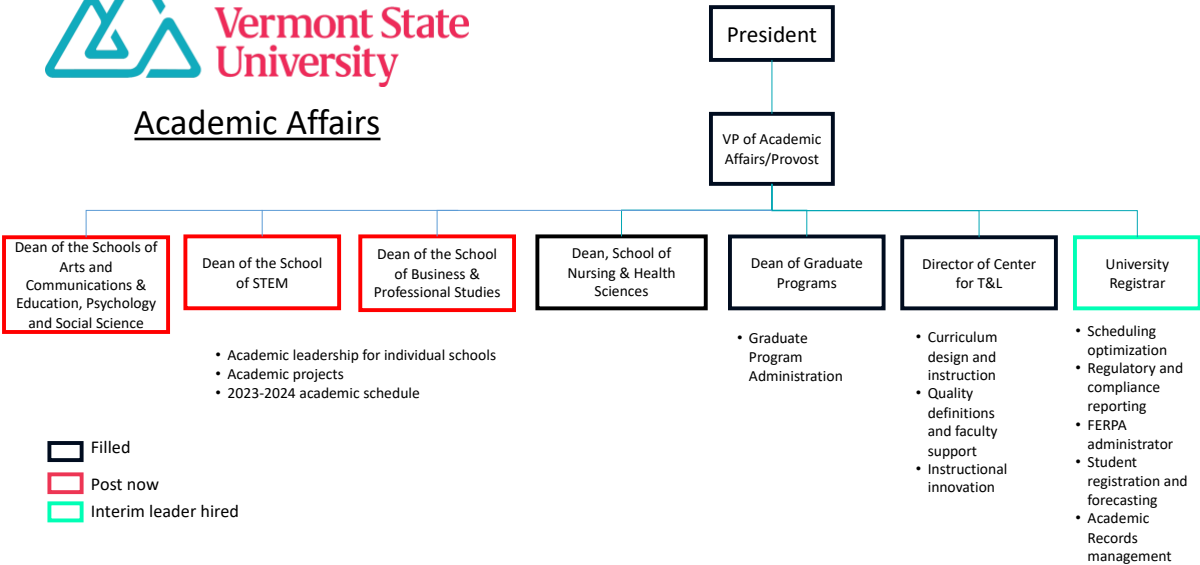
Leadership Organizational Chart

Last Update: 3/10/2023



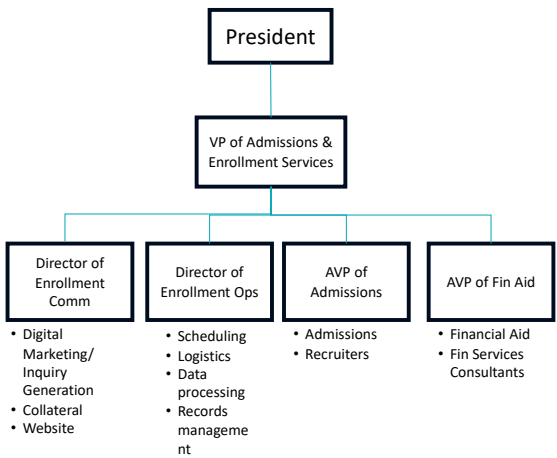


Academic Affairs



Admissions & Enrollment

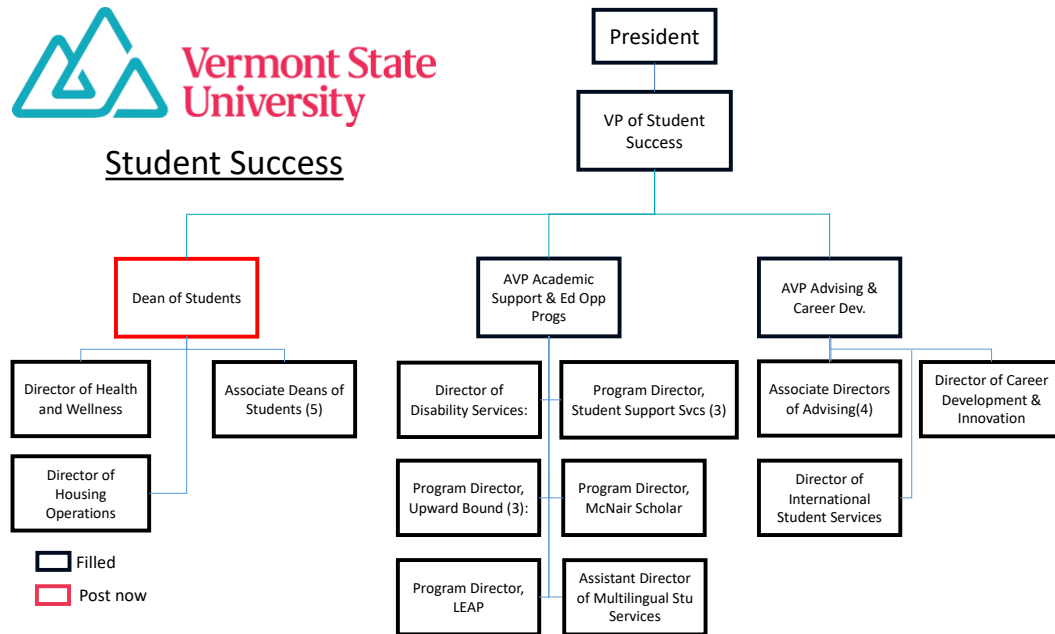
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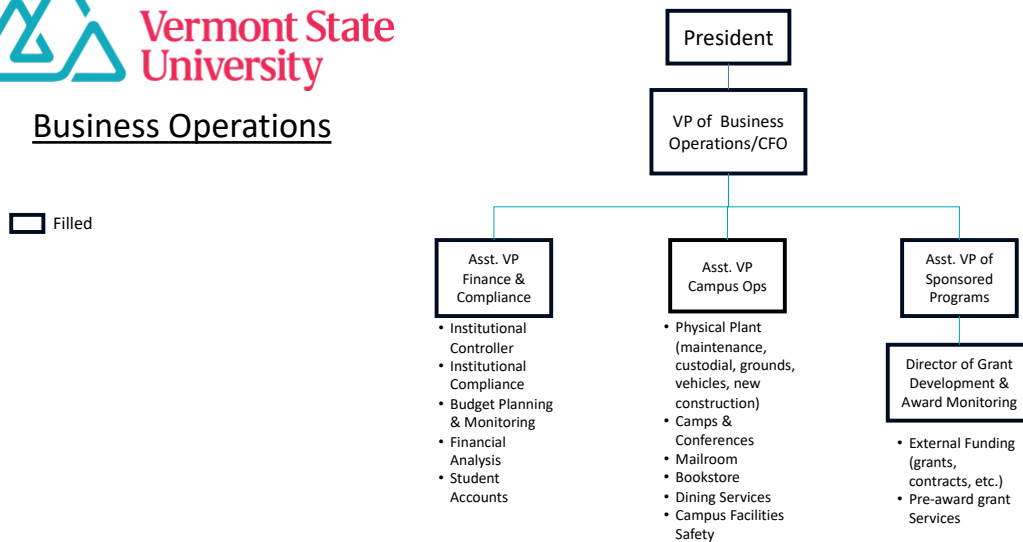
Vermont State University

Student Success



Vermont State University

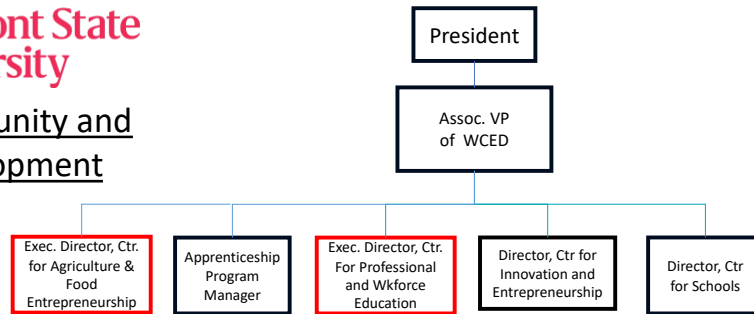
Business Operations



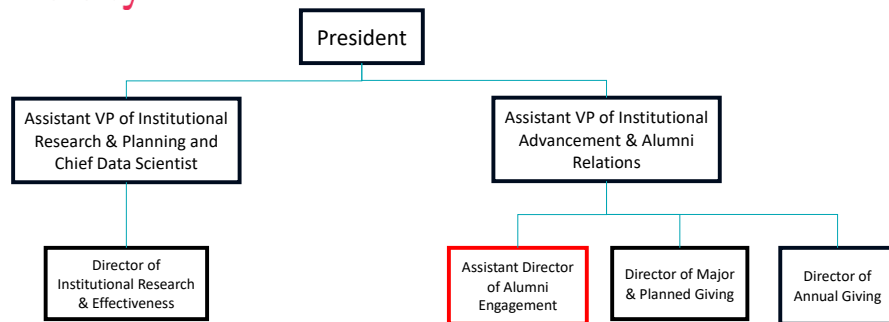


Workforce, Community and Economic Development

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VSCS Shared Services Leadership Structure

- Leadership of shared services are the executives in charge of each department.
- COP provides direction and guidance, establish service levels, etc.
- The shared services leaders report to the chancellor not to the COP as a whole.

