



# VSCS Transformation Newsletter #54 (9/25/2023)

***Transformation Update #54 - September 25, 2023***

Bringing you the latest updates in the [Vermont State Colleges System's transformation project](#).

## In This Issue

- Significant Dates & Celebrations
- Message from the Chancellor
- Transformation Project Team Updates

- Shared Services Update
- VTSU Facilities Master Planning Update
- Upcoming Board and Committee Meetings
- Transformation Feedback Form

**New to the VSC? The Vermont State College system is engaged in a five-year plan, the first phase of which was to launch the new Vermont State University. This new institution is comprised of what was Castleton University, Northern Vermont University, and Vermont Technical College and launched July 1, 2023. The second phase of transformation is focused on functional process optimization and system-wide administrative consolidation, including a shift to shared services for Information Technology, Human Resources, Finance, and Libraries. You can read past [Transformation Updates](#), visit [the Transformation website](#), or [the Vermont State University website](#) to learn more.**

## Significant Dates & Celebrations



As part of our continued commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice through education, we wanted to share the following resources:

**September 15 to October 15** is [National Hispanic Heritage Month](#), which [was first observed in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage week and was expanded to a 30 day event in 1988](#). This is a time to celebrate and recognize Hispanic and [Latinx](#) Americans, as well as the diverse cultures and histories represented. [The U.S. Department of Education has events and resources](#), and [you can find more here](#).

**September 22** is the Autumnal Equinox, which is observed across the world by different religions and cultures.

Beginning at sundown **September 24 through September 25** is Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year in Judaism. It concludes the High Holy Days that began with Rosh Hashanah on September 15. Core to Yom Kippur are themes of atonement, repentance, and reflection and some fast as part of observance. [As we shared last month, here is a place to find events across Vermont](#).

**October 9** is Indigenous People’s Day, which honors the indigenous people of North America. [It has been recognized in Vermont since 2021. Vermont Abenaki Artists Association has events and resources throughout the year and more details about Vermont’s state recognized tribes can be found at the Abenaki Alliance website.](#)

**October 10** is World Mental Health Day which the World Health Organization states is [“an opportunity for people and communities to unite behind the theme ‘Mental health is a universal human right’ to improve knowledge, raise awareness and drive actions that promote and protect everyone’s mental health as a universal human right.”](#)

## Message From the Chancellor



All:

A lot has happened since the last update and there is a lot underway at Vermont State University as Interim President Mike Smith looks ahead to his departure on October 31st. Last week was a particularly busy week. Looking back in reverse order . . .

On Friday, the Board of Trustees appointed David Bergh to be the next Interim President of Vermont State University. See <https://www.vsc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/PRESS-RELEASE-Interim->

[Vermont-State-University-President-9.21.23.pdf](#). We are working to finalize the details of the transition and will share those once they have been confirmed. It is anticipated that Dave will serve as Interim President through to the summer of 2025. The search for the permanent President will likely begin in August/September of 2024, consistent with the traditional Presidential hiring cycle in higher education.

On Tuesday, the Board of Trustees wrapped up their annual two day Board Retreat. Links to the retreat materials are available at <https://www.vsc.edu/board-of-trustees/meeting-materials/board-trustees-meetings-2032-24-academic-year/> and much of the information that was shared at the retreat is detailed below.

On Monday, my decision to step down as Chancellor at the end of this calendar year was announced. See <https://www.vsc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/PRESS-RELEASE-BOT-Congratulates-Chancellor-Zdatny-9.18.23.pdf>. The role of Chancellor continues to be necessary given the ongoing transformation of the system, the necessary oversight of two very different and distinctive institutions, the building and maintaining of strong State support, the development and implementation of Board policies, and the management of risk and compliance for the system. The Board will be appointing a Search and Screen Committee for the next Chancellor shortly and details of the search process will be shared once these have been finalized.

The leaves are turning, the nights are getting darker, and there is starting to be a certain nip in the air that heralds the arrival of fall. It looks as if we may have several days of sunshine in the forecast. I hope that everyone can get out and enjoy the turn in the seasons.

With best wishes,

Sophie

## Transformation Project Updates



### New Student Experience Updates

The applications for Fall 2024 have launched, and prospective students are beginning to apply. The team continues to work to optimize the admissions and enrollment marketing processes and tools to lay the foundation for enrollment gains in the upcoming cycle. As part of this work, a strategic Admissions and Enrollment Plan has been created that documents the institutional commitments, as well as the marketing and admissions objectives.

Last week at the Board of Trustees Retreat, Maurice Ouimet, VTSU's Vice President of Admissions and Enrollment, provided an overview on the strategic plan for admissions. Mr. Ouimet's slides can be found [here](#).

Maurice will also be visiting each campus over the coming weeks to meet with faculty and staff and share additional details about the plan. Watch for information about these sessions on your campus.

### Student Success Updates

Over the last month, the Student Success team has been working to finalize their priorities and projects for the next phase of transformation. The three Student Success Priorities include: implementing the shared advising model, targeting outreach and programming to increase student outcomes, and embedding DEISJ throughout Student Success and the university.

At last week's Board of Trustees Retreat, Kelley Beckwith, VTSU's Vice President of Student Success, provided an update on the student success plans for this year. These slides can be found [here](#).

## Academic Program Updates

The Optimization 2.0 Working Group that was convened in July continued to meet through early September and worked to establish criteria and data sets that would be used in the optimization work. President Smith has now released those data sets to faculty and staff in advance of a report that will include proposed changes to the academic program array. This report will be released on October 1st. Faculty will have an opportunity to provide feedback or alternative proposals through their deans prior to October 27th and decisions will be communicated by November 1st.

A summary of this work was provided by President Smith and Provost Atkins at the Board of Trustees Retreat last week, and the slides can be found [here](#),

President Smith will continue to provide regular updates to faculty, staff, students, and the VTSU community as this work progresses.

## Shared Services Update



The Shared Services organizations for Finance, Employee Services, and Information Technology are reviewing progress this year, beginning their planning work for next year, and working to put together service level agreements and budget proposals for FY'25 before the end of the year.

The shared service leaders provided an update to the Board of Trustees Retreat last week. As part of the IT Shared Service Update, Wilson Garland, presenting on behalf of VSC CIO Kellie Campbell, provided an update on Systems Projects and the planning underway to replace the existing ERP system. The slides for these sessions can be found [here](#).

## VTSU Facilities Master Planning Update



The Facilities Master Planning Working Group is continuing to meet, with their next scheduled meeting in early October. On Thursday, October 12th, they are planning a larger community update. Please watch for details on your campus.

Now that students, faculty, and staff are all back on campuses, the working group is beginning to collect additional information from all stakeholders that can help inform the process. Last week they launched a CoMap survey to the whole community as one of several ways to collect input. This tool enables respondents to identify favorite open spaces, workspaces, classrooms, study spaces, eating spots, etc. They can also draw your typical routes to/from and through the campuses, rate spaces, and leave comments. Already, over 500 responses have been received.

Please watch for more details and opportunities to engage in this process moving forward.

## Upcoming Board and Committee Meetings

[Please find all information, including the full meeting schedule and the links for virtual attendance, here.](#)

[The Board Chair's Rules for Public Comment are available on the VSC website](#), as is a form to [submit public comment before the meetings](#).

Tuesday, September 26 – Executive Committee – 8:30am

Monday, October 16 – Audit Committee (via Zoom) – 1:00pm

Monday, October 16 – Finance & Facilities Committee (via Zoom) – 2:00pm or at the conclusion of the Audit if it runs past 2:00pm

Monday, October 30 – Education, Personnel, and Student Life Committee (via Zoom) – Time TBD

Monday, October 30 – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (via Zoom) – Time TBD

Monday, October 30 – Board of Trustees Meeting (via Zoom) – Time TBD

## Giving Feedback to the Transformation Teams

If you would like to submit your thoughts regarding the ongoing system transformation or offer suggestions to a specific team, please send them to: [Engage – VSCS Transformation](#).