



## Manual of Policy and Procedures

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### PURPOSE

The VSC Board of Trustees considers the annual Vermont State Colleges operating budget as the primary financial plan for operations of the System and its components for a given fiscal year (July 1 through ensuing June 30). This policy prescribes the dimensions of the development, adoption, and subsequent administration of the annual Vermont State Colleges operating budget and the annual operating budgets for the individual colleges plus the System Offices and Services within the Vermont State Colleges System.

### STATEMENT OF POLICY

#### 1) Development of the Annual Operating Budget

Development of the annual Vermont State Colleges operating budget for recommendation to the Board of Trustees is the responsibility of the Chancellor. Budget development will be conducted in a collaborative manner with the Council of Presidents to assure application of revenue and expenditure factors as well as other dimensions in a consistent fashion appropriate to functioning as an integrated System. Annual general fund budgets (also called operating budgets) will be developed for individual colleges plus System Offices & Services and are consolidated as the Vermont State Colleges operating budget.

Development of the annual general fund budget will embrace the following key components and considerations:

### State Operating Appropriations

- All State operating appropriations shall be allocated to the colleges equally.

### System Office Allocation

- The System Offices & Services annual operating budget will be funded by a “System Services Charge” levied equally amongst the colleges. The amount, basis, and administration of the “System Services Charge” shall be determined by the Chancellor and Council of Presidents, and shall be an integral part of the annual operating budget recommended to the Board.

### Student Tuitions & Fees

- Each college will retain all student tuitions & fees the college generates, and in consultation with the Chancellor can determine the use of these funds.
- During each year student tuitions & fees available to each college will be as actually generated, whether below or above budgeted levels. Each college will assume responsibility for confronting the financial impacts from under-realized or over-realized student enrollments.
- The Board is responsible for approving not-to-exceed maximum tuition rates, room and board program charges, and selected fees. Each college is responsible for setting individual tuition rates, room and board program charges, and selected fees at or below the approved maximum rates. Further, each college may set such waivers, merit aid programs, and need-based financial aid as the individual presidents believe are best designed to maximize net tuition revenue and support overall enrollment. Additionally, the VSC as a whole may enter into a waiver program (for example: NEBHE) with the approval of the Chancellor in consultation with the Council of Presidents. The proposed impact of the rate setting and waivers must be shown in the materials included with the Vermont State Colleges operating budget presented for Board approval. Actual tuition rates approved and implemented will be included in the budget materials provided to the Board. Each college will be responsible for the impact of the college’s setting of rates, charges and fees, tuition waiver programs, and discounting practices.

### Further Provisions

- Incentive for sound college cash management will be provided by allocation to the colleges of all System investment income, returning this revenue to those whose funds produce it and doing so according to each college’s invested cash balances averaged over 12 months.
- Each college will retain all entrepreneurial revenues the college generates and, in consultation with the Chancellor, can determine the use of these funds.

Periodic Review of the Operating Budget Model

- Because the public higher education environment will continue to evolve, the Vermont State Colleges operating budget model and its key components should be periodically reviewed and, if necessary, recommendations made to the Board for recalibration or changes.

2) Adoption of the Annual Operating Budget

The VSC Board of Trustees is responsible for reviewing the Vermont State Colleges operating budget recommendations by the Chancellor, and for adopting the official annual operating budget. This is consistent with the Board's ultimate fiduciary responsibility for the Vermont State Colleges System. Timing of the Chancellor's recommendations will allow the Board to conduct its review and take action no later than the final Board meeting of each fiscal year. The Chancellor's annual operating budget recommendations are to include individual colleges plus System Offices & Services and are to reflect combined System totals, within each current operating fund or group of VSC activities.

3) Administration of the Annual Operating Budget

On behalf of the Chancellor and Council of Presidents, the System chief financial officer in the Chancellor's Office and the chief business officers at each college are expected to collaborate and work with other appropriate college and System officials to assure the proper and effective administration of all annual operating budgets as adopted by the Board.

Actual operating results compared to budgeted results for activities will periodically be provided by each college through the Chancellor to the Board, by means of quarterly financial statements which reflect budgeted, projected actual, and variance to budget numbers for key enrollment, revenue, and expenditure areas.

To hedge shortfalls in annual operating budgets, each college will maintain college contingency reserves in the amount of 2.50% of unrestricted fund budget. Use of funded reserves is subject to approval of the Chancellor, and depletion of a college's reserves must be replenished by the college in a timeframe determined in consultation with the Chancellor.

The colleges may reserve up to an additional 5.0% as a strategic or discretionary reserve. Such reserve may be budgeted and expended by the president with concurrence from the chancellor.

Upon the audited close of each fiscal year's books, any carry-over funds available (net of encumbrances forward, commitments forward, maintained college contingency and strategic and discretionary reserves) may be proposed by the president for one-time uses subject to concurrence of the Chancellor and approval by the Board of Trustees.

As circumstances confronting the annual operating budget change over the course of a year, budget modifications may be authorized by the Chancellor's Office for the purpose of realistically reflecting increases, decreases, or shifts among budgeted revenue and expenditure categories.

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jeb Spaulding, Chancellor