

## **Suggestions for Securing the Future**

1. Rebrand the colleges as destinations for students who are keen to study environmental science, ecology, etc. or want to participate in competitive outdoor sports.
2. Promote Johnson and Lyndon as skiing and mountain biking colleges. Compete in these sports at the highest levels. Offer academic programs that take advantage of the natural resources surrounding each campus. Develop degree programs that connect to the outdoors. Recruit nationwide.
3. Consolidate the campuses by having just one campus at Castleton. Make Green Mountain College part of the Castleton campus. Take over its environmental programs. In short, demographics tell us that Johnson and Lyndon (and probably VTC) cannot do business as usual. Either dramatically change their identity or consolidate.
4. Don't consolidate the Castleton and Green Mountain College campuses because you would lose commuter or part time students.
5. Shift to offering 50% of all courses in technical or trade education.
6. Offer fewer degree programs and create more certificate programs.
7. Look at the situation from the perspective of a whole system instead of individual colleges.
8. Pursue marketing initiatives as an entire system instead of devoting several administrative positions at each college to individual initiatives.
9. Add a machinist degree or technical program to better meet the manufacturing workforce needs of the state.
10. Offer apprenticeships or partnerships with manufacturers in Vermont such as GW Plastics or LEDynamics.
11. Conduct research on the effects of eliminating competing programs at the different colleges in order to provide new certificate or degree programs.
12. Conduct market research about which programs are unique to each college and draw statewide enrollment.
13. Look at underutilized housing across the system and see if there is a way that VSC could partner with local businesses to provide affordable housing alternatives for their employees. This could be a win-win for both the colleges and local businesses, as affordable housing is a key barrier to full time employment.

14. VSC could offer housing on campuses in the summertime to promote Vermont tourism.
15. Have a discussion about Z degrees and the VSC OER librarian in the context of the white paper project.
16. Send out surveys about OER to the faculty and ask if they have any other support needs.
17. Rebrand VTC as Vermont State University at ..... to make it more attractive to out of state students.
18. Consider how to strategize and operationalize teaching courses online and consider which courses may or may not be appropriate for online instruction.
19. There is great technical support provided to professors teaching online courses at NVU, which has contributed to the success of its online courses.
20. Clearly delineate the academic degree programs and the continuing education and technical training programs to encourage students to see the colleges as degree-granting institutions first and foremost.
21. The system needs a more effective process for modeling universal cost tracking and budgeting.
22. Colleges can be entrepreneurial, but it would be better if they did so within the confines of things being done at the system level.
23. Consider whether in-state tuition for all would make sense for boosting enrollment. The colleges could try this on programs that don't have a large percentage of out-of-staters, such as VTC engineering.
24. Consider the role of cost in college choice. Are Vermonters making primarily price-based selections when they decide where to go to school?
25. Can you provide lower tuition rates without a substantial effect on quality?
26. VSC needs to have a consistent message about the role of the Legislature and advocate the importance of program portfolios to the state workforce.
27. In the area of early college, VTC may be vulnerable to a perception problem if it seems like any high schooler can participate in its programs during their junior and senior years.
28. It may be worth considering whether or not VSC can survive without a tenure system.

29. Investigate the cost and benefit of moving to year-round operation at some of the colleges.
30. Recruit for technical programs outside of Vermont in cities with growing high school populations.
31. Since there is a central office, eliminating on campus “big leaders” could be a way to achieve structural savings without taking money from academic programs.
32. Consider how to engender more public support for a larger legislative role in funding the VSC.
33. Make VSC early college and dual enrollment available to privately educated Vermonters, not just public school students.
34. The board could consider reframing its views on unions and tenure to see unions as less of a barrier to successful contract negotiations.
35. The Prior Learning Assessment could be used more to partner with local businesses to provide their employees with post-secondary learning opportunities.
36. How can recruitment be increased in the face of a shrinking high school population and the closure of some of the smaller colleges?
37. The VSC could provide “open classes” where students can go through a course at their own pace with an assigned faculty member to support them. As an example, Western Governor’s University offers programs like these.
38. Streamline accounting processes and policies across the system would be more effective.
39. Utilize VSC alumni as part of the recruitment process.
40. Consider adding weekend and evening courses to appeal to working families or students who may not be comfortable taking an online class.
41. If the state’s population is getting smaller, growing smaller as an institution might actually make sense. Having a plan to downsize with grace might be beneficial, such as reducing low enrollment programs.
42. Make more aggressive marketing efforts both nationally and internationally. Is there a specific marketing effort to recruit military members or international students?

43. The title of the white paper is about serving VT students, so why do we have out-of-state tuition? Out of state students always pay room and board. There is a huge allure to Vermont. If you're going to a technical college, they're half the price of VTC. But if they're just a little more, we can draw students with our ski hills, etc. You could discount this rate over time to get in- and out-of-state tuition equal.
44. By 2045, white folks will be minority population. What can we do to better serve underrepresented populations? If people knew about what Vermont and VTC offers, we could draw from other areas. People want to get away from places that are not inclusive.
45. Improve diversity, equity and inclusion efforts on campuses to make students feel welcome.
46. We should bring together guidance counselors to get their thoughts on the 40% non-continuers. They are not necessarily looking for a 4 year program. They need different modalities and credentials. What is the philosophy of the guidance community?? Is a 4 year degree best for every student?
47. It seems to me that this is about creating a new system, a multi-generational strategic system. The White Paper does an excellent job of identifying the threats. Have we identified the opportunities? I don't think we've looked at strengths of each college, the OC and the board to understand what can be better coordinated and integrated.
48. Language should be carefully used. We want system to thrive, but we need to understand that people have lost their jobs and programs have been cancelled. "Thriving" might rub the wrong way.
49. It seems like an entrepreneurial spirit encouraged at the colleges puts us in competition with each other. We need to see the data that shows why duplicate — or competitive — programs are approved.
50. We'll have more non-trad students; there is probably a big disparity in the backgrounds of these students and what they're looking for, for example, an engineering student vs. liberal arts student. With such a small population in Vermont— how can we customize the appropriate approach for each of the programs?
51. Going to year-round instruction to help students complete their programs earlier in 3 years. Four year degrees are too long for some.
52. Our campuses have underutilized resources and facilities. Could the colleges be sharing campus spaces more? For example, the VSCS at Castleton or Bennington? Break down the walls to eliminate transfer problems. Can students float among the colleges?
53. Colleges within the system should seek to NOT develop duplicate programs.

54. We should consider a strong marketing campaign from the VSCS about the value of a two-year degree. What can we do to market better to VSAC and to guidance counselors? What can the OC or Legislature do to support this outreach to middle school students?
55. There's going to be a recession. Do we have plans for that? What will we as a system do to capture people who are dislocated from the economy then?
56. I wonder how people view the system since it has different legacy brands. Maybe we should be one system with locations in different places?
57. Continue to make a strong argument for state funding.
58. Should we list UVM as a threat in the white paper? When people see the UVM campus, they wonder why we complain about public institutions not getting enough money. They don't see the "have nots."
59. VSAC portability is indefensible. It should be on the list even though we've talked about it forever.
60. Incentivize the people who "go beyond." Contract sets a base, but people go beyond. Could we incentivize that? A lot of opportunities with online/hybrid/telepresence. This requires a lot of work and faculty to buy in. You're on your own to do online. Identify and invest in these areas to get more involvement from faculty.
61. Have conversations with AOE, Superintendents and School Boards Association about how we might better meet the needs of public school students.
62. Can we spread the OC out again, or could the OC use an empty space on a campus, instead of a lease payment?
63. Take a hard look at legacy items, and what we're maintaining, that are not contributing to our mission. We need to make better plans for exit strategies from the projects funded by grants once the funding is done.
64. You need to look at the governance structure. Don't make assumptions about what's right. I recognize the efforts gone into legislative efforts. The same people who are advocating for our state appropriation are the same people who are setting tuition. There is value and perceived value. Controlling costs with tuition increases is in conflict with the mission. It is important that we have alums on the board with this perspective.

65. What about having a board of twenty with five people appointed as VTC reps? Or, each college could have an advisory board.
66. We need to address infrastructure and vacancy rate. It is tough to market this campus to students.
67. We need to analyze what we need for infrastructure. What do you do with empty dorms in the middle of your campus? What's the appropriate pricing model?
68. The title of the white paper should be flipped. We're trying to sustain a system for its' own purpose. We need to focus on the system in order to be here for the long term.
69. If we just focus on one thing, we could say we'll focus on teaching. If you offer good things for students, your business will follow.
70. You can offer more flexible pathways to degree completion for working Vermonters.
71. The VSC should better leverage federal opportunities to leverage degree attainment and retention.
72. Share additional services across the system. Look at SUNY. Efficiencies sometimes mean job losses. We should use our funding better. We talk a lot about not being all things to all people. Small programs and small services aren't possible anymore. For example, the EAB presentation showed us how small the pond is in which we're competing.
73. A word of caution: changes shouldn't come at the expense of our strengths. We have so many students choosing us now. We can't assume students will keep coming here if we change the institution.
74. Reduce competitiveness between colleges in online programs.
75. Be mindful of the way we characterize unions.
76. Need to balance online/new delivery platforms with the need for bricks and mortar -- that's where VTers are employed and where out-of-state students come.
77. We need big ideas: review outcomes of NVU consolidation. Should there be further consolidation onto one campus? We need to address lack of system reserves like this.
78. We need to determine how we can best compete online, given the growth of SNHU, etc. Is it through niche programs? Type of delivery?
79. Focus on high quality and VT brand in marketing VSCS.
80. Don't wait until we're financially unsound to make big changes; it might be too late then.

81. We need to reduce our square footage.
82. Streamline central administration: either delegate processes to the colleges or strengthen the central office.
83. Optimize system efficiency so that the functional areas can thrive.
84. There is economic development potential in bringing youth to the state, even though our first focus is serving VT students.
85. Institutions should specialize: one should focus on residential and four year/masters programs with centers across the state, another should focus on workforce (CCV/VTC) and the third on robust online. Each an expert in what they do.
86. It's important we take our own steps to confront challenges because I don't see the State of Vermont operating differently, ie. K-12 spending.
87. We should identify strengths across the system, ie. academics, student-centered.
88. We need to present a counter-narrative to the media which looks at this project and thinks we're failing. We're not.
89. It's important to keep communicating about our impact on communities, culture.
90. Consider year-round programming.
91. Continue to support adoption of tech tools, i.e. Canvas.
92. We will need new resources in order to invest for growth. We can't grow fast enough in the next 5 years without more students coming up.
93. The opportunity is to focus in the classroom.
94. Where are further opportunities for savings? Workers comp?
95. Associates degrees should be embedded in all bachelor's degree programs.
96. How can we support an expansion of Early College?
97. Consider the student experience when delivering IT services. Improve service to students with better IT practices – update the portal, use more online forms, and implement a full service help desk. Invest in online tutoring services and instructional design to maximize the use of Canvas and other teaching technologies.

98. IT should be a shared service, as many outside of our organization have recommended, all with an eye toward improving customer services and efficient use of resources. A new governance model should precede the shared service. Take advantage of (share) subject matter expertise across the system. Implement asset management, transition to the cloud, and modernize the help desk function.
99. Analyze and standardize procurement across the system through centralized purchasing to avoid duplication, increase compliance and manage risk.
100. The system should become more like CCV in that it is nimble.
101. It is easier for a student to go from CCV to another college than it is to go to another institution within the VSCS; that should be addressed.
102. In the Board's plans for the future, don't saddle one college with the infrastructure or debt or the trappings of tradition of another college.
103. CCV could offer all the general education courses for the system.
104. The system should make a strong case for a preK through 14 system and open the education fund to those additional two years.
105. Address that pipeline better than we can capture the 40% who are not going on. Tenured faculty focused on their specialties, allow CCV to provide gen ed — it can work with students differently.
106. There are more opportunities to provide post-secondary opportunities in high school, beyond concurrent and dual enrollment. Early College begins to blur this line.
107. We need to think about people dipping in and out of college — how are we set up to encourage that? Colleges put up a lot of barriers for adult students.
108. Could meta-majors better help us meet people where they're at?
109. Some systems have better aligned their majors (between system colleges). Look at Florida, Texas, Georgia and Pennsylvania. Sharing faculty governance can lead to better major alliances. SUNY moved to one shared online system with seamless transfer.
110. We need to reduce students' concerns about whether their credits will transfer between our colleges.

111. Maximize the potential of APL credit by assuring it can transfer and apply to degree programs at other colleges. This is low-hanging fruit for the VSCS. SNHU and Champlain are more effective at this. That's what progressive institutions are doing.
112. I hope the board considers that we're too redundant across the system. Reduce duplication, i.e. Gen Ed — CCV could offer the online courses.
113. We're shooting ourselves in the foot by charging high tuition at the system's on-ramp (CCV). Discount our on-ramp.
114. Somehow, I'd like the paper to be clearer on costs about each colleges' financial footing.
115. Allow more funds at the colleges to flow to risk and innovation. CCV is a nimble institution but there are so many times when we could make changes more effectively if we had just a little more economic security to do so.
116. Instructional design staff member would support faculty.
117. More funds should be available to pay for program assessments so we can insure they are assessed for quality along the way. How well are we meeting our promise to students within those programs?
118. We might need to think about closing some of our schools. We can't have everything we currently have. The problem is we love them all. If one piece is keeping everything else afloat, we need to think about that.
119. Consider that people are underpaid compared to their peers. We're intrinsically motivated but please keep that in mind.
120. VSCS should offer complete online programs, starting at CCV, and ending at whatever college is appropriately suited to the program. We would offer a seamless program, ie. University of Florida system, with the same online training for all faculty.
121. We should have one VSC expert in VA benefits processing/compliance and also that we have one VSCS expert for international student support and compliance.
122. The Legislature should consider merging VSCS with UVM to maximize benefit of the Vermont brand, to ease transfers and to achieve efficiencies.
123. Rising administrative costs should be addressed in any proposal.
124. The Board should consider whether or not the campuses should be cooperating or competing.

125. How can the Board support a culture of innovation among faculty?
126. Declining levels of preparedness of incoming students needs to be addressed. Should VSCS reconsider open admissions?
127. There should be a strategic plan to increase the VSC endowment to support non-government revenue for operating costs.
128. If the VSC is going to operate as an efficient and unified system that allows students to take courses across a number of VSC institutions, as well as campuses, then serious efforts need to be made to be sure that courses are offered equivalently across the system. Today, the content of courses and the level of difficulty vary across colleges and campuses even when the courses share course numbers and titles. The current effort to identify 'equivalent courses' is insufficient and not a good use of time.
129. So many Vermont students are going to college at out of state schools- sometimes paying significantly less than they would pay at home. What can be done to keep Vermont students in state and attract out-of-state or international students to the VSCS?
130. How can central office administrative costs stay the same if more processing is moved (or moving) from campuses to that central office? It seems obvious that central office is currently understaffed given what they've taken on recently (AP, Ultipro, etc.)
131. How can we build upon our brand? In looking for ways to create access to new students, can we look for them from outside the US? Based on research and conversations with industry relationships, there may be ways to build partnerships with Canadian universities in the Sherbrooke region. (As their students would like access to US employers.)
132. Our alumni need to understand the seriousness of the situation when being asked for donations.
133. Reconsider whether the Board should advocate for an end to portability.
134. The Board, not the Central Office, needs to commit to a supporting a change of internal culture within the admin, staff, and faculty instead of simply putting out financial fires. Think long term: fiscal health will grow from faculty-supported innovation.
135. We shouldn't lower our academic standards to make more profit.

136. Let's help every VSC employee to convincingly communicate the value of college in 1-2 honest and succinct sentences. If we can't communicate our value in 1 sentence, let's re-evaluate how we plan to meet customer expectations.
137. How can the VSC be the colleges of choices for veterans?
138. The administration should turn a critical lens on its own operations and ask how it can better serve the VSCS by generating revenue, locating efficiencies and reducing its costs.
139. Remember that TRIO can't operate on an online platform. VSCS should remember that if it proposes to shift from campus-based delivery to online.
140. We should offer something of value that people can bring to the workforce and to the world. South Africa, for example, is changing their system to train leaders in solving climate change. Think ahead and position ourselves now to be where we need to be in 20 years.
141. VT State Colleges System is leaving money on the table by not leveraging incredible faculty we have. There are great people teaching in our system. We should focus on that in our marketing.
142. Tax the wealthy for free tuition to draw more people to Vermont.
143. As part of this process, we need an academic and student services plan as well as a financial plan. We need a vision of where we're going in those areas.
144. The VSCS needs to focus on more non-traditional students. If we could focus in on those areas where the economy is not serving people, i.e. LNAs. Already in the field but want to move up.
145. Vermont should stop sending \$10,000 to people to move here when we're not supporting the VSCS. We need to get people to stay here, not just to come here.
146. IT should serve academic needs more effectively.
147. We need to invest more in marketing and take advantage of the Vermont brand and lifestyle.
148. There should be a development director at the OC.
149. There should be a marketing director at the OC to coordinate marketing across the system.

150. Use space on the Randolph campus to house the Chancellor's office.
151. Consider whether there is a future to the farm at VT Tech – there are fewer students participating in those programs and it's in tough shape. Maybe the land could be sold to finance investments elsewhere.
152. Why not have student loan forgiveness for students who commit to staying in VT after graduation?
153. VSCS should partner with the state to fill workforce gaps, like state police.
154. We need to focus more on out-of-state students because of demographics. Support VTers' education by bringing in out-of-state students.
155. We really need to look at having non-duplication of resources. How can we work smarter by looking at duplication?
156. Having a (Senator) Sanders Institute at one of the state colleges. We should leverage his popularity with young people to get students to come here.
157. There should be a coordinated effort to build the endowment.
158. Consider what Rhode Island is doing: offering free tuition in years three and four. This is an incentive toward completion.