

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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VSCS Board of Trustees takes next steps in Secure the Future project
Reaffirms support for two-campus Northern Vermont University

Fairlee -- In [a resolution](#) passed unanimously at its annual retreat today, the Vermont State Colleges System Board of Trustees directed the Chancellor to make specific recommendations before December 3 that will position the System for a strong future. Specifically, those recommendations are to include strengthening the newly-unified, two-campus Northern Vermont University.

“In one year only, Northern Vermont University has already accomplished great things for its students, and it has become a national model for unification. We reaffirm our strong support for NVU and for public higher education in the northern tier of Vermont. We look forward to helping it realize its vision for two vibrant campuses that serve students throughout the region and beyond,” said VSCS Board Chair Church Hindes.

“We have not finished our assessment of our system to achieve the educational and fiscal results we hope to achieve. However, due to recent, unfounded rumors, we have addressed NVU first. We are not proposing the closure of the Lyndon campus, or any campus within the VSCS, and we are not proposing replacing campus-based academic programs with NVU Online. NVU Online provides national access to quality NVU programs that differ from their campus-based programs,” said VSCS Chancellor Jeb Spaulding.

The creation of NVU is an example of a system innovation we’ve taken. We anticipate more as part of the [VSCS Secure the Future](#) project.

The Board approved [a resolution](#) asking the Chancellor to develop plans to strengthen the system’s finances, boost enrollments, and deliver academic programs in ways that best serve today’s students. Plans may include changes to the System’s academic programs and delivery, reinvestment in or repurposing of infrastructure, and policy changes. Any plans brought to the Board must include financial analysis of funding needs, costs, and risks associated with changes. Proposals will support if not expand high-quality educational opportunities for students. Passage of the resolution marks the start of the next phase of the Board’s [Secure the Future](#) process, an effort to acknowledge and respond proactively to the challenges confronting the higher education sector.

Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) Chair Mike Pieciak reported to the full board that his committee had met multiple times on each VSCS campus to gather input and feedback as part of

the Secure the Future project. The Committee also held two systemwide Zoom meetings and sessions with many internal and external stakeholders. [A list of over 200 ideas](#) gathered by the LRPC will inform the Board's discussion about the future.

"The VSCS community is speaking with passion on behalf their colleges and their students. The ideas shared by faculty, staff and students will continue to be central to our conversations about the future," said Pieciak. Pieciak has requested an additional LRPC meeting to review incoming suggestions.

The Board continues to seek practical suggestions that will provide meaningful and durable financial benefits to allow the system's institutions to thrive. It will prioritize those solutions that are good for students and good for Vermont. Ideas are welcome at securethefuture@vsc.edu.

"We look forward to reviewing the input and the Board's direction to develop a practical plan to support a strong state college system that will serve Vermont well," said VSCS Chancellor Jeb Spaulding.

Other board action included approval of:

- FY2021 tuition, fees, room and board, including a maximum 2.9% increase in tuition,
- a new "Data Science" degree program at Northern Vermont University, and
- [a resolution granting posthumous](#) Chair Emerita status to its former Chair, Martha O'Connor, in honor of her life of service and her devotion to the VSCS.

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