

Minutes of the VSCS Board of Trustees Long Range Planning Committee meeting held Monday, October 21, 2019, at the Office of the Chancellor, Montpelier, VT – UNAPPROVED

Note: These are unapproved minutes, subject to amendment and/or approval at the subsequent meeting.

The Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees Long Range Planning Committee conducted a meeting Monday, October 21, 2019, at the Office of the Chancellor, Montpelier, Vermont

Committee members: Michael Pieciak (Chair), Megan Cluver (12:43 p.m.), Lynn Dickinson, Dylan Giambatista, Adam Grinold, Karen Luneau

Absent: Janette Bombardier, Bill Lippert

Other Trustees Present: Churchill Hindes, Jim Masland, Peg Flory, Linda Milne, David Silverman (1:18 p.m.)

Presidents: Elaine Collins, Joyce Judy, Pat Moulton, Karen Scolforo

Chancellor's Office Staff: Tricia Coates, Dir. of External Affairs and Governmental Affairs
Todd Daloz, Associate General Counsel
Jen Porrier, Administrative Director
Jeb Spaulding, Chancellor
Meg Walz, Project Manager
Sophie Zdatny, General Counsel
Yasmine Ziesler, Chief Academic Officer

From the Colleges: Nate Ball, VP VSC-UP, Vermont Technical College
Amy Bremel, VSC-UP, Castleton University
Bailey C., Student, Northern Vermont University
Elijah Clarke, Student, Northern Vermont University
Jonathan Davis, Dean of Students, Northern Vermont University
Kathleen Hunter, Student, Northern Vermont University
Adrienne Hutchin, Student, Northern Vermont University
Laura Jakubowski, Chief Budget & Finance Ofc., Castleton University
Tom Mauhs-Pugh, Provost, Castleton University
Linda Olson, Interim President VSCFF, Castleton University

Andy Pallito, Dean of Administration, Community College of Vermont
Brandon Stroup, Faculty, Northern Vermont University
Littleton Tyler, Dean of Administration, Vermont Technical College
Victoria Zolnoski, Faculty, Northern Vermont University

From the public:

Shawn Brennan, VP, Freeman, French, Freeman
Scott Campbell, State Representative, St. Johnsbury
Kim Creedy-Smith, Business Owner, Lyndonville
Cyndi Miller, American Federation of Teachers, Vermont
Jonathan Wolff, Government Relations Specialist, Primmer, Piper, Montpelier

1. Chair Pieciak called the meeting to order at 12:35 p.m.
2. Approval of the minutes
 - a. October 11, 2019

Trustee Dickinson moved and Trustee Giambatista seconded the motion to approve the meeting minutes from October 11, 2019. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Committee Discussion: Next steps identified in Chancellor's 10/18/19 memo
 - a. Future reporting by Presidents on actions taken by institutions to confront challenges identified in the Chancellor's white paper.
 - b. Executive Committee review of services, staffing, expenses, and location options for Chancellor's office.
 - c. Tasking Education, Personnel and Student Life, and Finance and Facilities committees with review of systemwide initiatives to confront identified challenges.

Chancellor Spaulding gave a review of the steps taken by the LRPC to date: identifying the challenges facing the VSCS and higher education, generally; gathering input throughout the state, including multiple meetings at each VSCS Institution; generating over 200 ideas and suggestions for facing the challenges; and, most recently, evaluating and prioritizing these ideas and suggestions. The Committee then began determining what level (System or Institutional) would benefit most from the implementation of the ideas. The Chancellor then shared the memo of October 18, 2019 (included in meeting materials) that delineates three approaches to move the Secure the Future initiative forward:

- 1) Charge the presidents with reporting to the Board of Trustees what specific action steps they are taking and will take at their respective Institutions, with respect to the six challenges identified in the whitepaper.

- 2) Charge the Board's Executive Committee with working with the Chancellor to conduct a review of services, staffing, expenses and location options for the Office of the Chancellor.
- 3) Charge the Education, Personnel and Student Life Committee and the Finance and Facilities committees with reviewing the status of systemwide initiatives currently underway or planned, that address the six identified challenges. The Committees should then review successes, and barriers to success and recommend Board actions to elevate and accelerate identified priorities.

The Committee then discussed the importance of increased system collaborations, and the importance of developing additional alternative revenue streams at the Institution and System level. Initial reports, including metrics and benchmarks to measure progress, will be delivered to the Board of Trustees by the Chancellor and the Presidents at the December 2, 2019 Board meeting. The Chancellor will work with the Council of Presidents to provide a common template for these reports. A second check-in will be due at the March 28, 2020 Board meeting and the final reports for these items will be due at the June 17, 2020 Board meeting. The Chancellor noted that this timeline was more realistic than the one set forth in the Board's September 18, 2019 resolution.

Trustee Flory moved and Trustee Luneau seconded the motion to approve the plan as outlined in the Chancellor's October 18, 2019 memo with the additions as discussed.

Chair Pieciak then opened the floor to public comment on the plan and the Committee's work.

4. Comments from the public

Linda Olson, Interim President of the Faculty Federation and Vice-President of Higher Education for AFT-VT, read a statement from the faculty. Full statement included with these minutes as attachment A.

NVU Student Elijah Clarke shared his frustration with class scheduling difficulties.

NVU Student Adrienne Hutchin expressed frustration regarding numerous cancelled classes.

Adjunct Professor Victoria Patrick Zolnoski expressed frustration with lack of communication from the Chancellor's office regarding implementation of the new payroll and benefits system.

State Representative Scott Campbell stressed the importance of finding a way to keep the system together for the future of Vermont and believes that NVU-Lyndon is critical to the local area.

Kim Creedy-Smith, business owner in Lyndonville and Chair of Downtown Revitalization Team, shared that they supported NVU-Lyndon in establishing and opening the coworking space, Do North Coworking and are now working on a grant to open an art gallery in the downtown area. Ms. Creedy-Smith voiced her concern that finances are being funneled into NVU Online to the detriment of the physical campuses.

Chair Pieciak and the Chancellor responded to the public comments, appreciating the input from various members of the broader VSCS community.

The motion to approve the plan as outlined in the Chancellor's October 18, 2019 memo with the additions as discussed was approved unanimously.

5. Other Business

There was no other business.

Chair Pieciak adjourned the meeting at 1:49 p.m.

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ATTACHMENT A:

Statement from Linda Olson, Interim President VSCFF on behalf of faculty

The faculty, staff, and students of the Vermont State Colleges, are committed to helping our institutions survive and thrive. They believe in providing affordable, high-quality education to all Vermonters and work hard every day to fulfill that mission. There is no doubt this is a challenging time for the VSCS, and strategic change is necessary for the system's long-term health and survival. Staff and faculty are doing everything possible to help the VSCS weather these difficult times. They are working more hours and taking on more tasks as positions go unfilled due to budget constraints. They are developing new programs to inspire students and train them for 21st century jobs. They have agreed to significant cuts in our benefits to save money for the system. In response to the white paper, campus administrators, faculty, staff, students and community members have offered more than two-hundred suggestions to address the challenges facing the system. Rather than advocate for these, the Chancellor continues to focus on the worst possible outcomes, often blaming his own employees for the problems facing our system. The employees are not the problem; they should be enlisted as allies in building a strong Vermont State College System. Staff, faculty, students and campus administrators deserve a real voice in the decision-making process. It is time to work together to find solutions that will not devastate our rural Vermont communities and deprive Vermont students of opportunity. We must all work together to strengthen the VSCS and create a path to the future. Our students, our communities, and Vermont's economic future depend on it.