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**Vermont State Colleges System Board of Trustees to Defer Vote Regarding
Reconfiguration Plan**

Trustees will hear information regarding VSCS financial challenges—No vote planned

Montpelier, VT – The Vermont State Colleges System (VSCS) Board of Trustees Chair, J. Churchill Hindes, announced today that Monday’s meeting of the Board will be informational in nature. The Board does not plan to vote on recent transformational changes at that time. Chancellor Jeb Spaulding recently unveiled plans in response to ongoing challenges facing the VSCS magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic. The plans are designed to avoid System-wide insolvency and ensure the VSCS can continue its important mission for generations. The Board had planned to vote on the proposal at its meeting tomorrow, however, it will now treat the meeting as informational, giving Board members a week to consider the plan and related comments and discussion. The Board will meet again on Monday, April 27th.

“I have listened to my colleagues on the Board and want to give them time to consider the very significant decisions we have to make.” said Hindes. “But,” Hindes cautioned, “delayed action increases the profound financial risks facing all four VSCS Colleges and Universities. Those risks grow daily. We simply do not have the funds to afford a protracted discussion and debate.”

Every two weeks, the VSCS spends approximately \$6 million between payroll and expenses. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a significant increase in the VSCS anticipated operating deficit to as much as \$7 – \$10 million this fiscal year, including \$5.6 million in costs for student refunds for room and board due to moving students off-campus and shifting to remote instruction. The System could run out of operating funds by mid-June, forcing it to begin spending its already low reserves.

The Chancellor’s plan, made public last Friday represents a whole system transformation focused on eliminating program duplication, reducing overhead and investing in programs that are high demand, economically viable, and provide valuable career opportunities for Vermont students. It includes the consolidation of the two residential career-focused liberal arts campuses of Northern Vermont University (NVU) to Castleton University, along with refocusing Vermont Technical College’s programs at its Williston campus and closing its Randolph Center campus.



“The recommendations I have laid out,” said Chancellor Spaulding, “are an attempt to avoid a catastrophic result for Vermonters’ access to higher education and reposition the entire System for the future. We are happy that we will have the opportunity to engage with the Governor and the Legislature. I must emphasize we cannot wait to act until after the completion of a long deliberation – as some have suggested. In addition to the inevitable financial consequences, the result would be that students may forgo their education with us, potentially leaving the State, and staff will seek more reliable employment elsewhere – it’s that simple. We will find ourselves in a vicious and unending cycle of decline.”

The VSCS Board of Trustees will conduct a virtual meeting on Monday where they will review information provided by the Chancellor. The public is invited to view the meeting at <https://youtu.be/oxNi8068Lww>. More information is available at www.vsc.edu.