

VERMONT STATE COLLEGES SYSTEM

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

RESOLUTION No. 2020-004

Establishing a Task Force for System-Wide Transformation

- WHEREAS, The Vermont State College System has endured for nearly 60 years and seeks to provide access to affordable, quality educational opportunities for tens of thousands of students, particularly rural, first generation and low- to middle-income Vermonters; and
- WHEREAS, Given the rapid changes occurring in today’s higher education landscape, in May 2019, the VSCS Board of Trustees Long Range Planning Committee began a thorough examination of the challenges facing the system, documented in the report “Serving Vermont’s Students by Securing the Future of the Vermont State Colleges System,” also called the “White Paper”; and
- WHEREAS, In September 2019, after receiving considerable input from internal and external constituencies on the “Securing the Future” project, the Board met and discussed these challenges and directed the Chancellor to provide a plan with specific recommendations for each Institution, the Chancellor’s Office and the System as a whole to address them; and
- WHEREAS, In March 2020, the VSCS, along with colleges and universities around the country, ended in-person instruction and moved to virtual learning as a result of the global coronavirus pandemic; and
- WHEREAS, The actions taken in response to COVID-19 had a significant and adverse impact on the VSCS’s finances to the point where closure of three campuses was proposed; and
- WHEREAS, In April 2020, legislative leaders House Speaker Mitzi Johnson and Senate Pro Tem Tim Ashe called on the VSC Board of Trustees to develop a transitional plan which takes into consideration the needs of both the VSCS and the State of Vermont, pending one-year bridge funding from the Legislature for the 2020-2021 academic year; and
- WHEREAS, Interim Chancellor Sophie Zdatny continues to work closely with the Legislature in its efforts to gather the financial and operational information needed to develop bridge funding for the VSCS to support system transformation and respond to COVID-19; and
- WHEREAS, President Dr. Elaine Collins of Northern Vermont University has charged an NVU Strong Advisory Committee with identifying financially

sustainable models and initiatives that collectively will ensure a strong and thriving future for NVU's Johnson and Lyndon campuses as well as NVU Online; and

WHEREAS, President Patricia Moulton of Vermont Technical College has charged a Transition Advisory Taskforce, comprised of representatives from staff, faculty, students, and administration, to develop goals and concepts for the entire college community to consider that will transform the college to be more sustainable and resilient; and

WHEREAS, In addition to individual institutional transformation efforts, the Interim Chancellor and all four Presidents have identified the need for a task force to develop additional recommendations for system-level transformation; and

WHEREAS, The Interim Chancellor, working with the Presidents and union leaders, has identified individuals willing to serve on a system transformation task force who collectively represent a balance of institutions, employee groups, and expertise, leadership, and innovation with all aspects of the system; and

WHEREAS, The work of the System Transformation Task Force will require facilitation and immediate and significant effort to develop recommendations for full consideration and implementation during the transition year of 2020-2021; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the VSC Board of Trustees directs Interim Chancellor Zdatny to launch immediately a System Transformation Task Force, which is charged with reviewing ideas and developing recommendations to:

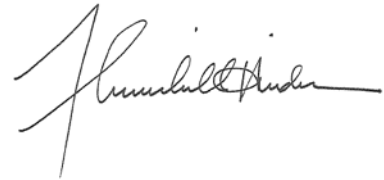
- address program duplication;
- ensure quality, financial viability, and access to programs;
- clarify distinguishing characteristics of member institutions;
- strengthen VSCS's focus on core, high-demand programs that meet the needs of today's students and the Vermont workforce;
- identify sustainable strategies to deliver programs and provide student support in rural areas of Vermont; and
- reconfigure the system in organization, finance, governance, and accreditation; and be it further

RESOLVED, Tthat the VSC Board of Trustees directs Interim Chancellor Zdatny to appoint the members of the Task Force and its Chair and to secure the services of a skilled external facilitator to support the System Transformation Task Force in its work; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the work of the System Transformation Task Force include regular communications with the entire VSCS community; and be it further

RESOLVED, That to allow time for subsequent development of a final system transformation plan, the Board directs the System Transformation Task Force to provide a preliminary report of ideas reviewed and potential recommendation areas to the Interim Chancellor for consideration and presentation to the Board no later than August 14, 2020, at which time the Board shall provide further direction to the Task Force.

Approved: June 1, 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Churchill Hindes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

J. Churchill Hindes, Chair of the Board of Trustees