

Minutes of the VSCS Board of Trustees Meeting held Monday, May 11, 2020, at 1pm via ZOOM – APPROVED

The Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees met on Monday, May 11, 2020, via ZOOM.

Board members present: Churchill Hindes (Chair), Janette Bombardier, Megan Cluver, Lynn Dickinson, Dylan Giambatista, Peg Flory (1:20 p.m.) Izzy Gogarty, Adam Grinold, Bill Lippert, Karen Luneau, Jim Masland, Linda Milne, Mike Pieciak, David Silverman

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

Chancellor's Office Staff: Sophie Zdatny, Interim Chancellor
Donny Bazluke, Network/Security Analyst
Kevin Conroy, Chief Information Officer
Todd Daloz, Interim General Counsel
Jen Porrier, Administrative Director
Meg Walz, Director, Program Manager
Steve Wisloski, Chief Financial Officer
Yasmine Ziesler, Chief Academic Officer

From the Colleges: Nolan Atkins, Provost, Northern Vermont University
Laura Jakubowski, Chief Budget and Finance Officer, Castleton University
Maurice Ouimet, Dean of Enrollment, Castleton University
Sharron Scott, Dean of Administration, Northern Vermont University
Jonathan Spiro, Interim Provost, Castleton University
Littleton Tyler, Dean of Administration, Vermont Technical College
See attachment for further attendees

From the Public: *See attachment for attendees*

1. Welcome and Roll call

Chair Hindes called the meeting to order at 1:03pm. Administrative Director Jen Porrier conducted a roll call of the Trustees.

2. Approval of Minutes

- a. May 6, 2020
- b. April 29, 2020
- c. April 21, 2020
- d. April 20, 2020
- e. April 11, 2020

Trustee Dickinson asked for a correction in the minutes for April 20, 2020, but upon further inspection, the original time notes was correct. The minutes for April 20, 2020 will be brought for approval again at the next Board meeting. **Trustee Dickinson moved and Trustee Masland seconded the motion to approve the minutes of May 6, April 29, April 21, and April 11, 2020. The motion was approved unanimously.**

3. Update from Interim Chancellor

Interim Chancellor Sophie Zdatny gave a brief update. She shared information about a meeting she had with Speaker of the House Mitzi Johnson, Senate President Pro Tempore Tim Ashe and leaders of the House and Senate Appropriations and Education Committees on May 7th. The VSC has provided information to the State Treasurer's Office, and the State House has hired an external consultant to assess the VSC's financial situation on an expedited schedule. While the VSC is still in a critical financial situation, the Interim Chancellor was cautiously optimistic that the State will provide the bridge funding needed to weather the immediate crisis. The VSC has also submitted a request to the Legislature's Joint Fiscal Office regarding costs related to COVID-19 and a supplemental request will be submitted today. The Interim Chancellor stated that the existing status quo cannot continue and if the Legislature chooses to give the VSC funds to weather this "transition" year, the expectation from the Legislature is for the VSC to exit Academic Year '20-'21 as a transformed Vermont State College System. Individual institutions and the Chancellor's Office are starting the conversations to that effect on their campuses now. Interim Chancellor Zdatny also made a general plea to all, including all observers of the meeting, for collegiality and calm and constructive conversations, with the goal of increased, positive collaboration into the future.

4. Plans for June 1, 2020 Committee Meeting Schedule

On June 1st, there will be meetings of the Executive, Audit, EPSL, Finance & Facilities and LRPC Committees. Unless social distancing restrictions are lifted, these will occur via Zoom.

5. Presentation and Discussion: Anticipating June 1, 2020 Committee Meetings

Finance and Facilities Committee

Chief Financial Officer Steve Wisloski echoed Interim Chancellor Zdatny's sense of cautious optimism. He continued that the F&F committee has not had a meeting since February 3rd and there will be three categories covered on June 1st. First is routine operations (approve endowments, quarterly reviews of cash and investments, grants activities, review of policies, etc.). Second is routine process and procedure to monitor the financial health of the System (regular quarterly financial reporting, budget development process). Third is any extraordinary activities such as the assessment by the State Treasurer for the Legislature, working with the newly designated external consultant, Jim Page (the former Chancellor of the UMaine System), and focusing on requests to access the COVID-19 relief funds. Mr. Wisloski went on to outline the current budget deficits and plans to address that in fiscal 2021 that will be further discussed at the committee meeting on June 1st. He also confirmed that the external audit process would commence at the June 1st meeting.

EPSL Committee

Chief Academic Officer Yasmine Ziesler shared that the last meeting for EPSL occurred on February 3rd but that regular business has been taking place regardless. At the June 1st

Committee meeting there will be updates and reports per Policies 101 and 109 as well as the appointment of VSC faculty fellows. Dr. Ziesler then introduced HR UltiPro Program Manager Katrina Meigs to discuss the progress surrounding the UltiPro Payroll and Benefits project. Ms. Meigs shared the progress being made with the ticketing system for UltiPro, transitioning from a reactive state to a proactive state. She shared that in response to COVID-19, across all the VSC unions the employees have created a collective sick bank to support each other. Dr. Ziesler also shared the likely need for an additional EPSL meeting in late July or early August due to the newly issued regulations related to Title IX. She then introduced Interim General Counsel Todd Daloz to discuss that work. Mr. Daloz shared that based on the newly released regulations the VSC will have to make updates to our policies. Policy 311 focuses on discrimination and certain forms of harassment including gender, and Policy 311-A focuses on actions such as assault and stalking. The new Title IX regulations will affect how the VSC investigates and adjudicates complaints under these policies and therefore a new policy is required to address the new Title IX regulations to ensure compliance.

Long Range Planning Committee

As a preview for the Long Range Planning Committee Meeting on June 1st, Interim Chancellor Zdatny invited the Presidents to share updates from each campus. Northern Vermont University President Elaine Collins shared that NVU has created a committee called the NVU Strong Taskforce comprised of sixteen members from faculty, staff, students, student families, alumni and community members. The Committee is chaired by NVU Provost Nolan Atkins and launched on May 7th. The Committee is looking at challenges including COVID-19, declining demographics, low state support, excess capacity in facilities and increased disruption in higher education. Their charge is to sustain NVU and right size it for the future. They intend to start with a fifteen to twenty-five percent budget reduction. The task force will meet for the first time on May 12th and will continue through the month of May in preparation for bringing a specific model for recommendation to the June 17th Board meeting.

Vermont Technical College President Pat Moulton shared that Vermont Tech will end the fiscal year with a surplus and will push that all into strategic reserves. President Moulton shared that Vermont Tech will be shutting down the biodigester and that process will be complete by the end of May. Vermont Tech will be selling the Enterprise Center on Route 66 and will cease teaching two programs: Equine Studies and Fire Science. Vermont Tech's long term planning process involves right-sizing the facilities and involving the community through a Transition Advisory Taskforce comprised of fifteen members of faculty, staff, students and administration. The goal is to develop a plan to transition Vermont Tech to a more sustainable institution able to withstand vulnerabilities exposed by COVID-19. Vermont Tech is planning on returning to face-to-face classrooms in fall of 2020 with backup plans if this is not possible. 2020 Commencement will occur during Homecoming at the students' request.

Castleton University President Karen Scolforo shared that this is her last Board meeting and she will be handing off the discussion to Interim President Jonathan Spiro, who will start on June 1st. She stated that CU's strategy for sustainability includes expense control and sustained healthy revenue generation. CU froze spending in the spring of 2020 while sustaining a high impact from refunds due to COVID-19. CU is focused on sharing resources and reducing duplicative

programs in the VSC system with up to twenty current pathways with CCV. Dean Spiro added that CU is also hoping to be open for face to face instruction in the fall.

Community College of Vermont President Joyce Judy stated that while CCV is engaged in planning, they are taking their lead from the other colleges as well. CCV has all 365 of their classes online for the summer semester with more than 2500 students enrolled so far. CCV was one of 67 Colleges and Universities designated as a second chance Pell Institution, able to work with incarcerated students in a pilot program with the goal of assisting inmates in gaining skills for the workforce and reducing recidivism. The inmates can only take CCV courses offered in the prison. CCV has also received a grant from Northfield Savings Bank to further develop the Flex Grant Program.

Executive Committee

Chair Hindes indicated that the Executive Committee would have a brief meeting on June 1st, largely for the purpose of approving a back-log of meeting minutes.

6. Discussion regarding Search for Longer-Term Interim Chancellor

Chair Hindes explained that the Board anticipates recruiting a new longer-term interim Chancellor to begin as soon as possible to work with the Presidents and the Board during the transition year 2020-2021. Chair Hindes shared three important considerations: this is a decision to be made by the Board, it is important to involve the System's constituents, and expediency is needed. The Trustees then discussed different methods to pursue this endeavor.

Trustee Lippert moved to charge the Executive Committee with the task of bringing a proposal for a search process to the full Board of Trustees by Monday May 18, 2020, to search for a longer-term interim Chancellor, and that the Executive Committee will be open to all Board of Trustees members for participation. Trustee Dickinson seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

7. Public Comment

Dr. Ziesler shared the process for providing public comment. Beth Walsh and Thomas Judd shared comments with the Board.

8. Other Business

There was no other business.

A recording of the meeting can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sU2QyB7jreE>

Chair Hindes adjourned the meeting at 3:43pm.

ATTACHMENT: ATTENDEES LIST