

Minutes of the VSC Board of Trustees Executive Committee meeting held Thursday November 21, 2019 in the Library Conference Room, Vermont Technical College – Williston Campus, Building 400

The Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees Executive Committee conducted a Committee meeting on Thursday, November 21, 2019 at Vermont Technical College - Williston

Committee members present: Churchill Hinds (Chair), Karen Luneau, Lynn Dickinson (Vice Chair), Linda Milne

Chancellor's Office Staff: Jeb Spaulding, Chancellor
 Todd Daloz, Associate General Counsel

Chair Hinds called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

1. Review of Chancellor's Office Operations – *Securing the Future*

The Executive Committee discussed their assignment in the context of the *Securing the Future* initiative. For clarity and consistency, the Committee agreed to use the phrase "Chancellor's Office" throughout its review as encompassing all VSCS-related activities at 575 Stone Cutters Way, including what is often referred to as the "Central Office". Trustee Luneau recommended providing an opportunity for additional Trustees to provide input for the Committee's consideration. Chair Hinds agreed and suggested including a Committee meeting that would provide an explicit invitation for other Trustees to attend and participate.

The Committee framed the general phases of its review as:

- Understanding the status quo
- Considering possible changes
- Reaching conclusions including recommendations for change or for further review

In light of related Board discussion, and the testimony and two dozen or so related suggestions generated through the *Securing the Future* initiative, the Committee sees the following as its initial areas of interest:

- Chancellor's Office operations and services
 - Operations and services including division of between System-focused work and individual institution-focused work
 - How those operations and services might be characterized as "supplying, supervising or supporting"?
 - Chancellor's Office operations and services in context of related operations and services at the individual VSCS institutions
- Annual spending and the number and roles of leaders and other employees at the Chancellor's Office (current and over recent years)

- Overall spending and staffing at the Chancellor's Office per se, and in the context of total VSCS spending and staffing (current and over recent years)
 - Spending and staffing related to each of the primary Chancellor's Office operations and services (current and over recent years)
- Chancellor's Office operational efficiencies—past and current efforts to control and reduce Office and System-wide spending, and additional cost-savings opportunities to recommend for further consideration
- The current location and related costs of the Chancellor's Office, and alternatives to recommend for further review
- How we might answer, “Thinking about the current Chancellor's Office and the VSCS, if we could start again without constraints, how would things differ from what we have today?”
- Structural changes for the VSC System to recommend for further review, if any (including statutory, corporate, and bylaws modifications)

Attorney Daloz indicated that a recent survey of the Chancellor's senior team indicated less than 10 percent of that group's work, on average, was focused on the Office of the Chancellor as such, and the remainder was split between work for individual institutions (e.g., reviewing a contract for Vermont Tech) and System-wide work (e.g., implementing a new software system for student advising). He went on to point out that the growth in FTEs at the Chancellor's Office (6-8 additional FTEs over the past seven years) largely stemmed from increased compliance demands in higher education, and a greater focus on shared services among the member institutions.

The Committee also discussed the physical location of the Chancellor's Office and the potential for moving the Office to an existing campus or other location as a means of cost savings and/or improved service to the institutions. The Committee requested additional information on the current lease at 575 Stonecutters Way, a summary review of comparable rental property costs in Central Vermont, the approximate costs and types of costs of housing the Office on a college campus, and the historic costs and square footage for the VSC offices at Stanley Hall in Waterbury. The Committee also noted that moving would require one-time costs that would diminish potential savings related to relocation, and that the approximately \$295,000 in costs at 575 Stonecutters (including lease, utilities and maintenance) represented less than 4 percent of the total budget for the Office.

Chancellor Spaulding noted that some portion of this review should include discussing potentially radical shifts in the Vermont State Colleges System structure, including shifting to an administrative supporting services organization model under an executive director rather than the current VSCS executive leadership/administrative services model under a chancellor. Such a shift would require substantial statutory, bylaws and other organizational changes.

Chair Hinds suggested the Chancellor's Office could be viewed as two linked entities: a central administrative support services operation providing shared services e.g. IT and finance as well as services as needed by individual institutions e.g. contract reviews, and an Executive Office of the Chancellor, providing system-level leadership including gubernatorial and legislative relations, legal services etc.

Finally, the Committee requested more information about spending on IT to better understand what costs under that area (responsible for >50% of Chancellor's Office costs) are attributable to the System versus the individual institutions, and how such services are responsive to student, staff and faculty needs. Also requested was a revised organizational chart showing major areas of operation such as executive versus administrative support services.

The Committee's next meeting will be at 3:00 on December 19 at the VTC Williston campus. All meetings are open to other Trustees. Future meetings will include and invitation for others to attend and participate.

The Committee expects to complete its review not later than our March 28 meeting.

Chair Hinde adjourned the meeting at 5:15 p.m.

These minutes were approved by the Executive Committee at its meeting on December 19, 2019.