

VSCS Recommendations for Transformation

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What do you see as strengths of this proposal?

In the spirit of full disclosure, I am the lone VSC faculty member on Select Committee on the Future of Public Higher Education in Vermont. My opinions therefore are based on the informed work, discussions, and decision-making process of this Committee, as well as the extensive feedback from colleagues at NVU Lyndon and the public in general. I will attempt to keep my comments focused on the overarching themes of the report that I find worthy of mentioning. First, I believe that it is essential that the system consolidate and unify where possible and appropriate. It is critical that every student have universal access to the unique programs on each campus. It is also important that the competition across campuses be reduced or eliminated by program collaboration, not elimination or consolidation. Example: I envision a common math degree across all of the campuses where core courses are offered remotely from one campus on a rotating basis so students from any campus can participate. Each campus would then offer their own unique set of electives for their respective students to complete degree requirements. Please be aware that I am not advocating for a completely online degree of any kind. A large majority of our students want to be on a physical campus with face-to-face instruction. I see and hear this every day, especially with the disruption the pandemic has caused. The students in the Northeast Kingdom often have limited internet access and find online learning difficult. They need the support and instruction that in-person learning provides. The success rates of students in online courses is quite low. Second, the NCHEMS report recommends a continued physical presence for each campus in their respective communities and I strongly support this. As mentioned above, a large majority of our students want to be in a real classroom with an in-person faculty member. This is where their greatest chance for success occurs. I am also a lifelong resident of Lyndon and an alumnus of NVU (Lyndon State College), having earned four degrees (Associates, two Bachelor degrees, and a Masters). Without the presence of the College in my community, I would not have been able to afford to attend college. This is true of thousands of students before and after me; NVU is a valuable, local, accessible, and relatively inexpensive higher education option. As the senior member of the Town of Lyndon Selectboard, I will also state the NVU - Lyndon provides valuable financial resources to our community. Not only do our students spend money in local stores, restaurants, and other establishments, but the University provides substantial financial support for the Town's services. For example, NVU-Lyndon paid \$320,000 alone in electricity costs in 2019. NVU also contributed \$81,904 for water and sewer services in 2019. (2020 was lower in both areas due to the pandemic.) NVU also is one of the largest employers in the region. These jobs would be impossible to replace.

I can see benefits from merging into one system

I think the two distinct yet complementary institutions model sounds very logical as described in this report. This enables CCV to continue its highly successful and financially viable model of associate's degree and workforce credential offerings while combining the institutions who offer bachelor (and beyond) degrees to try to achieve some level of financial viability. I also appreciate the very clear identification of the need for comprehensive permanent funding from the legislature for the VSC to maintain any level of feasibility as an affordable and accessible opportunity for Vermonters.

The realization that changes cannot be delayed. That there is an urgency regarding changes.

CCV remains a separate institution. CCV plays a critical role in the state. Consolidation of VTC, NVU, and CU. Focus on workforce education.

This proposal recognizes the importance of access and affordability as Vermonters pursue workforce training, certificates and degrees. It also recognizes the vital role the VSCS has in delivering these, statewide. This proposal recognizes that CCV is well positioned throughout the state to nimbly respond to Vermont's evolving educational needs, some unique to each region. Whether high school or traditional aged, adult, employer or agency, CCV has demonstrated they can affordably provide thousands of Vermonters innovative and convenient options close to home. High school students get to experience college and non traditional students are able to pursue work force training and higher education conveniently, within their community. ...

What do you see as strengths of this proposal?

There is no better time than now to come together to intentionally design our community's future. Expanding educational opportunities for students and addressing the financial burden of college and career readiness, demands a collaborative process with community-based organizations, "anchor institutions" (colleges/universities, hospitals, businesses), to provide equity, access, and opportunity for Vermont's students. Rutland County is geographically positioned to serve its students through the Vermont State Colleges (VSC). Rutland County has a Community College of Vermont Campus, access to Vermont Technical College through Stafford Technical Center, and Castleton University. Vermont's Act 77, of 2013, mandates that sustained and trusting relationships are developed to meet the needs of students in grades 7-12 through "flexible pathways". The following VTDigger article from August of 2019, Popular early college programs put high schools in tough spots, identifies Dual Enrollment and Early College challenges for school districts. VSC's Transformation Proposal can address flexible pathway hardships. Rutland County has the highest percentage of learners accessing Vermont State Colleges, tying Orleans County, with 4.9% (Figure 12, p. 20). The opportunities provided through the Vermont State College system would be improved with stronger consideration for student access to Dual Enrollment and Early College in support of "work immersion programs such as registered apprenticeships, internships, and co-ops...supporting earn-and-learn academic programs..." (p. 86). Figure 12 (p. 20) and Figures 7 and 9 (pp. 16, 17) provide evidence for needed "work immersion programs" Rutland County. Rutland County has the second highest projected loss of working-age adults (ages 25-49) of any county in Vermont by 2030 (Figure 7, p. 16). Might the lack of Vermonters aged 25-49 years old, without an associates degree (Figure 9, p.17), be the result of not having "work immersion programs" Rutland County? Figure 44 (p. 56) recognizes degrees conferred during the 2017-18 school year from Vermont State Colleges. The absence of college and university graduates for "...in-demand jobs identified by the McClure Foundation..." (p. 56) can be addressed through the VSC's Transformation Proposal. In a VTDigger article from December of 2019, Officials weigh overhaul of tech education center structure, Dual Enrollment, Early College and Career and Technical Centers, all flexible pathways supported in Vermont's Act 77, are identified as challenging school district budgets. Vermont's State Colleges as an "anchor institution" MUST collaborate with PreK-12 education to expand educational opportunities and address the financial burden of college and career readiness. Approval of the VSC Transformation Proposal will influence equity, access, and opportunity in Vermont public education for decades.

This proposal is very strong. Looking to other states, such as Maine, we see the unification of state universities into a system helps students better access courses and programs. This will also help to streamline programs across the system, and allow for more strength and fiscal responsibility.

Administrative Service Consolidation can be beneficial to reduce cost while also improving efficacy and access for students. This may require investments in technology to achieve desired improvements. Need for legislature to be more engaged and to increase investment in this critical resource for the future of Vermont.

The primary strength of the NCHEMS proposal is the evidence-based acknowledgement that the VT Legislature must increase the annual appropriation for support of public-access higher education in VT. The plan to join the residential/bachelor's colleges into a single institution while maintaining their unique identities is positive, yet middling. It will enable the faculty and staff at those institutions to collaborate and innovate.

Leaving CCV standing alone and merging the residential institutions will help reduce competition between the residential colleges and focus on the success of students, while reducing costs for redundant services and promoting select programs. With the residential institutions becoming financially viable once again, the perceived threat of other system institutions will be reduced, and a focus on serving the students can prevail.

consolidation of programs; portability

Please see my comments below.

Focusing on the system. Recognition that maintaining VSC presence across the state is critical to the mission of the organization and the success of Vermonters in the present and future.

Maintaining CCV's independence and focus on our student population is a strong decision. I also like the streamlining between the other colleges so that students can access a more consistent opportunity across the state.

1. The goal is to decrease the cost to students and increase affordability 2. Increase state funding 3. Increase student access by increasing student portability of credits across the VSC system 4. The focus on the VSC impact on our local communities to increase economic growth 5. It maintains the distinct cultures of the individual campuses in the VSCs but decreases competition between them

Increased flexibility for students

What do you see as strengths of this proposal?

Johnson Works supports the recommendations from the Legislature's Select Committee on the Future of Public Higher Education, including the proposed funding and consolidation. We support the recommendations as they preserve access for students across the state to all of the Vermont State Colleges, including Northern Vermont University and its Johnson and Lyndon campuses. 70% of NVU's students are Vermonters and without NVU, many Vermonters would not receive a college education. With its 400 employees, NVU contributes \$31.4 million directly to our economy along with securing additional funding and resources to address state wide needs, including nearly \$5 million in the past nine months. NVU is vital to Johnson and northern Vermont.

The strength of the proposal is that it is necessary. Many details need to be added to understand its full implications, but it is obvious that change must occur.

*A need to increase appropriations is needed from the state

Good research. Clear statements regarding the seriousness of the financial crisis the VSC faces. "In the absence of additional support from the legislature and time to undertake radical structural changes the overall system—not just individual institutions—will be faced with financial bankruptcy." "Select Committee on the Future of Public Higher Education in Vermont – Revised Page 48... b .VSC is overbuilt for the size of its current student population—in both personnel and facilities..." "The very public recommendation made in April 2020 to close three campuses created uncertainties that further tarnished the attractiveness of these institutions to students. This combination of conditions has pushed the VSC institutions into a downward spiral that will take concerted efforts to reverse."

Proposal goes considerable distance toward eliminating internecine competition within the VSCS while reducing administrative costs, especially among the top positions. It recognizes the need to maintain the existing campuses to meaningfully serve all Vermonters. It clearly understands the problem of chronic underfunding of the VSCS. A Vermont State University has magnificent potential, leveraging the strengths of NVU, which already has considerable experience with unification, Castleton, and Vermont Tech. Ideally I would include CCV in this unitary model as well.

Coordination among the various VSC institutions.

Consolidation and a look at funding directives

The focus on lowering the tuition and increasing access to students. The NCHEMS report points out the BOT needs some education about education and currently does not have the knowledge to effectively function. This is a critical issue that needs to be resolved for the VSCS to serve the people of Vermont. The NCHEMS report acknowledges that the VSCS has been chronically underfunded by the state. A single governing board, although not at the exalted level of the Chancellor's office. The single governing board needs to be closer to the colleges, as proposed in the LTF proposal.

N/A

Detailed assessment of the revenue side of the equation.

Consolidates overlap of high paying school administration costs. Keeps CCV in tact to allow it to continue being agile and responsive to workforce/Vermont's needs. Acknowledges lack of state funding.

Asking the State of Vermont to increase appropriations to the Vermont State Colleges.

NA

Combine the campuses under one umbrella but let each campus keep its identity.

- A greater sense of being a true system rather than four separate entities (less competition among sister institutions for the same student population).
- A better experience for students – more streamlined, efficient, and interchangeable policies, processes, and expectations no matter the institution/location.

See below

What do you see as strengths of this proposal?

First of all, you have only included the NCHMES plan and do not mention the Labor Task Force recommendations. I would like to comment on the strengths of the Labor Task Force Plan, as I think that it similarly emphasizes the important need to increase state funding, increase student access and portability of credits across the system, coordinating curricular offerings and expanding learning options. These are strengths. However, the Labor Task Force also includes recommendations that I fully support, which are not included in the NCHMES plan.

Joining Castleton+NVU+VTC into the Vermont State University (VSU) as a 4-yr regional university makes academic and organizational sense and will set the table for much more significant collaboration and consolidation within the VSU institution, both in academics and in administration. It would also balance and align the relationship of the 4-yr institutions with CCV. The VSU would be a strong 4-yr regional university but with "small college" campuses with a different character and mission than UVM.

It is easier to get all stakeholders on board.

There are some good ideas around coordinating the curriculum across all campuses so that it is seamless for students to transfer credits and to take courses across campuses.

The recognition that state funding is inadequate. The recognition that affordability is a contributor to enrollment decline (although the proposal incorrectly cites declining demographics, not cost of attendance as the primary contributor). The seeming commitment to keep each campus open, operating, and retaining each one's culture and history.

I do not see any strengths to this proposal.

The expansion of associate degrees.

As a senior level administrator in higher education for nearly 20 years (6 years as dean and 7 as provost at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro; 7 years as dean at the University of Utah) I certainly understand the efficiencies to be gained from the proposed reorganization.

I don't see any strengths in this proposal

None whatsoever.

It is inferior to the Labor Task Force plan. It proposes (at a high cost) to continue with the failed policies of the past which is how the VSC has arrived where it is.

It begins to address the funding issue and the consolidation needed to help reduce costs. It focuses on access and affordability.

It's comprehensive and evidence-based to the extent possible.

The aims of the proposal are noble, the expansion to include adult learners... As far as I can tell, the proposal of the Labor Task Force is motivated by the same noble goals.

The proposal is right to identify affordability and sustainability as important objectives of any reform. The report also rightly calls attention to the need to reform the board. Modern boards of higher ed continue to exercise critical oversight of system finances, but also play meaningful roles in identifying and securing funding from external sources. The NCHEMS report's call for more robust orientation and increased professional development for board members is convincing.

To balance out the state college system to provide an opportunity for affordable higher education for Vermonters and those wanted to attend college in Vermont. Have a physical campus in the rural portions of the state provides culture, community development, economical benefits and a sense of home for the students. Access to hybrid online classes being taught from the campuses themselves. Continue to sponsor athletics on each residential campus as student-athletes have higher retention rates and generate more revenue for the colleges than the expense of an athletic department. Requiring VSAC grants to be restricted to Vermont schools only which aligns with the rest of the country.

Consolidating the administration, collaboration across campuses, maintaining individual identities of the campuses. I also like the idea of making the colleges more affordable to students, but I do think they need to have more concrete ways this would be done as are outlined in the Labor Task Force proposal.

What do you see as strengths of this proposal?

This proposal if implemented will help reduce competition among the institutions and provide a more marketable institution to draw in Vermonters for affordable education.

I think the 8 descriptors on page 2 are vital...Nimble, Accessible, etc... I think the review of data is important and helpful in the 6 major domains (enrollment, education attainment, etc..) The priorities of resolving fiscal debt within a time frame while creating maximum affordability for students are important. I also support the notion of assessing the workforce needs for education that is efficient and flexible to meet the diverse student needs and economic realities. Stakeholder comments should be taken very seriously and good that these are represented in the report. The proposal suggests some various models.... I think the BEST is probably to combine the 3 campuses in terms of mission as described. . However, I can see the value of the VTC being kept separate or LINKING VTC with CCV as it perhaps caters to a different level and type of workforce and associates degree education. If VTC is not linked to something.. essentially, the gains of combining start to be lost because you still end up with 3 systems I think the review and recommendations about the 9 major system components is fairly well done. It looks at important domains from Urgency to Accountability.

Within this current proposal, it gives significant opportunity to leverage existing strengths of the VSC while addressing some of the current limitations. For example, CCV has such a different culture from the rest of the institutions and therefore must remain separate in order to continue to thrive. CCV is a welcoming space for students that are new to college, providing deep advising, a robust financial aid team, small classes, a variety of learning formats, and a presence in every corner of the state. Without this current structure, we would be losing our mission of connecting Vermonters without opportunities. CCV is located in the communities that we serve and we build deep connections with the high schools and organizations that we work with. Additionally, CCV has a large role in preparing students for transferring to other institutions and a potential blessing out of this proposal. By CCV maintaining an independent institution with clear entry points into one school will allow us and VSAC to better leverage our existing relationships to support students in pursuing further education. We can leverage the combination of VTC, NVU, and Castleton into a single institution to develop student friendly direct admissions pathways that incentivize students to stay within the system. In their current fashion, these pathways are under development and exist in an organized function for Castleton but are a bit more haphazard with the other institutions. Additionally, it could streamline the types of financial incentives that are available (as it can be confusing for high schools to understand the different incentives as it varies from school to school and program to program). Lastly, I could great strength coming from building specializations within the system. As someone who both works for the system as well as pursuing a master's degree within it, I would love to see greater collaboration across the system and develop a more robust list of advanced degrees that can be available in a variety of learning formats to serve Vermonters throughout the state. Right now, there are only a couple programs that are available asynchronously but it would be great to see more formats developed to serve working Vermonters throughout the state. NVU Online and CCV's robust list of course formats can serve a model for a modern system of education that can compete against SNHU and the rival online colleges. Modernization is necessary but we must not change the parts of the system that are working for our students.

Its goals: Decrease the cost to students, increasing affordability. Increase state funding (both one time and yearly appropriations). Increase student access and increase portability of credits across the system. Its acknowledgement of our history: VSCS problems have a long history, and decreasing state funding over decades is a major contributor. Its focus on local impact: Focus on the impact of the VSCS on our local communities, both as an employer and an economic engine for growth and prosperity. Its implementation: Maintain distinct cultures of the individual campuses within the system. Combine individual institutions into a more integrated whole to reduce internal competition.

The report provided by NCHEMS is well researched and confirms the dire financial situation. There is little to debate about the need for immediate change. Now is the time to acknowledge the problem and boldly take action.

While I am not sure how Vermont Tech's program will integrate with the two liberal arts institutions - I think it will be good for students to have more options for degree/ career pathways in a one stop shop. From the Report - This alone should justify more investment in VSC - given we have invested in recruiting workers from out of state.... what is the plan to help the 45% of high school grads that don't go into a post secondary program - making us more accessible will be key- but programs much be related to viable careers and have accelerated options. "VSC institutions play a significantly more important role, especially among first time students (Figure 11)."

It's focus on shared mission, our VSCS mission, to students and the state of Vermont. We will rise to challenges and make good decision if, together, we focus on students.

Consolidating either all or some of the schools provides an opportunity for the VSCS to work better together. As seen at NVU, there is the opportunity for major cost savings without the loss of the unique culture and identity of each campus. It also allows each campus to continue to grow and support the needs of higher education throughout the state. Having obtainable campuses for Vermont residents is absolutely key. In addition to supporting many residents who may not be able to achieve an education otherwise, it also is a major component of economic stability for rural areas.

See below

this could change Castleton University drastically - they have a well branded and well known name in the community and New England

What do you see as strengths of this proposal?

Leaving CCV--the strongest of the colleges in this system--alone makes the most sense, as does letting the Chancellor's office stand.

Financial

It has the support of the Trustees.

I appreciate their emphasis on the urgency of the financial situation. Without a significant increase in state funding, none of the plans put forward will work. Likewise, the focus on affordability for students and discussion of post-traditional students are important. I agree with the proposal that higher education is essential for economic growth and for civic engagement. How are we working to convince the VT Legislature of that?

1) Letting CCV continue it's success 2) Consolidating of resources and aligning of priorities of the remaining institutions should hopefully make them more sustainable. 3) increased coordination between the VSCS institutions is always good!

Having two institutions will reduce competition between state colleges. More potential opportunities for adult learners. More portability between Vermont State College and CCV.

I agree with the NCHEMS recommendation that CCV should remain a separate institution from the other VSC college(s). As a 17-year employee of CCV, and a financial aid counselor for most of those years, I have seen for myself how important affordable and locally accessible college is to our students, especially adult students. Integrating CCV into the other institutions would blur our purpose and erode the confidence of our students. It would likely diminish the agility we have in terms of creating and implementing timely new academic programs. It could erase our long-admired culture at CCV, which has proven to provide the individualized support, care, and attention many of our students need to be successful.

I can see the strength and utility of combining CCV with complimentary institutions. U.

The strength of this proposal is that it maintains CCV has an independent institution within the VSC system. CCV plays the unique and critical role of providing associates degrees and certificates to adult learners in the workforce, at an affordable rate. Keeping CCV a separate but still highly connected institution is crucial for the growing population of adult learners in the state.

It seems to me that this proposal builds on the strengths that we have as a system while seeking to minimize our structural limitations. One thing that is clear is that the future success of the VSCS will require us to be far more dynamic as a system than we have been in the past. Whether it is a rapid response to an emergent situation like the pandemic or a more thoughtful approach to a long term limitation like our demographic and funding challenges, it is essential that the reimagined VSCS have as a central feature the ability to change its offerings, programs, delivery methods and strategic direction. The two institutions that are contemplate by this plan put us in the best possible position to realize that necessary dynamism. That level of response is built into CCV's model and is one reason for its relative strength. The new configured bachelor's focused institution would present the campus based schools the best opportunity to realize the statewide perspective that is necessary to respond to these changing demands.

Consolidation is our only option, as the report clearly shows. The recommendation to move aggressively to coordinate administrative service operations is a critical piece and will require a great deal of planning and organization to implement. I especially appreciated the recommendation to hire an experienced project manager (or firm) to implement these changes. Though I know some people at institutions think the Chancellor's Office is full of unnecessary administrators, in reality the staff at the system office are already spread way too thin. They are already working long hours just to keep key functions running, making sure that personnel and vendors are paid, that we're in compliance with federal requirements, laws, etc. We have to get this right; we don't want another disaster like the implementation of the new payroll system that still had way too many issues before it launched. We need experienced people who are well-versed in project management to do this.

This proposal goes against the demographic trends in Vermont. It keeps 3 universities.

- A streamlining of residential program options within the system - An opportunity for the residential cam - Keeping CCV as a separate, distinctive institution with an expanded portfolio.

On the one hand, merging NVU with VTC makes sense but combining all campuses and calling it one is just going to confuse people and create a lot of expense remarking and rebranding. I thought the report was good in identifying the goals and the importance of these institutions of higher ed.

What do you see as strengths of this proposal?

This plan could actually work to accomplish the above stated goals. CCV can use its unique structure to continue to have a state-wide presence with emphasis on an entry-level student centered approach. CCV can continue to function as a conduit for Vermont students who want to pursue a 4-year degree. CCV is administratively structured in a different way from CU, NVU, and VTC, and this different administrative structure allows CCV to be more flexibly adapt to a changing workforce and post-secondary educational landscape.

The "no-brainer" integration of general education shared amongst the institutions which should have been mandated years ago. This also includes the elimination of duplicate majors, especially with the recent remote learning abilities for access. Maintaining the "system office" in some form is a must. For those who propose the elimination, they have no idea how or who would handle administrative functions/decisions - and who would enforce the "working togetherness" which is needed for the success of the changes?

Centralized function is a positive aspect.

- Financial savings and administrative efficiencies by combining the three four-year institutions (CU, NVU, and VTC). - The recommendation that the State of Vermont adopt a strategic plan to fund the VSCS.

Consolidation of Northern Vermont University, Castleton University, and Vermont Technical College. Strong case made for sufficient, sustainable funding.

Saving plenty of well-off Vermont taxpayers' wealth.

None. All this consolidation will do is tie two failing institutions to one thriving institution, and therefore weaken the entire system. For far too long the Board of Trustees and the Chancellor's office have let failing institutions continue on the taxpayers dime. It's time for you to make the hard decisions that preserve what works for higher education in Vermont. Castleton is and has been the strongest four-year institution in the system and should not be drained to prop up NVU and VTC. This is not a model for success in the real world, where the rest of us operate. Do your job and make the hard decisions that you were paid to do,

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At present I cannot comment on this proposal's strengths because it is not completely clear to me how CCV will remain unaffected financially.

The consolidation of some admin/management positions and "norming" of programs and gen eds so there is less duplication in the system overall.

It proposes for a degree of consolidation among the colleges, provides a wealth of data, and makes a nod in the direction of respecting all stakeholders.

None

n/a

In my own experience all of these institutions have collaborated harmoniously for a very long time; which proves they are in sync together. If they can do even better with the new proposed model why not!

No comment

Very little. It will cost more. It will duplicate expenses. It will reinforce disparity of access to higher ed. There will be two tracks of students; those who can access the community college and those that can access a Bachelor level degree. Inequality, lack of access.

I do agree that a common academic calendar and rates across the board where possible will help with accuracy of student bills, along with many other benefits.

What do you see as strengths of this proposal?

The proposal is very strong. A combined institution would allow for Vermonters across the state to access a high quality education, at both the undergrad and grad levels, and maintain access to higher education for students across the breadth of the state. All the services and campuses are critical to the state's economy and future - Lyndon, Johnson, Randolph, and Castleton are all economic and social hubs - and this plan maintains them for the benefit of the state of Vermont. Sharing resources in an integrated university system is a smart way to move into the future.

Although consolidation can take some time, I support the consolidation of the VSC institutions. The NVU consolidation provided opportunities to work and learn with new colleagues which benefits, staff, students and faculty. As a TRIO Student Support Services director, my colleagues and I work closely with low income and first generation students which make up more than 50 % of the students at the VSC. Consolidation will provide more opportunities to better serve these students through easier transfer of credits, one general education, shared professional development and shared student experiences.

Continuing to provide access across the whole state--forcing efficiencies and unifying missions.

Having consistent policies throughout institutions will improve the transfer process a great deal.

The CU/NVU/VTC model will allow students more choice in the selection of courses, for an increased number of degree programs. Existing programs can be enhanced through course-sharing, telepresence classrooms, and other forms of collaboration. Obviously, cost sharing will help reduce the overall expense of running a future Vermont State University program (or whatever it may be called). Already we are making strides at collaboration between NVU's Anthropology and Sociology program and both CU's AAGA and Sociology programs.

As an alum, I fully support the suggestion to consolidate my alma mater with its sister State Colleges to create a healthier and unified system for Vermonters. -Cost savings -Unified educational experiences for students -Continued access for students across Vermont

Only if you think doing something, however misguided, is better than doing nothing

The strengths of this proposed model are the CCV system and strength of it will improve - it should be seamless for anyone youth student or adult to transition from CCV to the VSC system campuses. There are more CCV offices/class locations so having this an entry point around the state is so important. The strength of joining the CU, NVU and VTC administrative functions can help a streamlined approach to college in VT - from academic programming to recreation. These campuses house 3 amazing recreation facilities, SHAPE that are staples to the college and local communities (in pre/post covid world). Having them function with strength in leadership only aids to healthier communities, more possibility to entice students to stay and live and work in our communities and leave college with new life long wellness skills.

Less competition between the institutions

By combining the campus institutions there should be a reduction of costs from duplicated systems. There should remain a presence at each physical campus for major roles (registrar's office, and admissions), but by being a single institution there should be reduction in efforts and thus a reduction in costs. CCV's mission constituents are different from the campus schools and should be left to manage and continue to support these rolls. Furthermore CCV can be utilized to be the VSCs primary conduit for workforce and similar short term training programs.

The creation of two distinctive complementary institutions I believe that CCV is best suited to focus on exclusively sub-baccalaureate programming and expanded to encompass a greater focus on workforce-relevant education and training and services to adult learners and employers, including non-credit programming. Here are the reasons why: -CCV provides accessible education to all Vermonters by providing physical classroom and advising locations within 50 miles of the majority of Vermonters -CCV provides course offerings in different formats and at different times so that they are available to all students to include the traditional, working parents, high school, non-degree and work force students. -CCV is the second largest college in Vermont and services more Vermont Students than any other State Institution -CCV offers numerous pathways, credentials and badges that provide students the skills that businesses and employers are looking for -CCV has the agility to offer coursework/training that the business community is looking to be provided in a relatively rapid time frame -All of CCV's dedicated Faculty are part-time and because they teach topics specific to their respective professions, they have the most relevant experience in those areas. Each is most certainly an expert in their field -CCV is the most affordable of all the Vermont State Colleges and the only one operating in the black -Because of above, CCV is the State College best poised to provide offerings to the only population in Vermont that has the opportunity for growth: working students. Combining CCV with other State Colleges and potentially closing CCV Centers will significantly impact the ability of Vermonters to get the education and skills they desire and need. In addition, this course of action would be unlikely to significantly increase enrollment at other State Schools. I hope you will support the recommendations of the Select Committee.

What do you see as strengths of this proposal?

The main strength of this proposal is that it keeps CCV separate from the other institutions, thus respecting several key differences that exist between CCV and the other VSC institutions. For instance, CCV consistently provides a balanced budget and stays on budget year after year. CCV has been able to achieve this all while operating with a unique culture and business model that has made it the least expensive of the VSC institutions, and made it relatively nimble in responding to statewide and local demand for programs. This proposal also respects the wants and needs of Vermont's students. CCV serves more students than the other VSC schools combined. This enrollment is evidence of what Vermonters want and need when it comes to education. CCV also serves a relatively distinctive student population, especially working adults. Adult learners comprise a population that represents the only significant opportunity for growing enrollment among Vermonters, and they are likeliest to attend an institution that provides convenient access to programs and courses that lead directly to in-demand jobs.

CCV remaining a distinct institution provides more flexibility for our students, while combining the remaining schools allows for consistency and efficiency.

One accreditation, a system wide core curriculum are the only strengths in my opinion.

A recent VT Digger article got it right when writing, "it is recommended leaving the Community College of Vermont intact to preserve its learner-responsive curriculum and pedagogy, broad accessibility, low cost and its own financial security." I offer strong support keeping CCV as a stand-alone institution and feel like this foundation is key in making the proposed plan viable. There is considerable risk in losing the many benefits this institution provides to Vermonters, were it to be subsumed in the reorganization.

Help - the roof is leaking, but there is not enough money to fix it! "Do something!", says the State. Okay, let's move the furniture around and rearrange the rooms. This is cheap and easy to do, and maybe no one will notice that we haven't really solved the problem! It seems like that is what this proposal accomplishes.

I answered this yesterday.

Increasing state appropriations to state colleges.

CCV can continue to remain affordable and expand access to higher education for Vermonters as a separate distinct institution. The combined institutions of CU, NVU, and VTC may be able to streamline resources for efficiency and still provide Vermonters with an affordable post-secondary education.

-Acknowledgement of burden of high tuition on students. -Greater focus on better integration as a system. -Keeping campuses distinct to capitalize on individual character and strengths. -Acknowledgement of individual campuses as important educational, cultural and economic regional forces. -Acknowledgement of history of underfunding. -Request for increased annual funding from the state.

The one strength I see is the opportunity to collaborate with other staff and faculty from the other colleges, to provide the best educational experience for our students. We all work for the same purpose, so to be able to work together with different perspectives and bring different ideas to the table is a great thing!

undecided I do not see how this will make the VSC more affordable.

State wide collaboration on workforce development. Combining faculty resources across institutions (and students) for low-enrolled programs, potentially saving and strengthening those programs. Being able to identify facilities that do not "pay for themselves" and either repurpose them, sell them, or even tear them down.

Castleton University's success being tapped by other vsc schools

I do not see any strengths from this proposal, except that NVU would remain open.

Recognition and prioritization of VSCS in local communities Decrease costs and increase funding

Hi, my friend. I just finished filling out this survey. I wanted to look it over and print it out before I sent it to you, but I didn't because I thought the little arrow at the bottom meant go to the next page, not submit. SO, would you please send my response back to me so I can print it out. Sorry for any trouble this causes you. Thanks. John Gillen john.gillen@castleton.edu

What do you see as strengths of this proposal?

We can hope at least that it will provide some financial stability to the VSC system. I wonder, however, what the Board will do if the Legislature does not provide the amount of money (\$72 million?) that the Board has requested. Is it possible to establish VSU with only a portion of that money? Also, if the Legislature does not provide the desired amount, does that mean we are back with Chancellor Spaulding's proposal? Perhaps the Board should not make a final decision until the actions of the Legislature and the Governor are final. The proposal does have loads of possibilities. For example, a course in political science offered in-person at Castleton might have students on-line from NVU and VTC as well as interested Vermonters in their own homes, and they could be talking with Senator Leahy about, say, the electoral college or student loan forgiveness. But this kind of experience can be easily overdone. Nothing, in my opinion, can replace the power and effectiveness of in-person classes, where faculty can deal personally with students who are obviously having difficulty understanding the material. When power-point arrived on the scene, many faculty started to use it--and overuse it, to the point that students would groan when it was introduced. You don't want this to happen with Zoom and hybrid classes. One or two might be fine. Four or five are not.

CCV will be able to retain its agile, responsive approach to providing higher education to Vermonters. Furthermore, CCV will be able to expand workforce development opportunities and play an even larger role in helping VT's economy grow in a post-pandemic world.

I don't see any advantages in adopting this plan.

Some money saving and encouragement of collaboration between the colleges

Consolidation of some redundant services (i.e. purchasing, library)

From a student perspective being able to take courses, move more seamlessly. From a system perspective, it will make colleague much easier and I can see consolidating some of the top positions.

Cost saving measure Less competition among peer institutions Possible expansion of majors/programs offered

Unifying our system (maybe).

Starts looking at real change

Strengthening educational programs within the VSC.

The proposal, as it stands, has many strengths. CCV is the institution most well equipped to support the variety of students the VSCS needs to thrive and support the state's economy. CCV effectively serves first-generation, high school, traditional, and adult learners without running a budget deficit. The data also show that students who begin their education at CCV perform better than their transfer counterparts at 4-year institutions, including VSCS schools. It's clear that CCV is an institution that deserves unique consideration moving forward to be able to continue to serve Vermonters and prepare them for the workforce or transfer. I am glad to see CCV as a stand alone institution in the proposal; as the higher education landscape continues to change, Vermont needs an institution that is able to be flexible in order to accommodate those changes. Additionally, CCV and its amazing advising services and able to promote and articulate the transfer pathways to other VSCS schools; this will remain the best enrollment pipeline for the VSCS 4-year schools. With respect to the 4-year schools, I appreciate how this proposal recognizes the unique programs and history of each institution. Maintaining and expanding the technical education at VTC will be incredibly important to meet the demands of the 21st century workplace; having 4-year liberal arts institutions to train the next generation of teachers, social workers, etc. is also vitally important to the state.

Possible reductions in operating expenditures. Functions like accounting, marketing, admissions, IT, and academic administration could be centralized and run more efficiently.

I believe the objectives of the proposal to be strong as outlined (above)....fiscally sustainable and fulfills its mission of delivering an affordable, accessible, high quality, student-centered, workforce-relevant education for Vermonters in measured stages to be completed within five years.

Keeping CCV separate creates a great feeder for the whatever CU, NVU and VTC become. It holds vital role in preparing students for success to move in on to a four year degree or into the workforce. CCV is nimble and responsive the needs of out students and communities in what we offer from non-credit trainings to associate degrees. We are responsive the needs of employers and adult learners. We have proven in our partnerships with VTC that students that start at CCV are more successful and having higher completion rates. I truly believe that not keeping CCV separate will be the end of the VSCS.

What do you see as strengths of this proposal?

Obviously, consolidation. It provides some economies of scale, which is hard to achieve in Vermont. And it would as a byproduct enable alignment of strategies across the institutions, which in theory could be beneficial.

A good analysis of the state colleges problem, but only half the work is done. Where is the complementary analysis of the University of Vermont as part of Vermont's solution to establishing a sustainable, world-class public university model? One with satellite campuses? With UVM at the heart of the discussion, we would be visioning in a whole different way.

- (Hopefully) remove competition between the colleges. - Improve educational portability within the system. - Reduce administrative costs. - Greater collaboration among institutions, hopefully improving student experience.

The report identifies the need for leadership which has been lacking, the need for adequate funding which has also been sorely lacking for too long, the need for more stakeholder input, and the need for attention to mission and purpose.

CCV and VTC should stand alone as individual institutions it has always been flexible and keeps its business model strong and is able to adapt to the needs of the students at each center and change to meet the needs of the both the surrounding towns, regions and state while operating as a single system within itself. Combining CU NVU should be the priority and would strengthen the overall power of those schools.

First, CCV should remain a separate institution within the VSC System. As the only state institution providing exclusively sub-baccalaureate programming, CCV fills a critical role in the provision of educational services and one that needs to grow to meet rising workforce needs for sub-baccalaureate education and training and to serve adult learners in larger numbers. Specifically: • CCV operates with a unique culture and business model that has made it the least expensive of the VSC institutions, and made it relatively nimble in responding to statewide and local demand for programs. • CCV serves a relatively distinctive student population, especially working adults. Adult learners comprise a population that represents the only significant opportunity for growing enrollment among Vermonters, and they are likeliest to attend an institution that provides convenient access to programs and courses that lead directly to in-demand jobs. • There appears to be a growing opportunity to respond to employer needs with noncredit programming, and CCV is well positioned to meet that need. • There is a considerable risk that combining CCV with the other VSC institutions could serve to limit its ability to flexibly and affordably provide ongoing or expanded subbaccalaureate programming.

Greater emphasis on programs, with high career placement for traditional and non traditional students
Creating working and learning communities
Improving the quality of programs
Expanded work based and internship opportunities
Providing collective expertise to improve services

Eliminating administrative costs

If the new institution is named appropriately, it will be appealing to out-of-state students in addition to in-state. The arrangement offers the opportunity to minimize duplication of efforts, positions, and expenses.

The strength of the proposal is a central operating system which should result in a more uniform and less costly administration of mission and method. If done correctly, it should reduce duplication of administrative functions. In addition, this model has the potential to broaden the geographical footprint to the benefit of students, regardless of which campus is their primary location. Shared mission made possible through a consolidated administrative effort unlocks regional and statewide resources for all locations that have been largely local to each campus up until now.

CCV remaining

Providing a consistent support system to a college system that covers the state of VT

Trying to improve the quality of education and experience offered to VT students. Increased academic offerings by allowing students to attend one campus but take classes offered at another. Reduce unnecessary/redundant admin costs.

A single university, if properly administered, would provide a more streamlined educational system. A single administrative office would eliminate the need for the expensive and wasteful practice of having several presidents, provosts, academic officers etc. It would also remove the need for an expensive separate office of the chancellor, as all the offices can, and should be, housed on a single campus.

Congratulations on producing a report.

Consolidation sounds great.

What do you see as strengths of this proposal?

The consolidation of administrative oversight will drop the annual operating costs .

no comment

uniting governers of the colleges & focus on Vermonters

Inevitably, you will need to consolidate students and the administration to CU like Chancellor Spaulding recommended. He may not have used the right words or the perfect timing, but his plan and this plan is all you have left. If CCV is run right it can survive on it's on. The key is sound leadership.

I believe that the proposal to maintain CCV and VTC as a separate institutions and consolidate NVU (Johnson/Lyndon State) and Castleton is the best proposal.

Maintain the Community College of Vermont (CCV) as a separate institution with a mission to focus on exclusively sub-baccalaureate programming... the offerings, including types of workplace skills absolutely needs to be expanded.

In principle being able to build each other up by amplifying mutual strengths. Governance simplification would should result in better collaboration and reduced administrative costs.

The biggest strength I see is the preservation of strengths at all four institutions, while finding an affordable way to continue functioning. Additional Strengths: I hope the system-wide approaches include ... -a common General Education program that will allow students to move more easily between CCV, CU, NVU and VTC. -a decrease in the number of administrators at all four institutions and in the Chancellor's Office (more efficiencies) to save money.

Many things, including maintaining all campuses and consolidating duplicate programs. A key piece is giving each campus a distinct identity.

This is my proposal. Close all state funded colleges! After that cease funding Vermont public radio and tv! Then cut state government in half! After that give school choice and start charter schools. Abolish Act 60/68 or whatever it's called today. Instruct ever student to study Calvin Coolidge.

A unified presence could and should save money, many departments (financial aid, bursar, registrar, administrative) could be centralized.

There is strength in numbers. Larger organizations are more efficient, you have a lot less duplication of effort, and there are more people to get the work done. The Vermont State Colleges are each too small on their own. Bringing them together makes financial sense.

I like that students will have access to courses at the other VSCS institutions and that collaboration between NVU and CU can take place.

One of the strengths of this proposal is that it allows CCV to continue to focus its work on associates level degrees while expanding its workforce and adult education programming. In every Selects Committee meeting, the consultants from NCHEMS highlighted the need to keep CCV separate. If it was to be absorbed within the other institutions or UVM, it puts the vulnerable populations that CCV serves at an even greater disadvantage. Another strength is the alignment of the programmatic offerings at the other institutions and an elimination of duplication. We must be more strategic with which schools offer which academic programs. Lastly, a strength of the proposal is to downsize the Chancellor's office. In a two institution model, that office could consist of legal and payroll functions.

Reduced Operating costs

N/A

Workforce related courses for VT is critical

If the proposal can actually deliver an affordable education for all Vermont students, that would be a strength.

-more state funding -a focus on accessibility -maintaining CCV as an independent structure

What do you see as strengths of this proposal?

The strength of this proposal is in its recommendations to: 1) restructure the system into a single entity, "Vermont State University" 2) employ a single General Ed and accreditation, 3) share faculty and programmatic resources across campuses using online and/or remote and/or hybrid delivery formats 4) maintain the separate identities, cultures, and histories of the physical campuses of NVU-J, NVU-L, CU, and VTC. 5) support or intertwine the liberal arts and workforce needs

The emphasis on a spectrum going from workforce education through certificates, associates degrees, and ON to bachelors degrees, and then more (post-graduate) workforce education is a strength, and having one VSCS institution will make that work more smoothly.

I support the direction to treat the system as two distinct institutions because it would align the higher institution 'products' correctly by their strengths (i.e. CCV with Associates, workforce, etc., and the other three. The additional strength is the commitment to keep each one of these institutions open in the communities they serve.

Separating CCV's two-year education from the other programs while continuing to allow the transfer of CCV credit in the VSC system. Personally, I think VTC should keep its name, but be under the same leadership as CCV. VTC has an array of two year degrees, and deliberately tries to respond to the job market. It therefore has a goal that is more similar to CCV than the general liberal arts college model of CU and NVU (which should be combined).

Focus on interoperability and economies of scale

I think combining institutions should make things more efficient from an operations standpoint.

I do not have the experience one way or the other to comment on your model. I do know high speed wifi will be needed and necessary to move forward in this new pandemic economy.

None--get rid of the Chancellor's office.

"Norming" the Gen Eds and grad standards could result in a stronger network of collaborative state-wide academic support (specifically within the team of library professionals). Transparency and collaboration in the academic support departments would significantly improve retention. A system-wide strength could be the utilization of a devoted, highly proficient staff of professionals.

Good background information and problem statement

More people will be able to get an education.

Reducing overlaps and promoting the best of our campuses

Reducing costs of administration between the campuses

The survival of the VSC system is vital to the future of Vermont itself but this proposal fails to address underlying problems and does not contain financial analysis to justify the proposed changes.

movement toward an actual "system", rather than a federation. Collaboration and collegiality throughout the state.

The proposal acknowledges that something needs to be done quickly to retain the financial sustainability of the VSC institutions and also acknowledges that the State of Vermont has historically under funded its public higher education institutions.

Possible but minor financial savings

Cost savings Better together Better for students More options for students

The strength of this proposal is the recognition that the VSCS needs significant addition funds from the Vermont Legislature - an increase in the annual appropriation from \$30 million to \$47 million. The VT Legislature has not lived up to its fiscal responsibility for decades!!

What do you see as strengths of this proposal?

CU & NVU have a lot of overlap, are both residential colleges, serve communities across the state, and I suspect, could save a lot of \$\$\$ in administrative costs if consolidated.

This proposal would lead to a more efficient transferring of credits, reduce administrative bloat, and be able to give access to more education to Vermonters.

Q4 - What do you see as the weaknesses of this proposal?

What do you see as the weaknesses of this proposal?

As I have expressed in the Committee meetings and have also heard from numerous colleagues, the concept of separating CCV from the rest of the system schools is not an idea that has been received favorably. Consolidation should mean that ALL schools in the system fall under the same accreditation. I believe this would promote more collaboration and pathways between CCV and the other schools, making transferring credits smoother and more practical. I am not doubting that CCV provides a valuable service to many Vermonters, but do not see the need to have them function as a separate entity.

Leaving CCV to continue to operate on their own would allow them to continue to undercut the other colleges at will. The proposal also does not do enough to reduce administrative overhead.

I am unclear about the value of the chancellor's office in the future system. Based on a plethora of issues over the past few years, it seems clear to me that having collaborative leadership at each of the two institutions who work in concert together makes far more sense than adding a whole other level of administrative bureaucracy. Said another way, I have only experienced the chancellor's office as impeding positive progress within our institution and have not experienced any value added. Systems and policies they have added have made work more difficult and often more expensive rather than creating any improvements.

I don't think the changes are significant enough. I think they need to be more "extreme."

I worry that the changes won't go deep or far enough to ensure the system's long-term sustainability. While I do believe VSCS needs to offer programs and services in the Northeast Kingdom, I don't think the Kingdom area or the state can sustain a physical presence in both Lyndon and Johnson. The devil when will be in the details in determining footprint. I only hope the BoT, Chancellor's Office and legislature have the political will to make the really difficult decisions that will ultimately position the system for sustainability. Any decision to shutter buildings will likely be met with loud resistance. I also do not think the system needs a Chancellor's Office. Resource sharing can be achieved through collaboration between the community college and state university. The president's of the two institutions should report directly to the BoT. The value-added benefit of a Chancellor and OC staff does not warrant the cost.

This proposal presents challenges in that it can't be everything to everyone. Some communities would be impacted greatly by the downsizing or loss of their campus and local educational and employment opportunities. Given the challenging times, how might this be made more economically viable in those communities and also more doable in such tight budget times in Montpelier?

There is no better time than now to come together to intentionally design our community's future. Expanding educational opportunities for students and addressing the financial burden of college and career readiness, demands a collaborative process with community-based organizations, "anchor institutions" (colleges/universities, hospitals, businesses), to provide equity, access, and opportunity for Vermont's students. Rutland County is geographically positioned to serve its students through the Vermont State Colleges (VSC). Rutland County has a Community College of Vermont Campus, access to Vermont Technical College through Stafford Technical Center, and Castleton University. Vermont's Act 77, of 2013, mandates that sustained and trusting relationships are developed to meet the needs of students in grades 7-12 through "flexible pathways". The following VTDigger article from August of 2019, Popular early college programs put high schools in tough spots, identifies Dual Enrollment and Early College challenges for school districts. VSC's Transformation Proposal can address flexible pathway hardships. Rutland County has the highest percentage of learners accessing Vermont State Colleges, tying Orleans County, with 4.9% (Figure 12, p. 20). The opportunities provided through the Vermont State College system would be improved with stronger consideration for student access to Dual Enrollment and Early College in support of "work immersion programs such as registered apprenticeships, internships, and co-ops...supporting earn-and-learn academic programs..." (p. 86). Figure 12 (p. 20) and Figures 7 and 9 (pp. 16, 17) provide evidence for needed "work immersion programs" Rutland County. Rutland County has the second highest projected loss of working-age adults (ages 25-49) of any county in Vermont by 2030 (Figure 7, p. 16). Might the lack of Vermonters aged 25-49 years old, without an associates degree (Figure 9, p.17), be the result of not having "work immersion programs" Rutland County? Figure 44 (p. 56) recognizes degrees conferred during the 2017-18 school year from Vermont State Colleges. The absence of college and university graduates for "...in-demand jobs identified by the McClure Foundation..." (p. 56) can be addressed through the VSC's Transformation Proposal. In a VTDigger article from December of 2019, Officials weigh overhaul of tech education center structure, Dual Enrollment, Early College and Career and Technical Centers, all flexible pathways supported in Vermont's Act 77, are identified as challenging school district budgets. Vermont's State Colleges as an "anchor institution" MUST collaborate with PreK-12 education to expand educational opportunities and address the financial burden of college and career readiness. Approval of the VSC Transformation Proposal will influence equity, access, and opportunity in Vermont public education for decades.

The only weakness I see is a lack of helping communities better understand the position the state colleges are in. This allows for certain groups to become louder voices, and the protection of positions to bubble up more than the community voice. The proposal itself is very strong.

What do you see as the weaknesses of this proposal?

Single Leadership Structure will result in loss of focus on regional needs, which vary greatly from southern Vermont to the Northeast Kingdom, as you can see in the profile of students that are enrolled at each institution. This loss of local control will reduce responsiveness, adaptability, innovation and ultimately weaken ALL institutions.

Maintaining CCV as a separate institution is a major error. The rationale for this demonstrates transactional and political thinking instead of true transformation. It lacks foresight. Look around the world to see that higher ed is moving toward seamless unification instead of clunky coupling. This plan necessitates a Chancellor's Office, which is unnecessary and overly expensive. The VSCS is too small to support a heavy executive load. Many national reports demonstrate that higher ed is overloaded at the executive level. See the Labor Task Force Report for sources. Other states (Alaska; Georgia) are unifying their community colleges with their residential/bachelor's colleges. VT should move in this direction: See the evidence documented in the Labor Task Force Proposal. The LTF proposal will yield much greater cost efficiencies, higher quality student experience, and improved access. Now, and under the NCHEMS plan, the incredible ineffectiveness of creating pathways between CCV and the bachelor's institutions are wasteful and burdensome for students. Uniting the entire System would create a unified network and curriculum that would be both healthy and nimble. Removing the Adult Education function from the VT Tech Centers is a solution without a problem: If it is not broken, don't fix it. This element of the NCHEMS proposal is a distraction. The residential colleges already provide credit and non-credit adult learning and workforce/professional development options for VTers. The NCHEMS plan will increase internal competition unnecessarily. The NCHEMS plan to improve Board decision-making through professional development is valuable. However, their recommendations remain tepid. The LTF Recommendation #4 to add faculty and staff to the BOT aligns with the recommendations of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, which is your professional association. Approximately 22% of public institutions of higher education have faculty and/or staff on the BOT. This recommendation has no associated expenses: It will cost the taxpayers nothing. The BOT can implement this change immediately to bring it in accordance with best practices for shared governance. The NCHEMS plan will push the System forward without addressing the most significant internal barriers. The recommendations in the Labor Task Force proposal will authentically transform the System. The Board should not be afraid to embrace transformational change. The faculty and staff want to work in collaboration with the BOT and a more effective and streamlined executive team to move the System into our unfathomable future as a team.

The proposed system will not be effective until the competition between system institutions is significantly reduced. This will need to be strategically achieved.

not facing the most important issue: financial insolvency and the mismatch of five institutions with the demographics

Please see my comments below.

Typical top-down thinking. Lack of inclusion, shortage of creative thinking, focusing on the numbers as opposed to the vision. The weakness of this proposal is reflected in this statement from the proposal: "stimulating distractive protests". This is the mindset that alternative perspectives meet when challenging these proposals. If all alternative perspectives are not intentionally sought throughout the process, they escalate to "protests" out of necessity. The fact that you view them as "distractive" is emblematic of the lack of weight that all alternative perspectives get in a process like this. Additionally, there is a complete avoidance of crafting a narrative that is optimistic, forward thinking, and garners excitement. "right-sizing" is not a goal, it may be a step along the way to a goal. The vision that is needed here absent, which further draws into question the efficacy of the form of governance in the VSC and the necessity of the Chancellor's office. VSC/VSU can be a destination for out of state college students as we adapt to changes in economics, climate and social frameworks of our civilization. Vermont is safe, green and smart. Until this is embraced and specifically engaged, we will be moving deck chairs around on the Titanic.

The current proposal highlights the relative stability of CCV, but CCV operates using 100% adjunct faculty labor which is not a sustainable model and is not a socially just model. There are currently no plans for CCV to transition to a more equitable faculty model. Using entirely contingent labor is exploitative and doesn't further goals of diversity, inclusion, and equity.

1. Deepening the lack of representation of the faculty and staff on the board of trustees and at the chancellors office 2. Maintaining/ increasing the chancellors office and administrative oversight 3. Lack of focus on the specific impacts of public-access higher education in Vermont (civic, social, personal and economic) 4. This proposal DOES NOT address VSAC portability and the possibility of using those funds to instead create a tuition assistance program for students attending public college in Vermont

Very little detail has been released about the proposed financial savings. I find it hard to believe it will truly be 5 million. Trying to fit a technical college into the same mold as two liberal arts colleges is unfortunate. Vermont Tech's brand and functions are vastly different. Operationally, you aren't taking that into consideration. Liberal arts is on the decline and technical education is on the rise.

Not currently clear

What do you see as the weaknesses of this proposal?

I don't understand why maintaining the Office of the Chancellor was one of the starting assumptions of this proposal. Assuming the proposed consolidation occurs, the new VSU will serve approximately 5,000 undergraduates at VTC, NVU, and CU [CCV has its own leadership and likely needs little input from the OC in the new arrangement]. 5,000 seems like a remarkably small number of students for a system to require a Chancellor and other super-ordinate administration. Couldn't the tasks currently occurring at the OC level be handled on a dispersed, shared-services model based on those already employed by the campus-based institutions? It seems important to highlight that OC personnel have virtually no contact with students. Campus-based cuts, in contrast, will be highly visible to students and will likely decrease the quality of student experience. This model also assumes a remarkable increase in state support for the VSC, including a \$17.5M increase to the annual allocation. Is this realistic? What happens when the legislature does not come through with the funds?

*There is short-sightedness with regards to the collaboration with UVM and if that collaboration is even feasible. *It does not include shared governance on the board. *The expense of non-bargaining staff, admin positions. *The lack of fundraising efforts.

Not recommending that VSC residential campuses with vibrant athletic programs and strong ties to the local community have a full-time President at each campus. This would be, IMO, a tragic mistake on many levels (cultural, emotional, managerial, financial and more). A Pollyanna view of the likelihood of the state providing a 140%+ increase in funding over the next three years. What is the probability that the state of Vermont will provide the funding outlined in the report - \$221 million over the next three years (vs. the \$91.5 million currently planned)? Without that significant financial commitment for the long-term, we are just "rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic".

I believe CCV should be part of any future Vermont State University. I also believe we need to pare down the administrative costs of the Office of Chancellor.

Since the Chancellor's office and the current Board of Trustees have substantially contributed to the current financial disaster, expecting them to solve the problem is magical thinking. The UNITING VERMONT: A DESIGN FOR A UNIFIED PUBLIC-ACCESS HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM Labor Task Force for Public Higher Education in Vermont is a much better thought out solution. The increased role of the Chancellor's office, currently located 27 miles from the closest campus, VTC, and 80 miles from the furthest, CSU. They have shown a consistent lack of knowledge of what goes on at the campuses. They have allowed the administrative growth over the last 44 years to lead to the VSC having TWICE the numbers of administrators per student than the national average of State-sponsored colleges. I have previously sent a 6 page PowerPoint to the Select Committee showing this data. The report by Jim McHugh, which I also sent, has a detailed analysis which supports the Labor Task Force proposal.

Can lose identity of individual colleges and what makes them unique

Increasing the responsibilities of the Chancellor's Office which would increase the costs and reduce cogovernance (faculty actively participating in the governance of the VSCS). Too much top down governance and associated costs. Separation of CCV would make it harder, not easier for students to succeed in higher education. CCV needs to be integrated into the VSCS system. Although the financial challenges of the VSCS are noted, potential solutions are lacking. This includes addressing the flow of state dollars out of state due to VSAC portability.

The biggest weaknesses of this proposal are the consolidation of administrative staff positions, such as Presidents, Deans, Controllers, etc. We've seen the detrimental effects of cuts to HR with the implementation of Ultipro, which is still not a fully functional, accurate system. There are certain things that need to be maintained on each campus, such as a President and Dean of students. I understand that these positions are higher paid and will result in significant cost savings, but I believe it would be harmful to our individual campuses and the overall culture. Having a president on each of our campuses one day a week is not efficient or realistic. There are also no clear guidelines to what positions will be consolidated. I would hope that the VSC would give us enough respect to discuss our positions (because our job descriptions are widely inaccurate) and learn more about what positions could be eliminated/consolidated. The other weakness is that it's proposed by outsiders who have limited knowledge of the system and its history. The system has never gathered faculty and staff to work together to provide suggestions for moving the Vermont State Colleges forward.

Inadequate assessment of the expense side of the equation; no real "business plan"; does not really address the elephant in the room - detailed reductions in faculty and staff.

Kicks the can down the road in addressing why NVU continues to fail. Johnson and Lyndon have a long standing, multi-generational, poor reputation in Vermont. A lot of money was spent on a rebrand that ultimately failed, because here we are again. Bold decisions need to be made here, and rolling it into VTC and CU and rebranding as VSU will dilute the positive reputation of VTC and CU around the state and regionally. Perhaps NVU should be eliminated like Spaulding originally said. If nothing less, current NVU leadership should not hold leadership positions/ in the newly formed entity.

The NCHEMS report does not promote shared governance by staff, faculty, or students.

NA

What do you see as the weaknesses of this proposal?

One weakness is the separation of CCV from the rest of the campuses. CCV students need the opportunity to be on other campuses so they continue their education after earning an associates degree. If they were on actual campuses, they could get the feel and be able to reach out directly with department chairs of certain majors and plan their future years with the VSCS. But how can you call it a system if it is broken apart and not standing as ONE?

- System leadership model – needs to be less centralized and more of a shared governance. Students, staff, and faculty on the ground need to be part of the decision-making process moving forward.
- Keeping CCV separate rather than combining into one institution. Having CCV as a separate entity will continue to create competition for the population we are all vying for in VT, including non-traditional and adult students and workforce development. Perhaps this is solved by being very deliberate with mission and focus, as the report mentions, and having clear partnerships between the institutions.

See Below

Weaknesses of NCHMES: Keeping CCV completely separate. The Labor Task Force plan suggests that there can be cost savings by having the CCV branches use already existing campuses of the state colleges, which would represent a cost savings. In addition, having the CCV programs integrated onto the existing state college campuses will help to facilitate a seamless transition from CCV to baccalaureate programs at the state colleges. NCHMES recommends expanding the operational authority of the BOT, increasing the management function of the Chancellor's Office, and developing an administrative branch for oversight of operations. This plan is a weakness because of several factors. The centralization of operations so far has not resulted in improvements (e.g. the HR operations, which have been a disaster). It is a weakness because it means more funds invested in administrative costs and will result in cuts to faculty and staff. There have already been excessive cuts in staff and faculty. The quality of academic and supportive services for students will suffer even more than it already has. We want to attract more students to stay in our state system. Providing less quality will drive them further away. We do not need more funding for administration. The Labor Task Force plan proposes unifying CU, NVU, VTC, and CCV to form Vermont State University with a single executive team, which will cut administration expenses. The Labor Task force also proposes a model of shared governance in which faculty and staff will participate in the governance of the state university system. This model would incorporate the experience and knowledge of faculty and staff who understand the actual working needs of the students and the system. The American Association of University Professors and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges recommends involving faculty and staff with trustees as a best practice for governing boards.

Retaining the Chancellor and office in the leadership structure is a weakness. We may need to retain a shared general services department for the VSU and CCV but leadership can be accomplished by the executive teams at VSU and CCV and the BOT can hire and oversee the VSU and CCV presidents. Having a Chancellor and other officers above the VSU and CCV is not necessary or effective.

I do not think it goes far enough. I think that we need to close campuses and focus on the success of fewer campuses.

1. I feel very strongly that this analysis and proposal focuses too much and unfairly on comparing the CCV system to the VSCS residential campuses. This is clearly a flawed analysis because you are comparing apples and oranges. CCV is obviously a whole different model of higher ed that fills a different niche - non-residential, no student life or extracurricular activities, and no full-time faculty. It seems as if you are making the case that the CCV model is what the rest of the VSCS should move toward and only UVM should exist as a four-year, residential, public institution. IF you don't agree with this then take CCV out of the analysis! Your cost comparisons are ridiculous and biased. If you are taking CCV out of the 'transformation' then take it out of the analysis all together.
2. The Chancellor's office should be moved to a VSCS campus - close the expensive and unnecessary Montpelier offices. Use the real estate that we own! Then cut the staff at the Chancellor's office and return front line Human Resource and Financial support staff back to their campuses.
3. Completely reform the VSCS BOT to actually represent the VSCS. There should be board seats for faculty, staff and more than one student. The board should also fairly represent the geographic span of the VSCS and should not be Chittenden County centric.
4. The BOT needs accountability. I do not know the best way to do this but it is clear that they have utterly failed in their mission to advocate for the VSCS in the VT Legislature.
5. End VSAC portability! Keep VT dollars within VT.
6. The BOT seems convinced that austerity is the solution. It is not! Austerity is the root of the crisis the VSCS finds itself in. The VSCS needs leadership that recognizes higher education as a public good that is worthy of investment!

It seems to grow the Chancellor's office and expands the authority of the Board instead of shrinking it and lowering centralized expenses. It excludes CCV from the restructuring when it would seem to make more sense to integrate CCV further with the residential four-year campuses in order to reduce duplication of first and second year courses, lower overhead, and increase the ability for CCV students to seamlessly transfer to four-year VSC programs. It does not speak at all to the need to attract out-of-state students to VSC schools (a necessity based on the report's own citation of declining demographics and the state's declining and aging population) by making the system more affordable for those students as well as Vermonters, and by marketing the system and its signature programs more widely. Perhaps most significantly, it doesn't address the problem of VSAC portability and keep those dollars in state.

Ripping Castleton of its incredible history and impacting its future indefinitely. Castleton, a small Vermont college has made an enormous name for itself, taking it away and merging would be a disservice to every past and present faculty, staff, and student member. The single governing board will not allow Castleton students, faculty, and staff to create rapport and relationships with their president. This is something that can only be done at a small school, and is something that should be preserved and cherished.

What do you see as the weaknesses of this proposal?

I feel you are overlooking the poor reputation that NVU brings to the table and the impact that may have on future students wanting to attend the combined college. I have several family members that are Vermont high school teachers and they have repeatedly told me how at conferences and seminars you can tell the difference between a Castleton University student and a NVU student based on the respectfulness, the preparedness, and the professionalism the Castleton University student shows, and the lack of these skills exhibited by the NVU students. I have two children that have attended/graduated from Castleton University and neither one would even look at NVU due to its poor education quality reputation. I also have a junior in high school who is currently looking at colleges, and although NVU offers the major he wants (data analytics), he has already counted NVU out due to its reputation, but he is considering attending Castleton University for a double major in math and business. However, He also has heard about this proposal and said if a merger happens he will not attend Castleton either. If you ignore the fact that people do not want to go to NVU because of its reputation for producing a lower level education than the other Vt State College schools, and you merge all the schools together, you are going to find many students will now refuse to go to the new school because they're afraid the education level will have dropped to an NVU level of education even if they're attending school at the Castleton campus. VTC and Castleton University have strong reputations for their education level. Vt children need a place they can go where they can graduate feeling like they got the best education possible, and you're gonna lose that opportunity if you merge the schools with NVU.

As the proposal points out, for the proposal to be successful, the Vermont legislature needs to allocate sufficient resources to higher education in Vermont. The system can't flourish on the current level of underfunding from the State.

Castleton is doing great at the moment and this merger would take away from CU

By moving specific programs around, especially away from Castleton University, to other institutions, you will be isolating many students from their current relationships to begin with. This ultimately will cause a decrease in student populations across the board. For student athletes especially, which at most Vermont campuses are the majority of the student body, this will cause them to change teams, which would lead to problems for everyone. Some schools do not offer the same sports programs, so if a student's major were to be relocated, they would either have to give up a sport to continue their major, or change their course program. For upperclassmen this would be problematic as they may have to restart their curriculum. Students may also transfer to other schools because they do not believe the new location suits them or who they are. Ultimately, this decision will cut the learning experience for both students and staff, and should not go through.

If consolidation occurs, CCV should be integrated into the overall institution. It should not be a low-cost, low quality adjunct to the VSC, as it is now and would continue to be under this plan.

It does not go far enough. Keeping CCV separate makes no sense. CCV should be more connected with the other institutions in the VSC, not less. The proposal gives the current BOT more power. The BOT needs to be re-envisioned with membership expanded to include people within the VSC. It also keeps the Chancellor's office.

Whether the proposed model or one of the other options is chosen, there are many significant assumptions about implementation that will hold true to varying degrees. While comparisons to peer institutions and other mergers were made, none were a great fit. There are so many variables. It's unclear how the proposed model will impact enrollment and whether it will be financially sustainable. What if the legislature does not agree to the funding? Also, will the new entity be able to sustain a drop in enrollment (that will result if rebranding is needed), and for how long? Castleton and NVU recently completed rebranding. Is there evidence that rebranding and/or renaming so soon is what we should do? Can we merge without changing our branding?

Miscellaneous

This proposal fails to offer clear evidence that a far-reaching merger will result in enough cost savings to justify the risky disruptions it would entail. The NCHEMS report itself admits that a merger would demand significant upfront costs and could depress enrollment for years to come, further compounding financial shortfalls. While the NCHEMS report speaks to the importance of retaining unique cultures and identities on each of the campuses, this proposal does not achieve that goal. Merging these three distinct institutions could further damage the reputations and brands of the campuses with prospective students. The plan also makes the surprising proposal to retain a chancellor's office. The clearest cost-savings from a merger would come from eliminating a redundant layer of administrative leadership (as well as costs associated with renting space for an independent chancellor's office). This proposal fails to take advantage of those savings. There is also little evidence that further centralization of administrative functions would be desirable or cost effective. The system's adoption of Ultipro continues to be riddled with problems that have ended up costing more money to fix than the changeover saved. Increased centralized decision-making has also made it more difficult for individual campuses to pursue grants, engage in fundraising, and respond nimbly to emerging trends.

We are not investing in the future academic needs of an every changing workforce. Instead of look at what each campus has done historically well, look at the future needs of Vermont and the workforces and sponsor majors with these. While we need to focus on Vermont student needs, we can not forget all of the student who want to come to Vermont and end up living here after graduation. Out of state students and their higher tuition costs subsidize Vermont students. With that said, we need to change how we charge out of state students. If we offer them the same rate as instate students we would become a much more attractive option.

What do you see as the weaknesses of this proposal?

1. Not bringing CCV into the VSU framework 2. Not looking for alternative revenue sources to help fund affordability for students 3. That VSAC portability was not addressed in any meaningful way is deeply disappointing. 4. Proposing a consolidation of staff and faculty positions which will result in cuts that will affect the quality of education for our students. 5. There does not seem to be a clear understanding in this report of how many cuts to faculty and staff have already been made. 6. The conflict of interest represented on the legislative committee is evident in this proposal. The fact that they recommend CCV not be part of the consolidation and that VSAC portability is not discussed are both due to the fact that Joyce Judy chaired this committee and Scott Giles was on it. Very disappointed by this clear conflict of interest. 7. I am also disappointed that we paid \$250,000 to NCHEMS to do this report and that we paid another \$190,000 to an outside consultant to recommend consolidation of academics. Think of how many students could have benefitted from that \$440,000 to reduce tuition. 8. No exploration of share governance with faculty and staff representation. Same old top down deliberations that have put us in the current crisis. Labor Task Force proposal has a much more comprehensive understanding of the actual workings of the VSCS institutions and has more concrete ideas because of this.

This proposal has the challenge of trying to integrate a technical college into a liberal arts university. Additionally, it keeps intact a chancellor's office which may not be necessary under a unified college where a "Strong President" model may do. This proposal also does not take into account the issue of VSAC portability that the Labor Task Force proposal does.

Naturally, a dramatic change of this magnitude will include some major losses of valueable people, campus cultures, opportunities, etc... so that is the weakness. However, since the other option is for the system to essentially die, one has to focus on the opportunity and strengths of the REAL situation. No path will be ideal or meet everyone's needs. That is also an inherent reality of any plan of this magnitude with such diverse stakeholders. Each stakeholder group will perceive weaknesses probably based on their priorities and concerns. These will have to be carefully weighed and balanced. It seems important to be careful with DATA.... Many issues associated with education have to do with quality and we need qualitative data and not just quantitative data to make the best decisions for the most stakeholders. This topic should be more fully examined. How are we measuring and reporting on qualitative issues? Currently, I know that at CU we hold a very high standard on quality. I imagine the other members of the VSC are the same. We want to maintain this high standard for educational attainment.

This proposal does not specifically mention high school programs for CCV. This will be an important program to maintain. As many students seek out experiences that work with their schedules, CCV allows students to study in the communities within which they live. By continuing to preserve the early college and dual enrollment programs, we are allowing for students to start college in a highly supportive environment and balance their other responsibilities. I have worked with so many students in my time at CCV that have stayed within the VSC for their degree because of the high level of support that exists. It will also be important to consider how to maintain Vermont Tech's technical and workforce education programs that are a valuable resource that is missing at NVU and CU.

Its plan to expand the operations authority of the BoT without adding faculty and staff. Many members of the current BoT seem out of touch with the realities of the day-to-day needs of the system. Its plan to increase the management function of the Chancellor's Office, when our admin costs are already higher than like systems. Its lack of specific data to support the economic value of the VSC. Its restructure plan to keep CCV as its own entity, why not one entity with one shared-governance structure. It does not address VSAC portability.

Although it states that, "Accordingly, it will be essential that the VSC system move rapidly to prioritize the administrative services to be consolidated and to hire an experienced project manager (or firm) for the task of leading the necessary change efforts." It is essential to broaden this project management beyond the financial process to the entire management of systemic change and implementation of that change. The people guiding the change were not hired to do so. They are wonderful, collaborative and smart people. But, they were hired to run a system, not to create one. Provide them with the support that they need to succeed.

How will programmatic accreditations be handled? We currently have many high-quality and successful programs that are in demand by employers that have separate accreditations. Will this merger change employer's perceptions of a VTC degree/ graduate? Cost savings do not directly seem apparent though this model - is their more data on the plan? Vermont Tech already meets the following criteria and is responsive to workforce needs- the affordability question is a challenge but ROI is clear. • Nimble in response to the needs of students, employers, regions and communities, and the state. • Accessible—programs will be readily available to all types of students in all parts of the state. • Innovative—programs will prepare students for jobs in a changing economy. 99% job placement • Ubiquitous—the VSC System will be a resource to residents in all parts of the state. • Essential—the VSC System will continue to provide essential support to stimulating economic and workforce development for the state and its regions and communities. • High-quality—transformation will help to smooth educational pathways and improve program relevance and delivery. We currently work with CTE's but the financial model makes this somewhat challenging to develop a comprehensive program and warrants legislative/AOE support and input.

Vermont State University. It is noted that campuses will maintain characteristics & brand, yet there remains uncertainty to what extent renaming will impact institutions. My thoughts: We should seek to avoid pitfalls learned in LSC/JSC unification to NVU, and renaming/rebranding is a known challenge! NVU unification and name was announced in 2016, fully official in 2018, and we haven't yet reached a space of full name recognition. Renaming/rebranding is expensive, and even with the best marketing firms and dollars (as NVU has had for this particular item), can be an uphill battle never won. It takes time for all systems - where students find & learn about us, such as the College Board - to comply with changes... and enrollment suffers while time moves by! Adding the risk of renaming/rebranding amidst already great known enrollment challenges is avoidable: We can unify in many ways the proposal notes (overarching name and shared accreditation) and still maintain (and not compromise) established existing institution names and branding.

What do you see as the weaknesses of this proposal?

Maintain a Chancellor's office seems to be an added burden for the system. I see the need for having a centralized structure to support all elements of the VSCS, but having the position of Chancellor seems to take away from the benefits of restructuring. The leadership of the resulting institutions should form an executive committee, with a revolving chair between the campuses. This will provide autonomy for each institution to make changes as needed, while also providing the necessary coordination across the system.

See below

Castleton University is a big attraction for students wanting to obtain higher education in Vermont

The other colleges, including NVU, have a long way to go in terms of developing their online expertise. It would benefit them to take some tips from CCV, which has been offering online classes since 1995 and requiring faculty to take a 5-week training prior to teaching online since 2004.

I do not see how this would incentivize student enrollment. On the contrary a more institutionalized program seems unattractive.

It ignores some of the issues that the Federation proposal addresses.

There are several, and I say that knowing that no proposal will be perfect. But I'll highlight a couple here. 1) This proposal seems to shrug off the Labor Task Force's proposal, which to my knowledge has never been put forward for public comment. Why is that? The LTF comes from VSC faculty and staff: the people who are on the ground working at the institutions in question. It deserves more than just lip service. By presenting the public with one plan, not with both, it seems to me that the Board has already made a decision about which to support, which makes me wonder how seriously they're taking our input. 2) Related to (1): shared governance. The LTF proposal increases the number of student seats on the Board and adds seats for faculty and staff. This proposal does not. Students, faculty, and staff make up the VSC. They all belong in places where decisions are being made. Allowing them to voice opinions and ignoring all of them does not count. 3) This proposal does not address unlimited VSAC portability. Millions of dollars in state grants leave Vermont each year. No other state allows unlimited use of such grants for higher ed outside of the state. Finances are the biggest issue here, so why wasn't VSAC portability addressed?

1Unfortunately, I'm not sure it's realistic to expect increased state funding.

I fear that CCV will continue to be seen as the 'cost-effective' solution to the state's education challenges, without recognition of the work Castleton, NVU and VTC have done to strengthen options and develop curriculum. There is a serious risk that online options will be given more attention and support, neglecting that many Vermont students have been deprived of in-person instruction for more than a year and that some materials and classes really do need to be face-to-face and hands-on. The Chancellor's office has never resulted in the cost savings, efficiencies, or coherent guidance promised. It is 2021 and I am still hearing from VSC students that it is difficult to transfer credits between some of our 'sibling' institutions! Handing the Chancellor's Office the reins for a new program will only repeat the mistakes of the past. I am genuinely convinced that leadership has, at best, a vague idea of what 'the distinct attributes and strengths of CU, NVU, and VTC' are. I can get a better answer to this question from most Vermont high school students, including those who wish to attend college out of state. Taking this proposal at face value risks further hollowing out of the depth and uniqueness of the programs of our Vermont State Colleges in pursuit of a vague idea of 'efficiency.'

Vermont's decline in population may be too difficult to overcome in terms of future enrollment and sustainability, regardless of the transformative changes we make.

I don't see any strength in keeping failing northern campuses alive with the one vibrant campus of CS

N/A

While not actually a weakness, I think we would be wise to acknowledge the limits of the proposal. Though the proposal is comprehensive, it is not and cannot be detailed. The system will be challenged in many ways to implement the proposal. This proposal is certainly more comprehensive than the pre work that went into the LSC/JSC merger, but I think it's important to acknowledge that the merging of the three schools will need to happen more quickly and deeply than the NVU creation. I am also cognizant of the need for a significant increase in state support. As far as I can tell, even with the innovations suggested by the report, we cannot keep all of our institutions open at our current level of state support. That ask has been out there for the legislature for many years - I worry that even if the legislature comes up with the year one bump that it will eventually either go back down or not keep pace with need.

What do you see as the weaknesses of this proposal?

While I understand the very valid reasons for keeping CCV as its own institution while merging Castleton, NVU, and VTC, I feel like it doesn't make sense to have a higher education system that is comprised of only two institutions. That seems like an extra layer of administration for just two institutions – there would still be three separate administrations (two presidents, one chancellor). Why bother having a system if there are only two institutions? Furthermore, with just two institutions in the VSC system, it further promotes the inequity between CCV faculty and other full-time faculty. The CCV business model does keep costs down, but it does this by denying its faculty similar benefits and rights that other VSC faculty have. Having a two-institution system strongly sends the message that faculty are valued at four-year institutions (the new Vermont State University), but not CCV. I believe that CCV should either be a stand-alone institution OUTSIDE the VSC system or else it should be part of the new institution, and its faculty should receive the same benefits. If we are a true system, not a confederation of institutions, then all faculty would have the same rights. It seems so inequitable to me to say that we're all part of the same system, but one institution gets to have a really different business model. CCV prides itself on being different from the other VSC institutions – a different business model, a different demographic, etc. This is true, and CCV has had some amazing successes. But if CCV is so different, why are we trying to fit them into the VSC system at all? My fear is that CCV will always see itself as an exception and won't truly be part of new system-wide transformation. I should note that I really value my CCV colleagues, the strategic vision of CCV, and CCV's commitment to students, so I don't want this to come across as critical of CCV. It is an equity issue for me.

This proposal keeps 3 universities when we only can afford and need 2. By doing this we make the VSC system weaker in the long term. Keep and invest in 2 VSC to make them better plus CCV.

- A strengthened Chancellor's Office could be an asset. However, when combining administrative functions, the system should make sure that it is not solely focused on what is going to yield the greatest savings. Instead it should be looking at what makes sense and what is going to actually yield a more streamlined entity and not instead cause further conflict and confusion. - I appreciate the attention and acknowledgement that's been paid to how difficult this transition will be. But, even then, it is going to be ugly and very painful for some colleagues we've had in the system for a long time. I hope we can understand the knowledge that may be leaving the system in the near future AND realize the practical and political costs that go along with that.

The system should be re-named - Vermont State University System [VSUS] which should include CCV, Castleton University, and Northern Vermont University [with VTC absorbed into NVU], and then a VSU Online I think clumping NVU, Castleton and VTC into one university with one name is going to damage all of them. I can see combining NVU and VTC because NVU already consists of two sites, adding a 3rd will help VTC and strengthen NVU. But you should leave Castleton University as separate. Then the Vermont State University System will be CCV, CU, and NVU. It will just be confusing to people if you change too much.

It was very disruptive when Lyndon State College and Johnson State College merged. It will take time for the VSC to heal from any significant change to the system.

I'm not sure combining VTC in with CU and NVU is the right move. While VTC does offer baccalaureate degrees, it is still thought of as a primarily two-year institution and that is where the bulk of enrollment still is, especially due to the high cost VTC when they can get a job right after two years. I like the design of a three college system; combining CU & NVU, keeping VTC and CCV separate. If there needs to be just a two college system, then I would suggest combining VTC and CCV to concentrate on sub-baccalaureate, workforce development opportunities, as well as more collaboration with VT CTE programs. I didn't see much in regards to seeking other diverse uses of underutilized facilities, i.e. can empty residence halls, or other spaces be used for other areas of the State in need of increased support - such as mental health, corrections, etc. We need to have more collaboration amongst other state supported areas. I'm even concerned that CCV might have expanded too much in their physical property purchases. I've also been concerned about the expansion of the VTC Williston Campus especially for duplicative programming. Was there mention of physically moving the system office to other VSCS locations? Also, UVM was mentioned many times, but I didn't see any reference to what UVM's opinion was? Are they even inclined to discuss various options which might involve them?

CCV should be allowed to start offering bachelor's degrees too. There are many areas of the state not served by CU/NVU/VTC with a campus to offer classes that appeal to students. Why do students in areas have to commute to Castleton or way up north to get a bachelor's degree in majors that VTC does not offer degrees? Also, why should you be sending CU or NVU faculty across the state to instruct when CCV has very well qualified persons. Start offering bachelor's degrees at a cost effective means, you are pushing students to New Hampshire, Mass, and NY to get a bachelor's degree. There are too many deans or associate deans in this plan, especially at CCV. There has been a steady decline of students in Vermont, yet all these colleges keep adding administrative personnel, starting laying some of them off and cut spending.

Possible over-expansion of the chancellor's office.

Insufficient attention to Vermont secondary school students, especially those from the Northeast Kingdom. Encouraging and incentivizing their enrollment in the VSC system will benefit the students, who might not otherwise attend college; the VSC institutions; and regional economies and communities.

The end of high quality technical post secondary education at VTC.

What do you see as the weaknesses of this proposal?

Everything. In the real world you do not drain resources from a successful operation to prop up failing operations. There are fewer college-aged students in our state and therefore there should be fewer colleges in our system. If you look at the trends, this is not changing for the next 10 to 20 to 30 years. Delaying the inevitable only hurts the successful institutions of CCV and Castleton and asks the taxpayers to take on the burden of failure.

VSAC is exporting tax dollars from VT to other states. This is more than "highly unusual"; it's criminal. This must absolutely be overturned. If you want the youth to stop leaving the state, stop enticing (and paying for them) to do so!

My takeaways thus far leave me with the following concerns: 1) CCV's adjunct-based model may be affected; I do not see clear evidence from the proposal that CCV's adjunct model would be preserved. 2) I also do not see clear evidence from the proposal indicating that CCV will not be sharing, somehow, in the existing and potential worsening of the financial burden of the other schools.

CCV and Vermont Tech share a library - all of the VSC libraries have different electronic resources and different staffing structures. None of the libraries are fully staffed at present and Vermont Tech is the only institution with a Library Director. The leadership seems to be under the misconception that these libraries can be merged or consolidated and that doesn't seem feasible without a substantial increase in funds for staffing and resources. The work needed to consolidate the libraries can't be done without managers and adequate professional leadership. New leaders can't be hired because current salaries aren't competitive and job descriptions haven't been updated (for some, since 1997). The administrators seem to be under the impression that the "Hartness" model can be applied over the larger system and that is unrealistic.

1. Its nod towards stakeholders is seems to be nothing more than window dressing. For instance, they never even mention the Uniting Vermont report. It's clear that the only stakeholders they actually respond to are the trustees, the chancellor's office, CCV, and VSAC. 2. It provides no reason for keeping CCV separate, for maintaining the chancellor's office, for continuing VSAC portability. Basically, it advocates something much too close to the status quo. 3. Its financial analysis is very broad brush. It discusses overall costs but never analyzes the different categories of costs: instruction, administration, etc. By doing so, they can avoid the elephant in the room, which is that the VSC's high costs are largely driven by excessive administrative costs. 4. It offers no specific suggestions for reducing administrative costs, though it is very specific about ways of reducing instructional costs. It should be noted that instructional costs are close to the national average for similar institutions, while administrative costs are far above average. 5. It does very little to reduce excessive bureaucracy. 6. It does nothing to reduce the extreme favoritism shown towards CCV; if anything, it makes it worse. 7. It does nothing to stem the flow of taxpayer funds to private and out-of-state colleges. 8. It presents only an illusion of reform, leaving in place the causes that have led to the financial emergency in the state colleges.

Castleton University will lose its successes to NVU's failures.

n/a

The leadership having too much on their plates. And perhaps a little confusion to people at the beginning.

Not enough consolidation.

It will cost more. It will duplicate expenses. It will reinforce disparity of access to higher ed. There will be two tracks of students; those who can access the community college and those that can access a Bachelor level degree. Inequality, lack of access.

I do not agree that Castleton University should merge with any of the VSC. I believe (with the exception of CCV) they have been the strongest institution. It makes no sense for the debt of the other declining colleges, to affect Castleton. Furthermore, losing the branding of the Castleton name, would not be beneficial to that school, State of Vermont or the town of Castleton. I do not see where merging two struggling colleges will save them both. Closing one MIGHT save the other. I realize we are late on that option, that should have happened at the time it was first proposed. Coordinating Administrative services- might be a big mistake. Take a look at how effective the Central office taking control of Accounts Payable and Payroll, to see how that still has issues. Was it really a cost saver? For students to invest money in attending college, they MUST have job opportunities available once they complete their degrees. There needs to be an increase in career development on each campus.

The VSC and all the institutions, regardless of restructuring, still need investment from the state. I hope that the board of trustees will continue to push hard for fair funding from the state government. We will do our part, and they must do theirs.

I believe the most significant weakness of this plan is the lack of consolidation of the Chancellor's Office in Montpelier. Although many of the staff who performed functions such as accounts payable, accounts, receivable, have been moved to the Chancellor's office, in this virtual world, there is no reason those staff can't be moved back to the campuses. I don't believe there is a need to have a chancellor and four presidents when the number of students is so small. This could eliminate the rent now being paid in Montpelier. Also, the CCV campuses that are near 4-year campuses could share space by moving onto those campuses.

What do you see as the weaknesses of this proposal?

Potentially less resources to go around, given the idea that we should be leaner.

rebranding CU,NVU and VTC into a new entity will be very expensive, both in terms of actual dollars and in personnel costs. We also risk losing the support of our two biggest constituencies: our alumni and our local communities. Our alumni are loyal to a specific institution not to the VSC system. Why would they want to donate to a system when it is clear that the State of Vermont has not been contributing its share to their alma maters all these years?

The weakness is getting over the ridiculous notion that CU is any better than NVU. There is a cultural barrier here that can easily be resolved through a bit of old-fashioned diversity training, ice-breaking workshops, and simply getting people together face-to-face in conversations. We have much more in common than we know. Let's work together and combine our assets!

While leading change can be a challenge, the loss of academic institutions committed to helping students develop career skills in Vermont's northern corners would be detrimental to our communities. One biggest obstacle will be marketing and changing the narrative of the VSCS. This may include re-branding and public relations. Additionally, buy-in from faculty and staff across campuses will be a challenge. Unifying systems and programs needs to happen though this will be a challenge. The timeline of a full unification needs to be very realistic.

No cost savings. No recognition VT's demographics do not support four residential colleges. No evidence that state funds will be allocated per student, not by an arbitrary and out-moded formula. No recognition that Castleton is the only viable institution of the three. No indication the needs of the southern 2/3 of the state are being taken into account. Keeping the chancellor's office in the north (Montpelier) when CU in the south is what is sustaining the whole system.

Some of the current programs that are run in central office such as payroll and benefits and HR - create a feel of isolation and disconnection on the college campuses. I would not want this to spread to other departments because someone outside a college campus is not considering the impact of policies and procedures on the real time college practical application and usage. Athletics is a core recruitment and retention driver on all 3 of those campuses, and should remain so.

That VTC won't be a stand-alone institution.

The process to combine the campus schools, and restructure the system as a whole will be a lengthy process. How will communities that depend on student population continue to be well served?

The need to rely on additional funds from the State.

I do not see weaknesses of this proposal when compared to the other suggestions for restructure.

There is a possibility that the restructuring overwhelm the other three institutions and cause greater damage. The questionable length of time it will take for the VSCS to recoup lost funding as a result of merging.

The first weakness is that this proposal does not address the financial and budgetary crisis. There are no hard decisions being made to address them like relocating NVU to one campus and consolidating their staff, faculty and administration. They are 2 institutions an hour apart and 1 alone can address the accessibility of higher education in northern part of the state. Castleton does it in the south so why can't 1 do it in the north. The proposal also relies on the assumption the state will come up with tens of millions of dollars to support a system which it can't financially. The VSC system is the Titanic and it is going down. You can make the choice of either putting 25 people in a lifeboat and save them or jamming 75 in that same lifeboat and watching it sink 2 hours later because it can't support that many people. The second weakness is having 1 president, 1 Dean of Enrollment, 1 Dean of Administration as well as other administrative positions for the entire system. One of the strengths of small colleges like those in the VSC is the accessibility to these people. For example since the VSC moved some of its financial services to the Chancellors office, the red tape has increased, accessibility to information decreased and the ease of getting things done disappeared. This will be no different in this case. Seeing the President at sporting events, plays, lectures and even around campus is a plus at these institutions. This visibility will be gone. With the proposal including keeping both NVU campuses open and the Chancellors Office remaining in Montpelier (or moving to one of those campuses), the assumption, reality and human nature says that NVU will be served better than Castleton due to proximity which is a detriment to CU, its students, faculty and staff. The third weakness of the proposal is that it is clearly skewed towards saving NVU-Johnson and VTC without a thought at what it will take away from Castleton. Long before the merger of Johnson & Lyndon, Castleton was thriving and moving forward while those campuses struggled with enrollment, retention and improving their physical campuses. There has been no attempt to do any of this so why do those institutions now get the benefit of a plan that will relieve them of their responsibility of working to make themselves better. They want someone to bail them out and this proposal does it. In the end people did not like what Chancellor Spaulding proposed 2 years ago and it cost him his job. But, the numbers supported that hard decision that this proposal does not address in my opinion.

What do you see as the weaknesses of this proposal?

-

The real problem is two-fold = lack of funding, and fewer college age students in our area. I don't see how re-organizing the VSC does anything to solve either problem. As an administrator at CU commented, not addressing these two problems directly is a waste of our time, energy, and resources.

I answered this yesterday.

Too many to list and the high cost of this analysis done from a BUSINESS perspective. Students are not widgets. The last thing needed is another layer of administration.

The time, energy, and resources needed to invest in these changes will potentially detract from other responsibilities.

-It keeps CCV separate. This will hinder system-wide integration and collaboration (which, among other issues, will negatively affect students moving from CCV to one of the four-year campuses, and will intensify competition for students within the VSCS). It will also require two separate administrative structures. -It does not include faculty and staff in the true decision-making process. The governing board needs to really foster shared governance, which can only be done by including all stakeholders. -It recommends expansion of management functions. Currently the system is top-heavy in executive/management sector compared to institutions of our size and nature in other states. -It does not address the millions of tax dollars that are annually sent out of state due to the unrestricted portability of VSAC funds. -It is still in draft form.

Identity being taken away as each school has their own brand and sense of community. I feel with only one system, this will be taken away. I can only speak on my experience of working for Castleton University- Castleton has grown and has really stood out from the rest of the colleges. Students come to Castleton University because of the people, the location, the atmosphere and the feel of a small university and not a system where they feel like a number.

I do not see how this proposal is going to save enough money to make all the institutions strong in the long run. I believe we need to reduce our footprint with property and building, maintenance, etc and I believe reducing the northern part of the state to one campus will help save a greater amount of money. We are not going to get the funds we asked the state for and as a taxpayer I don't want the state to give as much as we've requested. I don't believe we are making the hard decisions that need to be made.

Not sure that even with all this disruption that whatever is left will be sustainable. Do the new ideas/opportunities add up to enough to offset the demographic downturn now & in the future? There doesn't appear to be any evidence provided of how much savings can be expected from administrative consolidation. Do we know how to "right-size" the workforce and still fulfill all the goals and provide all the educational services outlined in the plan? By trying to maintain facilities all over the State are we just going to drag the whole system down?

You did not include the proposal by the Labor Task Force committee. The trustees cannot possibly understand the individual and unique contributions of the campuses as they never have come and met with faculty, staff, students to have impromptu conversations such as by dining in Huden with them. They arrive, go to their meeting location, and depart.

To be honest, NVU is failing. Castleton, while it's had its fair share of difficulties, is doing much better than all of the other schools. This proposal has no benefits to Castleton specifically, and will, I fear, ultimately bring us all down. Unifying is not the answer. Having one President preside over 4 very different and very far away campuses, simply will not work. We are a place of human connection. We need actual people here to provide that service. When we unified the Accounts Payable and Payroll offices, we lost some very valuable people. Whereas before we could see an actual person and get an answer right away, now we have to submit electronic requests and wait for answers. Sometimes those answers require more discussion, and back and forth we go. The rollout of that merger was terrible for Castleton. This proposal seeks to have the Legislature give us even more money, and when they refuse, then what? We do it anyway, and cut a bunch more jobs? We are struggling to keep up as it is with all the cuts done before. We need to keep the people we have. There has to be a better way!

The focus on continued growth of administration and a central-office. We are already an extremely top-heavy organization, as staff and faculty units have already been cut significantly over the past decade, while executive and upper-level administration has increased. The lack of consideration of faculty and staff input, and most decisions are being made by folks who are not on the ground, nor have experience as educators. This has not been a truly collaborative process, which greatly limits trust and buy-in from the people that have to work harder and harder to keep the system alive. Not a winning combination! This proposal needs to pivot and consider all stakeholders, so we can win this together.

See my previous response.

What do you see as the weaknesses of this proposal?

One weakness I have already mentioned--the overuse of Zoom and hybrid classes. Another is that the proposal does run the risk of undermining the culture of the three colleges and destroying the community of faculty, staff, students, alumni, and local supporters who are devoted to the colleges and want them to flourish. Castleton makes a considerable amount of money from its fundraising. The donors think the money will go to Castleton students and programs. I wonder whether they will continue to donate at the current level if they think their gifts will not go directly to Castleton. Also, what will happen to varsity sports teams? To student governments? To student publications? The list is endless. I am impressed by these remarks made on p. 31 of the interim report: Keeping the three institutions separate "is likeliest to assure the preservation of unique institutional characteristics and cultures, and may appear to be least disruptive or threatening to the communities and regions that host existing VSC campuses, But it must otherwise be just as transformative in nature; even if institutions themselves are not consolidated, their academic programs and administrative services must be." I very much agree with these remarks. It seems wiser to try this approach first before implementing the more drastic approach of creating a new institution. As the therapists like to say, it is very difficult to unscramble the egg.

One obvious weakness is that this transformation will require that the state make a larger commitment to the VSCS than it has in previous years, and at a time when the budget is already extremely tight.

I've taught lots of people in lots of places (in Vermont and elsewhere around the country), and I can honestly say CCV students are a unique bunch who respond well to the academic culture CCV has developed over the decades. Some of these students would do well in any academic environment, but the majority wouldn't be as successful in a different, less locally available environment. CCV is all about helping these students prepare for the rigors of the professional programs other state institutions do such a fine job of delivering. Watering down this carefully targeted experience would lead to less initial student success and ultimately fewer Vermont students enrolled at the state colleges and university.

Not enough savings to ensure long-term thriving or even survival of too many campuses given demographics and continual loss of students in at least one of the colleges. Weakening of personal attention to students, a key reason for their choice to attend these colleges. Mass defection of students if academic programs need to be combined and they need to attend remotely.

A total disregard for any input from the stakeholders affected by this proposal. This is a business proposal and not a proposal that addresses the educational needs of Vermonters. Emphasis on online learning. Try talking to your grandchildren and see how much they have liked it during this pandemic. While some online learning is valuable to adult learners who need flexibility, we should not become New Hampshire University (online money maker)

I am concerned that keeping both of the NVU campuses open is going to endanger the system as a whole. With enrollment declines and demographics I don't think it makes sense. Students who need to remain at home while taking classes have other options with CCV satellite campuses and a greatly expanded online catalog. I'm worried that we will spend a lot of money on the consolidation only to find in 3 years that we are under enrolled and need to make cuts/close a campus again. It is dragging out something that I think is necessary and inevitable. I am also worried that Castleton may be forced to change how we do some things to fit with the system model when from what I can see Castleton has the best enrollment and is the most viable standing alone right now. That tells me that we do a lot of things the right way and I am concerned that the merger may strengthen VTC and NVU while weakening Castleton.

*Proposed Name Change will confuse the marketplace *More reliance on more virtual learning and less in person interaction; Virtual learning is NOT the future of the Education system *Inability to recruit particular student-athletes if program consolidation results in virtual learning *Relationship loss on each particular campus. Having to report to someone else on a physically different campus *Lack of any case studies that have accomplished a similar change and success of new model

In my opinion, I think that rebranding isn't going to bring us together as a unified system like we think it will. I think that it is a lot of money to put on the table to rebrand that we don't have. We are already in debt so why continue to put us further in debt? We already aren't united as a system and I don't believe a name update is going to help that. I think we need to come together as institutions and start working together before exploring a name change. We look down on one another when all of us are really strong! For example, we should all have the exact same tuition, room, board, and student fees. We should all have the same scholarship opportunities for students. Why are we trying to compete against ourselves when we could work together to shine?

Relies to heavily on increased State investment and doesn't go far enough to cut footprint

The proposal to retain VSC infrastructure as it currently exists under a single administrative entity is a political solution which fails to address the underlying causes of the VSC financial situation. The proposal retains its current infrastructure. An infrastructure which requires significant investment to address delayed maintenance and the ongoing maintenance needs of the infrastructure. Bluntly, the VSC cannot afford to maintain four campuses. The proposal fails to incorporate the reality of the decreasing population of individuals between the ages of 18 to 24. At

What do you see as the weaknesses of this proposal?

What will need to happen to make this plan successful is a reinvention of the 4-year institutions of the VSCS. CCV, with additional funding and support, will continue to effectively serve Vermonters through developing college level skills, preparing students for transfer or the workforce, etc. But, the other VSCS schools have a much steeper hill to climb – the historical challenges associated with the VSCS 4-year institutions are not going away. Vermont still does not receive adequate funding from the state, faces a decreasing population, etc. What I don't see in this plan is how to market the VSCS schools to out-of-state students, which will be needed, or a clear delineation on how to attract students to the residential campuses. In short, how will the VSCS convince an 18 year old to spend their college years in Lyndon? Or Randolph? Or, why would a 30 year old make a career change and not use an online competitor? I recognize these are tough questions to answer but a good plan for the VSCS must include considerations like this to have a viable future.

Unless VSAC loan and grant portability is reduced, giving them additional funds is not guaranteed to help the system. Direct aid to the campuses to lower tuition would be more effective. Although I am agnostic on the issue of CCV being administratively separate, they need to become more academically integrated with the VSC. There needs to be a two-way conversation on how to better align their curriculum and courses with other VSC institutions. Furthermore, the system needs to ensure that academic quality is the same across the VSC, that students achieve the same outcomes from the same courses regardless of where they are taught. If there are only going to be two VSC institutions, I'm not sure I see the need for the position of Chancellor to oversee two presidents. This report reads as one where the faculty perspective is missing. There is little acknowledgement of the difficult circumstances VSC faculty members are operating under and the number of tasks we are asked to accomplish. As a full-time faculty member, I am expected to teach 8 classes a year, stay current in my field of instruction, keep up to date on best practices of teaching and usage of instructional technology, try to make my courses accessible to new populations of students, do outreach events to market my degree program, perform academic administration tasks like assessments and curriculum planning, advise 30+ students, keep on top of retention tasks, and coordinate career opportunities for students in my program. And, for most of my years with the VSC, I had to do research or teaching during the summer for additional income because my base salary wasn't enough to make ends meet. The report makes no mention of these difficult circumstances or how change will make the situation better.

I strongly disagree with CCV being separated out from being combined with the other institutions. I (and many others) believe a huge amount of savings can be obtained in using CU, NVU, VTC campuses by embedding CCV courses within them. Closing some CCV sites and using others as satellite sites for all of the VSCS would be a smart move. CCV's mission should be integrated within all of the institutions, which would lead for an easier way for students to transition beyond certificate and associate degrees into 4-year degree and beyond encouraging students to move along if they so desire. If all the systems were melded together in the VSCS a strong union it would be!

I like the current model, the biggest weakness I see is potentially mucking about with CCV. Let CCV do what CCV do and help make the VSCS stronger.

Monoculture. A single board with a single vision may not be the good thing you propose it to be. In fact, it could impair innovation and differentiation, and put these Vermont schools at a huge disadvantage to out of state colleges that can act more incisively to competitive challenges and emerging trends. At best, you rob Castleton and NVU of their distinct institutional identities to achieve a more coordinated educational response. At worst? You end up with cookie-cutter institutions that look and act like franchises. I don't think anyone wants Vermont to be the McDonalds of higher education. But that's a real possibility here.

See above. Proposal too narrow and short-term in focus. Silo thinking at this stage — especially as UVM is now also showing financial strains and cutting programs — is not helpful to creating a long-term solution.

- What role will the Chancellor's office serve? If we're going to keep this extra organization, I would expect them to do more to align courses, programs, and pathways; improve training for faculty and staff; and be a better advocate for the VSCS students. - Potential for continued competition between the two schools.

What do you see as the weaknesses of this proposal?

The proposal suffers from the unfortunate limiting language of the charge which defines the future as a "workforce-connected future," a future focused on economic needs rather than human needs and the needs of the planet. This limited vision poisoned the well and undermined the potential of the process. We would be looking at a qualitatively different report had the charge been to consider a human-centered future. My response to the interim report of Select Committee on the Future of Higher Education in Vermont charged with "addressing the urgent needs of the Vermont State Colleges (VSC) and developing an integrated vision and plan for a high-quality, affordable, and workforce-connected future for higher education in Vermont." While the ambiguity of the terms "high-quality" and "vision" as they relate to the purpose of higher education are open to interpretation and debate, the narrowly defined future as one being "workforce-connected" is the most concerning and restrictive assumption of the Committee's charge. The separate and urgent need for affordability should be clear to everyone. There is much to be admired and carefully considered in the report's findings and recommendations. My concerns have to do with the assumptions and restrictions built into the charge as given to the Committee and the resulting narrow interpretations of state and student "needs" as they relate to the larger purpose of higher education. The report interprets the higher education "needs" of the state with terms such as "workforce development" and "meeting the needs of employers." The report similarly interprets "learner needs" as preparing students for the "world of work" as "skilled labor" with "stackable credentials." While a mission of workforce development is fitting for VTC, and "a greater focus on workforce-relevant education and training" may well be appropriate for CCV, I believe it is the wrong emphasis for the remaining institutions (CU and NVU), regardless of how they may be configured in the future. While the ambiguity of the terms "high-quality" and "vision" as they relate to the purpose of higher education are open to interpretation and debate, affordability is clearly the most "urgent need" to be addressed. In fact, there is plenty of evidence that individual institutions within the VSCS have a track record of delivering high-quality education. Pragmatic Vermonters understand the wisdom behind the concept, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." The problem needing fixing is one of affordability, and the primary cause is clearly evidenced by the simple line graph in Fig.26 on page 67 depicting the respective Share of Public Higher Education Operating Revenue for both families and the state. Over three decades from 1988 to 2018 the burden of family share increased from 60% to 87% while the state share decreased from 40% to 13%. We can debate what each "fair share" should be, but it's important to note that Vermont ranks lowest in the country for investment in higher education.

The weakness comes from not wanting to make the tough call as to which school to close. The best opportunity comes from closing the Lyndon location because you could sell it to Lyndon Institute and still have the income draw to the town while expanding their high school programs across the world. Then provide scholarships and transportation to Johnson or CU but the students are shrinking and the colleges are not so we need to use the data to make the tough call. CCV has always been independent and money making and VTC has strong workforce and Technical programs. These two colleges stand on their own merit and should be left to continue doing what they do best flexing to serve the students and are student driven. CU and NVU are faculty focused not student focused and it shows. They are rapidly losing students because they are out of touch with who they are serving and they do not have the nimble flexibility of CCV or VTC. I have been a student at LSC and JSC and CCV and my daughter graduated from VTC I speak from experience when I say CCV and VTC have it together and they put students before anything else.

Limiting any educational opportunities in any way is a bummer.

Given the climate we are in I am only focusing on the strengths.

Reliance on the State to provide more funding than ever before, during a pandemic, when our state revenues are down. Continuing to have a Chancellor's office and the costs associated with that.

It sustains the existing competition between CCV and the other 4-year institutions, which would now be one other 4-year institution, for students in their 1st and 2nd years of college. Unless the change results in lower costs of attendance, it will not change our future much.

Consolidation of CU, NVU-Lyndon, NVU-Johnson and VTC should be a careful and considered path. Each of these institutions have their own legacies, which are held in high regard by alumni. It is critically important that any consolidation be mindful of these individual legacies. VSCS should take great care to honor these individual legacies on each campus in very visible and meaningful ways. As an example, a unified calendar produced for NVU-Lyndon and Johnson in 2020, which is distributed largely to alumni, met with great resistance. Lyndon and Johnson alums felt as though half the photos used in those calendars did not apply to them. Lyndon alums did not recognize Johnson scenes, and Johnson alums did not recognize Lyndon scenes. Anecdotally, a few alums told me they wouldn't be hanging the 2020 calendar. I see that as a marketing failure that shouldn't be repeated.

System wide approaches and leadership will be very difficult to carry out successfully.

Potential loss of identity for current institutions. In-fighting among the VSC institutions.

The funding from the state of VT. I personally do not believe that they are going to give us more.

What do you see as the weaknesses of this proposal?

My concern is that the new university would not address on the primary issues which has led to the current financial crisis, namely, the uneven and unfair distribution of funding. Castleton has, and likely will continue to have, an unfair advantage due to the political connections it has used from the time David Wolk became it's president. NVU and VTC, coming from less powerful political regions, have suffered. Castleton got funding for a football stadium while Johnson and Lynson (now NVU) were in need of dorms and classroom space renovations.

This proposal lacks imagination. It also is not centered on students and recruitment -- a key problem in this system. It does not really address student retention. It does not address keeping young people in Vermont after they graduate from high school and college.

Honestly, the Chancellors office, if it's still going to exist, should replace a lot of the SENIOR admin at the other colleges, otherwise... why is it there?

New Long term and annual funding strategies and getting more local elected people on the VSC boards.

I do not think it makes sense to lump VTC, Castleton and NVU together. NVU and Castleton make sense. VTC is not a similar institution. VTC should be a stand alone technical college as CCV is different. You are not comparing apples to apples with VTC in relation to NVU and Castleton.

lack of support from state

Like the dissenters said, it will severely damage the rural communities surrounding NVU and VTC. Perhaps the best hope there would be to turn the campuses into housing. There is strong potential for government mismanagement with no accountability if this is done, but I see no alternative unless you can find a tech giant that wants to build a corporate and housing campus.

None. Combine these three traditionally residential four-year liberal arts colleges into one. It makes perfect sense. Keep VTC as the "engineering/technical college" in the state, and keep CCV as the "community college" in the state (but do have some guaranteed transfer pathways from CCV to VTC, particularly in STEM/CIS degree pathways). It makes perfect sense. Sell VTC as "the engineering college option" in Vermont. Plump out VTC's four-year engineering programs to make them more competitive with UVM and possibly even other competing engineering colleges like MIT and Clarkson. Make it respectable and not a "fall back option" for students wanting to become engineers. Make VTC "the" college to "aim for" in the state by making it rigorous and respectable, and the students will come, the reputation will grow, and the profits will follow. These other liberal arts colleges should just be side projects, options for kids that don't really have what it takes to succeed in STEM: STEM is where the future is, where the jobs are, and where the focus needs to be.

Chancellors Office needs to be downsized. We are administratively top-heavy. This is not addressed. Idea of a two-university system (CCV and VT "U")... you will not get buy in from the individual campuses, as there is no guarantee this will improve student success or quality of teaching. Delivery systems... No capacity to meet the technology needs of all Vermont residents. Ask any instructors about the technology challenges learners face during the pandemic. No reliable wifi, trying to learn by phone. State needs to address these factors.

The identity loss of the respective three institutions. Having gone through this at NVU, I can report that working in one of the well-known professional programs that merging campuses was frankly dumb with respect to losing our brand identity. I think the same caution is in order with such a "unification" of three institutions. We should not focus on re-creating a new brand/name like we have at NVU at the expense of forgetting your story with quality high-touch experiential programs that make us unique.

Potential loss of identity at CU, NVU and VTC. Students still need to feel a connection to their chosen institution and be able to recognize its strengths.

Lack of specificity.

Read my proposal.

I still have concerns about the cost of multiple locations.

Will the legislature provide the needed funding? Does the board have the stomach to make the hard decision to disappoint some people by bringing three colleges into one single college with locations in lots of places?

What do you see as the weaknesses of this proposal?

VTC is a different entity than NVU and CU and will be difficult to go to a single accreditation. I don't like the idea of one President, as it takes away from the visibility on each campus and there is a ton of administrative work that is done at each location. Eliminating competition between administrations and faculty is important, however. My biggest concern is that this plan does not begin to address the huge financial deficit, and it seems as if no one is willing to make the hard decisions that should have happened last year. We don't need two locations in the northern part of the state and the consolidation between JSC and LSC didn't go far enough. Combining CU with those two seems only to compound the problem.

One weakness is that it requires the board and the legislature to set long-term goals and investments in the VSC, something they have been unwilling to do in the past. It also extends the time frame for this process and as the 4 residential schools have dire financial situations, it risks dragging CCV down, the one institution that has a balanced budget and is meeting its mission. Additionally, an inherent weakness is that this asks leaders at the 4 residential VSC institutions to make very hard choices for the future of the VSC and that requires a level of bravery and leadership that we have yet to see.

Loss of identity of the institution that you go to school at.

Consolidating NVU, Castleton, and Vermont Tech spells doom for the Vermont College System, and that is not hyperbole. The combination of the aforementioned schools is only a continuation of the destruction of that system. Without unique programs and curriculum, students do not have expanded choices, despite what is spelled out in the plan. A lack of wide spanning and unique curriculums from school to school only gives students more reason to go to another state to access higher education. If a student does not like the curriculum offered in Johnson, they do not have the opportunity to go elsewhere in the state for a different experience. This will cause the student to go elsewhere to seek education. Lower enrollment will ensue and closures will commence. There is no benefit to a student choosing a school and they will simply be choosing because of the location (ie. Vermont) rather than the substance. That is not a recipe for higher enrollment. This is a gross display of negligence and laziness that the VSCS has continued to display. The lack of effort and knowledge on how to move forward has been revealing.

Not clear on campus directions

A weakness would be the loss of the nature and culture of the individual campuses including the loss of choice and diversity for incoming students. With a single governing board, this could easily turn into a disaster similar to Act 46 when many towns lost control of their schools. I would not want to see our higher education institutions in Vermont lose their individuality and students lose the equity and diversity provided in the system we already have.

My biggest concern is with the unification of any of the VSCS campuses into an institution is the rebranding strategy and lack of campus/institution pride to follow. I visited the Lyndon campus when it was still "Lyndon State College," and the campus pride I saw amongst my soon-to-be peers was something I identified strongly with. That was a huge factor in my admission. Now, as NVU-Lyndon, I watched as the administration snuffed out the idea of campus pride in order to ensure students knew that we and NVU-Johnson were one university. Lyndon and Johnson, to my understanding, already saw each other as friendly rivals in sports competitions and as a sister school through the Vermont State Colleges System. With our unification, those feelings should have remained the same--the only change should have been on an administrative level, and gradually reflected in some of the policies we saw on both campuses. Instead, a divide was drawn between the two campuses--both student bodies having it out for the other on a personal level. Both student bodies also had (and still have) the largest grudge against administration, begging for more campus-individual identity. Both of our campuses are still recovering from this movement--incoming students see the tension between those "LSC/JSC" born and those "NVU" born. Speaking our old university identities feels like taboo instead of reflecting on our own rich history. If any level of unification happens in a similar manner rebranding wise, the very little "pride" our VSCS students have will be gone, and none of our campuses will be marketable--not with moping faces and soulless eyes everywhere. As a student who identifies with the image of the university they attend, I will sit on my knees and beg of the VSCS Board of Trustees to think very carefully about the rebranding and marketing aspects of this proposal (and any others). Please do not cause our current students and our alumni more pain and suffering than what we've already endured. I don't think I can take that...

The weakness is in the separatist view the proposal takes toward CCV, and the failure to recognize that CCV directly competes with the other institutions in the delivery of core lower-level courses that drain enrollments. Additionally, the proposal does not recognize that there is poor instructional continuity (and in many cases, low instructor expertise) within and across CCV, and a significant loss of continuity for students who then transfer from CCV to the baccalaureate institution. To address these issues, the proposal should reduce competition between CCV and other VSC institutions by developing a "FT faculty work load repository" such that faculty who are seeing declining enrollments in lower-level courses on campus that are also offered by CCV, would be provided with a "first dibs" option to teach the course in a combined format for both CCV & campus-based students. This would 1. decrease the number of sections of a course needed across the VSC/CCV system, ensure continuity of instruction by faculty with high expertise for students transferring from CCV to one of the baccalaureate colleges, 3. reduce low-enrolled courses, 4. encourage CCV students on to a baccalaureate degree, 5. reduce the destructive enrollment competition between CCV and the baccalaureate institutions.

CCV should not be a distinct institution. For one thing, that would undermine the strength I described above. For another, the split looks a whole lot like a way to continue the use of part-time faculty for economic but clearly exploitative benefits. A bad look.

What do you see as the weaknesses of this proposal?

The potential weakness of this proposal would be the failure to get rid of the previous competitiveness among each school. It is imperative for them to be seen as one entity first who work for and promote the good of all.

If you don't work hard to maintain VTC I will be seriously disappointed in the Board, it truly is a gem. It has a beautiful campus in the center of the state and Lyndon's meteorology program could be moved there and integrated into VTC. Low-residency programs (labs, I assume) are an excellent idea. I'm not sure what to do about the Willison campus, it would be a shame to have everything continue to funnel into Chittenden County and the traffic issues are already pretty bad. When you had to merge JSC and LSC, clearly that was the time to properly restructure, it was an idea that was doomed to fail. My sister graduated from NVU as an adult student, all of her classes were online and she didn't have very good advising. Castleton should become the only liberal arts state college (UVM is the state's university), with an array of online degrees. It has a proper name, a proper campus that can remain vibrant, and with good advising would be an excellent mid-range college.

• The proposed leadership model is ill-defined here. How will responsibilities be shifted? • What are the proposed burdens on faculty and staff? Entry-level faculty are already paid less than K–12 teachers in some areas. • Not sure about the language "a single governing board with strengthened oversight policies and culture"—what do you mean about "culture"? A single "culture" inevitably means the NEK and other rural areas will be minoritized out of the conversation. • Does "innovative and flexible" also include best educational practices for our populations—or is this business-speak? The latter will fail. This is a primary reason the fervor against Spaulding's 'white paper' was so pronounced.

I question whether combining these organizations will make up for shortfalls and make them truly sustainable.

See above

The continuation of the Chancellor's office. We don't need it.

There are challenges with the connection between the technical programs and the liberal arts programs. Vermont Tech and CCV have a lot in common: many academic centers throughout Vermont, a student body focused on applied learning and trades, a "non-residential/adult learner" approach to the college experience... It would be difficult to "brand" a Vermont State College that is both liberal arts/residential focused and also trade/technical/career-focused. Those are VERY different concepts in higher ed. and for potential students.

It is unlikely to have the desired outcome, long term financial stability of the VSC.

The money Castleton currently gets from grants will now be dispersed to the other facilities hence taking away from a campus that might be doing much better than other campuses. As a result, succeeding facilities might lose the money they need to keep excelling because the money is going towards others than might need it more since they aren't doing well. On top of that, having more colleges even under one name, doesn't solve the issue that there are still facilities that have to be maintained and taken care of.

Being governed by a Chancellors Office and having people not connected or invested in the colleges in charge

When Johnson and Lyndon unified, many administrators received raises which did not cut back enough of the money saved.

1. Combining CU,NVU and VTC does not address the serious underlying problem of the financial untenability of retaining Johnson as a residential campus. 2. Castleton University is a brand well known for excellence outside of Vermont and is a major draw for out of state students. 3. The proposal does not address the \$5.5 million being sent out of state by VSAC to educate Vermont residents. Vermont is the only State that does this. 4.VSC hired an out of state consultant to advise on this proposal.

CCV should be united with the other campuses, all under one accreditation. Chancellor's office should be minimized, rather than expanded. Faculty and staff should be added to the decision-making on the Board of Trustees. Term limits should be in place for board members. Decisions to eliminate programs must be based on multiple criteria, and not primarily on enrollment. VSAC portability must be limited.

With declining numbers of Vermont high school students, it seems to be short sighted and wishful thinking to realign all of the institutions in the VCS system to support only Vermont students, even if attendance of older adults could marginally increase attendance numbers at VCS institutions.

See in "comments" below

Need more data and a commitment from the state government for funding.

What do you see as the weaknesses of this proposal?

A merger will severely weaken and threaten the special character and identity of Castleton University. Castleton University (CU) is a unique institution known for: The exceptional teaching skills of its faculty. Close relationships between students and faculty. Its ability to attract out of state students, who make up 30-40% and pay higher tuition. Its success with first generation college students (70%). The pride, love and loyalty CU students and alumni exhibit toward CU. All of this will be weakened by a merger! There are NO CLEAR details or proof that the merger will lead to cost saving, in fact it rarely does!

Vermont Tech is closer to CCV than the other two institutions. The majority of the programs are associate's degrees or certifications, much like CCV. VTC is the important, direct link from high school straight to career with hands-on, applied programs. Like CCV, VTC has sites across the state. If the consultants were worried about the existential longevity of associate's programs (CCV) should all four institutions be consolidated, wouldn't that naturally include Vermont Tech as well?

The Chancellor's Office remains which is entirely unnecessary for this proposal. It will also lead to the loss of identities among the merging campuses.

Q5 - What opportunities do you see in this proposal?

What opportunities do you see in this proposal?

I see many opportunities to continue to provide quality and affordable learning opportunities for Vermonters, as well as create new opportunities (learning and working collaborations come to mind). We cannot abandon what does work well for the sake of change, but should be willing to change and adapt when appropriate. The liberal arts still provide essential skills needed to be engaged participant in our world. Another big idea I see in this proposal is the opportunity to control the cost of higher education and revisit how students pay for that education. The concept of an affordability standard, though somewhat abstract, seems to be a step in the right direction.

VSAC needs to be addressed too

I would love to see alternate governance proposals that rely on collaborative leadership among the two institutions rather than the ineffective and expensive current model of the chancellor's office.

Strict evaluation of the programs/majors/departments that cost too much and gain little interest.

Increased savings over time that will stabilize the system financially. I hope that in time this will result in lower tuition for students. The state, however, must support the state system with increased appropriations.

Change brings challenges, growth and opportunity. This proposal gives us a chance to examine our priorities, look at ourselves, our students, communities, and state, microscopically and forwardly, to celebrate what works well, to address what needs changing and to imagine and plan, with sound data, for the future educational needs of Vermont and Vermonters.

There is no better time than now to come together to intentionally design our community's future. Expanding educational opportunities for students and addressing the financial burden of college and career readiness, demands a collaborative process with community-based organizations, "anchor institutions" (colleges/universities, hospitals, businesses), to provide equity, access, and opportunity for Vermont's students. Rutland County is geographically positioned to serve its students through the Vermont State Colleges (VSC). Rutland County has a Community College of Vermont Campus, access to Vermont Technical College through Stafford Technical Center, and Castleton University. Vermont's Act 77, of 2013, mandates that sustained and trusting relationships are developed to meet the needs of students in grades 7-12 through "flexible pathways". The following VTDigger article from August of 2019, Popular early college programs put high schools in tough spots, identifies Dual Enrollment and Early College challenges for school districts. VSC's Transformation Proposal can address flexible pathway hardships. Rutland County has the highest percentage of learners accessing Vermont State Colleges, tying Orleans County, with 4.9% (Figure 12, p. 20). The opportunities provided through the Vermont State College system would be improved with stronger consideration for student access to Dual Enrollment and Early College in support of "work immersion programs such as registered apprenticeships, internships, and co-ops...supporting earn-and-learn academic programs..." (p. 86). Figure 12 (p. 20) and Figures 7 and 9 (pp. 16, 17) provide evidence for needed "work immersion programs" Rutland County. Rutland County has the second highest projected loss of working-age adults (ages 25-49) of any county in Vermont by 2030 (Figure 7, p. 16). Might the lack of Vermonters aged 25-49 years old, without an associates degree (Figure 9, p.17), be the result of not having "work immersion programs" Rutland County? Figure 44 (p. 56) recognizes degrees conferred during the 2017-18 school year from Vermont State Colleges. The absence of college and university graduates for "...in-demand jobs identified by the McClure Foundation..." (p. 56) can be addressed through the VSC's Transformation Proposal. In a VTDigger article from December of 2019, Officials weigh overhaul of tech education center structure, Dual Enrollment, Early College and Career and Technical Centers, all flexible pathways supported in Vermont's Act 77, are identified as challenging school district budgets. Vermont's State Colleges as an "anchor institution" MUST collaborate with PreK-12 education to expand educational opportunities and address the financial burden of college and career readiness. Approval of the VSC Transformation Proposal will influence equity, access, and opportunity in Vermont public education for decades.

Opportunities for strategic alignment of programs across institutions, the removing of redundancies, appropriate sizing of campuses.

Some good analysis and ideas, however, the VSC Board of Trustees needs to listen to and incorporate the concerns and feedback of the communities served by these critical institutions.

The NCHEMS proposal will move the Systems a few yards down the field toward sustainability--particularly with increased funding from the State. However, the System will remain mired in longstanding norms that disable our progress, our ability to learn as an institution, and our efficiency. The LTF proposal will move the System many more yards down that field toward more likely sustainability. This plan will significantly increase collaboration throughout the entire System, actually transforming the System into a unified Network. Like VT Public Radio and VT PBS the VSCS must join all the institutions together to increase our service for the enhancement and security of a civil society. We must, as put in the LTF proposal, Unite Vermont.

What opportunities do you see in this proposal?

Systematizing priorities and expanding on strengths of the existing institutions and programs will allow us to reach more students in ways that better meet their needs and academic goals.

consolidation of academic programs

Please see my comments below.

To think like a system.

I see opportunities for contingent faculty to gain more stability as the colleges stabilize. I see opportunities for students to access more consistent opportunities across the state.

An opportunity to focus on how to improve access to education and affordability to VT students.

An opportunity to address affordability and the pricing structure of the VSCS colleges.

NVU serves some of the state's most vulnerable students and it is vital that access to NVU's academic degree and continuing education programs be preserved for students now and into the future to both meet workforce needs and to encourage graduates to remain in Vermont.

Anything that increases the level of collaboration among the VSC schools is a positive. We have competed for resources and students for too long. There appear to be outstanding opportunities for academic program collaboration between NVU and CU in particular, as long as faculty take advantage and leadership provides for a collaborative process.

*Increase appropriations from the state.

The opportunity for the Board and VSC to take off the rose-colored glasses and face the cold, hard facts. Tough, painful decisions must be made for the health of the Mother Ship. The report and recommendations do not accomplish this. Even if the state makes the required short and long-term investment, demographic and other environmental headwinds combined with our current situation are unlikely to produce a sustainable business model for the VSC.

Please see the attached comments.

Not much in its present form, see above.

Chance to streamline overhead cost and reduce any duplication of programs in the network

The proposal provides the opportunity for discussion, which opens the door the Labor Task Force proposal. The proposal also raises the idea of combining the colleges into a single entity, as does the Labor Task Force proposal. These discussions occurring around this proposal provide the BOT with the opportunity to learn about the challenges faced by students, faculty and staff at the VSCS.

Opportunities of this proposal include bolstering CCV and maintaining its separate entity because it is so different than the other three colleges. Also, making a Vermont education more affordable.

Its a good start; but also, it is fundamentally a restatement of a 30 year predictable and predicted problem.

What opportunities do you see in this proposal?

Need to expand partnerships with businesses, and provide incentive to hire students with VSCS education as a way to keep Vermonters in Vermont. The biggest opportunity and gem in the system seems to be CCV. Moreover, how could we reduce k-12 expenses by increasing participation in Early College programs that allows high school students to graduate with a year's worth of transferable college credits so college is more affordable? Why is Early College not more widely taken advantage of? Are school districts disincentivized to inform their students of this great opportunity? Can CCV be an extension of our k-12 system? AP credits should go away in public schools. All high school graduates should be graduating with some college credits through this program, but they are not - why is that and will it be addressed? Being a Vermont institution, how can VSCS integrate and work more collaboratively with Vermont departments? For example, can the DOL help connect VSCS students with employers? Could they provide career guidance better than the career services teams at each of the VSCS schools? What other collaboration could happen between state government and VSCS?

I feel the NCHEMS proposal will continue the top down decision-making structure that currently exists.

NA

saving the communities from losing the income for local businesses.

- To be able to transform the VSCS into a destination of affordable post-secondary learning for not only Vermonters, but also for those from out of state and internationally.
- To truly transform the VSCS into a successful, nimble, multimodal (online, in-person, hybrid, varying start/end dates, outside the box) institution of higher education.

See Below

The Labor Task Force plan emphasizes the need for our legislature to restrict the use of public funds (VSAC funds) to in-state use. Unrestricted portability has led to millions of dollars leaving the state rather than attending Vermont institutions. Some of these funds, kept in-state, can also be re-directed to assist Vermont students in being able to afford to attend our state institutions.

In the VSU: Consolidate marketing, admissions, HR, and other administrative departments Form single academic departments in mathematics, science, English under a School of Arts and Sciences Combine the business departments into a single School. Combine the nursing and health professions into a single School

The next step of campus closure.

There are some good ideas around coordinating the curriculum across all campuses so that it is seamless for students to transfer credits and to take courses across campuses.

While I don't believed that it is an adequate final solution I do believe that it represents a good starting point for reimagining the system to one that serves the needs of Vermonters, attracts new students and potentially new residents and businesses to the state, and is stable and sustainable for the long term.

Money. Which should not be a deciding factor.

You may save money through the reduction in higher admin positions.... but at what cost?

I would hope that the proposal would lead to more collaboration across the campuses, more access to Vermonters, and enhanced efficiencies in administrative operations.

None

None

That the legislature has recognized the failure of the system to provide for Vermonters.

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What opportunities do you see in this proposal?

The opportunities are countless. A student-centered, affordable, flexible, financial stable, etc. organization is described. Students, employers, and the state will clearly benefit if it can be delivered as envisioned.

Miscellaneous

The proposal is right to encourage the continued development of new delivery modes, which the faculty have pioneered during the pandemic. New technologies will allow collaborations across campuses, whether or not a far-reaching merger is carried out. This should help the system to continue to find efficiencies in the future.

realign the budgets and missions of all of the state colleges to better service all students. At the moment budgets are not equal, faculty staffing is not equal, scholarships offered to students are not equal. We spend too much time, energy and dollars going after the same students. Each school needs to have the same FA packaging guidance and one can not provide great discounts then the others.

Consolidating upper level NBU positions. This has never been done in any meaningful way and this is where we can actually save money. IPEDS data indicates we are way to top heavy when compared to other comparable institutions. Many more opportunities for innovation in the Labor Task Force proposal.

This proposal can allow less administrative bloat, and an opportunity to create a new marketable university to draw in Vermonters from across the state.

I think with the benefits of technology and the many skills that the pandemic forced us to master and implement within education, we can definitely create a statewide system that can allow students to potentially take even more diverse and enriching classes regardless of where they live. I think many tasks can be streamlined for fiscal savings, efficiency and flexibility. This does require careful QUALITATIVE analysis of what is streamlined, what needs to be preserved and unique or available in person, etc...

I see opportunities for a robust system of collaboration that allows for better specialization. It will also limit competition within the state between colleges since NVU-Johnson, NVU-Lyndon, and Castleton which have pitched a similar experience for traditional age students. By shifting the model to merge the schools and identify how to create unique identities for each of the school within a shared accreditation will allow students to apply within one school and seek out different opportunities. I see better collaboration coming from this proposal that allows CCV to support enrollment at the other institution. I also see an opportunity for the VSC to do a better job of providing student services. As someone who received a BA from a college out of the system and now completing a MA from NVU, I can speak to the value of having a robust advising system. It will also allow for better staffing in certain departments that can be mysterious for students. Working in financial aid, I have had students consistently comment on how different it can be to actually develop a relationship with financial aid and connect with someone. This allows us to support students in collaboration with advisors and student services.

Greater viability for the system if this proposal and its authors look much more closely at the Uniting Vermont report submitted by the Labor Task Force (LTF). The LTF report deserves a thorough review.

Opportunities include: Elimination of duplication of program offerings. Consolidation of the physical footprint of the system. Reduction in administrative overhead costs. A rethinking of delivery due to technological advances required by the unfortunate COVID pandemic.

From the Report - This alone should justify more investment in VSC - given we have invested in recruiting workers from out of state.... what is the plan to help the 45% of high school grads that don't go into a post secondary program - making us more accessible will be key- but programs much be related to viable careers and have accelerated options. "VSC institutions play a significantly more important role, especially among first time students (Figure 11)."

Improved opportunity for students to leverage courses & programs across the system. Shared gen ed, courses, and easier access to courses across the system via increased delivery modalities will broaden access and foster continuance and persistence to graduation. Shared curriculum, shared budget/funds, and our – faculty and staff - shared talents!

The proposal provides the opportunity for all of the institutions to exist in some form. This is absolutely vital for the future of Vermont. It help help strengthen the educational needs and support economic growth, specially for rural regions.

See below

What opportunities do you see in this proposal?

strengthen Castleton's current reach

CCV has the opportunity to branch out even more into adult ed and can build stronger transfer pathways with the other colleges (or college).

It need to be clearer what this means for current staff. Will there be layoffs?

I am unsure.

There are good ideas in here. The system needs to improve portability of credits. Campuses can probably specialize somewhat. Thinking and moving forward strategically is important. Linking us to the state's economic growth plans will be huge. Brain drain is a problem. I also see major opportunities in emphasizing the value of a liberal arts education. Most employers value the so-called "soft skills" (strong speaking and writing skills, critical thinking, teamwork, etc.) that are emphasized in a liberal arts education as much as, or more than, job-specific skills (<https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/2015employerstudentsurvey.pdf>). The future is flexible, and people are much more likely to switch careers and even industries than ever before. Transferrable skills are critical. I had to explain this plenty of times to relatives who were skeptical of the value of my linguistics degree. Ironically I never really had to make the pitch to an employer. We have the opportunity to make a case for that.

There are a lot of opportunities for working together across institution to improve student experience!

Though there is a risk in combining branding/identity of Castleton, NVU and VTC, there is also the opportunity to promote a high-quality and portable education. A student who grows up in Rutland could work for a year and attend classes part-time at CCV or Castleton, and then take their credits to NVU for the following three years without transfer fees or stress. This would be a legitimate boon and convenience to the students of Vermont.

While the NCHEMS report recommends that CCV continue its focus on workforce education and training, it is also exciting to imagine the possibility of expanded baccalaureate opportunities for CCV students to seamlessly transfer into VSC on-line degree programs after earning their associate's from CCV.

We defineltly need to train young people in the technology field and the CCV consolidation will be the right environment for that.

N/A

I am thrilled to see a more directed, expansive approach to areas like workforce development and adult education. Expanding our system focus in these areas seems like a very smart approach.

I feel like so often in the VSC system we are always focused on immediate crises. All of the budget cuts over the years have left us too understaffed and overworked to be proactive, since our energies are focused on putting out the fires right in front of us. People are already working such long hours to teach and support students and to keep the business functions running; it's hard to ask anything else from people who are exhausted, burned out, and uncertain about what the future holds. But these recommendations help give us a blueprint of how to move forward. Change is scary but I think these recommendations can also bring us some hope. Especially if there would be qualified project managers hired to help implement this so it doesn't fall to people who already have so many things on their plates. It's also an opportunity to re-think how administrative functions are handled. Do we need to have a physical Chancellor's Office, for example? Probably not. As we've clearly learned during the past 11 months, people don't have to be in the same physical location to be productive. But the functions that are overseen by the Chancellor's Office definitely need to be handled in a centralized way, and I appreciate that the Select Committee recognizes this. It's exciting to think that we can rethink current ways of doing things. Giving people more flexibility, either to work from home or to work at the VSC location that is closest to their home, will really be welcomed by staff. Research is another opportunity that was mentioned in the recommendations (ie, commercialization of university research in ways designed to grow particular sectors of the economy, page 47). Very few faculty have research grants currently, and this is an area with huge potential for growth. Investing in a system-wide office of sponsored projects and more formal mechanisms for encouraging faculty to write proposals and support them when they have grants would provide a tangible return on investment. These could include a grant management system, a better way to help faculty find grants, and institutional research funds that faculty new to grants could apply for.

It seems like a compromise destine for failure.

- An opportunity to strength the system's focus on Vermonters and creating a tightly knit group of programs that are latticed and provide our market with credentials that are tangible. - The chance to create a strengthened CCV that has a sister institution that it can engage with tight program integration and increased transfer opportunities.

What opportunities do you see in this proposal?

1. I think the opportunity to dilute the impact of the separate identifies of each component of the system is spectacular. NVU has a different personality from CU. CCV is a different thing all together. 2. I think the opportunity to eliminate a top heavy administration is key. 3. The VSCS should be focusing on educating students - not organizing comedy shows and movie nights for them. Lighten up the money spent on social activities in student life and let students hang out and learn. 4. Castleton used to be the little college with the big heart. With this plan its going to be the big university with little heart.

There are opportunities for the VSC to provide more affordable higher education opportunities to Vermonters. I think keeping CCV as a separate institution is important for maintaining the flexibility of the entire VSC. If you combine CCV with CU, NVU, and VTC, you run the strong risk of losing CCV's unique adaptability to a changing educational/ workforce landscape.

Is there an opportunity at this critical time for change, to eliminate unions? The examples of some other successful state systems which combined colleges, seemed to be noted as "non-union" - and maybe that's also behind some of CCV's success? It's clear that it's time for drastic changes and why not think about elimination of unions!

A start at creating a statewide higher education system, but there are many areas under served, and other areas when they do not need NVU. We are wasting money on these NVU campuses.

The principal opportunity is the very survival of the VSCS - albeit in a transformed structure.

See suggestions, comments, ideas, below.

CCV rises in status among true believers of the doctrines promoted by the Ethan Allen Institution for the Chronically Inane.

It's time to close NVU and VTC, and put resources into CCV and Castleton. We need to right-size our number of institutions to the number of projected college-aged students in our state. For example, New Hampshire has a larger population and fewer institution in their state college system. Our mission is to educate Vermonters and if there are fewer Vermonters seeking higher education, then it makes sense to have fewer institutions.

-

None yet. I see no opportunities in any proposal that even remotely reaches into CCV's existing wellspring.

Better access to online academic support and, with a centralized brand, a more engaged student body, state-wide.

None. I see it as a serious threat. Not only will it not make the problem better, it will create the illusion that something constructive is being done, thereby allowing the legislature to continue its ongoing neglect of the VSC, while the funds they do provide will be sucked up by VSAC, CCV, and the chancellor's office, perpetuating the ongoing financial crisis while cheapening the education offered to students.

None

n/a

More people will have access to affordable high quality education from highly respected institutions. There will be a broad range of support and course options to students at a close proximity than in the past. Higher graduating rate.

Not enough to make a difference.

lacking except for those who are in the Chancellor's office and for CCV.

A common calendar, Reviewing programs with low enrollment. Adding programs where more job opportunities are.

What opportunities do you see in this proposal?

I see opportunities for integrated learning throughout the state. I see opportunities for economic development and creating consistent cohorts of skilled Vermonters in places that most need them, especially across the northern tier of the state. I see the ability for students to access a greater depth of programming, using expertise from varying campuses which before were siloed off by the separate-institution structure. I see a chance for the VSC to stop shrinking, and to grow.

The opportunities I see are in this proposal are ways to save money and lower tuition. Lowered tuition would provide a more affordable college education which over time will increase enrollment. Also opportunities for greater connection between the colleges and businesses.

More technological advancement informed by our learning re: COVID allowing for seamless transitions for students regardless of what campus they may be on at any given time.

I think this is an opportunity to clearly differentiate the offerings at CU, NVU, and VTC and look for more system-wide cost savings. If we were not competing for many of the same students, then there would be no reason not to share in promotion, and possibly even Admissions costs. The three institutions could retain their distinct cultures and identities while benefiting from cost-sharing. It is also an opportunity to force the Legislators to acknowledge that, by allowing VSAC money to be used out of state and by not allocating necessary funds to the VSC, they have contributed to this situation. Now they need to step up and help solve it.

Right now, at NVU, I offer the sole Anthropology and Sociology program (15-18 students) in the VSC. At CU, the new Applied Archeology program has 1-2 students, and the Sociology program has 10-15. If we combine our efforts, we could be one very impressive program, serving the needs of 35-50 students. I have a unique set of applied anthro courses (Medical Anth, Ecotourism, etc.) and Sociology courses (research methods/theory) that would be an asset to CU; likewise, we need to offer archeology to NVU students, which comes directly from Matt's CU program. We could be a formidable team!

-Cross-campus learning and experiences for students -Large alumni networking opportunities -continued access to all institutions -cost savings -streamlining processes across the system by learning how each campus functions -reducing duplicative systems -reduction in low-enrollment programs

It is not sustainable as proposed. The only opportunity in the proposal is that maybe logic will prevail and the proposal will be tabled or defeated.

I work in SHAPE on Johnson Campus - I collaborate some with Lyndon, but would love to see all 3 SHAPE facilities have more specific management in terms of policy, liability, usage, fee for service programming, fundraising and investment. These facilities are gems in their community and essential to the lively hood and livability in our communities. The funding continues to be cut while it should be a driver of programming and activity, but when no one is set to manage them but part time staff and full time staff with many hats such as coaching and athletics they are not used to their full potential. I see a real opportunity here to improve all SHAPE facilities with a full time regional director positions or system wide director. I see the same model could be applied to all departments as well. What is working well on one campus should work elsewhere and what we have to learn from each other is essential.

To make college more affordable.

The ability for specialization per campus locations. Would a single nursing program that is managed and delivered the same work better for the system than having two separate systems? The option to move between campuses during a program?

The spotlight that the Select Committee report has put on the solvency of the VSC System and the opportunity that provides to focus that attention on a positive way forward.

There appears to be a growing opportunity to respond to employer needs with noncredit programming, and CCV is well positioned to meet that need. There is a considerable risk that combining CCV with the other VSC institutions could serve to limit its ability to flexibly and affordably provide ongoing or expanded subbaccalaureate programming. The clarity and removal of redundancy that comes out of this proposal for students in terms of their options for higher education in Vermont is a large opportunity. The ability for CCV to more effectively partner with the VSU to serve students in their transfer needs.

The opportunity for combined efforts will allow students greater access to resources.

The only one I see is single accreditation.

What opportunities do you see in this proposal?

-

For CU, to intertwine ourselves with "a clumsy elephant that the VSC seems to want to become" will make us less agile as an institution, and perhaps threaten our chances to succeed. It is possible that being tied to campuses that are failing may pull us down as well - not nice, but true. Each of our institutions has different strengths and purposes, and serves a different population. CU is not at all like VTC, for example - which is good. Each should have the opportunity to pursue its unique individual goals. This gives Vermont students better choices. Maybe we should not all be in the same boat.

I answered this yesterday.

Consolidating administrative functions as long as it does not slow the process at the college level. .

Streamlining resources which could provide efficiencies that can translate to lower costs for the institutions and students.

-Integrate the system. -Celebrate and support the distinct culture and importance of each campus. -Face the state legislature with a unified voice to request increased annual funding -Publicly acknowledge that the current system is not serving Vermont well

To review the system and review the positions within the system. There seems to be a lot of Directors hired and with that comes a decent salary. To review employees salaries and the positions, there are some salaries that are not even at livable wage. I also think looking at a flow chart of operations and see what is working and what isn't. What systems are working, what needs to be updated..

I do see opportunities for students to take courses in any part of the state, have the same costs and awards, wherever they attend. Systems will be easier to support, Financial aid, AR, portals, etc.

We obviously have to do something; and this is something. I think there is some potential to increase college enrollment with addressing the affordability issue. Maybe we should just focus on that one thing.

All locations using same AY dates; curriculum resources, policies, etc.

See above.

The chance to take a hard look at how we operate and focus on thoughtful, data-driven restructuring. Make sure that we are offering what is needed to make education accessible to VTrs and help keep young Vermonters in the state to provide a trained and capable workforce.

See my previous response.

I have addressed this question in my answer to question one.

This is an opportunity for the VSCS to grow into a system that more accurately reflects the needs of Vermont and its students, especially amid a time of so much uncertainty.

I do not see any new opportunities for CCV students or instructors in this proposal.

More collaboration especially with Vermont Technical College, which could benefit the offerings of the other colleges.

Expansion of technical training through VTC ("trades" training) Cut athletics from one campus and consolidate into two stronger programs (why are three campuses recruiting against each other for students?) Academic programs have been told there should not be redundancy, yet athletics is redundant and not very successful.

I do see opportunities to really reimagine the system and find innovative ways to serve Vermont.

What opportunities do you see in this proposal?

Eliminating under enrolled programs makes sense Ability to offer more programs/majors but concerned about the mode of delivery for these programs; again virtual learning is NOT the future of a residential education system Elimination of overhead costs

The opportunities are a chance to find common ground, unify, and work together to best serve Vermonters and non-resident students if done correctly.

New way of looking at how we organize and deliver education

I see opportunities doomed to fail due to lack of resources because resources are expended on retaining a bloated infrastructure.

There is a real opportunity to re-write the story of public higher education in Vermont in this plan. As a high school senior myself over 24 years ago, I never considered the VSCS as an option – I wouldn't have been able to articulate this at the time but upon reflection I assumed the VSCS wasn't a great value and I never developed a connection with any of the institutions. I think this has only become more of a reality for students since that time; the state needs to have a viable public higher education system it believes in and connects with local students and communities. I truly do feel this plan is a step in that direction – an excellent community college network in every pocket of the state and online where you can then seamlessly transfer to a 4-year institution with its own specific curricular focus is a model that works in many other states and will serve Vermont well too. But, it's incumbent that we use this time effectively and change the narrative around the state college system as well as the internal financial challenges faced by the 4-year institutions.

It is possible that better alignment of curricula will occur, but merely changing the institutional structure does not ensure that will occur.

According to the plan ... which in my mind has always been the objective but not always successful is to have all campuses operating in a similar manner in the way they function. It is the hope that we can not duplicate course offerings/degree offerings too much so that we are offering a boarder spectrum of educational opportunities through out the system. (less competition with each other and more complementing each others unique offerings maybe.)

To better plan 2+2 programs, clear pathways from CCV to 4 year programs.

Cost savings. And that's it.

Why isn't Vermont proposing to follow in the steps of neighboring New York? SUNY-Albany, SUNY-Plattsburgh, SUNY-Cortland, etc.? Especially in our small state with the big cachet, why are we not studying the model of UVM-Burlington, UVM-Lyndon, UVM-Johnson, maybe even UVM-Montpelier?

- Potentially improve student access to a wide variety of courses. - Chance to re-evaluate the needs of Vermont workforce and students, reimagining program offerings.

The opportunity to think through a broader vision, a more meaningful and relevant purpose for the role of higher education to create a human-connected future. Page 20 "Structure and Mission - The recommendation that "high-quality liberal arts programming" should be aligned "more closely with the workforce needs" is troubling. The language "need not be in conflict" appears to lack an understanding of the job skills inherent in true liberal arts education. Jeb Spalding, in his unfortunate White Paper, demonstrated a similar misunderstanding, stating that "employers are able to instill in their employees such elements as critical thinking, collaborative skills, and cultural understanding..." In fact, a survey of 500 executives refutes that claim. These human resource experts overwhelmingly assert that the Job Skills Gap is "Soft Skills: communication, critical thinking, collaboration, creativity," a liberal arts education! Let employers train workers. The VSC mission should be to educate students and empower them to create a better future for themselves, for society, and for the planet! I do want to call attention to a specific recommendation that liberal arts programming be "augmented in ways that deliver targeted workforce-relevant skills (e.g., by establishing a technical writing requirement for English majors)." If anyone missed the inaugural poem by Amanda Gorman I suggest you watch it on you tube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNFAICB8vxw>) and then read the full text: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/20/amanda-gormans-inaugural-poem-the-hill-we-climb-full-text.html> I can assure you that a "technical writing requirement" will not better tell the our story, nor will it "raise this wounded world into a wondrous one" (Gorman). If you want to add a requirement that is a truly "relevant skill," add poetry. The report does briefly acknowledge the need to prepare students for "participation in a democratic society." But the report really does not expand on that crucial need. Rather than workforce development, more emphasis should be placed on human development. Recent events should make clear the vital role of higher education in protecting our democracy. The VSC mission should much more strongly emphasize and articulate the need to educate citizens, not to be mere participants in a workforce-connected future, but empowered to create a better future for our democracy, a future in which liberty and justice finally prevail.

What opportunities do you see in this proposal?

I see the opportunity to save the VSC if the right choices are made. I understand that the committee needs to look at the VSC as a whole unit but does it really? You have the moment to really look at who is suffering and who is not. Who makes budget and who does not? CCV makes it own ends meet and prepares for all ups and downs and VTC does as well. NVU has not done this for decades I am unsure about CU as I am less aware of that school. However, NVU needs to take the opportunity to cut Lyndon sell it to Lyndon Institute and Save Johnson and stop wasting time and effort.

CCV can stand alone! CCV is strong and necessary.

Greater and improved opportunities for students

With the right marketing team, our brand identity could become stronger as a single entity.

Bringing more out-of-state students to a Vermont education by appearing like other respected multi-campus state institutions (e.g., California State University @ _____).

Broader educational and opportunity scope for students across the system...possibly broader benefits for faculty and staff, as well.

More collaboration, programming across the system will allow for more students to access across the state.

clearer missions

Improvement of the VSC

A new Board of governors, consisting of fewer political appointees and more graduates of the VSC system itself, would find itself more invested in the future of the VSC. This stands in opposition to the current Board, made up of mainly business people and political appointees with little or none of the connection to the future university which would seem in the best interest of both the State of Vermont and the VSC.

This proposal needs to be sharpened to be a win-win for Vermonters. It basically restates the sad status quo of the system, moves a few administrators/college presidents around but doesn't address declining enrollments in a significant way. The opportunity I see is to create a VermontCorps or Vermont (public) Academy at one of the campuses for 16-20 year old high school students who would board at the campus. The Academy could accept two students (with full scholarship) from every high school per year, and would therefore have an enrollment of about 300 students for an average two-year study program at the campus. Other students (those who did not receive the scholarship) could pay tuition to attend the Academy. Acceptance to the Academy could include guaranteed acceptance into a VSC bachelor's program, easing that transition between "college-ready" and "college entrance". CCV courses could also be offered at the Academy. The academy would function as a recruitment program for the VSC system. Students would take advantage of college-like facilities. A Vermont Academy or VermontCorps could be a magnet high school for students wishing, for instance, to take advanced science courses and be prepared for medical-technical careers, nursing, or doctors. Their scholarship could be conditioned on them staying in Vermont to practice for a period of perhaps two years after they attain their bachelor's degree. Alternatively, a Vermont Academy could be a magnet arts high school. It could train engineers. It could offer pre-apprenticeship programs, and work experience programs in the community. It could function as a year round Governor's Institute with high school credit. It could provide transition housing/education for Vermont youth transitioning out of foster care. It could provide incubator space for budding inventors and entrepreneurs. It could be a place for students to meet with Vermont employers. Perhaps it could be a magnet for IT specialists in training. It could serve as a halfway house program for women coming out of prison. It could be a magnet for teaching leadership, social justice, activism, political engagement. In other words, we could begin addressing other Vermont concerns by restructuring the facilities in the VSC.

Cost savings. Ease of Student planning

Its a good time to look at all funding and expense ideas and revamp the VSC system I believe reduction in operating costs and eliminating programs that don't keep a minimum number of students is an essential part of the plan.

no comment

opening up opportunities to non traditional Vermont students

Saving the college/small university system.

What opportunities do you see in this proposal?

The opportunity to quit wasting money on liberal arts programs and to focus on STEM and the future and moving Vermont's students into the fields of study where they will have a future in a more and more technology-driven world.

Eliminate athletic redundancy between campuses to save money... why are our state schools competing against themselves (and spending the money to do so) to draw students into one system?

Strategic partnerships on research grants to build on each other's strengths, and curriculum enhancement through simplification with the general education/liberal studies and developing new partnerships across existing expertise.

Efficiencies--identify where roles are duplicated within each college and within the system. I think/hope it will become easier for students to move from one school to another within the system and from high schools and tech centers into the system.

To create thriving campuses and give each a distinct role to play within the system

Read my proposal.

I see this as an opportunity to step back, regroup, and grow. A combined effort of all VSC systems could prove to be very interesting

You can bring the best of each college into the mix and push the best in breed across the organization. Change can happen faster.

The only opportunity I see is working with NVU to consolidate programs.

The opportunities for collaboration, particularly with CCV and CTE/ABE programs is exciting. VT has long had a siloed approach to our educational services and this is an exciting step towards creating deeper and more consistent partnerships and programmatic offerings throughout the state. The opportunity for each of the 4 residential schools to refine and clarify their offerings and strengths is also an opportunity.

The ability to attend classes offered by one institution but taken at another. Possibility of expanding your education without having to relocate.

Opportunities for students to give their money to other states for education

Something needs to change due to enrollment

My hope would be that administrative costs would be dramatically reduced.

-

The maximal use of resources at reduced cost. Increased opportunities for faculty-faculty and student-student and faculty-student collaboration across the system/campuses. Decreased redundancy in the time- and resource-intensive accreditation process.

Not many, to be honest. Being a part of the "unification" of Lyndon and Johnson into NVU, seeing how that sausage was (is being) made, has convinced me that that it is simply too difficult to pull together curriculum across two (three, four?) institutions, arrive at something coherent, and not LOSE valued signature aspects of each college. One opportunity that might be there is that developing a system-wide general education might help with transferability, though.

I have always felt that the VSC system needs a central branding campaign that promotes the overall, then supports the individual school by directing potential students to each school's expertise. The opportunity to offer remote curriculum through all the schools should also be expanded.

Just as UVM has an Extension Service that strives to serve the needs of Vermonters across the state, primarily in agriculture, CCV serves a similar need at a more credit-educational level. That is something that is clearly being supported by this proposal, which is excellent. If CCV could work with VTC to create opportunities to have technical coursework available possibly through CCV centers (if not online) with low-residency laboratory weeks on the Randolph campus, it could help with economic issues in very rural areas. Even if courses are online, having an office that one can go to for help or advice would be key in maintaining momentum in pursuing a degree.

What opportunities do you see in this proposal?

Shifting of purpose and priorities. However, if you focus only on outcomes and not process, you will end up with a model that is not compatible with an IHE.

There is an opportunity to modernize and adapt for what future education may look like post pandemic. There is a chance to pivot to remote learning opportunities more fully and to prioritize revenue generating departments.

With improvement to technology more courses and degrees can be offered/promoted on a state and national level without the expensive tuition of private college on campus learning.

As long as the Chancellor's office continues to rule over the VSCS??? None!

The VSC leadership has the opportunity to communicate with faculty and staff who work "in the field" with students. There is also an opportunity to demonstrate meaningful leadership within the educational community in Vermont.

A discussion on state support for higher education and the cost of portability of funding for students going out of state.

NA

Consolidation of programs and elimination of extraneous and low enrolled programs in each location

Education continuing for Vermont students

1. VTC is a vital asset to Vermont's educational system. VTC could/should collaborate with the College/University institutions so that synergies can be found to enhance educational opportunities for Vermonters.

A chance to build a stronger system and to celebrate the importance of the Vermont State Colleges System to the people and communities of Vermont. We are finally being heard by the lawmakers in Montpelier. We need to keep it that way.

Merger of certain functions within the VSC institutions could have some financial benefits and benefits to students but the merger of the institutions to the detriment of their individual identities will financially harm some of the institutions.

None. Increased collaboration would be a plus, but can be achieved without a merger.

Scalability of student support services as well as consistency/collaboration to make that happen. Create something new, exciting that adds value to Vermont.

There are many wonderful opportunities for cross collaboration among the VSCS sister institutions. It should be easier for students to move between campus. Courses and major requirements should be coordinated. Faculty and staff should collaborate across their academic disciplines and programs. We should not be competing with each other.

Nursing programs would be consolidated. As it stands, everyone wants in on the nursing cash cow, so we compete for students. Vermont Tech is the best situated (administratively, technologically and geographically) institution to continue this program moving forward.

Financial Stability, cross training and credits. Vermonters being able to be aware of and attend these institutions. Easier transfer from CCV.

Q6 - What do you see as the necessary success conditions?

What do you see as the necessary success conditions?

That the system can provide the necessary skills needed by all learners to thrive and lead productive lives, that the learning of those skills are accessible to all Vermonters, and the cost of education remains within reach of all Vermonters.

Increased state support and elimination of portability

Significant, ongoing, guaranteed funding from the legislature. Dedication from Vermont to upgrade communication infrastructure to enable all Vermonters to access online higher education opportunities. Support for staff, faculty, and students at navigating the change process - whatever the future looks like.

Certain departments and programs must be cut. We must offer something unique and special to attract students from out of state. We must cut operating costs so we can lower tuition for out of state students. People will lose their jobs but big changes must be made in order for the schools to stay open. There is no reason both NVU campuses need intercollegiate athletic programs. Millions could be saved if there are cuts in athletics. We also need majors at NVU, such as nursing, that are in high demand.

A willingness to let go of the status quo. A willingness of our leaders to make difficult and unpopular decisions. A speedy transition. At this point we are pouring millions of taxpayers dollars onto a sinking ship. Institutional leaders who are innovative and understand that the higher ed landscape is evolving rapidly. Successful institutions will look and operate differently. Increased state support. Vermonters view themselves as progressive. Their treatment of higher education, however, is embarrassingly regressive.

The restructuring must serve Vermont and Vermonters well. Students, families, employers, workers, agencies, and taxpayers deserve a system that is accessible and affordable, and also flexible to meet evolving technologies and work force needs. We must set benchmarks, identify and meet viable enrollment numbers, budget the resources to promote the value of higher education, thereby increasing revenues and the college-going rate in Vermont.

There is no better time than now to come together to intentionally design our community's future. Expanding educational opportunities for students and addressing the financial burden of college and career readiness, demands a collaborative process with community-based organizations, "anchor institutions" (colleges/universities, hospitals, businesses), to provide equity, access, and opportunity for Vermont's students. Rutland County is geographically positioned to serve its students through the Vermont State Colleges (VSC). Rutland County has a Community College of Vermont Campus, access to Vermont Technical College through Stafford Technical Center, and Castleton University. Vermont's Act 77, of 2013, mandates that sustained and trusting relationships are developed to meet the needs of students in grades 7-12 through "flexible pathways". The following VTDigger article from August of 2019, Popular early college programs put high schools in tough spots, identifies Dual Enrollment and Early College challenges for school districts. VSC's Transformation Proposal can address flexible pathway hardships. Rutland County has the highest percentage of learners accessing Vermont State Colleges, tying Orleans County, with 4.9% (Figure 12, p. 20). The opportunities provided through the Vermont State College system would be improved with stronger consideration for student access to Dual Enrollment and Early College in support of "work immersion programs such as registered apprenticeships, internships, and co-ops...supporting earn-and-learn academic programs..." (p. 86). Figure 12 (p. 20) and Figures 7 and 9 (pp. 16, 17) provide evidence for needed "work immersion programs" Rutland County. Rutland County has the second highest projected loss of working-age adults (ages 25-49) of any county in Vermont by 2030 (Figure 7, p. 16). Might the lack of Vermonters aged 25-49 years old, without an associates degree (Figure 9, p.17), be the result of not having "work immersion programs" Rutland County? Figure 44 (p. 56) recognizes degrees conferred during the 2017-18 school year from Vermont State Colleges. The absence of college and university graduates for "...in-demand jobs identified by the McClure Foundation..." (p. 56) can be addressed through the VSC's Transformation Proposal. In a VTDigger article from December of 2019, Officials weigh overhaul of tech education center structure, Dual Enrollment, Early College and Career and Technical Centers, all flexible pathways supported in Vermont's Act 77, are identified as challenging school district budgets. Vermont's State Colleges as an "anchor institution" MUST collaborate with PreK-12 education to expand educational opportunities and address the financial burden of college and career readiness. Approval of the VSC Transformation Proposal will influence equity, access, and opportunity in Vermont public education for decades.

True alignment. The NVU alignment has not really happened, with redundancies still existing. Redundancies and right-sizing must happen for the strong future of the VSCS.

Local Control and support of innovation.

What do you see as the necessary success conditions?

The most necessary condition is increase funding from the state, which is a statutory obligation under Vermont 16 V.S.A. 2171. Both the NCHEMS plan and the LTF proposal agree on this point. The NCHEMS plan then requires the System to increase internal savings by unreasonable amounts for each of the next 5 years: \$5M per year. The LTF proposal, instead, redirects more than \$10M of current funding toward tuition-reduction support. This plan is more feasible. The second most necessary condition is direct input from faculty and staff. The faculty and staff must be treated as partners in this endeavor. There is more expertise about operations, data collection, systems evaluation, and evidence-based thinking among the faculty and staff than within the CO and the executive teams. The faculty and staff will make the transformation a reality; we know where to go and how to get there.

Much as CCV does now, admissions and advising staff need to be a resource to direct students to the most appropriate programs and services within the system. They cannot compete for each student or withhold pertinent information from students to benefit their own enrollment. Knowing the full system well and appropriately guiding prospective and existing students MUST be part of the strategic work.

Legislature providing more money, but not spending tax dollars just to sustain what isn't viable. making the tough decisions to one or more geographic locations. making the system financially viable.

Please see my comments below.

Shared governance. Re-tooling BoT and eliminating Chancellor's office.

Strong messaging and rebranding from VSCS. The community has seen so much turbulence from VSCS lately that we need a strong message about how we're going to move forward consistently.

REDUCE executive and administration duplication!

Faculty and staff buy-in.

Everyone working together.

The legislature needs to approve the increased funding. Without this, I believe Chancellor Spaulding's proposal is the only other option.

*Increase appropriations from the state.

It hurts to have to say this, but the probability of long-term success, even assuming we get the massive increase requested in state funding, is low. Even if the VSC faces the facts and divests itself of assets and operations that have virtually no chance of financial sustainability, we will still have our work cut out for us.

Above and beyond all else, the Legislature will need to begin supporting public higher education sustainably. Slow starvation has brought us to this crisis.

All current campuses viable with tuition lowered to the national average for state-sponsored colleges.

Student numbers need to improve and we need a long term funding solution

Integration of CCV into VSCS. Currently students that transfer credits into VSCS colleges are sometimes not prepared, resulting in frustration and increased costs (as they need to repeat courses). Separation of CCV will increase this trend. Lower tuition across the system so that students can afford to work in Vermont following graduation. Increase state funding for higher education. Buy in from the faculty and staff of the VSCS (LTF!!)

1. Schools that are consistently underperforming in terms of student enrollment (not for COVID purposes) are right-sized with a loss of staff and faculty. Schools that have higher/maintaining enrollments should not be forced to lay employees off for the good of the others. 2. The state as a whole buys into the proposal and there is the transparent sharing of information 3. Each college has differentiation and is supported in doing what they are good at (NVU's online delivery, Castleton's residential experience, VTC's trade learning, etc.)

What do you see as the necessary success conditions?

(1) Change in board governance structure. Clearly, it hasn't served the needs of the VSC given the current conditions; (2) A true business plan to include: specific process design changes; economic analysis to the program level; a human resources development plan incorporating planned retirements; (3) Inspiring leadership at all levels; (4) Honest recognition and discussion of our failures to move beyond just asking for more money; (5) A chancellor's office with direct experience in the daily challenges of running a college.

State funding and State leadership. Good paying jobs in Vermont. Many leave Vermont because other areas have a high volume and wider breadth of career options. Vermont's economy is largely hospitality based, and a college education just isn't needed for a lot of jobs in this sector. Moreover, taking a few classes directly related to jobs in this sector does not equate to higher pay. Another large source of jobs in Vermont is in government & higher education - low paying, and highly vulnerable due to dependence on taxpayers and student tuition.

The Board of Trustees needs to be reconstituted.

NA

see above

- Clear and transparent vision, values, and mission.
- Mission focus: Every decision and change that we make must benefit current and potential students, followed by other key stakeholders (local/business community, etc.).
- As the SC report mentions, thoughtfully implement consolidation and change by hiring a professional consultant or firm that will engage all employees that will be affected by the change(s) and strategically make changes that make sense and are sustainable for the long term (not just cut to save \$). There are so many intricate details of our daily work that are unrealized and must be taken into consideration before system-wide changes take place.
- Leadership: (1) Move away from centralized leadership (though we do need a small Chancellor's office to maintain the major parts of the system) and toward more leadership on campuses overseeing the areas that are to be consolidated; (2) Put into place a shared governance model; (3) Distributed leadership might serve the VSCS and its campuses well.
- Staffing: (1) Keep the appropriate level of staff from each consolidated department disbursed throughout the campuses for student access and on the ground collaboration and experience (2) Be sure that staffing levels are right-sized (there are enough people in each department to do the job well and not be overwhelmed) and employee strengths and knowledge are being utilized in order to create the best possible customer service experience for students and other customer.
- Communication: Phenomenal communication, both externally and internally, is needed to help guide all stakeholders through this change. External: Combined marketing and communications department (with marketing/communications staff from and located at each campus – including CCV). More inclusive, less competitive, external marketing. Clear and concise messaging about changes. Internal: There should be someone (in addition to the very busy Chancellor) focused on internal communication, which needs to be clear, transparent, and timely in order for students and employees to feel like they are a part of the changes happening.
- The budget should be one, or at least presented as one, not separated by institution or campus (this creates competition and blame rather than collaboration).
- Continued systems improvements and upgrades for both student success/experience and staff/faculty work efficiencies.

Increased public funding

Significantly increased state funding for our state institutions of higher education. Reduce the cost of tuition for students Limit the portability of VSAC funding Involve faculty and staff with trustees in governance Eliminate the Chancellor's Office and move it to one of the campuses, saving costs. Reduce the amount of expenditures on upper-level administration by reducing the number of upper-level administrators. (cost savings of \$7,000,000 annually. Reduce redundancy and increase efficiencies of academic programs and emphasize the strengths of each of our campuses' strong academic programs Offer certificate programs and job-related skills training programs in addition to liberal arts programs, providing preparation for jobs in Vermont to strengthen our workforce and keep Vermont students in Vermont after graduation.

Meaningful change in the VSCS leadership with a commitment to forming a strong 4-yr regional

Campus closure.

1. Reform the VSCS BOT as stated above. 2. End portability of VSAC funds, restrict them to in-state institutions. 3. Full court press on the VT Legislature for fully funding the VSCS AS REQUIRED in state statute. From 1988 to 2018 the share of higher education paid by families went from 60% - 87%, while the share paid by the state of Vermont went from 40% to 13%. VT ranks last in state funding to higher education. No wonder enrollment is declining, families can't afford it! 4. Reduce tuition to be in line with state institutions of higher ed in our region. 5. Keep Castleton in Castleton University. The pride in and recognition of the Castleton University name cannot be replaced by some Vermont University or some equally boring name. 6 Combine the NVU campuses into one physical campus. The NE part of the state must have a four-year residential VSCS campus.

By far the most necessary item is a serious and sufficient financial commitment from the state.

What do you see as the necessary success conditions?

VSCS does not need to make any changes to be successful. Castleton is successful on its own and the other colleges/ university's should be taking note to improve their conditions before the merger ruins Castleton and its history.

Any merger will only be a success if it considers the reputations of the schools among Vt residents and the high school students when determining next steps.

My primary concern is the extent to which the individual identities and names of the individual campuses will be protected. I am an alumnus of Castleton University, and as you know this institution has existed in one configuration or another since 1787. I have established an endowed scholarship at CU and have a substantial planned gift to the institution in my estate plans. I will revisit my intentions if the reorganization leads to a loss of Castleton University's identity as an institution of higher learning in Vermont.

Leave Castleton out of this proposal

Keeping the schools as is will bring success

First, sustainable funding from the state. An initial first step is keeping VSAC money in the VSC/UVM system and not sending it out of state. But more funding must be provided for the system or it will continue to fail.

The state has to commit more funds to the VSCS or nothing we do will succeed. Their commitment is essential.

More information is needed on how to overcome the sizable distinctions between what the VSC may or will attempt and what other institutions have done. For example, the list on pp. 70-71 includes significant challenges that the Georgia system did not face, but that the VSC will need to overcome to succeed. It's unclear how that will be accomplished. In some ways, while I very much appreciate the data about other institutions and mergers, the proposal feels like it is asking the VSC to take a collective leap of faith off a very tall bridge and hope for a safe landing, all the while praying that it does not lead to our ultimate demise if the leap is unsuccessful.

Miscellaneous

No ambitious reorganization can succeed without robust financial support from the legislature. In addition, any reform will only be successful if the reputation of Vermont's state colleges emerges without damage and the public retains faith in the institution or institutions' quality and stability. That is probably best ensured by retaining the campuses' unique current identities and brands.

Offer cost affordable majors that are in demand and the students will come. Whether or not the state legislature provides additional funding isn't the main issues. Right sizing our staffing, academic offerings and investing in growth degree areas.

We will not succeed unless we get more state appropriations, make college more affordable for our students, and have a place at the table for all stakeholders.

To be successful, the State of Vermont needs to provide better financial support to the institution to reduce tuition costs. Additionally, staff and faculty cuts should not be emphasized over administrative cuts. A strong faculty and support staff across the colleges is necessary to ensure quality education for Vermonters for the workforce and to be lifelong learners.

To build on the core concepts and similarities of various plans because this demonstrates the areas of greatest consensus and collaboration. This includes the strengths I outlined in first box. GOALS: Decrease the cost to students, increasing affordability. Increase state funding (both one-time dollars and increased yearly appropriations). Increase student access and increase portability of credits across the system (including both coordinating curricular offerings and expanding learning options). LOCAL IMPACT: Focus on the impact of the VSCS on our local communities, both as an employer and an economic engine for growth and prosperity. HISTORY: VSCS problems have a long history, and decreasing state funding over decades is a major contributor. IMPLEMENTATION: Maintain the distinct cultures of the individual campuses within the system. Combine individual institutions into a more integrated whole to reduce internal competition.

What do you see as the necessary success conditions?

I think it will be important to identify how each of the institutions will retain their strengths and how students will pass from each. Perhaps, this may allow it to be the Vermont State University with a technical campus at Vermont Tech's previous locations, create a school of the environment at NVU-Lyndon. A merger like Lyndon and Johnson must be avoided, which just created two schools with a shared President and leadership team, without collaboration and individual identities. CCV will maintain a separate institution. In order for it to maintain its unique identity, it will be essential that we continue to maintain our structure that allows us to attract adult, high school, and traditional age students. We are an entry point for many students that may not be ready for a more "traditional" college experience and need an affordable education. However, we can collaborate better with direct admissions pathways and clear transfer pathways. We can support the institutions if we are able to present clear pathways to students, high schools, and organizations.

Proper financial support from the state as outlined.

The physical footprint of the system must be reduced. Both faculty and staff reductions must be made by eliminating duplication of programing and service delivery. Each department of each remaining campus must act as a business entity, relying upon profit and loss statements to drive decision making. Each remaining campus must have a decision maker who is on the ground daily to guide the organization. Rebranding must be put off for another day. It will bog down the process and distract from the work that needs to be done.

change in funding models, focus on non-trad pathways, employer partners

Funding. The primary catalyst to how we arrived in this situation is lack of funding over a great deal of time. All seems to hinge on appropriate funding, from the state - as well as responsible, fair system allocation. Affordability. We are losing students to institutions within and outside of VT, where opportunities are more affordable than students' own Vermont State Colleges. Becoming comparatively affordable is critical to engage (yield and retain) students whose paramount deciding factor is affordability. Retention. Strong enrollment management is critical with demographic challenges. Beyond admission, enrollment takes a village committed to student success! Everyone across the VSCS must understand their individual, important role in student retention and persistence. Strong Teams. Success will hinge on us having the right people. More thoughts are shared in comments.

VSCS needs to find a way to help attract more students. This means finding ways to keep students in the state, as well as attract from other states. In order to do this, VSCS, no matter its capacity, must strengthen programs that are known for their experiences education and focus on undergraduates. One of the major benefits of the VSCS is the focus on undergraduate education. NVU is already known for its Atmospheric Science, Exercise Science, Outdoor Adventure, and Music Business and Industry programs. But devoting additional resources to build up program like there, the VSCS can attract more students to the state.

See below

no comment

CCV must remain as is.

Transparency

ANY proposal needs: FUNDING from the state of Vermont. Support from faculty, staff, students, and community.

Inclusion of students, faculty, and staff on the Board and in the transition process. I'm a returned Peace Corps Volunteer, so that's the perspective I'm coming from, but this is development/aid work 101. It's also essential to socially just work. When outsiders come in and "fix" the problems that they see without centering the voices of those they're "helping" (and, indeed, ensuring those people are the creators and drivers of changes), it does not work. I saw it in the computer labs that sit gathering dust at rural Cambodian schools that don't have electricity. For an excellent example, Ernesto Sirolli's TED Talk (17 min; https://www.ted.com/talks/ernesto_sirolli_want_to_help_someone_shut_up_and_listen#t-96083) is entertaining and informative. I understand that urgency requires quick decision-making and that "quick" and "committee" are oxymorons. I'm not suggesting that there will be an easy balance to strike. But when decisions come down from on high, especially when they're imposed by people who aren't part of the community and don't have the same understanding of what our work looks like, people get upset and frustrated. Those decisions are also sometimes divorced from the reality of the situation. Faculty and staff know how their jobs/functions/departments work. Work with them to see how best to transition. Otherwise, you risk wasting resources on changes that won't work, when faculty and staff could have advised you of better options. Again, Ernesto's hippos are a good example.

1) increased stage funding. 2) Cutting in the proper placers. Making the right decisions on how to streamline structures and eliminate redundancies, but not going too far and stretching student/academic support services to thin, 2) Related to the above - Maintaining (improving) academic support and student services.

What do you see as the necessary success conditions?

Thriving institutions located in the areas already served by the VSC, with in-person and online opportunities that are accessible and affordable. Every student in the state should be well aware of their options and with very few exceptions be able to have their needs met by a Vermont State College. Faculty and staff should have enough financial stability that staff turnover is low, giving students adults they can rely on to navigate academic and non-academic challenges.

Buy-in from faculty and staff, and long-term commitment from the legislature and governor.

As painful as it will be you need to shut down the institutions that are hemorrhaging funds, which the state is not being able to or willing to provide the kind of funding your plan would require

N/A

One end result here must be that the newly emergent VSCS is able to deepen partnerships in the community. We must be in a position to serve not only our current populations, but the significant number of other potential students. Whether it's new high school graduates or adults that have some college credit but no degree, we need our communities to think of the VSCS as a high impact, high value proposition that can make a positive difference in their lives.

Support from the state is going to be critical.

Long term financial viability

- A Board that is engaged and committed to seeing change through. - Leadership that acknowledges the ugliness to come and still sees through the plan to completion. - A Legislature that is willing to invest in a system that they have chronically underfunded for far too long.

I think the Chancellors office should be in one of the campuses - NVU or VTC. VTC is the most central. Paying additional money to rent space in Montpelier is a colossal waste of taxpayer money. If its all going one system then merge. Its not like the chancellors office needs to be in Waterbury, how much time do they seriously spend at the statehouse? l

The VSC needs additional financial support from the Vermont Legislature and buy-in from all the VSC sister institutions.

Enforcing/maintaining the plan - plus constant evaluation w/o waiting too long to make necessary tweaks to the plan. It's clear that this overhaul of the VSCS needed to happen a LONG time ago. I'm concerned it is now too late:(

CCV should be allowed to start offering bachelor's degrees too. Provide education statewide, not in specific areas served by CU, NVU!

Some continued productive use of the existing facilities (NVU-Lyndon, NVU-Johnson, VTC-Randolph, CU, and all CCV facilities - in partnership with local governments/agencies and institutions.

Sufficient funding for the VSC system. See suggestions, comments, ideas, below.

See my recent letter to the Seven Days editor. Re-establish the "select committee" to include retired faculty, a VTC graduate, and an AFT representative.

Right-sizing the number of institutions in the system to the projected number of college-aged students over the next 10 to 20 years.

-

Cannot comment yet.

Input from people "on the ground" who are running offices and working with students.

What do you see as the necessary success conditions?

Complete consolidation of all the VSC colleges, including CCV, eliminating three presidents and other bureaucrats; Elimination of the chancellor's office; Elimination of portability of VSAC grants

None

n/a

Adopt the new proposed model.

I don't see enough action to address the problem

One unified system that includes all institutions to create a full-continuum of educational opportunities across a student's life span.

We MUST keep, improve and recognize the importance customer service provided for students. If staffing declines then so does customer service, retention is huge.

The VSC and the board of trustees need to make a hard and binding commitment to all of the campuses; students are reluctant to commit when our own administration is reluctant to do so. It is holding us back. All doubt about that needs to be buried permanently. Faculty and staff need commitments that they will be able to stay employed to see these changes and new initiatives through to the end. The state needs to fund the VSC at a fair level. The idea of favoring certain institutions over others needs to be squashed; the unified university needs to truly be one body without internal rivalry.

The most important necessary condition for success is for the Legislature to provide more funding to support the the VSCS. As has been stated many times, Vermont is 49th in the country for state support for higher education. When Jim Douglas was governor he had a goal to move us up to 47th, we never even made it. Underfunding public higher education for many decades has crippled the system and forced our students into significant debt.

State support and proper training of new and current employees. Less union stalemates.

The VSC administrators need to really listen to the people on the front lines at each institution. For example, the Ultipro roll-out was a nightmare for many people. Perhaps that could have been avoided if more time was spent meeting with the supervisors and employees who had to actually use the system. Sometimes it appears to staff that the folks in the Chancellor's Office have no clue as to how things really work on our campuses.

*adequate funding *support in creative curriculum design and course sharing *help with transport and remote learning components for serving three campuses *strong leadership and faculty governance to sell collaboration to the nay-sayers and overcome possible transition tensions.

-Cost savings and elimination of duplication in programs, positions and systems. -A strong brand and marketing plan to sell the unified VSC university -Strong student success systems to support all students regardless of major, income, race, sexuality, and gender

Vermont cannot support four residential state colleges (five if you include UVM.) Any "consolidation" must eliminate at least one of the four campuses.

Necessary for success is system wide communication tool and training to use those tools. We have this system wide Microsoft teams account yet no training. You want us to use zoom instead yet most of us don't have cameras at our desk top computers so we use our phones. Proactive IT is essential and necessary for a system that is to work well and collaborate! Continuing ed for these such programs for staff is essential. A rep on campus for the system wide department heads will be essential - who do we go to on campus!

Retaining the most important qualities or offerings each individual institution offers.

Open conversations and taking out time. Any transformation to be successful will need thoughtful considerations on the process and the timing. Just bringing administrative tasks to the chancellor's office is not the answer all the time.

Creating buy in from as many parties as possible

What do you see as the necessary success conditions?

Keeping tuition low. A structure that doesn't disenfranchise adult and low-income students who are not looking for residential experiences and want education to fit with their multi-faceted lives.

Additional stakeholders also need to weigh in on this issue including: the Board of Trustees, the Legislature, the communities the VSCS serve, and the students.

There are none because without making the hard decision of closing a campus or two, the system will be in the same position 2 years from now.

-

For VTC, "Math and Science Lead to Success!". This is appropriate for them. But for Castleton, strong professional programs with an underpinning of Liberal Arts is our best model. In a fast changing world, to give our students too narrow an education would be a mistake. Exposure to good thinking, History, Science, Culture, and the Arts will benefit them throughout their lives. If we combine this with great sports, and programs like Soundings that bring in talent and challenging speakers, the campus will come alive. If we do this well, CU will have appeal and relevance for Vermont students, but also those from out-of-state, and abroad. Our foreign students have been a boon to us, helping our enrollment, and broadening the cultural climate on the campus. This is part of our unique identity. I do not see how becoming part of a larger VSC will help.

If the Board decides to embrace the VSU proposal, it should do so with the condition that the Legislature and the Governor provide the Board with the money it has asked for. This condition should be part of the motion to support the proposal. I understand that amount of money to be 72 million dollars. The Board should make clear that if that amount of money is not forthcoming, it will have to go back to the proposal that Chancellor Spaulding made the spring. The powers that be may not like that but that's what will happen.

Stop supporting sending VSAC money out of state. Only if there are no programs in state, for example VT does not have a Veterinary Medicine College or a Chiropractic College, should VSAC be supplying aid. Keep the money in the state which keeps the students in the state and keeps the graduates in the state. No other state in the union sends so much money and their future out of state.

Uniform adoption by all parties, faculty, staff, and students. I feel student/public input is necessary to consider all implications of the decision.

-Reduce tuition -Include input of staff and faculty who have the expertise and student-facing experiences to provide meaningful guidance -Get legislators on board with increasing funding - it is in the very statute that created the VSCS. -Get legislators and communities to understand the economic (and other) virtues of the campuses.

As long as our students are getting the education they deserve that is all that matters! Staff, Faculty and Administration adjust pretty well to change for the most part, but the goal and the focus is always our students and their best interest.

Success will mean Can we provide the students with the support they need? The VSC cannot do that from the Chancellor's office. That has already been proven through Ultipro.

Well, for starters, adequate funding from the State. As a taxpayer I'm not sure the State can afford to provide the kind of funds requested. There are a lot of important competing priorities, health care, childcare, climate change, broadband access, small business support, & restructuring the pension fund to name a few. How ugly will it be if the State only comes up with 2/3 of what we ask for, or 1/2? Or one-two years of bridge funding with a slightly higher yearly allotment?

Available and properly staffed (number of staff) in each support staff in Academic Support Center, Library, Student Services, Wellness and not virtually.

I fear this will not succeed, no matter what.

Limit VSAC portability. Include faculty/staff on BOT to ensure authentic and balanced shared governance Reduce executive and administrative duplication, particularly at the chancellor's office.

See my previous response.

What do you see as the necessary success conditions?

One necessary condition is the "buy-in" of the communities of faculty, staff, students, alumni, and local supporters who very much care about the colleges. Right now I am not sure the Board will have this. Indeed, the Board might have outright opposition, which would be exactly what it does need right now,

Greater consensus among legislative leaders about the role the VSCS plays, and could play. More unanimous support from legislature and other influencers. Increased financial support from the legislature.

Keeping CCV's finances separate from the rest of the state college system.

Retaining signature academic programs. Retaining close personal, frequent contact between faculty and students.

The administration in this system is top heavy. No need for so many administrators in a Chancellor's Office for such a small-sized system.

I think funding from the legislature is a big factor and I really think that communication and transparency are important. Right now many of us working in the system are struggling to do our best in a bad situation and feel like we don't know what is going to happen. Will I even have a job in a year?

Keeping established brand names: PepsiCo did not change Gatorade Name; BMW does not make pickups. "A Vermont State University" projects a large scale image. We will confuse our marketplace and have to re-educate all over again. Anytime a state is named in the name of a College or University it projects an image of large classrooms, lecture halls, no personal attention. That is not us. Those that want a large scale experience may look at us because of newly proposed name and then see the campus and not have it meet their expectations. We lose on both ends. The name change will destroy all the work we have done and then not be consistent with what we actually are. If we are trying to be a "UVM" alternative we need to realize we are not.

We need to start coming together and stop taking away from one campus that does really well. Why not use the campus that is doing really well to teach the other campuses the successes that they have had in order to boost the successes of those that are for some reason under fire right now? We continue to put those on a pedestal that have put some of our institutions at a disadvantage while taking away from those that have done and are doing well. We need to start teaching one another and working together to find success and not be in the same position in five years. We need to celebrate one another. Why didn't Castleton also celebrate that NVU got a really cool alumni donation? Why aren't we complimenting one another to bring awareness to our communities? There may be student's down south that have no idea NVU even really exists and vice versa. Why aren't we celebrating the fact that VTC is really stinking cool? They do so many awesome things on the Randolph campus and we aren't even throwing shout outs to one another. I hope that rebranding allows this celebration of one another to happen.

Need to be financially viable while providing high quality education

A recognition that a fiscal solution is required to solve VSC financial difficulties, got a political solution.

Essential to the success of the plan are adequate state funding, coordination amongst the institutions and, most importantly, an understanding that the reorganization will require sacrifice across various stakeholders. This will include, but is not limited to, staff, faculty, communities, unions, and within the legislature.

More state funding. Poor state support has put the system in a death spiral. Less state funding means higher tuition, crumbling facilities, low salaries for personnel, all of which contribute to lower enrollment. The state created this problem by not giving us the money we need to be successful and they should own up to the consequences of that lack of support. Frankly, the state should be apologizing to us for putting us in the situation, and the demands that the system reorganize in order to receive the funding we need to survive feels like an effort for state government to avoid feeling guilty for their failures over the years.

Our aspiration should be that our communities, the state, and our country support higher education. That we as educational leaders and support systems for these communities and the greater society are able to help shape tomorrow's workforce. Also that people can thrive in filling their dreams/accomplishing their goals in course work offerings at the VSCS.

Communication with the people that understand how the organizations work so we can create a strong system.

Success conditions? Obviously the solvency of the educational system. But frankly, the issue here comes from the decades of neglect to which Vermont has exposed its institutions of higher education. Vermont has such a robust brand, standing out as a beacon of conscience and social justice (and low COVID infection rates) at a time when so much of the nation seems to have cast itself into darkness. Vermont universities should be leading the way, but instead they are woefully underfunded and now struggling for their very survival. We should invest in them, not try to save a few pennies by shoving them into the same box.

We must look at Vermont as ONE system, and not attempt to fix the current problem by slapping a "University" label on Castleton or a merged Lyndon-Johnson system. As a graduate of LSC, I'm disappointed in what has been proposed and/or instituted thus far. Every Vermont student deserves a quality college education consisting of a strong liberal arts foundation and greater geographic opportunity for delving into specific fields of work interest — health, business, environmental sciences, teaching, arts, etc.

- Always put the students first! - State needs to fully invest in the plan and commit to funding.

Leadership with a vision for a human-centered future. The Executive Summary of the Select Committee on the Future of Higher Education in Vermont refers to a "workplace-connected future" as part of their charge and to guide their recommendations to meet the state's needs. The committee interprets "meeting state needs" primarily in terms of economic considerations - for example, #1." Fulfilling the state's workforce development needs..." In fact, four of six goals focus heavily on economic needs. I believe the VSCS leadership needs a more enlightened vision for the "future of higher education in Vermont." What should be the purpose of higher education? Some great minds offer their answers. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. believed the goal of true education should be "intelligence plus character." The Select Committee notes the goal of providing "skilled labor" but makes no mention of human intelligence, no mention of the core values essential to the development of character. Walt Whitman understood that "The role of those in power... is to train [educate] communities ... beginning with individuals and ending there again, to rule themselves." And yet those in power place participation in "democratic society" secondary to "preparing students for participation in the world of work." Jane Goodall observes, "Bizarre, isn't it, that the most intellectual creature, surely, that's ever lived on the planet, is destroying its only home... I truly believe, only when head and heart work in harmony can we attain our true human potential." How can we even contemplate a "workplace-connected future" which ignores the climate crisis and the persistent environmental degradation that threaten any future at all on our planet? How can we have a discussion about the future of higher education that prioritizes "workforce development" but fails to even acknowledge the need for the development of "our true human potential"? Why does VSCS leadership seem not to understand what these great minds so clearly articulate? These are my concerns for the future of education in general: • Emphasis on STEM courses at the expense of the Humanities. • Emphasis on training workers at the expense of educating Citizens. • Allowing corporate interests to hijack higher education at the expense of our Democracy. • A misguided push for austerity (in the guise of transformation) at the expense of the Public Good. Eco-philosopher David Abram identifies the three greatest threats to humanity: "war, greed, indifference." Perhaps the Dalai Lama was onto something when he said, "The aim of education should be to train happy individuals who will make up a peaceful society." In any case, believing that technology, STEM education absent the Humanities, can solve humanity's problems is comparable to believing that war will bring us peace, that more guns will make us safer, that more billionaires will make us all richer, that a job will overcome our indifference to the suffering caused by war and greed. These existential problems will not be solved by Artificial Intelligence; they can only be solved by Human Intelligence plus Character - true education. Castleton University Interim President Dr. Jonathan Spiro says it best: "Never underestimate the transformative power of a Castleton education." The individual institutions within the VSCS have a track record of delivering quality and accessible education while serving all of Vermont's communities. The proposed austerity-driven transformation of the VSCS will negatively impact the ability to continue that success. The "problem" as clearly shown by the simple line graph in Fig.26 on page 67 is affordability. The people of Vermont deserve leadership with the vision to recognize higher education as a public good worthy of investment. The VSCS needs leaders who whole-heartedly support that vision.

CCV independent operation from the VSC -Associates, Certificates, High school students, Workforce programs and trainings, VTC independent-Technical programs, Medical programs, Workforce advanced degrees. CU-is the only University and should focus on Bachelors and mainly Graduate level and Doctoral level as we are missing this unless you attend UVM which is out of reach for many "east coast" Vermonters. Sell Lyndon to Lyndon Institute use the money to revitalize Johnson and get rid of the crazy split campus messages that have been the new fad. Johnson takes over the Bachelors and Masters programs and does what it does best flexible upper level degrees for the working adult, providing distance education in a way Lyndon would never even consider until it had to.

The state providing enough money.

Appropriate and adequate staff in all areas We must provide efficient and excellent customer service, across the board Consistent and clear communication is critical; i.e. the right needs to know what the left is doing

FUNDING. Disciplined leadership making the right decisions to minimize wasteful spending. Visionary leaders who can see the strengths of the system, and present those strengths as a key piece of our brand / identity moving forward.

Optimizing personnel positions to eliminate duplication. Ensuring methods of simultaneous in-person and remote instruction for virtually every course offered so that class sizes can be profitable instead of segmented into separate "in-person" and online sections. A proper name for the new institution that combines VTC, NVU, and CU.

What do you see as the necessary success conditions?

Aggressive recruitment and finding revenue streams. It also wouldn't hurt to raise admission standards, while still making them flexible for personal review, when necessary. Academic requirements have been quite a low bar. I think that is a root problem with the retention issues you have. Some of your recruitments have not been up to the standards that higher education requires.

CCV should not be sucked up by the bigger institutions. In fact, CCV should be running the show...the only VSC who has stayed afloat in a lot of tough times.

Willingness to be open to meaningful dialogue and consideration of multiple options

Funding

A less political and business approach to the mission of the VSC must start with a premise that the university exists to provide a sound education across a broad varieties of disciplines. Campuses need to become magnets to draw students to their special programs. The acknowledgement that each has unique areas of strength that must be maintained in their current locations is essential. For instance, NVU Lyndon has a strong identity going back more than 40 years in the area of Media and in Meteorology, and provides a unique combination of opportunities for both fields which can't simply be packed up and moved somewhere else. Castleton has been the primary location for affordable Nursing programs. Johnson excels in the arts and in education of teachers. VTC provides unique opportunities for technical education as well as the only affordable higher education program for modern agriculture in Vermont. I mention affordability because UVM is not affordable for most Vermonter of modest means. All the programs must be affordable or this will all be an exercise in futility. If a student can attend an out of state university, like the University of Connecticut, for only a modest amount more than they would pay to attend this new university at in-state tuition, this venture will fail.

Without students there is no VSC. The campuses I have visited in the system seem like ghost towns (and this was prior to Covid). Students of this age want to be with other students. An Academy that accepted 1-2 students per junior class would not seriously affect existing high school programs or existing student counts in the high schools. However, students interested in sports would probably not be interested in transferring to an Academy. The teaching and facilities and administrative staff already exist in these VSC communities. Also, if located at one of the two NVU campuses, it would boost CCV options in either Johnson or Lyndon. It is possible that an angel investor might help fund a magnet Academy or VermontCorps program.

keep as many jobs as possible and ensure quality of delivery and increase student retention and consolidate admissions.

Finding new sustainable revenue sources for short and long term solutions. I

no comment

financial, need to have out of state demand to attend

Decisiveness. Communication. Great leadership.

The college leaders being able to let go of their irrational clinging to liberal arts even as other colleges (UVM) have defunded their liberal arts programs, which should be all the proof you need that it's time to let it go. I also feel strongly that you have to offer all degrees and all courses online if at all possible. The VSCs can have a meaningful presence across the entire state if all the college's offerings are available online. You do not need buildings in communities to have a meaningful presence across the entire state, you just need to have the degrees and the coursework accessible online. As a student, I struggled to access the math courses I needed while a student at CCV because only a few math courses were offered online. You *must* offer all courses online when possible, especially remedial math courses that students need access to the get "up to level" to succeed.

State of Vermont should adopt a strategic approach to how it funds the VSC System. This Board needs to be better involved in this process. The amount of funding is shameful. Better support services needed to retain students.

For current employees: Morale doesn't continue to decline, there's a new spark of hope for having a future For prospective students: They are excited to study something in their discipline in a safe and community-minded place, and clearly understand the breadth of our programs/experiences. For current students: Their programs aren't disrupted significantly. For alumni: Don't feel like they need to grieve the loss of their campus. For State of Vermont: Better alignment of programs and experiences to attract more young people to VT and also allow for greater opportunities for them to stay after graduation.

What do you see as the necessary success conditions?

Every employee and school is going to have to give up something. We need to work together to keep our eyes on the goal (a healthier, sustainable system). The unions also need to be on board.

Some hard decisions will need to be made in consolidating programs. We can't keep doing what we are doing. As part of NVU Lyndon, I thought this would happen with our first consolidation, but no difficult decisions were made relative to consolidating academic programs. .

Read my proposal.

We simply cannot run a deficit

Money from the legislature. Commitment from the colleges that they'll do this hard work. Agreement from the board that they'll make the hard choice to bring all the colleges together instead of keeping some separate just because they make a lot of noise.

reducing the deficit making the hard decisions so that the entire system doesn't go down because we insist upon keeping every entity open.

It is absolutely necessary that the legislature commit to the funding needed to support this transformation. It is also necessary that the board do the hard work of right sizing the residential schools in order to ensure educational opportunities exist for future Vermonters.

From asking friends, VT is one of the only states that doesn't want to support their higher education. Our government officials need to educated that most states financially support higher.

N/A

Kids ready for the workforce after graduation. Rural campus needed outside of Chittenden County

Success will depend on the buy-in of the individual educators at the various campuses. This proposal will also need to maintain incoming student choice of a variety of differently focused types of campuses,

Quite frankly, I know that with the VERMONT State Colleges System and the report being written by a VERMONT Select Committee, the state of Vermont is being prioritized. However, reading about "declining enrollment because of fewer high school graduates," I am pained that we are not looking at the broader picture. I've been writing about the following idea since my first year at NVU-Lyndon before I knew enrollment was such a problem. Why is the VSCS not adding marketing strategies outside of the state borders? My out-of-state friends have praised the local areas we've found ourselves residing in during the academic year. Many of us look into buying apartments in this area and local jobs. Many of us end up staying, or returning at some point in life. Going to university in Vermont makews Vermont a second home to us, regardless of where we originally came from. We could strengthen Vermont's young population if we just advertise outside of the state borders. If Vermonters are not buying into the VSCS, maybe Mainers will. Maybe those in Rhode Island or Michigan. Personally, I came from a geographical area identical to Vermont's Northeast Kingdom from another state. The only reason I came across NVU-Lyndon was because of an alum whose mother taught me in grade school. If my peers knew about NVU-Lyndon, they would prioritize the small, rural school over large, city options that we felt trapped with. I think that regardless of how you build the VSCS to be accessible to Vermonters of all ages, you will eventually run out of customers at some point. Start marketing elsewhere. And use your current student base to return home or call their alma maters in favor of our great institutions. (May I also ask that research is done with our alumni networks and current student bodies to see how many of us have retained in Vermont or have plans to?)

The proposal must recognize the role of CCV in undercutting the sturdiness of the baccalaureate institutions. (Please see "Weaknesses of the Proposal" above.)

Strong contracts for all instructors and staff (including part-time) and very careful negotiation there.

The necessity for all partners in this effort to be willing to change in how things have always been done.

1) Recognize that as a small rural state, we cannot provide on-campus convenience to all people in all places. 2) Expanded broadband is really the first priority for the state to begin to address equality of educational opportunities. 3)CCV satellites, with in-person advising and academic support, is probably the next most important thing, since many courses will be online, especially in the far-flung rural areas. 4) Working with VSAC to provide the financial support Vermonters need to attend college seems pretty important, too. 5) Offering very good advising is key to ensuring that students you enroll actually get a degree.

What do you see as the necessary success conditions?

Faculty buy-in on any and all teaching and learning-focused strategies. If this isn't built bottom-up it will fail.

I think schools should be self-sustaining. I think they should not offer duplicative paths of study. I believe that these schools should be a benefit to the VT workforce and a pathway for many to get a career.

Involvement and mentoring of students in the community, completion of certificate and degrees (state or national, on campus or remotely) and retention of students in Vermont.

"Success conditions" doesn't really make sense. But there can be no success as long as the Chancellor's office exists!

Transform the physical libraries into learning commons spaces. Weed approx. 1/3 of the print collection at CU and NVU and re-invent the facilities to make them a "one-stop-shopping-support" environment for residential students. Engage the (remaining) library professionals to transform the online library experience. Information scientists (librarians) in the current VSC system are the most underutilized, and endangered, resource.

Go back to the drawing board

NA

Everyone needs to be working together as one and not trying to focus on their individual campuses, making sure CCV folks are on the same page with the larger colleges and truly are promoting and pushing the students to the larger programs

Less competition between the campuses. Each campus should have some representation in the overall administration. At NVU the administration is mostly made up of Lyndon employees and it makes the Johnson campus feel lesser than Lyndon.

The survival of Castleton University as a Brand to take advantage of Castleton's recognition as a top quality University by applicants throughout the USA.

The state of Vermont must ensure a long-term commitment to increased funding of the system. Regular annual increases must be part of the funding plans.

There are two time frames in which success must be measured; the near term of up to 5 years and the future beyond 5 years. Success in the near term would be to assure the VSC institutions continue to exist, even is they are operated at reduced levels of students, faculty, services and management. Success beyond the current pandemic and political would be the return of the institutions to fiscally sustainable student enrollment with appropriate faculty, support staff and facilities. In order to assure success in the future VSC needs to make its member institutions more attractive to out of state students to bring in more out of state revenue and to enhance the Vermont student experience with cultures from other states and other countries. VSC should do this by emphasizing Vermont's uniqueness and attributes: pleasant living, clean air, lack of traffic, mountain, lake and forest resorts and sports, attractive and historic self-governed shall towns, relative insulation from the spread of diseases and pandemics, etc. Instead of turning within as recommended by the Initial Report of the Select Committee, VCS should instead look out to broader opportunities which will provide sustainability of VSC institutions further out into the future when Vermont cannot help but be one of the most attractive places to live in all of the United States. What the current pandemic has revealed very quickly is that working remotely can be highly efficient for many industries, businesses and institutions of higher learning.

See in "comments" below

Funding; buy-in from stakeholders

LISTEN to the people who attend and work at the colleges. Do not present that some outside expert knows what is best for Vermont. The VT Legislature needs to step up and fulfill its fiscal responsibility to the VSCS.

Appropriate state funding, bringing us on par with K-12 funding standards, as well as similar institutions in the northeast. Reduction of administrative costs, tuition costs, consolidation of duplicate programs.

Consistent funding from the state and the ability to draw more students from inside and outside Vermont. The limiting of staff and faculty cuts to maintain the ability of providing a quality education.

Q7 - Do you have any other suggestions, comments, or ideas that you would like to highlight?

Do you have any other suggestions, comments, or ideas that you would like t...

Please use the Labor Task Force recommendations as a way to move forward with a more holistic approach.

I am aware that union is proposing that CCV be integrated into the unified state university model. CCV's model has allowed the College to be nimble and innovative. The College is responsive to student needs, workforce demands, and the changing landscape. The College submits a balanced budget year over year, and CCV is the most (and only) financially stable institution in the system. CCV serves more Vermonters than any other college in the state, and in 2019 nearly half - 49% of the VSCS enrollment was comprised of CCV students. Vermonters are already voting with their feet. Half of the VSC students elect to enroll in the community college, not in a four-year college or university. Vermont's demographic cliff has arrived, yet there are over 100,000 Vermonters who have no post-secondary training. CCV is successful because it understands that adult students have to fit their studies into complex lives with multiple roles and stressors rather than being able to organize their work and social life around a central role as a college student. CCV's academic programs, schedules, course offerings, and support service are designed to support its adult students, most who attend part-time, hold jobs, and have substantial obligations beyond CCV. CCV is truly a community college, rooted in Vermont communities with a strong web of relationships with K-12 schools, employers, and service organizations. I strongly believe that it would be an incredible detriment to the state and to Vermonters to jeopardize this. CCV must remain a separate and distinct institution, for Vermont's sake.

We are blessed to live, study, and work in Vermont. We must prioritize and invest to evolve our system and its educational opportunities to meet the needs of Vermonters. The proposal recognizes the uniqueness and viability of CCV's model and would allow its continued success within a collaborative, efficient restructuring of the VSCS. Through statewide access to affordable and pertinent training, we, our communities, and state become stronger and better.

There is no better time than now to come together to intentionally design our community's future. Expanding educational opportunities for students and addressing the financial burden of college and career readiness, demands a collaborative process with community-based organizations, "anchor institutions" (colleges/universities, hospitals, businesses), to provide equity, access, and opportunity for Vermont's students. Rutland County is geographically positioned to serve its students through the Vermont State Colleges (VSC). Rutland County has a Community College of Vermont Campus, access to Vermont Technical College through Stafford Technical Center, and Castleton University. Vermont's Act 77, of 2013, mandates that sustained and trusting relationships are developed to meet the needs of students in grades 7-12 through "flexible pathways". The following VTDigger article from August of 2019, Popular early college programs put high schools in tough spots, identifies Dual Enrollment and Early College challenges for school districts. VSC's Transformation Proposal can address flexible pathway hardships. Rutland County has the highest percentage of learners accessing Vermont State Colleges, tying Orleans County, with 4.9% (Figure 12, p. 20). The opportunities provided through the Vermont State College system would be improved with stronger consideration for student access to Dual Enrollment and Early College in support of "work immersion programs such as registered apprenticeships, internships, and co-ops...supporting earn-and-learn academic programs..." (p. 86). Figure 12 (p. 20) and Figures 7 and 9 (pp. 16, 17) provide evidence for needed "work immersion programs" Rutland County. Rutland County has the second highest projected loss of working-age adults (ages 25-49) of any county in Vermont by 2030 (Figure 7, p. 16). Might the lack of Vermonters aged 25-49 years old, without an associates degree (Figure 9, p.17), be the result of not having "work immersion programs" Rutland County? Figure 44 (p. 56) recognizes degrees conferred during the 2017-18 school year from Vermont State Colleges. The absence of college and university graduates for "...in-demand jobs identified by the McClure Foundation..." (p. 56) can be addressed through the VSC's Transformation Proposal. In a VTDigger article from December of 2019, Officials weigh overhaul of tech education center structure, Dual Enrollment, Early College and Career and Technical Centers, all flexible pathways supported in Vermont's Act 77, are identified as challenging school district budgets. Vermont's State Colleges as an "anchor institution" MUST collaborate with PreK-12 education to expand educational opportunities and address the financial burden of college and career readiness. Approval of the VSC Transformation Proposal will influence equity, access, and opportunity in Vermont public education for decades.

The importance of a strong community college with accessibility throughout the state is vital. This proposal allows for CCV to stay strong and vital.

Please read the Labor Task Force proposal. Invite the LTF to a discussion. Host a town-hall meeting with NCHEMS and the LTF. VT has a longstanding heritage of deliberative democracy. One of the most significant books on the topic is published in VT through Chelsea Green. Instead of merely accepting the recommendations of an outside consultant (many of which are valuable), demonstrate that the BOT can model the sort of critical thinking, grounded foresight, research-based practice, and open democracy that the VSC institutions teach our students to use. We can do more than we think we can, if we work together. ----- BTW: the items in the check-boxes below are not exclusive, hence the use of a forced-choice mechanism reduces the validity of the survey. The management challenge in higher ed is to BALANCE the cost-access-quality triangle: prioritizing one over the others makes the system dysfunction, which is demonstrated by the current conditions of the VSCS's. The first box seems most like a whole-system approach. The second prioritizes access. The third prioritizes quality. The fourth prioritizes access. Where is your concern for cost efficiency? The highest priority is sustainability.

Do you have any other suggestions, comments, or ideas that you would like t...

We must retain many of the course delivery strategies used to respond to Covid-19 in order to better serve our adult student population. As the definition of the "traditional" student continues to evolve, those strategies adopted for adult learners will meet the flexibility needs of all students.

I continue to be disappointed by the failure to address specifically how to solve the financial problem which is paramount. With all that I have read, I don't see detailed analysis about what moves will save what money. Instead, it seems as if politics and "anything to save MY job" plays in the decision-making. Postponing the tough decisions that must be made when five institutions don't match the demographic needs is so hard to watch. Seeing a faculty union strongarm the other unions into going along with a proposal that will no doubt hurt everyone but the faculty is painful. I'm wondering how centralizing so many back-office functions will cause damage by taking away the expertise of a registrar who is available to students, faculty, deans on site, by taking away human resource person to know and talk to in person, by having a remote admissions staff not leading tours and collaborating in person on campuses, and by eliminating a top leader who knows the people on his/her campus and meets and interacts with them daily and influences the culture and identity. What will happen to the culture of an institution when one president from afar is making decisions? Why would we tear apart the fabric that keeps an institution running and replace it with a centralized office of people who are faceless and blindly making decisions without being a part of that institution? I see all this happening so that politically we can say we are not closing any of the five locations, even though by making that decision, we risk bringing down the entire system. Those decisions will have to be made; I wish there was more of a will to do so. I don't wish to belittle the thought and study that has gone on for many months. There are many good aspects. I can agree with consolidating programs and have seen evidence of some departments at the three institutions trying to work together for the benefit of the students. I like the concept of portability and one general education program. I agree that some institutions are better equipped to be the leader in some academic programs. What I so desperately desire is to maintain the unique capabilities and culture and attractiveness of the institutions that have the ability to survive and not to diminish the worth of all because of an escalation of commitment to an untenable system.

There is another proposal that has been put forth by representatives from all of the VSC schools, not paid consultants. I strongly suggest the Board give it serious consideration. It is not as top-heavy with administration, allowing the focus to be more on the needs of the students. I believe it is the better proposal.

Please focus on the interests of all stakeholders- students, businesses, organizations, employees and future citizens rather than on corporate shareholders.

This does feel like another top down decision. We know that hasn't worked in the past. The Chancellor's Office time and time again fails at rolling out changes. Accounts payable consolidation a few years ago, Ultipro, the former chancellor's closure announcement and now this. All have been failures that were plagued with issues or were so detrimental to the colleges (in the case of the closure announcement) that we still deal with the repercussions. In this situation I don't see a strategic and unified message being released from the board or the OC, or the individual colleges, that focuses on strengthening the colleges and too few on the board and at the OC understand how our colleges actually operate. For instance, do you really understand the cyclical nature of the business of education? If you did, this decision would be made in the summer instead of at the peak of enrollment season where this type of news will detrimentally impact next year's incoming students. The colleges suffer from a failure of leadership at the very top (board and Chancellor) over and over again.

Thank you to the Select Committee for identifying a path forward to sustainability for the Vermont State Colleges.

I firmly believe that each of the schools should have their own president who students and campus-based staff/faculty can look to for day-to-day leadership. The idea that we would have a system-wide president or chancellor who visits every so often is just not appealing at all. It also voids one of the system's core strengths: we are small enough that you can easily meet and know those who teach or manage you. There also has to be a way to keep the schools' names and identities intact, even if the system does consolidate. I worry that the name change will create disruptions to alumni support and damage the reputations of some of our better programs.

Do you have any other suggestions, comments, or ideas that you would like t...

The current situation has created the perfect storm: *Appropriations - The state contributions to the VSC are 49/50 and this is devastating to the colleges. We've limped along for so long. *Portability - The fact that our state dollars are able to go out of state with NO restrictions or even reciprocity or other is incomprehensible. *Cost - The cost of a state college education in Vermont is unaffordable for most, even for those in-state. We are shooting ourselves in the foot. *Brand - We are not seen as a prestigious option. We are seen as the frumpy, ho-dunk school, especially in comparison to more appealing options that are shiny and new, offering high school students a distraction to sell their product and entice them. *Deferred Maintenance & Over-spending - The things that really need fixing, infrastructure, etc. are literally crumbling, meanwhile there are major projects or positions added that are unnecessary. The years of rubber-stamping expenditures caught up and we're paying the price. See comments above under "Brand". *Shared Governance - For all the above reasons, we need those who are closest to working with our target audience/population/product to be involved in decision-making processes. Those of us - staff, faculty, students - are discounted and not valued for our strategic problem-solving or expressing the needs. *Staff & Faculty Cuts - For years now, the faculty and staff have endured cuts of positions through lay-offs, early retirements, and those who left on their own for retirement or other. Many of these positions have NOT been refilled/replaced, so folks are left doing double, triple duty in their departments = low morale and feeling taxed. Meanwhile, positions have only increased at the VSC and in admin - non-bargaining folks in numbers and cost. This needs to be addressed. Many of the changes made in efforts to have a VSC-central office have actually increased costs, increased staff time locally and increased headaches. There needs to be changes to this infrastructure of heavy admin. We are running on empty and have been for quite some time! *Fundraising - We do NOT have a formal fundraising plan for the VSC and on each of our campuses. This is a HUGE problem. I have worked in grant-writing and fundraising for several non-profit and it always shocks me that the VSC and our individual colleges have such little efforts, motivation or incentive to give - even as employees. We have more of a push/incentive/encouragement to give to the United Way - basket raffle for those who give - than we do for campaigns to give to our own institution. That is pathetic. We need to develop a formal plan and campaigns/drives for the VSC/Campuses to encourage fundraising and allow our communities to give/support our efforts and value the impact within the state as well as beyond to our alumni.

I will send a memo with my complete thoughts regarding the report and recommendations directly to Chancellor Zdatny. Anyone on the Board or at the VSC is welcome to e-mail me if you would like a copy of it. Please feel free to contact me directly to discuss any or all of the report or recommendations contained therein. . Brief background on myself: VSC Professor (semi-retired) at Castleton since 1990 Chair of Admissions and Retention Committee (20+ years) Men's and women's tennis coach (19 years) – have spent many enjoyable days at the beautiful Lyndon and Johnson campuses. Principal, Paul Cohen & Associates (43 years). Focus on Marketing Research and Strategic Planning My comments are as neutral and unbiased as possible. I have helped many organizations (large and small, for-profit and non-profit) in their strategic planning efforts over the decades. The keys to successful strategic planning are to be honest about the data, and to understand that sometimes, big sacrifices have to be made for the health of the Mother Ship.

Castleton and NVU faculty have endorsed the Labor Task Force recommendations with which you are familiar. I believe VTC is in the process of doing the same. I want to emphasize that these endorsements do not constitute rejection of the NCHEMS recommendations, which are yet to be finalized. We recognize that both would take us in the right direction for transformative change but the task force recommendations would take us further. Those votes suggest emphatic support for unity, for bringing all four of our sister institutions under one umbrella as our best path forward towards a sustainable future providing meaningful access to all Vermonters. A unified Vermont State University, as envisioned by the task force recommendation, would be the best and certainly boldest option facing us. Despite the obvious structural differences between CCV, which confers associate degrees and has no full-time faculty, and its sister institutions, which confer associate, bachelor and graduate degrees with full-time faculty, CCV would not be incompatible as an integral part of a Vermont State University. Certainly if NVU Online – which is delivered by part-time faculty – can exist within NVU, CCV could find a home as part of a future VSU. While CCV's model may be unique, including community colleges within a single university system is not, and a number of states, including New Hampshire, are exploring that route. This model represents our best hope of successfully transforming the VSCS into a truly unified, sustainable system guaranteeing access to high quality higher education throughout Vermont. In unity there is strength with one university under one administration. Leaving CCV as a stand-alone would dilute that strength while retaining the ongoing costs of separate top layers of administration and perpetuating internecine competition among constituent institutions. Nevertheless, given the scenarios laid out in the report, it seems we are heading towards bypassing that bolder vision. If that is so, I urge the VSCS Board of Trustees, the Select Committee, and the Legislature to seriously reconsider that unitary model, despite the political hurdles. If true unification is off the table, however, we are looking at two remaining options, recognizing that the status quo is untenable. As presented in the report, the first option would have CCV off on its own with the consolidation of NVU, Castleton, and Vermont Tech under a single accreditation and administration. The second would have NVU and Castleton consolidated while both CCV and Vermont Tech remain separate entities within the system. Regarding this last option, it's no option at all. If we're going to fix our broken system, simply combining two institutions into a joint accreditation while the other two remain in their own orbits with the attendant ongoing costs would squander an opportunity to re-imagine the system as a whole. Based on available data, one could well argue that Vermont Tech would be in a more precarious fiscal position off on its own and consequently so would the system as a whole, given its corporate structure. As one goes, so go the rest of us. While some may focus on the singular nature of Vermont Tech and its mission, that institution is in no way incompatible with the bold vision of a comprehensive university providing access to all Vermonters. Fiscal considerations aside, including Vermont Tech as integral to a Vermont State University would enhance both the current VTC and the new University. Offering a variety of certificates, baccalaureate and associate degrees in industrial, civil and computer engineering; agriculture – including plant and animal sciences – business, etc., VSU-Randolph would logically become the University's center of expertise and excellence in these distinct areas while at the same time being better able to leverage the offerings of its sister institutions. The most ambitious model, which brings all VSC institutions under one roof would go a long way towards eliminating the internal competition for students that has unfortunately become commonplace within the VSCS. What profit is there in a starving lion eating its own tail? We've seen full well the answer to that as we have been competing for limited resources and a dwindling pool of students. It would also result in millions in savings annually by avoiding duplication of top administration personnel. Our brightest future lies in a bold reimagining that would truly unify all four institutions. We need to embrace a structure that would enable us all to flourish, a structure that no longer pits one against the other and that effectively leverages our collective resources for the benefit of all Vermonters. Our faculty have spoken with one voice: We need unity. As Ben Franklin so aptly put it: "We must, indeed, all hang together or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately."

Do you have any other suggestions, comments, or ideas that you would like t...

As in the Labor Task Force proposal, eliminate the Chancellor's office (\$181,000 rent per year). Have a single President of the VSC, rotate, possibly two months at each campus (all have sufficient room), an Academic Dean on each campus and have common administrative functions (payroll, admissions, PR, IT (should be at VTC), etc.) distributed among the campuses. The Board should be reformulated as in the Labor Task Force proposal. I have been on many Board task forces over the past 44 years, and the Board has just been a rubber stamp to the Chancellor's office proposals. They have entirely failed in their fiduciary responsibilities to the citizens of Vermont.

The discussion around education funding is looking at shifting from property tax to an income based is still not the fix. You will lose the educational tax on out of state property at the percentage it is taxed now and those Vermonters in the highest income will have a 2nd home out of state and stay there for 6 months plus one day so they won't be a Vermont resident to tax. Look at raising the rooms and meals tax by 5 %, it will not stop one of the 13 Million out of state visitors from coming to Vermont. Wait until 2022 to initiate. also look at alumni of the Colleges and those Vermonter's that support the colleges to give portion of their retirement or life insurance to help support the long term funding. We don't get the 4 or 5 million dollar donations like they do at UVM, Saint Mikes & Middlebury College so look at a different option1

I much prefer the LTF proposal to the NCHEMS proposal. The separation of CCV seems disingenuous: funding was taken from the other colleges to build up CCV over the years resulting in increased costs at the other colleges. It's time for CCV to share their strengths with the other colleges, not undercut the tuition and continue to pull resources from the other colleges. A note about the ranking questions below: I find the focus offensive: is it really a matter of host communities versus student needs? In order to provide all students with an education that enables them to participate in Vermont's labor force, students in both urban and rural areas need the necessary supports to succeed, regardless of race/ethnicity, age, location and educational background. Given that the BOT is the audience for these remarks, I am concerned that the issues I present from the trenches of the VSCS will not resonate with them. I speak as a former VSCS student, and a current VSCS adjunct professor and professional tutor. My perspective is based on my experience supporting students. I don't see how increasing the Chancellor's office will benefit them and have found the growth of the Chancellor's office has increased the disconnect from the needs of the students and those who work to provide them with the education they desire. It feels like the BOT responds to the Chancellor's office, not the colleges.

If we've learned anything from the past year – and from the botched NVU merger – it is that information (and how information is shared) is key. I have the interesting perspective of being an alumni, current student, and current staff member of a VSCS institution. I can tell you already that the information being shared with us at our university, as well as our larger community, is not consistent. We were told in at least two union meetings that each college would be able to preserve their individual identity, and that the rebrand would be of the system itself: NVU would remain NVU, Castleton would remain Castleton, and so on. Speaking to community members, I've learned that what our president is sharing is not this. "Outsiders" have been told that the rebrand will be on mass scale and each campus would become Vermont State University, NVU, etc. It concerns me that at this very early stage, there is already a great amount of miscommunication. It leads to distrust among employees at our organization, and distrust toward both our union and the VSC. The VSC needs to make a more concentrated effort to align the facts that are being shared among various groups, because it makes everyone look bad when we're saying one thing to community members/alums/parents/other stakeholders and they've heard something completely different.

Needs a detailed analysis of: (1) changes in academic program design & delivery; (2) staff and faculty reductions... in order to be a real template for the future.

If closing a college (NVU) would have such dire effects on the economy in a single region of the state, that is a failure of Vermont leadership. If it's so important, just fund it and call it economic development and measure the ROI for taxpayers. Vermont should not have to be handcuffed to an institution in this way. Is NVU's mission to educate Vermonter's or to bolster an economy at taxpayer's expense?

The Labor Task Force (LTF), comprised of VSC staff and faculty, has put forward a visionary proposal for public-access higher education in Vermont. Unfortunately this proposal is not being considered by the Select Committee on Higher Education. Why is that? The following is a summary of the four LTF recommendations. 1) Increase state appropriation for public-access higher education in Vermont. 2) Reconsider the distribution of public funds for enrollment in out-of-state colleges. 3) Unify the four institutions of the VSCS into a single-accreditation institution of public-access higher education 4) Establish a structure for shared system-wide decision-making by trustees, faculty, staff, and the executive team. I feel all the choices for the list below are high priority.

I'd like to urge the Board of Trustees to please consider supporting the Labor Task Force proposal. Their proposal will help the VSC be financially viable, while still retaining faculty and staff. The proposal details other ways to save money without consolidating programs and sports within the VSC system. Finally, their goal of lowering tuition costs will help students in Vermont be able to actually pursue their higher education in Vermont instead of out of state, thus increasing the amount of students in the VSC.

I have also reviewed the LTF proposal. It contains good ideas with very well thought out logic. Carve down the ability of VSAC going out of state. We need to keep it here so the money will stay in state. CCV should stay with the VSCS and be part of the campuses --> saving money on leasing of buildings when some of the could go to an actual campus such as Rutland to Castleton and Morrisville to Johnson. Slim down the Chancellor's office to an affordable space on campuses and trim from the top instead of hiring more and more positions while leaving housekeeping (for example) positions vacant. Those people should not have to choose which area they will clean every day.

Do you have any other suggestions, comments, or ideas that you would like t...

- Have a technology solutions and innovation department to help create smart systems and efficiencies system-wide. Move all processes online – change of name forms (with place to upload documentation), employment forms (secure, with place to attach documentation), etc. This department would be the go-to when students, faculty, staff have a need for a technology-based solution, which could then be implemented system-wide (as needed). Students could suggest better ways to communicate with them via all the new technologies that are ever evolving.
- Develop “virtual call center” (ring group?) where cross-trained employees can answer some basic questions (e.g. how to reset your password, how to activate your account, how to access Self Service, how to find your 1098-T, Canvas basics, what’s my ID#, etc.) from their office while also doing their regular work. This way most calls will be answered by a live person rather than go to voicemail and it gives staff cross-training experience and greater sense of team (rather than siloed in departments).
- Have a team that focuses on how to get VT high school juniors/seniors to choose VSU over an out of state college, or to go to college or have some technical or professional training at all. What can we do, other than lower tuition costs, to make the “VSU” a destination?

My two cents is a reminder that ultimately increased public funding and lower tuition is the solution and what we should always be working for. The Relief Act should help, and on the horizon is the possibility of dramatic federal support with Biden's plan for two tuition-free years for public higher ed. I know it's off topic, but then again it isn't. Thank you all for your service. Sincerely, David J. Plazek Professor of Political Science Northern Vermont University

The NCHEMS proposal includes so many references to UVM (32 in fact), belying the fact that these recommendations are coming from an organization that is outside Vermont. UVM and the state colleges system do not have the kind of collaboration that this report assumes. The ranking system below is not appropriate. Each one of these are crucial priorities and one should not be sacrificed to serve another. I fear that increasing enrollment and expanding programs will not be accompanied by providing the students we attract with the needed supports necessary for them to succeed. We have already seen this when staff was significantly cut two years ago. Many of our students come to college without the life skills that they need to learn in order to persist in their studies. Many of our students come with histories of significant trauma and family situations that have not been able to teach skills in well-being (persistence, stress tolerance, social skills, and mental wellness skills). Our graduation rates tell that story.

Create separate boards of trustees overseeing the VSU and CCV to guide each institution in terms of mission, budget, planning, and leadership.

Take a risk and the next step, I think that for the success of the institution, it is time to consolidate. I would propose VTC, CCV, and CU.

Yes, listen to the people who know the VSCS the best, the students, the staff, the faculty, the alumni and the citizens of the surrounding towns. You have brought in experts that have provided comparative data from across the country and that is valuable. But now compliment that analysis with the real lived experiences and knowledge of those who know the VSCS the best!!

Instead of being limited to the NCHEMS proposal give full consideration to all alternate proposals and concepts which have been developed, including the Labor Task Force proposal and the NVU and VTC workgroup proposals, as well as feedback from this process.. Take the best ideas of each to shape a final recommendation that works for the entire system and the entire state.

Please do not do this. As a Castleton alumni, I can say that this would be a very sad decision that would break my heart. Castleton's name is incredibly important and continues to ground its students in the small town and college history. Castleton has shown that it can function on its own, with talented athletics, performing arts, and community.

I think you should consider joining the green mountain higher education consortium with Saint Michael's, Champlain, and Middlebury Colleges, where you can then consolidate resources in areas such as purchasing and HR, and ultimately get rid of many of the positions at the chancellors office. Any eliminations at VTC should happen at the Williston campus. The Randolph VTC program is too valuable to the state. This state needs technical education for its students. Any elimination of that would be a shame. It is not the job of the VSC system to keep up the livelihood of the college towns, especially since it is not receiving adequate funding by the state. If a college campus does not have enough students living on it to make it profitable, the campus should be closed. Lyndon is a good example of this. I am also concerned VTC would get lost in a merger of the type, since they are so unlike the other schools and offer no similar degrees. I think it would make more sense to merge NVU into Castleton University since Castleton University already has multiple campus locations, and keep VTC as a standalone school. To eliminate the reputation issue though, you will need to keep the school under the leadership of the Castleton university president or you're back to the same issue of reputation and students choosing to go elsewhere.

Castleton University (then Castleton State College) provided a transformative experience for me as a student born and raised in Vermont. I truly hope CU and the proposed reorganizational system within the VSC can continue to provide access to and serve Vermont students in a similar manner. Each of the four areas below are of equal priority, and attainable, in my judgement.

This would not help Castleton, I could see it hurting CU and benefitting other schools

Do you have any other suggestions, comments, or ideas that you would like t...

Don't do this.

The Labor Task Force report provides the possibility for a sustainable and successful VSC.

I think that the Legislature should strongly consider the Labor Task Force proposal. It goes further than the NCHEMS recommendations and focuses on unity of the system as well as accessibility and affordability.

While I've only read the Executive Summary and roughly pages 55 - 75 of the second report so far, it's clear that the report is well done and outlines the necessary considerations for any of the options. What may be most important now, is that as much as the past year has pushed the VSC and its stakeholders, whichever option is chosen, it is actually only the beginning of the work ahead. The hardest and most critical part of the transformation will be the implementation. Maintaining momentum and resiliency while re-envisioning and then delivering a new mission will require a new mode of operation for the Board and all VSC leadership. It will be an unprecedented exercise in change management. In our resource-starved environment, it's difficult to envision success.

I am surprised that the Chancellor and Board leadership are not talking about the proposal of the Labor Task Force (to merge into a Vermont State University with an alternative and arguably more democratically appropriate and in ways nimbler model of governance). A sizable group of stakeholders have contributed to that proposal, and it strikes me as strange that we are not discussing that work side-by-side with the Select Committee's proposal. Would the Chancellor address the stakeholders concerned that this might be intentional and even strategic marginalization? Or does the leadership plan to address stakeholders in an open discussion of ALL relevant proposals?

I urge the board to avoid embarking on a risky experimental venture in the hopes that it will eventually realize cost-savings. A far-reaching merger runs a real risk of destroying public confidence in the VSC, discouraging prospective students, and depressing enrollment even further than the system has experienced thus far. The system can find efficiencies in ways that are less visible to the public. For example, merging upper-level administration, discontinuing the lease of the chancellor's office, and encouraging continued cross-campus collaboration, which has only just begun, would generate immediate savings without the downside of tarnishing existing identities and brands. I hope the board remembers that its decision will affect thousands of students and alumni, hundreds of employees, and countless communities and businesses across the state. Please consider all options, including less radical proposals, before taking irrevocable steps.

We need to understand which areas in the college are doing well in regarding to recruitment, retention and program enrollment. Athletics is a major driving force as to why a student attends one of our institution. Athletics has turned a profit each year while bring in students from Vermont and outside of Vermont. This has created diversity on our campus and in our communities and schools. When a student participates in athletics we have a higher rate retention them and their gpa is on average higher than a non-student-athlete. We can use athletics as a grow engine on campus, but it has to be paired with strong and consistent academic offerings. I know at NVU we have lost numerous students due to ever changes majors and academic class offerings that seem to have no strategy behind the cuts. Strong academic offers, multi classes/electives in each discipline beyond the core requirements is needed. We loss our highest preforming students at to high of a rate. We need to focus on being an access institution to our BIPOC community within Vermont. I know Miles Smith has brought a proposal forward to NVU enrollment that was dismissed and needs to be review as it provide students from the BIPOC community here in Vermont a place to call home and serves their specific needs.

The need for affordability for students, preservation of staff and faculty positions (cuts have already been made), creating one system wide executive team, and creating real shared governance. Without all of these things, we will not be able to achieve our mission to serve the public good.

Do you have any other suggestions, comments, or ideas that you would like t...

Yes, I support the Labor Task Force report in the areas where the reports DIFFER. GOVERNANCE: LTF recommends adding staff and faculty to the BOT, establishing a single executive team for the VSU, and a faculty and staff senate which, all combined, will assure balanced shared governance. NCHEMS recommends expanding the operational authority of the Board of Trustees, increasing the management function of the Chancellor's Office, and developing an administrative branch for oversight of operations (possibly in association with UVM). RESTRUCTURING: LTF proposes unifying CU, NVU, VTC, and CCV to form Vermont State University (VSU) with a single executive team. Each campus would retain its distinct identity. NCHEMS recommends maintaining the Chancellor's Office, combining CU, NVU, and VTC into a single entity while maintaining CCV a separate institution, and moving adult CTE and workforce development from technical centers to CCV. VSCS BENEFITS: LTF identifies specific, data-based civic, social, and personal benefits, in addition to the positive economic impact of public-access higher education in Vermont. NCHEMS acknowledges the economic value of the state college system in general terms. VSAC PORTABILITY: The LTF identifies the unrestricted portability of VSAC funds as encouraging the movement of public funds and students out of state, thus privileging the value of freedom over unity. LTF recommends redirecting the unrestricted VSAC portability funds to create a tuition assistance program for students attending a public college in Vermont; this will increase persistence and reduce student debt. NCHEMS does not address VSAC. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY: LTF demonstrates that staff and faculty units have already been cut significantly over the past decade, while executive and upper-level administration has increased. LTF recommends reducing executive and administrative duplication. NCHEMS recommends the development of performance objectives for financial solvency of the System, for distribution of state aid, and for expectations for VSCS institutions. Specifically, NCHEMS recommends requiring long-term cost savings through "operational efficiencies" (i.e. more cuts across the board, including to faculty, staff and programs). NCHEMS correlates demographics to declining enrollment. LTF shows a stronger correlation between increasing tuition and declining enrollment. CONCLUSION: Although the two proposals agree on core issues, there are significant differences. LTF's proposal emphasizes social justice by balancing Vermont's core values of freedom and unity, drawing attention to the needs of all stakeholders, including current students; business, civic, and social organizations; employees; and the future citizens of a civil and educated society. The rankings in the next question> I found these difficult to choose between. These 4 should ALL BE top priorities. I also think that the 3 about direct educational goals are so integrated that it does NOT make sense to try to pretend they are separate. Point: We are not providing the best education to ALL students if we are not providing support and retention services... Ideally, I would rank the 3 educational priorities as #1 and the economic-host community issue as #2. I will also do the ranking as requested. In this case, I have ranked the overall educational priority as #1 for students. This IS consistent with my position described above. I don't think any school system has to meet the priority of EVERY student... that is why we have so many different higher ed options in America etc.. However the students we are working with should be fully supported to succeed.

I support the plan for restructuring from the Labor Task Force report, entitled "Uniting Vermont". Please see the letter from 2/15/2021 from CU Faculty Assembly President, Andre Fleche to Chancellor Zdatny and the VSC BoT. One very important note: The athletic programs on each campus are very large enrollment drivers. It is important for any consolidation of accreditation to include a conscience effort to ensure each campus is eligible for its own distinct membership in the NCAA (if that is its current governing body). Each of the campuses must be recognized as a unique institution to the U.S. Department of Education. They each must have unique IPEDS and OPE ID numbers. To be an active member of the NCAA each institution must be accredited by a regional agency. So, if the institution is recognized by the DOE as distinct and that institution is accredited by a regional agency, each institution is eligible for NCAA active membership.

The alternative suggestion addresses the need for a skilled and knowledgeable labor force to help our state's businesses thrive and grow. A successful combination of the talents and expertise provided through a merger of Vermont Tech, the Community College of Vermont and the state's technical centers would result in a highly competitive and efficient community technical college system. The infrastructure is already in place. CCV has twelve locations, each of which has a local technical center. Accessing CCV academic coursework, in combination with the skills of Vermont Tech faculty within technical center facilities that are already outfitted with the necessary lab space and equipment must be considered. Doing so will provide equal higher education access to all Vermonters in an accessible and affordable manner.

Do you have any other suggestions, comments, or ideas that you would like t...

Changes we've experienced haven't been wholly successful or implemented with the care needed for success. Change must be implemented well. Consolidation of Admissions function - if this is a chosen path - will be a herculean task. The layers of admissions' work are many! Student populations who admissions offices work with include: undergraduate, graduate, international, first-year, transfer, early college, high school dual enrollment, online, non-degree, certificate, and student seeking professional development. For all populations, simultaneous work occurs with current term enrollment and registration, coming term(s) admission decisions and yield, future term prospect cultivation and recruitment, and wider brand recognition to rising and peripheral populations. This work is centered on building relationships with prospects in all populations, and at all stages, though intentionally timed communications and calendar campaigns conducted via mail, email, text, social media, print publications, and in person. Additional relationships are built with those who support and guide our students, such as their parents and families, school administrators, school counselors, program directors, and advocates. Considerable coordination is in place with campus teams, including department and program faculty, academic leadership, student and residential life, academic support, financial aid, registration and financial services, and, of course, marketing & communications. I'm not necessarily making a case against consolidation of some admissions function, simply stating it will be a very large endeavor. And will take expertise. Regarding expertise, careful consideration must be taken toward individuals selected to lead. We will need individuals with the strongest experience and skill set toward necessary tasks, including project management and proven leadership (results) through change. I fear the expertise and knowledge lost in those not selected. We need the best of the best. If it is determined that a function can be managed from Montpelier, then it can also be concluded that the function can be managed by an expert at a campus location. The best leadership doesn't exist only among those able/available in proximity to Montpelier. COVID has further solidified the ability of teams to rise to success from various locations. We need to keep the best teams, the absolute best team members. I embrace necessary change and challenge. I am simultaneously concerned with administrative cuts, specifically with regard to workload absorption and the loss of an enormous amount of talent and expertise. How will these decisions be made? As stated previously, I'm writing to advocate for a strong assessment of necessary roles and scope of work. It is important to note that like-titles don't equal duplicative roles and responsibility. Strong administrative efforts matter a lot to the success of our collective work in service to students. I write to advocate for a strong, evaluative approach to designing the RIGHT administrative teams in service to students. Certain passion and knowledge, ethic and talent, is irreplaceable and will best support the redesigned VSCS & the great work we do! Finally, all of this change requires crisis communications. This is needed NOW! The VSCS mission and strength – one of quality and affordability across all institutions – needs to be injected into the media stream simultaneous to announcement of changes to come. Positive aspects need to be clear, with clear reason and with example of what/how students will benefit, to instill public confidence. We have suffered from coverage of the recent year. We MUST instill confidence across all of Vermont (and beyond), if we are to recover and negate further negative impact on our enrollment in the coming year and beyond. If done right, news of restructure and unification can have positive impact!

The State of Vermont needs to re-examine how they provide financial assistance to Vermont residents. Vermont provides the lowest, or the second lowest, percentage of fund to their state school compared to all other states in the nation. This is due, in part, to the additional funding provided directly to students. Students can then choose which institution they would like to attend and use their state funding grant. While many other states provide funding directly to students in this way, Vermont is unique in that students can use their grants at institutions outside of Vermont. A large number of students decide to move out of state each year for their education, which bring Vermont taxpayer dollars to other states and hurts the State of Vermont. This policy does provide additional opportunities for students, but through the transformation of the VSCS, the policy should be structured that makes it more difficult for these dollars to leave the state. For example, if a student is studying a major that is offered in Vermont, the grant should only be applicable in the state.

Dear Members of the Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees: I am writing on behalf of the Northeast Kingdom Collaborative to express my support for the recommendations made by the Select Committee on the Future as you consider the future of the Vermont State College System. We support the plans to consolidate and transform the system and to provide funding that will sustain this system and make the transformation possible. We encourage the Board to strongly advocate with the legislature and the Scott administration to implement these recommendations. For generations, NVU has been a driving economic force in the Kingdom, providing education, jobs and cultural connections. Its economic impact in our region is estimated at over \$100 million annually. By employing 400 people, it adds \$31.4 million to our local economy. In the most economically disadvantaged region of Vermont, this impact is enormous. NVU provides excellent educational opportunities for Vermonters pursuing higher education and serves some of the state's most vulnerable students. About 90% of NVU's students receive financial aid and half of these undergraduates are the first in their family to attend college. Simply put: Without NVU, many Vermonters would not receive a college education. NVU has been a critical partner in developing our local workforce. Even before the pandemic, NVU created a pipeline of skilled workers for Vermont's employers, providing students with the hard and soft skills that employers demand. During the last two months of 2020, as workers' jobs were affected by the pandemic, NVU stepped up to provide nearly 300 Vermonters with free courses and trainings through the Workforce Initiative. This impact on our workforce and economy will be augmented as NVU brings in even more resources—totalling nearly \$5 million—to our region. It will use a three-year \$986,252 grant from the Regional Forest Economy Partnership to establish the DoNorth Wood Product and Forestry Accelerator, which will help the forest products industry evolve and modernize, creating new jobs and skilled workers. Furthermore, NVU will use a \$465,000 USDA Rural Utilities grant to help expand video conferencing services in the state's more rural region, providing more access to workforce training, distance learning opportunities, and telemedicine in underserved areas across the state. Lastly, NVU will use a \$3.5 million gift from an alumnus and his family to establish the Learning and Working Community, which will offer academic study with real world experiences via partnerships with local businesses and organizations. As if its impact as an economic and educational driver in our region were not enough, it has provided facilities and cultural programs that have increased the vitality of the most rural region of the state. It has helped our resilient communities innovate during our recovery efforts. NVU embraces the Select Committee's recommendations and brings considerable resources to the transformation effort. As leaders in our communities, we stand with NVU, ready to do what is necessary to transform the VSC system and ensure its sustainable success.

do not change Castleton University, help it grow and continue to be an attraction to in-state and out-of-state students

Do you have any other suggestions, comments, or ideas that you would like t...

I hear from people from all social and cultural ranks about what CCV has allowed them to do with their lives and careers and it is an essential element of Vermont life. We don't want to mess with that. The 4-year colleges are important do and merging them will help to keep them alive.

Yes. After the Corona virus, we will see changes in enrollment and student choice from around the country. I strongly feel that we need to halt decisions like these until after the pandemic when we can clearly see the impact on our economic landscape.

I think the recommendation by the faculty union is a much better recommendation.

Have students been involved in any of this? Not just current or former students, but potential students? I agree that affordability is probably a huge reason that people aren't choosing the VSCs, but I guarantee that it's not the only one. I'm actually an example of a Vermont student who left the state for college-- and honestly, I didn't plan to come back. (To be fair, I had moved here as a teenager and winter was really not my thing.) That was ten years ago; I expect that some things have changed and some things haven't. The point is that we won't know what the factors are until we listen to potential students. Lowering costs is a piece of the puzzle. Making ourselves more appealing, in whatever other forms that might take, is another. We have a lot of value to offer. Do we just need to help people see it? Or do they value different things than we do? If that's the case, we need to pivot to align ourselves with their values.

As a VSC employee, I am apprehensive that the consolidation process will lead to existing employees being given increased (potentially system-wide) responsibility without accompanying salary increases. (This is already problem within the colleges, and I could see it being exacerbated by the consolidation process) This would lead to job satisfaction/retention issues and future problems hiring qualified employees. I would strongly encourage the administrations to include job reclassification as part of shifting responsibilities.

While the financial situation of the Vermont State Colleges is challenging, I would like to caution against the kind of rush to judgement and ill-thought-out impulse to radical transformation that the previous Chancellor suggested. The more deep and transformative the change, the more important it is to have solid information behind the decisions made. Northern Vermont University is three years old. It isn't old enough to have graduated from high school! Its challenges - which include having to essentially re-invent itself at the demand of the Chancellor's office - are a place where the Vermont State Colleges can learn, if they choose to take the time to do so. Instead of flailing around with a brand new plan every two years, I urge the Chancellor, the Board, and the state to stop, look and listen to the state - potential and current students, alumni, employers, faculty and staff, and more - before endorsing ANY major change or stripping the Vermont State Colleges of their identities and uniqueness. Thank you.

I know you will keep the best interests of our students in mind in your decision making. Good luck!

Please accept the reality of shrinking enrollments, failing campuses in the north and build on the strengths that are now in place; CV and CSU.

N/A

If CU, NVU, and VTC are merged into a new institution called Vermont State University (or whatever), we may want to rethink the system's name in general. Will "Vermont State Colleges" still be the right title if there's now a Vermont State University in the mix?

Take a bold step and close one of the schools to save the other ones

I just want to highlight that I am pleased to see in the Select Committee proposal that CCV is kept as a distinct institution. CCV has a unique place in the VSCS in that it provides strong sub-baccalaureate programming to Vermonters combined with a financially sustainable model across a wide geographic area. CCV needs to stay separated from the other VSCS institutions in order for it to fulfill it's mission of access, affordability, and student success. If it is combined, CCV's flexibility is limited and its ability to provide quality programming and service to students would be impacted for the negative.

The system should be re-named - Vermont State University System [VSUS] which should include CCV, Castleton University, and Northern Vermont University [with VTC absorbed into NVU], and then a VSU Online. Professors from any and all of the campuses could contribute to these programs and the programs should be accessible as fully online programs. Each campus might offer online classes that could apply but there should be a central university with specific programs that are fully online. Don't keep these within the other campuses because its just confusing. I think the State should play an important role in funding and deciding the future of these institutions. I also think that rich people from Vermont send their kids to out of state schools and bring VSAC money with them. What is VSAC? Why would individual students be able to spend Vermonters' money in colleges at other states. Put it into our institutions so our kids want to stay here.

Do you have any other suggestions, comments, or ideas that you would like t...

CCV, as currently structured, works. CCV has had a consistently balanced budget. This financial solvency could disappear if CCV were to administratively join CU, NVU, and VTC. Also, combining CCV with its sister institutions could limit CCV's current flexibility related to workforce programming and limit their ability to meet the needs of Vermont's adult learners. CCV also has a state-wide presence with 12 physical centers that have developed relationships with local communities and businesses. This physical presence is very important when thinking about outreach to new students, adult learners, and the needs of workforce outreach - constituencies that are so important for the whole VSCS.

In 2018, of the 1733 students who left VT for o/s colleges, 1) how many took VSAC money with them; 2) what was the average amount of VSAC money per each one of those students; and 3) what was the total amount of VSAC money which left VT in 2018? At a minimum, VSAC money should only go with students who are in a college major NOT available in Vermont; similarly run like the Regional Student Program managed by the New England Board of Education. Also, can VSAC actually be included in the "administrative" function of the VSCS - for instance, can VSAC staffing be located amongst the college locations and included in such functions as financial aid counseling, research, and general financial functions? Can VSAC actually be considered an entity of the VSCS? The below rankings was very difficult and almost seemed unfair to rank them - as I believe all are important. What was the purpose behind the request for rankings?

CCV should be allowed to start offering bachelor's degrees too.

Increased access to higher education should be at the center of the overarching VSCS mission.

In its February 11, 2021 Revised Report, the Select Committee on the Future of Public Higher Education in Vermont issued a number of promising recommendations, including to consolidate Northern Vermont University (NVU), Castleton University, and Vermont Technical College. If adopted, these recommendations would help assure a healthy and sustainable future for the Vermont State Colleges (VSC) system. My comments focus on NVU and, in particular, the Northeast Kingdom (NEK). NVU is a critically important component of the depressed northern Vermont economy with a total economic impact on the region of over \$100 million annually. Without NVU, the NEK would be in even more desperate financial straits. While the economy is important, the major focus must be on students. NVU provides essential college education opportunities for the area's high school students. As noted in the Select Committee's report, VSC institutions, including NVU, "are a major point of access for the counties in the Northeast Kingdom...counties that are less likely to show up as thriving in measures of educational attainment, population growth, and income." NVU presents the most accessible opportunity for NEK high school students to pursue a broad, comprehensive college education. This is especially important for students who, on graduating from high school, are not sure of their future direction. Still, many NEK students don't go on to college. If they do matriculate, it's likely that they are the first in their family to do so. NEK high school students represent a significant, largely untapped pool of potential NVU applicants. The university should strengthen its outreach to the region's graduating high school students, and provide more opportunities and incentives for these students to enroll in the university. This can be accomplished by expanding programs that allow high school juniors and seniors to take NVU courses, and by a more visible university presence in the region's secondary schools. NEK students who choose to attend NVU are more likely to remain in the region where they will add to the workforce, contribute to the local economy, and strengthen local communities. Presently Vermont's financial support for its state college system is among the lowest in the nation. Expanding opportunities for NEK high school students to attend NVU is possible only if there is a significantly greater level of support for the VSC system, including funding to enable more financial aid for families of limited means and opportunities.

Raise Vermont's status in the national publicly funded higher education ratings from next to last by raising taxes on the wealthiest and mandate that parents who wish to send their out of state for higher education pay full price. Finally, quit trying to undermine faculty unionism. Faculty are the most valuable components of a quality state college system.

Taxpayers operate in the real world and we demand that our institutions also operate in the real world. In the real world we do not prop up failing institutions by draining resources away from successful institutions. Anybody with a couple of business courses under their belt can tell you that. Let's use data to drive our decisions, not feelings.

I see no glaring issues with this proposal assuming that CCV will, in no way, take on the existing financial burden of the other schools. There should be no loophole allowing even the slightest spillover of this financial cancer. It would be like marrying someone with bad credit and enormous debt.

A learning commons model for the physical libraries would work but would require a significant increase in staffing and funding for resources.

Take into account the information provided by those who actually understand the system rather than hiring an outside consulting firm that clearly represents only the interests of management.

Let Castleton University continue to succeed as it is. You succeed in battling a cancerous growth by removing it, not transferring it to healthy cells. Creating VermontnState University will be this board's greatest failure. The board ignored the issue with Lyndon and Johnson through complacency. Aside from trustee Moran, the trustees should be embarrassed and replaced.

Do you have any other suggestions, comments, or ideas that you would like t...

You might consider partnering with Champlain College-- they must be doing something right!

No

The VSCS has mishandled funds and made bad decisions for years. I attended JSC 1980-1984 and received a very useful and affordable college degree. The campus was a no-frills operation. I was an "older" student and participated on the x-country team. I was appalled years later to see how much money was spent on "athletic facilities". The residents of Vt. cannot afford to bail you out. Due to poor decision making severe cuts and consolidation are the only answer.

Scrap this proposal. It is clearly biased toward CCV and Chancellor's office.

Continued communications is appreciated.

I think this plan is a wise way to proceed into the future. We at the VSC offer so much to the state now and we have more to offer in the future. I thank the board for proceeding in such a careful and considered fashion, and for acting to ensure that rural and low-income Vermonters are valued as people deserving of a high quality education.

If the CCV business model is so successful, why can't VTC go back to granting two-year degrees and either become part of CCV or follow its business model? Real estate is expensive. I think a hard look needs to be taken at underutilized or poorly utilized real estate. For example, is it efficient to have three VSC facilities in Bennington? If there is unused space, why not move (or distribute) the Chancellor's Office to various campuses? If the COVID pandemic has taught us anything, it is that we don't need to be sharing physical space in order to do good work.

Education, business, and psychology programs are programs that should be at the core of each institution. From there, each campus should have a few specialty programs. Duplication should be eliminated. A focus on career-readiness is necessary. The current career development offices and programs are not sufficient for placing students in the Vermont workforce.

Consolidation of Castleton University, Northern Vermont University and Vermont Technical College into a single entity is not penny-wise and is decidedly pound-foolish. The three institutions are simply too disparate and too geographically separated for such a plan to work administratively and cost savings would be ephemeral. The far better solution is to separate the three institutions into three separate colleges, each with its own board, each with its own identity, each with its own alumni and support base, and in the process eliminating the Chancellor's office. Then allocate the state's higher education dollars to the three colleges on a per-student basis, as opposed to the arbitrary and unfair percentage system now in place. Such an outcome would be fair to the traditions, history, alumni, students, faculty/staff and surrounding communities of each institution, and would serve the State of Vermont well by ensuring the strengths of each individual college would be allowed to flourish and grow. And by the way: you could have had the courtesy to accurately state that "Castleton" is formally known as "Castleton University" in the paragraph below, a descriptor you did not omit in the other institutions.

Opportunity lies in recreation potential for our campuses and communities. With a strong CCV program it should be known that in post covid world (and pre) they were entitled to access SHAPE facilities. More clear understanding of benefits to these facilities as well for employees and families - these should be the shining gems of our communities - no employee or student should feel they have to pay for wellness else where!

What other cost considerations have there been? What about moving Chancellor's office operations to the campuses? Instead of renting a separate location?

CCV should remain a separate institution within the VSC System. As the only state institution providing exclusively sub-baccalaureate programming, CCV fills a critical role in the provision of educational services and one that needs to grow to meet rising workforce needs for sub-baccalaureate education and training and to serve adult learners in larger numbers. Specifically: • CCV operates with a unique culture and business model that has made it the least expensive of the VSC institutions, and made it relatively nimble in responding to statewide and local demand for programs. • CCV serves a relatively distinctive student population, especially working adults. Adult learners comprise a population that represents the only significant opportunity for growing enrollment among Vermonters, and they are likeliest to attend an institution that provides convenient access to programs and courses that lead directly to in-demand jobs. • There appears to be a growing opportunity to respond to employer needs with noncredit programming, and CCV is well positioned to meet that need. • There is a considerable risk that combining CCV with the other VSC institutions could serve to limit its ability to flexibly and affordably provide ongoing or expanded subbaccalaureate programming."

1. Consolidate NVU Johnson & Lyndon into campus. 2. Return administrative duties to the campuses for better accessibility and cut duplicate positions at the Chancellors office. 3. Make the hard decision and do what is best for the system and not just for the institutions in the northern part of the state.

Do you have any other suggestions, comments, or ideas that you would like t...

COVID restrictions and Trump policies have hurt our ability to attract out-of-state and foreign students. I hope this will change. With a diminishing pool of Vermont students, we are increasingly dependent on these others. To remain competitive, we will need to maintain our good programs, our staff, and our fine faculty, all of which have recently been gutted by budget cuts. I hope we can rebound, before a destructive cycle sets in. The VSC and the State need to come through with timely support.

I think it would be in the best interests of all concerned, including legislators and the Governor, if the Board suggested how the proposal, once implemented, would change the colleges. For example, would Castleton still have a nursing program? Or a business program? Or a teacher education program? Would other colleges also have these programs? You should let people know what specifically the proposal calls for. We all know you can't be definite, but you can certainly be more specific than the report manages to be. If I were a senator from Rutland county and I sat on the Senate Appropriations Committee, I would want to know what exactly you are proposing to do at Castleton. "We don't know yet" would not be a satisfactory answer.

The Labor Task Force proposal is a better fit for our students and college system and I favor the following recommendations from the proposal. 1. In order to reduce tuition, increase state appropriation for public-access higher education to achieve parity with national averages and keep the promise that "the VSC ... shall [be] supported in whole or in substantial part with State funds" (Vermont 16 V.S.A. 2171). Vermont has an unfortunate history of inadequately funding higher education. Since the 1980s, the state appropriation has been reduced from 51% to 17.5% of the VSCS budget. The result of this neglect has been higher tuition, increased student debt, cuts to staff, faculty, and programs, reduction of student access, and deterioration of infrastructure. 2. Reconsider the distribution of public funds for enrollment in out-of-state colleges. Redirect a significant portion of this grant to the state college system for a tuition-assistance program. Unrestricted VSAC portability has diverted millions of tax dollars annually to out-of-state institutions while Vermonters who seek in-state, public-access College have been restricted from attendance and completion. 3. Unify the four institutions of the VSCS into a single-accreditation institution of public-access higher education to be titled Vermont State University (VSU). Unifying the VSCS into a single system with a common mission and distinct educational approaches across campuses will increase access, collaboration, and innovation. Consolidating common executive and upper-level administrative operations will reduce operating expenses. The VSU Executive Office will meld the operations of Chancellor's Office and the four existing Executive Teams into a single system-focused leadership team. 4. Establish a structure for shared system-wide decision-making by trustees, faculty, staff, and the executive team. Recent and recurring events within the administration of the VSCS indicate that the existing governance model would be greatly enhanced with direct and consequential communication between the trustees and members of the faculty and the staff. As noted by the American Association of University Professors and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, involving faculty and staff with trustees is a best practice for governing boards. Currently, over 13% of public institutions include faculty members as trustees with voting rights and another 9% include faculty as nonvoting trustees. In Summary- By increasing the state appropriation and redistributing public funds to strengthen unity of opportunity, establishing a unified organizational structure and reconstituting the governance board this design serves the common good while improving financial efficiency, reducing cost of attendance, expanding access, and assuring quality through collaboration. This proposal will unite Vermont and maintain the legacy of providing future generations with a network of opportunities for transformative higher education.

Above all, CCV should remain a separate distinct institution because it provides the lowest cost for Vermonters to access higher education. If CCV were to be absorbed into a unified VSC as one entity, I worry the affordability aspect would diminish.

-Stop hiring expensive outside consultants. -Note: It is difficult to rank the four choices below because they are all important to the success of the VSCS. My choice of #4 does not make it less important than my choice of #1.

To take consideration of what Castleton has accomplished over the years and to consider letting us keep our name and branding but most importantly our sense of our Castleton family. It is not all about just us on campus but what it does to our Castleton community. We make an impact in our community and our community makes an impact on us.

I have a concern...that is, if we do not make the hard decisions now, we will lose all of the VSC down the road. That would be a real shame. Shame on us for not making the hard decisions when we should have. Look at the NVU merger. That obviously didn't save enough money to help the VSC. Just cutting a few administrators is not enough. I am also concerned for what will be left on the campus level for student contact in offices of support. So far the departments that moved up to OC haven't had great success and rely on the campus's to fix their issues. We can't continue to do that with less people. You do not ask for negatives to this plan so in effect you are only asking for the good. One of the negatives is losing identity for the individual campus's. Losing good, dedicated, committed employees at the campus level for new people at OC who do not know the students or how to run the processes. This is a people based business and we can't lose touch of the importance of student/staff/faculty contact.

*See below, isn't most of #3 a given? However, students need to be capable of succeeding-so prior educational experience could be quite relevant; I'm not sure why that one was included. **This is a loaded question as "meaningful presence" isn't defined. If one of our goals is to provide economic & cultural support to host communities than we need many more VSCS facilities all over State. So many places in VT could benefit from economic & cultural support.

Please put the Labor Task Force's report out on the VSC site for all to view. Why would you not?

Do you have any other suggestions, comments, or ideas that you would like t...

I wish I had an idea on how to keep all of the schools open, but I don't. I just know that the proposal is not fair to Castleton, and as I said above, I fear this will be the demise of the VSCS.

The proposal should take into consideration the well-informed suggestions of the VSCS Task Force, made up of highly experienced professionals from all our institutions. For the VSCS to survive and thrive, it must truly be a collaborative process with buy-in from all stakeholders. Currently, most of the suggestions and actions seem to be solely focused on the administration, which is deeply troubling and greatly harms the health and success of VSCS.

See my previous response.

The report places considerable emphasis on preparing students for the workplace. I have no problem with that, but It must be remembered that we are also preparing students to lead full, rewarding, and thoughtful lives. This is really the mission of the liberal arts. At some point in their college careers, students should be invited to think deeply about what kind of life they wish to lead, what their responsibility is to others, and what kind of world they wish to live in. I know with all of the pressures on the Board, it's easy to overlook this, but it's at the heart of what we do, at what higher education offers those who pursue it. It's best not to forget that.

CCV works for Vermont students. Why change an successful entity that has been financially stable? Let it be.

With small colleges closing nationwide and with so many closing or about to close in Vermont, it's unrealistic to expect that this state can maintain all the colleges in the system. Very hard, heartbreaking decisions will have to be made and they should be made now while at least some of the institutions are viable and before the future of all are compromised.

I think decisions and plans need to be made soon, I think that someone from the outside needs to be hired to help plan the new structure and implement it.

Start thinking of another path besides the one that the NCHEMS has proposed. Based on historical data I don't think it is reasonable to expect the state to kick in average of \$33 million over 5 years in ADDITIONAL FUNDING to help solve this issue. That is over a 100% increase in a pandemic year. I don't see this as realistic path. Not to mention and increase of almost %60 for every year thereafter. It appears they wrote that fiscal projection without any knowledge of historical state support.

I think we need to take things from each campus that we all do really well and bring a committee together to align those common goods. We then need to teach each campus where our successes are in order to implement them at each campus. I think we need to also use the knowledge of other State Unifications such as SUNY but at the same time stop comparing ourselves to that as well. We are so unique in the fact that we stand strong with only a few schools in our system (there aren't hundreds of us). We should all be front runners for our VT students in the simple fact that we are state institutions that present lots of wonderful opportunities for our Vermonters. The issue is finding a way to make it more affordable for Vermonters while also giving ourselves a good meaning in our communities, locally and across the state. When I was looking for schools and even now, the talk locally about all of us isn't good. People don't want to attend anything in the VSC because it's not cool or they "don't" offer good opportunities. Well we all do offer great opportunities, I just feel we don't highlight them enough and we all aren't celebrated enough in Vermont. I think finding a way to become celebrated would turn the tables positively for all of us.

split VTC between the resident university and the community college, possibly changing to a community technical college.

I would recommend consolidating four campuses into two campuses. A single northern campus and a single southern campus. Each Campus would then leverage their strengths to develop regionally known programs. For example, the northern campus would become regionally known for its recreational/agricultural programs with the southern campus recognize for its business/medical programs. Development of an integrated marketing program. Development of general education program which supports professional programs. The current focus of expanding the general education program is a significant weakness.

I appreciate all of the work the committee has done thus far. Reading the Initial Report made me really confident that the system was being led by the right group of people for this time. If I were to make one recommendation, I would suggest that we look to other rural states that have a similar higher education model that we strive to emulate – Vermont is unique but we're not special and many other states have successful models that we could follow. I know some of this work has already been done but I think taking a deep dive on a few other models could help us bring along reluctant partners and provide a clear blueprint. Otherwise, thank you for taking on this challenging and essential task!

Do you have any other suggestions, comments, or ideas that you would like t...

Nowhere in this proposal are the issues of faculty salaries discussed. Our starting wages for faculty are so low that we can't expect high performance from them - Assistant Professor wages run at least 20% below comparable institutions. When I was first hired by the VSC, I had to secure outside employment in order to support my family, so I was never able to be fully devoted to VTC. I have had numerous colleagues remark to me that they don't know how long they can afford to keep working here, and these are good teachers who we should be fighting to retain. Furthermore, the low salaries create a situation where we have to accept poor performance because it's all we can afford. If the VSC wants to see their faculty be invested in the success of the institution, they need to invest in their faculty and give them the resources they need to succeed. In exchange for higher salaries, we should have higher expectations for our faculty and make it easier to remove people who don't live up to those standards.

1.) Students come first--- focusing on "student life cycle" is important from Applying all the way to being an Alumni. 2.) Investment in employees and valuing their contribution to the community is important. 3.) Being creative and flexible in a changing world can be key too. Adapting as things evolve has served us well. 4.) Vermonters have a spirit in us and may we nurture that as we move forward.

We're in a bind with COVID right now, but that won't last forever. Please, look at the bigger picture. When COVID passes, you will see a surge in people seeking advancement and growth. Do the right thing: don't take over these institutions. Instead, support and engage them, by leveraging the unique culture and values of Vermont to provide to enlightened minds a path forward in a difficult world.

In the early 1970's, I served as an LSC student rep on an ad hoc committee established to look at the same problem we are having now. The integration of UVM as the centerpiece of the Vermont system was raised as an idea at that time, too, but I never heard it I discussed in earnest beyond that. I'm still not hearing it discussed in earnest now, and I can only ask why? As a student then, while I loved my education at Lyndon State College, I would have preferred to be a graduate of UVM-Lyndon. As a grandparent now, I would much prefer my granddaughter have the opportunity to be a UVM graduate at one of the smaller campuses. Bottom line: the University and the colleges should be collaborating more toward creating a sustainable model for the future, and we taxpayers should be paying more to encourage and support this more creative vision.

My husband and I work for two different VSC institutions, one as faculty and the other as staff, so I definitely see how different everyone's perspective is on this. Change is going to hurt everyone a bit, but we must put the students first and stay true to the mission of providing an affordable, high-quality, student-centered, and accessible education.

In the Rutland Herald column, "Vermont by Degrees," James Lambert does a good job of identifying the value of Castleton University to the surrounding community and the state of Vermont. Lambert explains that these benefits "reach far beyond education," and include arts and culture, athletic events, community service and engagement. He concludes by saying, "The importance of connection between universities and communities has never been greater....It's truly a beautiful thing." I totally agree, and that is why I worry that the austerity induced proposed "transformation" of the Vermont State College System will undermine the record of success and value of those institutions as a public good. The wording of the priorities listed below makes them difficult to rank. Where is affordability? "programs being available" has little meaning without affordability. My #4 choice exemplifies the problem of "education, skills, training, and credentials" seen merely as a means to an end - "to participate in Vermont's labor force. Sad.

Leave CCV and VTC alone focus on the real issues with LSC, JSC and CU taking 4 year colleges and making them sound better as universities was not a smart idea and trying to force LSC and JSC to work together was a joke when they cannot even operate correctly on their own. CCV independent operation from the VSC -Associates, Certificates, High school students, Workforce programs and trainings, VTC independent-Technical programs, Medical programs, Workforce advanced degrees. CU-is the only University and should focus on Bachelors and mainly Graduate level and Doctoral level as we are missing this unless you attend UVM which is out of reach for many "east coast" Vermonters. Sell Lyndon to Lyndon Institute use the money to revitalize Johnson and get rid of the crazy split campus messages that have been the new fad. Johnson takes over the Bachelors and Masters programs and does what it does best flexible upper level degrees for the working adult, providing distance education

Thank you.

Do you have any other suggestions, comments, or ideas that you would like t...

I work at Castleton, and have spent the past decade on the "front lines" of our recruitment efforts. While I understand that our discount rate has become unsustainable, and has impacted our bottom line; I think it's important to take a deeper look at what other like minded institutions in our region are doing to get ahead in recruiting (athletic or otherwise). There is a finite number of students looking to continue their education at smaller sized, liberal arts Colleges or Universities, in rural settings, in the Northeast United States. Those students have many many options to choose from in this region....no matter how great we all think Castleton (or any other VSC school) is; it's not that much different than many of the SUNY schools, both New Hampshire State Schools, and many other private and public schools in New England. Ultimately in many cases, cost becomes the deciding factor for students in making their final decision about where to attend. I love Castleton, and take a lot of pride in recruiting students to Castleton, but I think many here and throughout the VSC system, have a false sense of who we are. If schools were cars....we're a Kia. Kia's are great. Ton's of people drive Kia's. You see Kia's all over the road. Kia's are safe and reliable. People who drive Kia's tend to love them....the problem is we continue to try and sell our Kia at Lexus prices and wonder why we can't get kids here without giving a substantial discount. (I believe our increases in enrollment in the past few years are directly tied to multiple schools in our area closing, our tuition match agreements with those students, and the extension of our "Maple Award" scholarship to include more applicants....thus increasing our discount rate) The dealers over in New York, in New Hampshire and other places in our region are finding ways to sell a Kia for what it's worth....and that's why we continue to lose students to those schools. To break this trend we either need to invest a lot more into the experience students have at our schools (make us the best Kia they've ever seen) or get our costs down so we can charge a tuition that better aligns with the product we have to offer. My rankings below are based on the idea that we can lower costs and charge less....if that is not a reality, I would change my rankings below to reflect that; putting "Students receiving the academic, advising, and other supports necessary to succeed in their VSCS programs...." as my #1 priority.

If this happens, it must be announced with a bang, not a whimper, to get on prospective students' radar screens, especially out-of-state students. Continuing carrying 5 major physical campuses (CU, NVUx2, VTCx2) in such a small state of declining population seems to be a non-starter if there are no drastic concomitant changes/improvements.

Broad-based media approaches such as radio and television are a waste of money. I cringe every time I think of all the money that was wasted on Do North. That's an image campaign. Every time I saw an ad during the evening news I, it was obvious to me that the media buyer had no clue as to the audience that is actually watching the evening news on TV in 2020 and beyond. Look at the ad load...it's mostly pharmaceuticals aimed at seniors! Your target audience is not a mass audience, it is a very specific demographic. Research the best ways to reach that demographic. Use micro-strategies that reach into high schools and talk to those sophomores and juniors. Excite them with the possibilities! Excite them with small, personal and hands on! Excite them with potential professional opportunities that rank right up there with the best colleges and universities in the country. Tout the programs you have that are being written up and getting great press, nationally. Student recruitment is a very personal, one on one process. Put the lion's share of marketing money into collateral materials and personal recruitment efforts. It will pay dividends.

I strongly believe that CCV should remain under its own leadership, rather than be swept up by others. Having attended both CCV and NVU as well as having worked at CCV, I was able to see the leadership at two different institutions and believe fully that CCV has the ability to collaborate and innovate while leading the way in affordable, accessible education.

I am concerned about the nursing programs in the VSC. CU, VTC and CCV all play crucial roles in the education of Vermont's future nurses. But each also has a unique role that should be respected. Utilizing CCV for general education requirements is an excellent option for our potential students -- it is quality education provided in an affordable manner. It is accessible to many, and has access throughout the state. VTC has a tremendous reputation for the education of LPN's and associate degree RN's. Their faculty are knowledgeable, technology advanced and leadership is in place. CU, the baccalaureate university for nursing education in our state, has a rigorous BSN program as well as a newly implemented Masters degree program starting this year. CU now has two campuses to better serve the BSN needs of the state, with dedicated faculty and leadership to make a significant impact on the healthcare of Vermont. CCV and VTC are great gateways to a 4 yr BSN through Castleton. Uniting a single mission of nursing education within the state, while utilizing the best of what each level of education has to offer will be essential in not only sustaining, but in advancing Vermont's nursing education opportunities. A VT state colleges board for nursing education that would include leadership from CCV, VTC and CU, along with the inclusion of our state's healthcare institutions, would allow for a single mission with clear objectives and development of excellence within each level of nursing education. We have the opportunity to outline for our future nurses which options they have available to them, and to clearly state how Vermont can help them achieve their goals to become an RN. CCV -- general education VTC - LPN and Associate degree programs CU - BSN and Masters degree programs

Do you have any other suggestions, comments, or ideas that you would like t...

I just don't see how the plan works. I'm guessing that the state is not going to give us the funding that is required for this plan. That will require the VSC to make cuts across the system to make up whatever difference is needed to close the gap. I would imagine these cuts would be made across the system. There in lies the problem. I am in no way wishing that people would lose their jobs during this or any other time but clearly that is going to happen. If the VSC makes "equal" or "fair" cuts across the system, then all we are doing is watering down what we are offering, diminishing pieces of the student experience and academic offerings so that we can save some jobs and keep all institutions open. While I am not advocating for the closure of campuses I truly cannot see how that is not the best option at this time. By closing/consolidating we can ensure a better student experience, pump our time/energy/resources into it and build something that will last, that students will want to attend and have the experience they desire while getting the education they need to move forward in their lives. I would suggest having one liberal arts campus (CU is the best option for this in my opinion), keep/update the VTC campus as they offer majors that compliment the offerings at CU, and put CCV in the NVU campus so that students in that area can still access education and then move on to the location (CU or VTC) that suites their needs best. Attempting to keep each institution open or merging all three does not fix the problem. The damage is done, there are less students going to college and there is nothing that is going to change that. This plan is a great idea but we know we will not get the needed funding and are going to have to make some tough decisions. Making those decisions now will be sure the VSC's foundation is strong and will last for decades to come. Failure to do this only means that the problem lives on and in future this decision will have to be made. My other suggestion to increase students going to college would be to ask the state to create a loan forgiveness program. We want our kids going to school in state but then also to stay here. We know that this is not currently happening and that our VT HS students are willing to pay more to leave to get their education. This is why we need to make our offering better (what I talked about before) but also more affordable. I would suggest the the VSC/state of VT work with VSAC to create a loan forgiveness program that entails the following: Any VT student gets the the funding they need to go to any VSC program at a fixed 1% interest rate. Upon graduation they only pay the interest on their loans if they get a job in VT, stay in the state for 8 years, then the loans are totally forgiven. If they do not then they have gotten their degree and have to pay the current interest rate like a traditional student. Data would suggest that keeping them here until they are 30 is most likely going to allow them to plant roots and stay in the VT for the long haul. This benefits the state in a number of ways from taxes to increasing the population but also makes education free if they stay. Thank you for taking the time to read this and for having the courage to make these decisions during this hard time.

I would like to reiterate my contention that the Board of this new institution needs to consist of alumni of the VSCS above all others. We were educated there, we have a vested interest in seeing the opportunity we had be available to future generations.

For the extraordinary expense Vermonters are paying for the VSC system, taxpayers need to see a few "win-win" situations. What I mean is please try to solve more than one problem at a time. Vermonters need to see that they are getting more for their money than atrophy and decline.

We have for years talked about increased funding for our state colleges, and in that same venue we have talked about reducing the burden of the states Educational spending off the backs of taxpayers, this year we will see an increase of 9 % to the education tax . You only have 600,000 Vermonters and on an average (don't count 2020 or 2021) 13 million visitors spend \$ 2.8 Billion in our state. if 75% of that is spent on rooms & meals that's \$ 2.1 Billion. A 3% increase in rooms and meals tax just from visitors generates \$63 million in additional revenue from tourists alone. . For Vermonters is \$3 more on a \$100 meal. Its affordable by all. I don't believe we will lose one visitor over the increase, if the snow falls, the leaves turn color, and the sun comes out in summer visitors will come to Vermont. Long term look to get alumni, supporters of education to pledge a percentage of their assets when they pass, or take out a life insurance policy naming VSC as beneficiary. Its a small cost up front that pays dividends down the road. We see big multi million dollar gifts from alumni of UVM, Middlebury and Saint Mikes, but that's a different income earner than those that graduated from our VSC system. Ducks Unlimited has very successful program like this and uses these funds to buy up wetlands we can use the same idea for some long term support of our state colleges & Northern University.

educating the value and pay back to the legislature of having a viable state college system focused on it's residents

My son went to NVU Johnson. He has temporarily dropped out due to online classes and poor ones at that. There is something of a doom spiral going on. The best and the brightest teachers and students leave first, then the next, and so on. If you're not decisive, you will not have much to fall back to.

I think you should really focus on launching a really respectable engineering program in VTC. That being said, with UVM having to ditch their liberal arts program, you may do well to add geology to one of your college's offerings. I was saddened to see the entire geology program at UVM was for some reason lumped under their liberal arts umbrella and cut with other liberal arts programs. Geology/geoscience *is* science.

Where is a true commitment to social justice? We cannot move on as a system without addressing underlying 21st century needs. No indication that the of quality of a VSC education matters. This has been the lowest I have felt valued in 15+ teaching in the VSC system.

Top-down change like this without bottom-up engagement will be clumsy. The sooner everyone can feel like they are part of a collaborative team working toward clear outcomes, the faster we will get to where we all need to be. Leadership needs to listen better to all the highly capable faculty and staff who will be executing this change. If this just feels like more cutting then more people will continue to leave and say fuck it all, which is where many are right now.

Do you have any other suggestions, comments, or ideas that you would like t...

Students and faculty would find it much easier if there was one portal and if tasks were done the same way at each institution. It's not only students that move between the colleges, but faculty teach at multiple colleges. CCV has been reducing the number of offerings at smaller centers (e.g. Middlebury, Upper Valley). I think this is a mistake--a strength of CCV is that it is accessible from almost any area of the state and that is starting to feel like it's not true. It would help to track students as they move within the system. For example, as students leave CCV, are they entering another VSC institution?

Restructuring Proposal from Lyndon's OEL Department The NVU Lyndon department of Outdoor Education, Leadership, and Tourism program is aware that significant restructuring of the Vermont State College System is about to occur and would like to make you aware of what we see as strategic advantages to housing all related programs at NVU-Lyndon.. Last year, we completed the consolidation of the OEL curriculum at the direction of Dr. Nolan Atkins, now the OEL programs at both campuses have a shared core curriculum. This has allowed for savings in instructional costs as well as credit counts for students improving the cost of the program and simplifying the pathway to graduation for students. Additionally, last year we aligned the course offerings for the Mountain Resort Management and Adventure Education programs making it easier for students to dual major (similar to what the Business Department has done). To best utilize the efficiency of this model, all our programs, faculty, and course equipment should be located in one place. This could include all Johnson Outdoor Education programs as well as the Killington School of Resort Management. Lyndon is already doing an excellent job integrating education with community through relationships with multiple resorts and guiding businesses regionally, nationally and internationally. One example of such relationship is with Burke Mountain, where we are working with the management and holding company to develop a co-op educational model between Burke Mountain and NVU-L. Lyndon is the ideal location for OEL for multiple reasons: Adventure Education 1. Program Facilities and Equipment - We have specialized gear needs and facility needs, including bulk food storage and packing areas, which Lyndon has established. We have also done an excellent job keeping our equipment up to date by having a gear sale every other year, developed systems to store and maintain our gear well, and we have proven our ability to manage our budget well. Johnson's OEL program just adopted our curriculum, but has never run our programs. Their current storage and packing situation would need extensive modification and increased facilities at significant cost. They currently borrow gear from us to run their existing programs. 2. Location - While we are close enough to all of the wonderful things Vermont has to offer, while also in close proximity to the White Mountains, where there is extensive work for people in this field. a. We have 6-12 students per winter being mentored by guides / guide services in the Mt Washington Valley. This results in excellent job placement rates. b. We attract New Hampshire students as a result of our work in their backyard 3. Burke Mountain Partnership - We are working with Burke Mountain to utilize their mountain as an additional learning lab to assist them in expanding programming. 4. Mountain Biking – we are in the mecca of mountain biking. This helps us attract students and also find them local jobs! Our alums built Kingdom Trails and they continue to employ many of our students. 5. Numbers - We have more students that OEL on the Johnson campus. For a myriad of reasons, both Lyndon's OEL and Johnson's OEL have had a downward trend the last few years (mostly marketing challenges). Regardless, we currently have and according to the data we have seen for the past decade, have always had the larger program of the two. Lyndon is known for our Adventure and Resort Management programs. a. The Resort and Adventure industries are both evolving. Many aspects are similar or overlapping. Shared training and knowledge of our students makes them all better prepared for their future. Our Adventure and Resort concentrations complement each other, with a shared core. b. Students can and do enroll in both Adventure Education and Mountain Resort Management concentrations while still staying on pace to graduate in 4 years. c. If administration wants to maintain OEL presence on both campuses, without the duplication of courses, a concentration such as Therapeutic Adventure could be housed on the Johnsons campus, as that is where the primary Psychology and Human Services program will be housed. 6. Employment After Graduation - Our students often get jobs before they have finished their last course; they are leave our campus with a degree in hand and a jumpstart on their careers! Mountain Resort Management 1. An Established Program - LSC was the first Resort Management program in the country, established in 1973, we have a loyal group of alumni in leadership roles at resorts all around the country and around the world! The ski resort industry network loyalty to Lyndon is amazing and greatly helps our job placement, we serve as a critical pipeline for an industry that is chronically understaffed. 2. Industry Relationships – We have long standing relationships that allow our students to engage in course work at Omni Mount Washington Resort/Bretton Woods Mountain Resort, Stowe Mountain Resort, Jay Peak Resort, Burke Mountain Resort, Smugglers' Notch Resort, Cannon Mountain and others. We also have extensive relationships nationally with some of the largest ski industry employers in the country, including Vail Resorts. Our students see firsthand how different resorts operate, from Vail Corporation to mom and pop mountains and everything in between. Students are allowed to job shadow business leaders at these locations and learn what skills are needed to be successful in today's job market. This is extremely valuable and aids in our extensive and diverse job placement. a. Being more centrally located in New England, we have very strong relationships with resorts throughout the northeast. b. Our relationships and vast alumni network has helped us place students in almost every major resort in the United States as well as New Zealand! More on these two items below... 3. Networking Opportunities – Our students attend industry events such as expos and conventions where we are the only college program in attendance to the point where we have been described as "omnipresent" by multiple industry leaders, and we are often asked why we are the only ones exposing our student to these opportunities. These networking opportunities, along with our alumni network often result in internships and jobs later. 4. Internship Opportunities – The alumni network listed above creates vast opportunities in a myriad of locations, affording internships that fall in line with the individual goals of our students. Almost all of our students end their internships with a job offer. 5. Creating Vermonters and New Englanders - The majority of our students move to Vermont to be a part of our program, and then stay in Vermont to become employees of local resorts, paying taxes, and contributing to the local economy. That said, we have produced leaders at resorts throughout New England such as Burke Mountain Resort, Stowe Mountain Resort, Killington Ski Resort, Jay Peak Resort, Bretton Woods, Gunstock Mountain Resort, Mountain Resort, Pats Peak Ski Area, Sugarbush Ski Resort. 6. Far-reaching Network – Nationally, our alumni are at Park City Ski Resort, Deer Valley Ski Resort, Jackson Hole Ski Resort, Cardrona Ski Resort in New Zealand and many others. 7. Complementary Programs - Mountain Resort Management and Adventure Education are complimentary to each other. 8. NVU-L v. KSRM at Castleton – We understand it is a goal to eliminate the repetition of like programs within the VSCS. It is our opinion the Killington School of Resort Management students should join Lyndon's Mountain Resort Management program. While both NVU-L's Mountain Resort Management program and KSRM are experiential based programs, we believe ours offers students access to a broader spectrum of business models; we expose our students to operations at multiple resorts instead of just one. Our program is built on a Bachelor of Science curriculum, and is the standard-bearer in the industry. We believe it is redundant to have two of the three BS degree programs in ski area/mountain resort management in the country in the same college system. Ex-Chancellor Spaulding made the decision to give the KSRM program to Castleton University behind closed doors and undermined our program in doing so. At Lyndon we have an amazing synergy happening with three very hard working, well connected faculty, with doctoral degrees. We are running top notch programs, with testimonials supporting that from all directions. Our students are getting good jobs and leaving ready to be professionals in a variety of fields. Our programs are strongest together.

I went to Kent State (Ohio) which had many satellite campuses. Those campuses were smaller and had a community college feel..but they were very much apart of the larger campus.

Do you have any other suggestions, comments, or ideas that you would like t...

I've heard some say that Vermont Tech doesn't belong in the new organization. If the other colleges are big enough to stand on their own then they are either. Maybe they need to be separated into different parts? It doesn't make sense to keep them separate if it means the state will always have to prop them up separately.

Don't destroy the individuality of the different entities. Simply cutting presidents and putting all the systems under one control will put both students and employees at a disadvantage. I greatly fear that all decisions will be made for financial purposes and according to general rules rather than looking at what attracts students to the varying places. Do not do away with athletics at Castleton as it attracts students and enhances the student life.

I think it is critical to restate the risk that exists for CCV throughout this process. As the only school focused on certificates and associates degrees, serving the most at risk populations and doing so while maintaining a balanced budget, I am very concerned that CCV will be made insolvent because of the other VSC institutions. As the report states, "There is a considerable risk that combining CCV with the other VSC institutions could serve to limit its ability to flexibly and affordably provide ongoing or expanded subbaccalaureate programming."

Our institutions need to expand there on line presence. My wife had to finish her education by using out of state institutions because there was no other option. She went from a RN to Masters in RN to PHD in Education to APRN. She did it all on-line using out of state colleges. I have 2 Daughters that have advanced there education on-line also.

N/A

Leave Jonathan campus open

Beware, there are always unintended consequences!

-think carefully about rebranding strategies; don't erase our history and our campus identities -additionally, I think we should have some VSCS merchandise in addition to each university/college and each campus supported by the VSCS -market outside Vermont's borders

Please see "Weaknesses of the Proposal" above.

Do NOT put online courses into a separate arm of the institution. NVU Online is NOT a success. It only looks like it on paper because it sucks students out of NVU proper, and the quality of the courses and instruction, overall, are NOT acceptable. Many instructors at NVU proper, CU, and CCV are teaching better courses, and have stronger connections to the academic department and oversight of those institutions. Plus, a new world has arrived: 1) many more instructors have developed online teaching skills because of the pandemic, and 2) the perceived split between "online" and "not online" has been blurred by other, in-between modes (hybrid, remote, etc.), so there is no longer a marketing benefit to the split. Our WHOLE institution should be selling what NVU was selling (but not delivering.)

To many, A VSC education has always been second fiddle to a UVM, Middlebury, or out of state college. Because of this, our reputation among the best students in Vermont has them not even consider VSC. We need an effort that changes this perception so that we can begin to capture some of our top in-state students. We need to stop leading the conversation with the 'lack of affordability' at VSC schools. I am a parent of three children who all went to out of state private colleges and compared to those, VSC is extremely affordable. that is what we need to sell.

-Please do not destroy Vermont Tech! Having more, not less, "tech" is important for Vermont's economic health. -Generally, putting "State" in a name is not a good idea, which is why Castleton is no longer Castleton State. Vermont State University is probably not a good idea if you are trying to recruit in this day and age.

Education is a discipline where everyone feels qualified as a professional, even when they are not. The equivalent in other disciplines are labeled 'alternative', 'pseudoscience', etc. In this field, they are promoted to U.S. Secretary of Education. Just because you value what an education might do for you does not mean your ideas generalize. Just because you were a good student is not a valid argument that you know teaching best practices. It is essential that you involve professional educators at the highest levels of planning in this proposal, or it will fail.

You need to consider added alternative ways for raising money needed to maintain and promote your programs. Promote summer campus use with speciality certificate programs and offer campus use for regional or national conventions. Pick one campus every few years for updating fresh paint, visually enhanced landscaping and rapid speed wifi for promoting rentals. Recruit students to assist in projects as part of coursework. Also in light of this pandemic might there be use and funding for storage of much needed supplies and housing in the event of disasters. Host local community events and get more residents on to and appreciate campus possibilities. Encourage more local outreach and mentoring within the communities for added local support.

Do you have any other suggestions, comments, or ideas that you would like t...

Mine are clear.

There are so many VSC staff members who have specialized skills and a working knowledge of the system which administrators are attempting to consolidate... Several of those staff members are not part of a bargaining unit or involved in planning committees regarding the future of the VSC. The focus on enrollment and "optics" is understandable but the system's true failing is in the support of students once they are enrolled and struggling through course work. The VSC's most valuable resource is the legion of committed Vermont professionals who are currently working in the system. I am grateful for the chance to express concerns in this format but please, rather than hiring another expensive consultant, engage and communicate with our existing resources.

It is unlikely that this proposal achieve the states objectives of solving the long term viability of the VSC. Consolidations rarely achieve the gains predicted and in our case, where management and the Board of Trustees have limited experience at organizational transformation, the probability for success is low. What are the projected savings? Are they realistic? In addition, the problem of five campuses (Williston included) for the VSC with too few students and not enough money is not addressed. The cost of deferred maintenance is large and the cost to make the colleges facilities competitive even larger. What are the capital needs of the colleges. Finally, the model of state support of degrees independent of the type of degree must be fixed if the VSC is to be fixed. While all education is important, supporting a degree in philosophy at the same level as a degree in computer science has a large cost. This cost is borne by both the state and the students. The ROI to the students is vastly different for the different degrees and the ROI to the state is vastly different also. The particularly disadvantages Vermont Tech. Most countries and states vary their supports for different programs significantly. I think leadership needs to tell advisors to go back to the drawing boards and be bolder!

Coming from Massachusetts where there are many students attending school, there were still schools that had to be shut down. With Vermont being rural, I don't think the state has money or can cut enough and salvage all the remaining schools without future issues. There is a reason why the Chancellor originally wanted to shut down those schools and it might be best for the state.

If this proposal is going to work effectively you need to eliminate overlapping programs across campuses and focus entirely on offering the programs of strength at each location. You have to ensure that VSAC stops allowing VT students to take VT tuition assistance to out of State colleges, and we need to bring all the campus locations down to the same price point to make it uniformed and equal across the board.

I am concerned for students like myself who received degrees from Johnson State, Lyndon State, or Northern Vermont University. Many employers may find their education unworthy when they view the history of the schools.

Efforts need to continue to find additional funding for the VSC system including involving Vermont's Congressional delegation.

As Dylan Giambatista said, we must bring students and faculty in (I am sure that he just forgot about staff), this will be better for our students and better for our state. He also stated that hearing from our campus communities is important to make sure we are doing this right. A single accreditation is not only about saving money, it is about strengthening what we are able to offer our students...a more accessible, flexible education. When Karen Luneau talks about opening up "contractual things" and being "big girls and big boys" I am disappointed in the dismissive rhetoric. We attract and keep great faculty and staff because of strong benefits. It certainly isn't for our salaries.

See my comments on success conditions above.

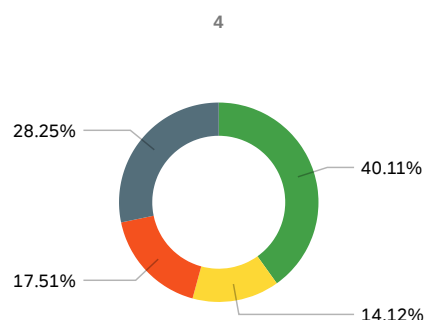
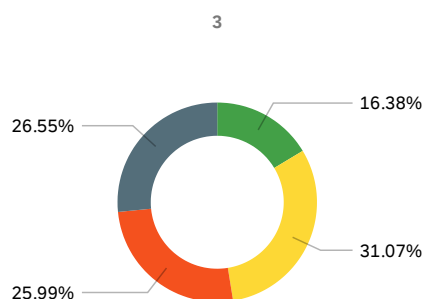
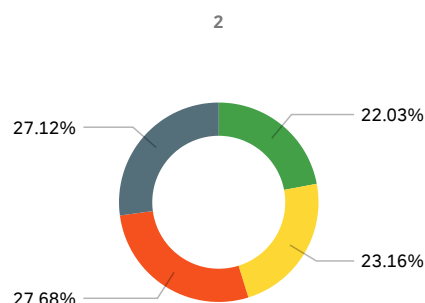
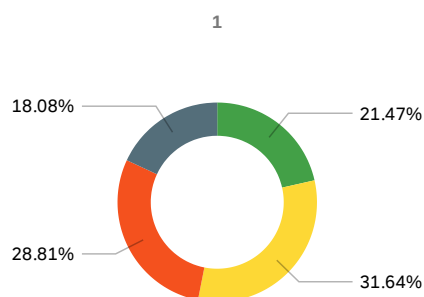
I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed merger. In 2015, I established the Castleton Bridge Initiative and I continue to co-chair this active group, which is composed of Castleton residents and Castleton University personnel. Our mission – as our name implies – is to work together to strengthen the bonds between the town and the University. We are extremely proud of our university for what it contributes to our town, our county and to the world. We love the hardworking students and understand how vital the special services Castleton U. offers are to their success. We know this because we see it in action every day: the caring of the faculty and their deep connections with the students; the superb teaching skills which I've observed in person as most of our Science Pub presenters are faculty members; and the love and loyalty students and alumni have for the University. Last year I facilitated a program during which I learned much about these very special Castleton University attributes. I have also met the international students and those who come from other states. When we travel and mention the University to people we meet, many have heard of Castleton University. All these things add up to what in marketing is called a "brand." A brand is very hard to come by and it is invaluable. The proposed merger would seriously detract from the Castleton brand, because the intensely personal would become impersonal and the daily closeness would vanish. That, in turn, would make it much harder to attract students, especially out-of-state ones. In addition, as a taxpayer, I object to the merger because it does not represent the cost saving that would allow all the colleges involved to succeed. My tax dollars would be wasted and ultimately the tough decisions will have to be made. I urge the committee to look for alternative solutions to the fiscal problems, solutions that would actually solve these problems while strengthening instead of draining Castleton University of its uniqueness and its success.

It is absolutely imperative that the VSAC funding be kept within VT. EVERY OTHER state does this with their VSAC-like programs. This will keep five million dollars within VT. That this has not yet happened is just unconscionable.

Do you have any other suggestions, comments, or ideas that you would like t...

If anything, combine CCV with Vermont Tech and NVU with CU. But I strongly support consolidation of all, as outlined in the VSC Labor Taskforce's plan.

Q8 - Please rank the following in order of importance with #1 being the highest priority:



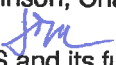
■ The VSCS having a meaningful presence across Vermont, especially in rural areas, while providing economic and cultural support to host communities

■ VSCS programs being available to all students regardless of race/ethnicity, age, educational attainment of parents, prior educational experience, parenthood, or place of residence

■ The VSCS providing students with needed education, skills, training, and credentials to participate in Vermont's labor force

■ Students receiving the academic, advising and other supports necessary to succeed in their VSCS programs as measured by their retention, persistence, and graduation

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	The VSCS having a meaningful presence across Vermont, especially in rural areas, while providing economic and cultural support to host communities	1.00	4.00	2.75	1.19	1.42	177
2	VSCS programs being available to all students regardless of race/ethnicity, age, educational attainment of parents, prior educational experience, parenthood, or place of residence	1.00	4.00	2.28	1.06	1.12	177
3	The VSCS providing students with needed education, skills, training, and credentials to participate in Vermont's labor force	1.00	4.00	2.32	1.07	1.14	177
4	Students receiving the academic, advising and other supports necessary to succeed in their VSCS programs as measured by their retention, persistence, and graduation	1.00	4.00	2.65	1.07	1.15	177

TO: Lynn Dickinson, Chair, VSCS Board of Trustees
FR: Joe Mark 
RE: The VSCS and its future
DA: February 4, 2021

Let me introduce myself. I am a retiree who served Castleton State College and the VSCS for 32 years. I began at Castleton in 1980 as dean of students; in 1984 I was chosen as CSC's academic dean. For the next 28 years I filled the roles of chief academic officer, dean of the college, and interim president. In my final two years before retirement, I simultaneously was Castleton's academic dean and, on a half-time basis, interim chief academic officer of the VSCS.

Through all those experiences, I became very fond of Castleton and developed, as well, a real appreciation of and affection for the System and its then five colleges. I'm proud to say that I had friends among the faculty and staff on every campus. I wish I could adequately convey how deeply I care about the VSCS and its future. That this document is so long, for which I apologize, may reflect my concern.

From the vantage of my 32 years of experience augmented by nine years of reflection in retirement, let me offer comments for your consideration.¹

We have been here before.

When our family moved to Castleton from a charming college town in southern California, I knew the System was recovering from an historically traumatic episode. Since I believe you were living in the state at the time, you may recall the financial crisis of 1978. The System had what was, in those days, a huge deficit, staggering deferred maintenance (at Castleton, literally every roof leaked), numerous under-enrolled programs, and low academic standards, including for faculty qualifications. Our reputation was poor too.

This necessitated the embarrassment of trips to the Legislature to plead for a bail-out, both to cover the operating budget deficit and to begin tackling deferred maintenance.

In the end, the Legislature pledged the financial lifelines we needed but only if several things happened. One key outcome required review of all academic programs for the purpose of eliminating under-enrolled majors and reducing duplication. The reconstituted VSCS's first policy, Policy 101, was the result. Policy 102, which made the process and conditions for approving new degree programs more demanding, soon followed. Both were designed to ensure that we never got into this regrettable situation again.

These were initially "hardball" policies with strict, rigorous quantitative criteria. (Sadly, in subsequent years, both policies were repeatedly revised and became over time, in my opinion, toothless.) A third policy, addressing faculty qualifications and the requirements for reappointment, promotion, and tenure, was finalized in August 1980.

The deal with the Legislature also brought leadership changes. Representative Marshall Witten, a relatively new legislator who had quickly risen to become chair of the powerful Appropriations Committee, stepped into the role of board chairperson. Under his guidance, trustees recruited a new chancellor, Richard Bjork, known for his willingness to make difficult decisions. And there were presidential transitions as well, one of which produced my new boss, who said that he had been hired to "clean up the mess," increase enrollments, balance the budget, and raise standards.

Quickly, following adoption of these new policies, things began to change. Most important, dozens of under-enrolled programs were eliminated. This permitted reassignment of faculty resources and reduction of the number of small classes. Faculty chafed at these unpopular restrictions, but the work continued.

¹ Before preparing my remarks, I reread the August 26, 2019, White Paper, which I found impressive in its candor and in the data it provides; the November 2020 "Design" submitted by VSCS labor unions; and the December 4, 2020, NCHEMS Initial Report.

Only it wasn't as bad as it is now.

And yet, the challenges you face are far greater. When I joined the system, the VSCS got as much from the state appropriation as it collected in student tuition and fees. Now that's down to 17% of total revenue. The demographic trends of today and the foreseeable future are daunting. And the general public doesn't have the same high regard for higher education and the value of a college degree that it once did.

I don't envy your role and responsibilities but have great respect for people like you who are willing to "step up" to lead and help strengthen our public higher education system. Thank you.

Fluctuations in fiscal discipline.

One of the big variations I witnessed over the course of my VSCS career regards the attitude of the chancellor and the board towards institutional fiscal responsibility.

In the 80s, Marshall Witten famously intoned, "A dollar short, a president short." That was quickly amended to "... a president *and a business manager* short." We all assumed he really meant it. That instilled an intense preoccupation on each campus with financial resources and expenditures. Everyone on Castleton's Administrative Council knew that part of their job was to contribute to revenue generation while also carefully managing expenses. I assume it was the same at the other colleges.

Although that "dollar short" mantra may seem harsh in retrospect, it worked. We had balanced budgets, even healthy surpluses most years, which allowed us to chip away at deferred maintenance and more generally improve the campus.

There was one other time when from my perspective, the messages coming out of what was then Waterbury—now Montpelier—strongly advocated fiscal discipline. This was during the chancellorship of Bob Clarke. The new expression became, "Every tub on its own bottom." Bob realized that the state wasn't going to save us and that, as had been apparent, the appropriation was likely to remain flat if not gradually decline as a percentage of total System income.

He advocated that each college get one-fifth of the appropriation and then, based on FTE enrollments, be charged for its share of the cost of System services. Colleges were encouraged to seek ways to increase revenue and also given substantial discretion in program development and marketing. I thought this approach worked reasonably well for a few years; but then, starting with VTC, individual presidents successfully made the case that their institution should get more than the standard 20%.

Unfortunately, these two periods—the "dollar short" and the "every tub" periods—were from my perspectives the only times that the System really emphasized and enforced fiscal responsibility. Most years, the appropriation (and sometimes even tuition revenue from other colleges) was used to subsidize or underwrite the losses of the college that was having the greatest revenue-versus-expense difficulties.

And rarely did any negative consequence befall the leadership of the institution that had gotten itself into a hole. I can remember years when the president of a college that had consecutive seven-figure deficits got to continue.

In addition, sometimes presidents, and I include ours at CSC, were allowed to encumber high levels of indebtedness in order to build expensive facilities.

- Whatever comes of the current "Secure the Future" initiative, I think it is imperative that the board of trustees champion, model, and enforce rigorous fiscal responsibility.

Three difficult topics.

As a comparatively knowledgeable former VSCS employee, I am in a position to address some topics that System insiders often consider taboo.

The VSCS's service mission. I believe that the goals around which the Select Committee has framed its recommendations, while undoubtedly well-intended and noble, are unrealistic under present financial

circumstances. (This is not new. Often over the years, the VSCS has embraced ideals that were disconnected from fiscal realities.)

“Meeting learner needs” is, in my opinion, a stretch beyond the VSCS’s grasp when it means providing relevant programs to all students anywhere, without consideration of financial or technological resources, broadband access, educational preparation, etc.

Ensuring that the VSCS is “affordable to all students regardless of their economic circumstances” is equally unrealistic.

The VSCS did not by itself create these challenges of access, income inequality, and the adequacy of preK-12 preparation. Nor should it be primarily, much less solely, responsible for addressing them. These are our *collective* responsibilities. An important planning document that embraces these lofty ambitions as goals without articulating the critical contributions others must make towards achieving them is a prelude to disappointment.

The goals identified in the Initial Report would be entirely reasonable in an ideal higher education world, but Vermont is not that ideal world. Far from it. As you know, state support for the VSCS has never approached the “in whole or in substantial part” promise of the 1961 authorizing legislation. Rather, as a function of need, with rare exceptions state support has consistently declined for forty years.

As a result of this persistent history of legislative decisions, Vermont’s state colleges have been forced to be tuition-dependent and heavily so. Under this business plan, appropriation income becomes a minor and shrinking subsidy of the full cost of a VSCS education. I believe that’s how legislators perceive the arrangement. In fact, I recall at least one year when the chancellor and board negotiated a special one-time increase in the appropriation expressly so that Vermont tuition could be frozen, albeit temporarily.

Given this funding model, it seems to me that, first and foremost, the VSCS mission should be focussed on providing high quality education and needed support services to current and future students, the ones who pay the vast majority of the bills.

Expanding the VSCS’s geographic impact, making its education affordable, addressing workforce development needs are all important, but in the context of the business model Vermont has imposed on the VSCS, not equally so. I view these as secondary commitments that should be addressed *to the extent that* the Legislature and other public and private entities can help support those initiatives financially.

VSAC. Early in my time in the VSCS, I learned that VSAC held “sacred cow” status. Brave and perhaps foolish was the chancellor or president who suggested that VSCS or UVM funding be increased at the expense of VSAC’s allocation. Yet, I cannot imagine a plan that secures the VSCS’s future that does not do just that.

I believe that Vermont, through VSAC, has the most generous and permissive state grant program in the country. When last I checked, no other state had what is called “portability without reciprocity,” meaning you could take your VSAC grant anywhere regardless of whether the state you wanted to go to permits their grants to be used at Vermont institutions. If ours were a rich state and if it were already providing exceptionally strong support for its in-state public colleges and universities, I would celebrate such a generous program. But we all know that neither of those conditional statements is true. So how can “portability without reciprocity” still be justified?

There are many ways in which the rules of a state grant program could be structured. A continuum of options would include the following:

1. Use grants only at in-state public and private institutions
2. Use grants at out-of-state institutions only when the intended program is not available in-state and when the state reciprocates with Vermont (This approach must be properly designed or it could allow students and families to “game” the system.)

3. Use grants at out-of-state institutions regardless of intended program as long as the state reciprocates with Vermont
4. Vermont's approach

I would be in favor of the first two of these, not the others.

- The process to transform the VSCS ought to address this issue.

Office of the Chancellor. I believe the VSCS cannot fully consider all its reorganization options without a clear-eyed examination of the Office of the Chancellor, how it has changed over time, and what it costs. I'm of the opinion that neither the college presidents nor the chancellor should have a seat at the Select Committee table. (I recognize that both the chancellor and the CCV president are on the committee and that President Judy is the committee's chair.)

I say this because participating in a process to redesign an institution in which you are deeply invested and on which your career may depend could at least provoke potential conflicts of interest and at worst feel like performing an appendectomy on yourself.

The section of the Select Committee report that addresses the Office of the Chancellor (pp. 31—34) seems to envision a significant expansion of the office and its role. This could well increase overall VSCS expenses and further skew the percentage of budget that goes to college and System overhead as opposed to instruction and direct services to students.

In June 1990, the journal *Policy Perspectives* published what I consider a prescient article titled "The Ratchet and the Lattice," which in two and a half pages described how expansion of administrative staff coupled with the increasingly narrow specialization of faculty were transforming a great many American colleges, and not for the better. I think this would be a helpful framework to have in mind while considering reorganizing the VSCS.

I don't know what the VSCS will look like going forward; but, if anything close to the plan proposed in the Select Committee's Initial Report is adopted—two institutions: CCV and a stream-lined university built out of the merger of CU, NVU, and VTC—I can imagine that the Office of the Chancellor would not be necessary, especially if, as suggested on page 34 of the NCHEMS document, a significant number of centralized services are coordinated with or outsourced to UVM.

- Finally, I recommend that before the Secure the Future project is completed and any reorganization plan is adopted, VSCS establish metrics whereby the outcome of its effort could be judged. These should relate, of course, to the goals of the undertaking and might be designed to answer questions like: To what extent has enrollment increased? To what extent has the cost per student credit hour decreased? Are a higher number of low-income students being served? To what extent have graduation rates increased? How do current job placement rates compare to previous ones? Etc.

I appreciate the consideration you have given to my input.

PS: While I can't imagine that you have time to respond personally to all those providing input on the current VSCS process, if you did want to get back to me, here is my contact information:

Joe Mark
P.O. Box 387
Castleton, VT 05735
(802) 468-5479 (H), (802) 236-3816 (C)
joe.mark.vt@gmail.com

Dear Board Members of the Vermont State College System,

My name is Tammy Howard Davis, and I am an employee of CCV, located in the Rutland center. I suspect you are getting many letters citing facts, statistics, and organizational logistics as you sort through this time of uncertainty and future decisions for the Vermont State College System. I write to you today from a different angle as someone who has spent most of my adult life working for the Community College of Vermont as an academic advisor. I have a strong background in business but have chosen to hang my hat at CCV in education for the last two decades. The reason is the mission: Access and service to my fellow neighbor. I have lived in Vermont my entire 54 years of life. Working at CCV has afforded me unlimited opportunities to serve and help fellow Vermonters obtain the necessary education to gain a leg up in the employment world, or help in even opening a door to better, more stable employment. Through that door is not only education but also confidence, empowerment, and realization of abilities and skills to become proud of. The creation of solid citizens within our local communities is why CCV exists and thrives.

Imagine having a dream of a college education but lacking the self-confidence and belief in self-worth to walk through an educational institution's door. This is the fragile demographic that I am referring to, these are the people we serve, and this is the poverty cycle I am referring to. In sharp contrast, imagine finally enrolling in a class or two and being the first one in your family to ever walk through a college door. Imagine hearing from someone at the college level that you have potential and yes, it is in you to do this. Imagine the feeling of nervous excitement that would come over one as you do your first set of homework. Imagine modelling the role of pursuing education to your children as you do homework together. Finally, imagine having hope for a better future. These are the feelings and experiences of many CCV students. CCV changes lives, one at a time. I ask that not be altered.

The Community College of Vermont is in the inspirational business as well as the educational business. We help people with the dreams that for many feels far away from their reach. We are a model that cannot be duplicated, and we serve a population that have placed their trust in us for over 50 years. I would invite you to reach into the community and survey how CCV changed the trajectory of generations for families. I personally am on my third generation of advising. The educational program and product are solid, affordable, and personalized. To effect positive change in the State of Vermont, I ask that CCV stay our own unique model. We have proven to many the success of our institution both organizationally and financially. We are a vibrant and strong resource for our neighbors. We are their hope for a better future. To say that CCV changes lives would be an understatement. I have boxes of notes and letters thanking CCV for "everything". I keep a board in my office dedicated to student appreciation letters that serve as a reminder of our work at CCV. There are so many examples I could share.

- The single mom who completed the manufacturing certificate and gained a well-paying manufacturing job enabling her to save their home from foreclosure.

- The gentleman struggling with unemployment and lack of housing – who wandered into our lobby and is now in management with a degree in business
- A young lady from an area high school who was an addict by the time she was in her junior year of high school but who is now finishing her master's degree in psychology at Northern Vermont University.

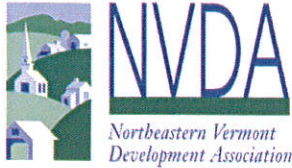
This is what we "do" at CCV. We build people and we build futures. We strengthen foundations.

I have appreciated the employ of The Vermont State College System and after 24 years feel that I have a strong pulse on who offers what to students for programs and next steps for our graduates. CCV is an incredible training ground providing a variety of programs and certificates at the associates degree level. We teach not only the curriculum but also how to become a "learner". We ready our population for their next steps – either as they head into the workforce or continue on for their bachelor's degree.

I am a product of the Vermont State College System and proudly hang my diplomas in my office. I believe in Vermont and encourage my student advisees to stay within the system as there are tremendous opportunities within. We are an incredible referral source for our sister colleges. CCV has a very strong charge of serving our fellow Vermonters in a model that makes sense. Every day, every week, every month ... and year after year, CCV opens its doors and provides access to those in search of bettering their lives. I respectfully ask that CCV be allowed to continue to do so. Vermonters need CCV - unchanged and accessible.

Thank you for your kind consideration. My cell number is 802 342-0550 should you like to have a further discussion.

With appreciation and gratitude,
 Tammy Marie Howard Davis



February 8, 2021

Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees
Office of the Chancellor
Vermont State Colleges
P.O. Box 7
Montpelier, VT 05601

Dear VSC Trustees:

The Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) is a combined regional planning and economic development corporation serving the communities, businesses, and people of Caledonia, Essex, and Orleans Counties – the “Northeast Kingdom”. As we continually work to provide new opportunities and improve the quality of life for those living and working in one of the most economically challenged regions of Vermont, it is important that one of our key institutions – Northern Vermont University (NVU) – be present to help us achieve this.

There is general awareness statewide that there has long been an underinvestment in higher education in Vermont, especially when compared to neighboring states. It is encouraging that we are now seeing multiple plans, with some coming through VSC, that endorse dramatically increased state investment and some form of consolidation under one accreditation. NVDA fully supports this concept as it will preserve the fabric and economies of local communities, while providing educational opportunities statewide. As was demonstrated through the unification of the Johnson and Lyndon State Colleges, NVU saved the Vermont State College System \$9 million and can provide valuable expertise to further unification processes. It seems that similar success is certainly possible.

NVU’s economic impact to our region and northern Vermont cannot be understated:

- NVU’s total economic impact in northern Vermont is estimated at over \$100 million annually.
- NVU brings nearly 18,000 people to our region every year. Additionally, the University attracts out of state students that choose to make Vermont their home after they graduate.
- NVU employs 400 people. The University’s payroll and benefits add \$31.4 m to the economy of northern Vermont.

NVU’s impact on education is significant for the Northeast Kingdom:

- NVU provides vital access for Vermonters pursuing higher education and serves some of the state’s most vulnerable students.
- Nearly half of these undergraduate students are the first in their family to attend college.
- 70% of NVU’s students are Vermonters and 75% of NVU Online students are in-state.

- A *responsive* NVU provided nearly 300 Vermonters with free courses and trainings via the state-funded Workforce Initiative in November-December 2020 for those whose jobs were affected by the pandemic.
- A recently awarded \$465,000 USDA Rural Utilities (RUS) grant will help NVU expand videoconferencing services in rural communities throughout the state, adding 30 additional community sites (for a total of 60). This will expand access to workforce training and education, distance learning opportunities, and telemedicine in underserved areas across the state.

NVU has a significant and positive impact on employers in our region and Vermont:

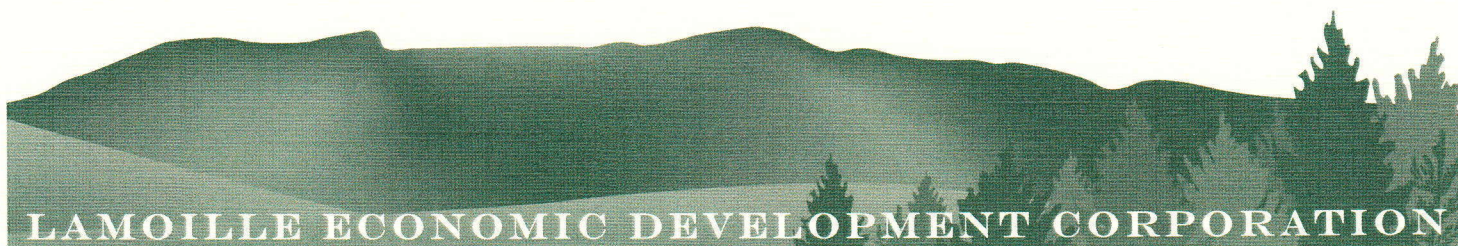
- NVU creates a pipeline of skilled workers for Vermont's employers.
- Central to NVU's academic program is the commitment to helping students develop the career and soft skills employers demand.
- Through NVU's working and learning community, the University is offering academic study with real world experiences via partnerships with local businesses and organizations, including NVDA. For many years NVDA has utilized NVU students to assist with our regional transportation and GIS programs.
- A recently awarded \$986,252 Regional Forest Economy Partnership (RFEP) grant will establish the *Do North Wood Product and Forestry Accelerator initiative*. Through this grant, the vital forest products industry in our region will receive business-building education and resources to evolve and modernize, with the goal of creating new jobs, skilled workers, and a reinvigorated industry.

Given the overwhelmingly positive impacts that NVU has on our rural region of Vermont and with the understanding that there will be significant challenges going forward, NVDA strongly requests that the VSC Trustees carefully review the proposals that recommend increased state investment and increased savings and efficiencies through the consolidation of NVU, Castleton University, and Vermont Technical College under one accreditation as one university with four campuses. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



David Snedeker
Executive Director
Northeastern Vermont Development Association



February 11, 2021

Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees
Office of the Chancellor
P.O. Box 7
Montpelier, VT 05601

Dear VSC Trustees,

The Lamoille Economic Development Corporation is the regional development corporation responsible for Lamoille County, the home of NVU – Johnson. As such we have a direct interest in the viability and sustainability of NVU to be sure, but more importantly we have an even greater interest in the viability and sustainability of the VSC system statewide as this affects every business, every family and every person seeking to better themselves through education and training.

To that end, the LEDC supports the recommendations of the Select Committee, including the recommendation for additional funding (via increased state appropriations) and further consolidation which will ensure access to higher education in northern Vermont on NVU's Johnson and Lyndon campuses as well as other VSC campuses around the state, while also enabling the system itself to transform its business processes and collaborate more effectively across all campuses.

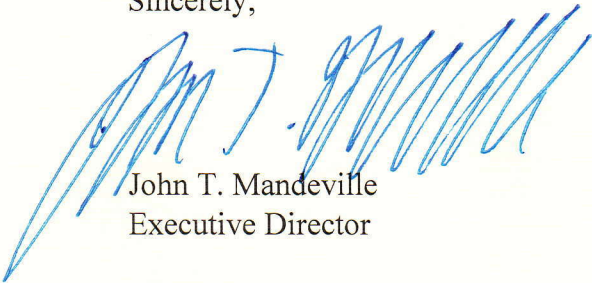
It is also important to remain fully cognizant of the economic impact that NVU in particular has in Northern Vermont. Estimates are that that amounts to \$100 million on an annual basis and consists of salaries paid to faculty and staff, goods and services purchased from vendors in Northern Vermont, dollars spent in the local economy from the 18,000 visitors that come to the region every year as well as other funds expended locally. Tie this together with the impact to local businesses who depend upon graduates from NVU to fill the jobs they have on offer and the additional impact to the regional economy of these graduates staying here rather than moving somewhere else, and the economic impact is formidable, indeed.

There is an enormous amount of discussion taking place in virtually every aspect of our socioeconomic order and culture today about Equity. Equity as applied to the economically disadvantaged, the BIPOC population, new immigrants, developmentally disabled, males/females, those with various sexual orientations, and many others in our society that experience a lack of equity in their daily lives. This is a crucial issue when it comes to the provision of post-secondary education everywhere and especially in Vermont. We already know that although we have close to the highest high school graduation rate in the country, we have

close to the lowest rate of graduating high school seniors who go on to some kind of post-secondary education. As the amount the state government contributes for the support of the state college system is the lowest of any state, and has been for years, this drives up the cost of tuition to among the highest in any state. I am sure I am not telling you anything that you don't already know but I detail it here as affordability is a huge issue as is accessibility. Many students, of necessity, live at home while attending college and would simply be unable to do so if any of the campuses within the current system were to be eliminated. Those who could afford it would be forced to pay to live either on or off campus at a college remote from their homes. Many might simply choose to leave the state to get their education. Studies have shown that there is a distinct predilection for many college students to choose to stay within the community or the state in which they received their education. This, of course, would only exacerbate the demographic challenges already affecting Vermont. If we as a society and as a state are serious about this issue of equity, then we must do everything we can to ensure that equity is at the top of our priority list in creating and maintaining a seamless pre-K through 16 educational experience with equal opportunity for all.

We can only do this by substantially lowering the cost to all students of all post-secondary education and training and by ensuring its accessibility to all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John T. Mandeville", is written over the typed name and title.

John T. Mandeville
Executive Director



February 5, 2021

Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees
Office of the Chancellor
Vermont State Colleges
P.O. Box 7
Montpelier, VT 05601

Dear VSC Trustees,

The Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region is comprised of a membership of approximately 400 Rutland County businesses, as well as many municipalities. This letter is being sent to you out of concern for the sustainability of the Vermont State College system, as well as for the impact on the success story that Castleton University has become.

The report provided by NCHEMS is well researched and confirms the dire financial situation. There is little to debate about the need for immediate change. Now is the time to acknowledge the problem and boldly take action.

In the work that we do, we recognize that there are times that branches of a business may need to consolidate and even close in order to preserve the corporation. As you consider bold action, we encourage you to keep in mind the following. The VSC faces a fiscal crisis for two reasons: the declining number of college-age students in New England and the level of funding from the State of Vermont. We do not see how the unification proposed by the Trustees will solve these two key issues.

There is no reason to think that a merger will solve the demographic challenge, which is that there are not enough college-age students in New England to support four residential colleges in Vermont. And, there is very little evidence that a merger will achieve the cost savings necessary to remain solvent. The plan presented by NCHEMS appears to rely on four assumptions:

- That the Legislature will give VSAC another \$5 million a year.
- That the colleges will be able to cut \$5M per year in each of the next 5 years.
- That the State will increase its regular contribution by more than 50% (to \$47.5M a year).
- And that the State will provide one-time funding of \$77 million over the next 5 years to support the transformation.

We are not confident that the Legislature will find this to be a sustainable path. We question it, as well.

Before proceeding down that path, we ask you to consider an alternative. The alternative addresses the need for a skilled and knowledgeable labor force to help our state's businesses thrive and grow. We believe that a successful combination of the talents and expertise provided through a merger of Vermont Tech, the Community College of Vermont and the state's technical centers will result in a highly competitive and efficient community technical college system. The infrastructure is already in place. CCV has twelve locations, each of which has a local technical center. Accessing CCV academic coursework, in

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combination with the skills of Vermont Tech faculty within technical center facilities that are already outfitted with the necessary lab space and equipment must be considered. Doing so will provide equal higher education access to all Vermonters in an accessible and affordable manner.

This plan should also include preserving Castleton University's role as the lead residential University within the system. Infrastructure work completed at Castleton University over the past 20 years has positioned the facility in a manner that provides the opportunity to deliver education well into the future. The programs provided are needed for the entire state economy to thrive. Diminishing its stature, autonomy and brand will not allow Castleton University to continue to attract young people to move to Vermont and become a skilled part of our work force. This hurts us all.

Ultimately, we are concerned that making Castleton University another branch of "Vermont State University" will damage its brand, a brand that has evolved to a point of being essential to its recruiting, especially with out-of-state students, each of whom is vital to our region's economy. Accordingly, if the Board approves a merger, we request that it take steps to ensure that:

- Castleton can preserve its attractive brand (name, logo, athletic teams, etc.),
- Castleton can retain its residential experience and,
- Castleton can keep its signature academic programs (Nursing, Business, Education, Communication, Science, Resort Management, etc.), each of which are critical to our region's economy.

Yet, we hope that this is not the path you choose. We are not convinced that a reorganization and renaming of the schools within the system will result in sustainability. The time is now, for you to act boldly and strategically. It is also time to connect the entire K-16 educational system in a manner that capitalizes on what already exists, which will strengthen the system with a community technical college system that all Vermonters and out of state students can access.

We stand ready to help make positive change. And, we thank you for your service to Vermont and look forward to learning more about how you intend to proceed.

Sincerely,

John Casella II
President

Lyle P. Jepson
Executive Director

Cc Rutland County Legislative Delegation
Bennington County Legislative Delegation



Castleton University

February 15, 2021

Andre Fleche
Professor of History
Faculty Assembly President
Castleton University
Castleton, VT, 05735

To Chancellor Zdatny and the VSCS Board of Trustees:

On February 11, 2021, the members of the Castleton University Faculty Assembly endorsed by official vote the plan for restructuring submitted by the Labor Task Force and entitled "Uniting Vermont." The task force included faculty and staff representatives from across the VSCS and incorporated feedback from both internal and external stakeholders. The Castleton Faculty Assembly's discussion of the proposal called attention to several especially meritorious aspects of the plan:

- The Labor Task Force proposal **allows the system's campuses to retain their unique identities and "brands."** The plan creates structures for disciplinary collaboration across the system, but each campus would keep its current name, mascot, colors, athletic teams, and admissions strategies.
- The proposal **identifies significant and tangible cost savings** through the consolidation of the system's administrative leadership into one executive team.
- The proposal **enhances the VSCS's practice of shared governance**, a practice which is expected by our accreditors, by including faculty and staff in systemwide decision making.
- The proposal realizes additional support by calling for **enhanced state funding and eliminating out-of-state portability** of public financial aid.

The faculty at Castleton University urges the board to consider the Labor Task Force's plan and looks forward to working together to secure the priorities outlined in its report.

Sincerely Yours,


Andre Fleche

Transforming the Vermont State Colleges

NCHEMS Recommendations (Dec 4, 2020)

“An Initial Report of the Select Committee on the Future of
Higher Education in Vermont”

Submitted by:

Dr. Peggy Ryan Williams
President Emerita,
Lyndon State College and
Ithaca College
February 13, 2017

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this report.

Allow me to introduce myself, to provide some context for my remarks.

I enjoyed a 36-year career in higher education. 21 of those years were spent in the VSCS: 10 with CCV; 3 in the Office of the Chancellor; and 8 as President of Lyndon State College. I left LSC in 1997 to move to Ithaca NY where I served as President of Ithaca College, and retired from there in 2009

I was a Johnson resident from 1972-1989; and again since 2009
I was a resident of Lyndonville from 1989-1997.

I have familiarity with the institutions within the VSC, and have enjoyed living in two communities where VSCS campuses exist: Johnson and Lyndonville.

First let me commend the selection of NCHEMS as the consultant for this important work. It was an excellent choice. NCHEMS has a long history as a highly-respected, data driven organization that has advised many colleges and universities on critical issues over the decades.

I concur with the bottom line recommendation of the NCHEMS report: VSCS needs to be transformed and reconfigured. Institutions within the VSCS need to re-align themselves to meet the future needs of Vermonters and Vermont. A healthy, robust VSCS is critical to a thriving Vermont.

A few Comments:

1. From the “Executive Summary” (page 2):

i 1 The Committee interprets “meeting learner needs” to mean:

“providing access to relevant academic programs in all regions of the state....”

This commitment is critical for educating individuals to meet the future workforce needs of Vermont (and the region), as well as for preparing individuals to participate in society as well-informed citizens. The latter is key to a functioning democracy.

Maintaining a VSCS presence in multiple physical locations in the state is critical to providing access to post secondary education (acquisition of knowledge and skills), enabling individuals to chart their paths to productive and meaningful lives.

Maintaining multiple physical locations is particularly important to those students for whom work/family obligations make it impossible to them to relocate within the state to attend college, as well as those who choose to attend college on a part-time basis.

Beyond the issue of access, each of the campuses is critical to its community and region:

>Regionally, the campuses and their employees are frequently called upon to offer their expertise to local businesses and organizations, in a consulting capacity. These resources are invaluable

>Equally important is the interest of regional and statewide not-for-profits to engage these same employees-- with relevant expertise--to serve on their boards.

>The campus communities offer students, faculty/staff, and area residents a plethora of features that enhance the quality of life in surrounding communities: lectures, music and dance recitals, student athletic events, and more. College towns distinguish themselves from other communities in the state because of these features, and make them attractive places to live.

>Finally, the four VSCS campuses are regional economic engines, and the closure of any one of them would be devastating. At a minimum, each campus:

- is a major employer with significant payroll
- is a major purchaser of goods and services
- contracts for major capital projects, which require labor, materials etc
- and more.

2. Structure:

Realignment of the VSCS requires structural adaptations as well as how/where/when academic programs—and supporting student services—are delivered. Program changes should be left in the hands of VSCS academic leaders.

Re structural adaptations, I can support the proposed consolidation of NVU, VTC and CSC, and the synergies and efficiencies that might result. At the same time, be mindful that each campus will need to have a COO/Executive Vice President to manage and lead the campus on a day-to-day basis. I am sure that you have assumed such staffing costs into the full assessment of the impact of consolidation. An equally important consideration will be to determine where efficiencies in “back office” functions will need to be complemented by some human faces in campus offices. VSCS prides itself in providing a high level of personal attention. So, where it might be good to consolidate Financial Aid processing, e.g., each campus will need to have a human presence in its Financial Aid office as well.

As an alternative to the merger outlined above, it might make more sense to merge the two two-year colleges--VTC with CCV-- rather than merge a two-year with two four-year institutions. VTC and CCV have more in common with each other than with NVU or Castleton. For example , they share recruiting/marketing efforts focused on the benefits of a two year degree; they provide advising services to student seeking to transfer to a four year college; and more.

3. Distinctiveness of each four-year campus

The three four-year campuses need to distinguish themselves, especially academically, to develop reputations of excellence that contribute to brand identity, marketing distinctiveness, recruiting advantage etc.

In the 80s and 90s the term “Distinctive Programs” was a well-known concept within the VSCS.. Each of the four-year colleges had 2-3 programs in which they sought to excel, and which were not offered elsewhere in the system. Much to my

chagrin, during my time at LSC, this concept began to erode. It needs to be resurrected with a 2021 look at what programs might be “distinctive” at each campus.

4. Student Body

VSCS needs to develop a robust recruitment strategy to increase its enrollment of out-of-state students. With Vermont’s aging population, we need a number of strategies to increase the number of well-educated/well-trained individuals to participate in Vermont’s future workforce. In recruiting individuals to study in Vermont, we know that a certain percentage will decide to stay in Vermont after graduation. When I was at LSC, 45% of our students from not from Vermont. Many did stay to live and work in the state.

The COVID pandemic is an added feature here. VSCS cannot, in good faith, recruit potential students by saying “come here, its safer than XXXX”. However, we do know that there are trends indicating that folks are leaving urban areas and looking at more rural communities as good places to be right now...and into the future.

5. Sale of Real estate

Sell physical assets and create a spend down account (not quasi endowments) with funds drawn annually over a period of X years, to complement tuition revenue.

In Johnson:

1. Sell McClelland. It sits on it own, separated from the rest of the campus. Vermont Studio Center or the Elementary School might be interested. If not, it might be suitable for a private developer to convert to housing.
2. Sell the College Apts to a developer to create units for rent/purchase.
3. Sell some land for development of “over 55” living community—rental or condos. Occupants would get an NVU/J ID card enabling them to access university facilities and programs.
4. Sell the President’s House. It sits separated from the main campus enough to provide a nice residence.

In Lyndonville:

1. See number 3 above. The NVU/L campus is an ideal setting for such development.
2. Stonehenge Complex
Consider taking some of the buildings out of the housing stock and repurposing them for: CCV? Office of the Chancellor? Private development?

3. In the late 90s, we purchased a house next to the Rescue building and turned it into a small residence hall. If NVU still owns this, consider selling it.
4. Keep this President's House. It is the nicest in the system with the finest view in Caledonia County.

In Castleton and Randolph Center

I am not familiar enough with these campuses to propose properties to sell. However, if memory serves me, I think the president's house on each campus is set apart enough from the center of the campus that the sale of each might make sense.

In the end, the President will need a residence and a place to entertain. The President deserves a decent house. I suggest that VSCS only keep one. At the same time, the President will need some form of accommodation in the communities where houses are sold, and where s/he is expected to spend time. A conundrum for sure.

Thank you.

Dr. Peggy Ryan Williams
Johnson, VT
pwilliams@ithaca.edu

PRW/2/13/21

February 15, 2021

Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees
Office of the Chancellor
Vermont State Colleges
P.O. Box 7
Montpelier, VT 05601

Dear VSC Trustees,

I am writing this letter in support of Castleton University and its impact on Southwestern Vermont Health Care (SVHC) and the southern Vermont region.

SVHC is a small, rural health care system comprised of a hospital, two nursing homes, a regional cancer center and nine primary and specialty care health centers. We are one of the largest employers in the southern Vermont region, employing over 1400 people. Health care and higher education are two of the anchor employers that support both the quality of life and economic vitality of the communities we serve. With the precipitous closure of Southern Vermont College (SVC) in the summer of 2019, we lost a critical resource for our region. SVHC, which worked closely in partnership with SVC, also lost a major supplier for its future workforce, especially in the area of four-year BSN educated nurses. As you are aware, the State of Vermont, along with the rest of the country is experiencing an ever-increasing shortage of nurses. It is projected that Vermont will have a shortfall of approximately 5,000 nurses by 2025. SVC was serving as a vital pipeline for graduate nurses entering the workforce. When SVC closed, SVHC immediately reached out to Castleton University to help fill this educational void. Castleton quickly responded to the need and within a very short period of time developed a satellite program with a presence in Bennington. They have done a remarkable job in building a strong local program that is providing support to our health system and students looking to enter the nursing profession.

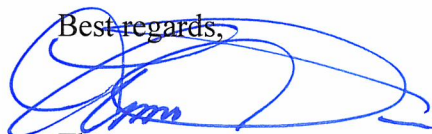
Castleton's leadership team, currently lead by Dr. Jonathan Spiro is continuing to build a presence in our community with their current nursing satellite program educating over 40 nursing students in the Bennington program (and with a vision to grow the program to over 100 students during the ensuing years). SVHC's desire is to provide an opportunity for young, local students to be educated and remain within our communities working within a nationally recognized nursing service program at SVHC.

We fully understand the challenges that face higher education in Vermont. The health care industry faces many of the same issues. We support the strategic imperative of forming a strong, integrated higher education system. SVHC is currently implementing similar strategies through an organizational alignment with Dartmouth-Hitchcock Health. But even as we organizationally move closer to D-HH, both D-HH and SVHC realize the need to maintain a vibrant, locally directed and community centered health care system in the southern Vermont region.

As we look towards enhancing the future community and economic development opportunities in the southern Vermont region, I hope that the VSC Board fully realize the asset the Vermont state system has in Castleton University and will continue to support its growth and development within our region. We view Castleton as a vital partner as we look to meet the health care needs of the people we serve.

Thank you all for your dedicated service in trying to enhance higher education in Vermont.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Dee', with a large, loopy flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Thomas A. Dee, FACHE
President and CEO

VERMONT TECH

16 February 2021

Joan Richmond-Hall
Professor of Science
Moderator of Faculty Assembly
Vermont Technical College

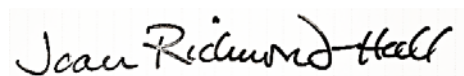
To Chancellor Zdatny and the VSCS Board of Trustees:

Today at our noon meeting, the members of the Vermont Technical College Faculty Assembly unanimously voted to endorse the report, Uniting Vermont, prepared by the Labor Task Force. We have compared it with the report of the National Center for Higher Education Management (NCHEMS). While the NCHEMS report contains a number of helpful recommendations, it represents a halfway, incremental approach to the problems faced by the Vermont State Colleges. By contrast, the Uniting Vermont report represents a comprehensive, detailed, and thorough approach. Specifically, we find the following:

- The Uniting Vermont approach would unite all the Vermont State Colleges into a single university. This would consolidate administrative functions and eliminate the need for an additional central office. The NCHEMS report would maintain CCV as a separate institution, requiring two separate management structures plus an additional administrative superstructure to coordinate the two institutions.
- The Uniting Vermont approach would restrict portability of VSAC grants and end the practice of sending Vermont taxpayer money to out-of-state institutions. The NCHEMS approach would not.
- The Uniting Vermont approach would restructure the board of trustees to provide input from a broad range of VSCS constituents. The NCHEMS approach would maintain the trustees' isolation from the broader VSCS community.

This is not a time for halfway measures. In the interest of our colleges, our students, and the state of Vermont, we urge the adoption of the proposals presented in the Uniting Vermont report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joan Richmond-Hall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joan Richmond-Hall, Ph.D.

To: Chancellor Zdatny and the VSC Board of Trustees
From: Paul Cohen
Re: Requested input regarding the future of the VSC system
Date: February 16, 2021

Dear Chancellor Zdatny and distinguished Board members,

I appreciate all your hard work and respectfully submit my feedback regarding the very tough and critical decisions you face.

Brief background on myself:

- VSC Professor (semi-retired) at Castleton since 1990
- Chair of Admissions and Retention Committee (20+ years)
- Men's and women's tennis coach (19 years) – have spent many enjoyable days at the beautiful Lyndon and Johnson campuses.
- Principal, Paul Cohen & Associates (43 years). Focus on Marketing Research and Strategic Planning

I have helped many organizations (large and small, for-profit and non-profit) in their strategic planning efforts over the decades. The keys to successful strategic planning are to be honest about the data, and to understand that sometimes, big sacrifices have to be made for the health of the Mother Ship.

After reviewing your latest report, I wrote ten pages of notes. In order not to unduly burden you, I chose to paste a few select quotes from the report with *my comments added in italics*.

I'm happy to discuss any of this at any time with the VSC, pro bono.

Report excerpts, followed by *my comments*:

"In the absence of additional support from the legislature and time to undertake radical structural changes the overall system—not just individual institutions—will be faced with financial bankruptcy."

What is the probability that the state of Vermont will provide the funding outlined in the report - \$221 million over the next three years (vs. the \$91.5 million currently planned)? Are we in danger of "rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic"?

“Select Committee on the Future of Public Higher Education in Vermont – Revised Page 48...

b .VSC is overbuilt for the size of its current student population—in both personnel and facilities...

The legislature and governor will have to more strategically allocate state resources to the VSC System, and to postsecondary education more generally, and in the process provide appropriate direction and incentives related to those goals.”

In order for any of the proposed strategies to have a chance of succeeding, the Vermont legislature must clearly, forcefully and quickly weigh in and put their money where their mouths are. Otherwise, they should prepare themselves for when it is announced that a campus in their part of the state, or the entire VSC will be closing due to the VSC’s insolvency.

“The very public recommendation made in April 2020 to close three campuses created uncertainties that further tarnished the attractiveness of these institutions to students. This combination of conditions has pushed the VSC institutions into a downward spiral that will take concerted efforts to reverse.”

This is, unfortunately, true. The downward spiral might be reversed, but only with a dramatic increase in both short and long-term funding by the state. What is the probability of that?

“Stimulating and supporting the economic and cultural vitality of the state and its communities.”

No doubt, a VSC institution brings tremendous local benefits, but we are significantly overbuilt for our demand. The amount of deferred maintenance alone is an albatross around our necks.

The closing of Green Mountain College was considered a “fatal” hit on Poultney, VT, but then came Raj Bhakta (WhistlePig’s founder). Poultney is now developing plans to become the outdoor recreation hub for southwestern Vermont.

Could the resources needed to run a large, physical complex in rural Vermont possibly be used for other forms of “economic and cultural vitality”?

“Attracting and retaining talent to a vibrant and growing Vermont economy fueled by an entrepreneurial spirit, creativity, skilled labor, and relevant basic and applied research supplied by thriving VSC institutions.”

‘Attracting and retaining talent’ is an under-addressed, long-term weakness and threat. VSC faculty generally support the VSC’s benefits programs, but the extremely low starting salary structure for professors puts us at a serious long-term disadvantage. As is done with our Nursing program, faculty salaries should be adjusted to at least come close to being market-based. If they are not, the VSC is at a severe long-term competitive disadvantage trying to attract superior educators. Many disciplines have to work extremely hard and get lucky to find professors who are willing to sacrifice for the “privilege” of living in Vermont.

“Recommendation 3c. – VSC Structure - rural residents—have access to physical campuses.”

The case for the importance of this is not adequately made. A hundred years ago, maybe even thirty years ago (pre-internet), providing physical access in four Vermont locations might be true. We “need” one physical campus for residential students. We need more only if justified. Satellite commuter sites is an option to consider. Online, “distance learning” can be effectively used and will continue to grow in importance.

A strong argument could be made that Castleton University should be the hub for the system’s “residential experience”. Certainly, Castleton is the hub for “rich intercollegiate athletics.” However, doing so without a campus President would be a terrible mistake.

“Based on these conclusions and after considerable discussion, the Select Committee concluded that its recommendations should target certain objectives while seeking ways to ensure the financial viability of the VSC System. These objectives are as follows:

a. Maintain a physical presence in each of the sites where VSC has campuses although recognizing that the activities carried on at those sites will necessarily change.”

Has the case been made that a “physical presence in each of the sites” is a financially realistic alternative? That is far from evident.

“With this as background, recommendations to restructure the VSC system should aim to create institutions that: •have distinctive missions and cultures, including the preservation of elements of institutional history and traditions that make each place unique...”

It is very important to maintain the tradition, culture and benefits (to students, faculty, staff, and the local community) of a campus President. No matter what the VSC decides to do, having a physical campus with residential students and athletics and not having a full-time President at that campus flies in the face of all logic. If there are case studies in the report that indicate otherwise, I apologize for missing them. The case studies I saw (GA and UT) did not seem particularly relevant to our situation.

“Recognizing that VTC is unique within that group of three institutions, a second option would be to maintain VTC as a separate institution and consolidate NVU and Castleton. This option would reduce the challenges of integrating VTC’s unique culture and disciplinary array with that of two larger institutions with deeply embedded cultures of their own. Maintaining VTC as a separate institution may also ensure that there remains a place in Vermont where priority is given to technical sub-baccalaureate and baccalaureate programs.”

If we merge, there is much evidence to indicate that VTC should be positioned and managed separately from “Vermont State University”, as we will continue to do with CCV.

If a merger happens, I recommend that the VSC adopt VTC’s (or better, a simpler) Gen Ed “Core” curriculum for the system. We must make it as easy as possible for our customers (students) to take as many courses as they want in areas that will benefit them the most. This is what our competitors are doing. There is every indication that much of the impetus for maintaining a large, burdensome Gen Ed core is motivated by the desire for job preservation as much, or more than delivering value-based benefits for our students.

“The Select Committee has weighed these options and their associated tradeoffs and has concluded that the VSC continue to be organized as a system with a Chancellor’s Office and that the System be comprised of two subordinate institutions—a unified institution (forged from Castleton, NVU, and VTC) and CCV.

This combination is outlined above, and includes the expanded mission described for CCV.”

I respectfully recommend that the Committee reconsider this conclusion, based on the cold, hard facts of our situation.

If the state commits to the proposed \$221 million over the next three years, there is a chance that the proposed strategy might succeed. Even then, and it truly hurts to have to say this, but the facts indicate that you’re trying to be too nice and are giving in to political pressures. Sadly, this will likely result in a path to insolvency for the VSC.

February 15, 2021

Vermont State College System Board of Trustees.
Office of the Chancellor
Vermont State Colleges System
P.O. Box 7
Montpelier, VT 05601

Dear VSCS Trustees:

The Castleton Bridge Initiative is a group comprised of Castleton residents and town officials along with Castleton University (CU) faculty members, staff and students dedicated to strengthening bridges between the Town and the University. Established in 2015, Bridge has accomplished numerous projects and solidified cooperation between the town and the University. Bridge members, being deeply connected to both the Town and the University, have been taking strong interest in the proposed merger, and we would like to share our collective concerns.

We understand that VSCS faces a serious fiscal crisis due in part to the declining number of college-age students, but mostly to inadequate funding from the state over the course of decades. While it is relevant how we got to this fiscal crisis, please also keep in mind how Castleton University has managed so long, despite declining funding, to offer quality education to Vermonters and to remain an engaged, economic driver in our community.

As you consider ways to remedy this situation, we ask that you take into account the following concerns and potential dangers we fear could befall Castleton University and the Rutland region under the proposed plan:

- Castleton University is the oldest college in the state and has functioned as *the* economic engine for the Greater Rutland area for more than 200 years. It is more than just a state college; it has an “identity” and a “brand” that is essential to the success and progress of the region. Businesses depend on the income of its 300+ employees and the contributions of its 2,000 students, who donate some 10,000 hours of volunteer work to the community each year. Home sales and rentals, restaurants and other establishments that make up the local economy depend on CU’s identity and economic power. Losing the identification of “Castleton” up front in its name would potentially cause lasting damage.
- The synergy between the University and the Town (as well as the county and larger region) will be harmed to the extent that Castleton will have centralized leadership in Waterbury that is less focused on our regional needs and more focused on a state-wide institution. The Bridge Initiative and the community recommend that the Board contemplate more than savings issues; it needs to recognize the political implications of administration being distant and making decisions that will have an impact in our communities.
- The symbiosis of the Town and the University depends on the “relationships” with students, faculty, staff and community. Students are comfortable at CU because of the support they have of on-site services like financial aid, which if centralized and off-site wouldn’t be as effective at having the trust of students who now know that staff care about them and their situations.
- Preserving Castleton’s identity is crucial to the robustness of the residential in-person learning experience, with room and board providing significant revenue - and students and their families, etc. spending money in town. The Castleton brand is also central to retaining the loyalty of

alumni and attracting out of state students who bring revenue. The ability to attract out-of-state students, who make up 30-40% of the student body, who pay higher tuition, and often decide to live and work in Vermont after graduation, would be in jeopardy. Also threatened would be Castleton's ability to attract athletes and performing arts students from out of state who live in the dorms. The staff at CU is already bare bones; diminishing revenue sources like out-of-state students would mean that we'd have even less to offer Vermonters.

- Castleton's success with first generation college students (70%), whose performance requires much support and face-to-face contact, will be damaged with loss of identity and important on-site services and resources. The support, pride, and loyalty students and alumni exhibit toward Castleton University specifically, would not extend to a blandly named state college system.

Thanks to CU's vibrant programs in academics, health care, business, education, social work and criminal justice, its graduates fill the ranks of nurses, teachers, entrepreneurs and creative professions in the Greater Rutland area. All would be threatened with the loss of Castleton's well-earned, long-established identity to this region.

We therefore urge the VSCS Board of Trustees to develop alternate plans that address recruitment, finances and the traditional responsiveness to CU students in creative and sustainable ways.

We thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Martha Molnar, Chair
Richard Byrne
Rich Clark
Sue Day
Mary Droege
Phil Lamy
Charlotte Gerstein
Jan Jones
Mike Jones
Ted Molnar
Matthew Patry
Julius Riermersma
Rachel A. Sayward
Pat Schroeder
Katherine Spaulding
Bill Wood



Town of Castleton

263 Route 30N, P.O. Box 727, Castleton, VT 05735

February 8, 2021

Rep. Eileen "Lynn" Dickinson
Chair, VSCS Board of Trustees
Office of the Chancellor
P.O. Box 7
Montpelier, VT 05601

Dear Representative Dickinson:

As the elected members of the Town of Castleton Select Board, we write to express our considerable interest in the work of the VSCS Select Committee and the recommendations it is contemplating.

We recognize the authority of the VSCS Board of Trustees to make critical decisions regarding the future of the System and its member institutions, how those institutions are structured and managed, and which degree programs are offered at each.

Our concern is that the Castleton campus remain the vital, creative force that it has been in our community. In fact, this past summer, a planning process initiated by the Town's Community Development and Economic Revitalization Committee received numerous comments from citizens who identified the University as one of the greatest assets of the Town if not *the* greatest asset.

The University's two thousand students and its 300 employees bring immeasurable energy and talent to area institutions. As one example, interns who, in the course of pursuing majors in athletic training, business, criminal justice, education, nursing, physical education, and social work, among other fields, make invaluable contributions to the region's agencies and corporations and, through that, to their clients and patrons.

Castleton University is, as you know, the largest employer in our town and one of the largest in Rutland County. But, beyond that, the students and staff visiting the campus on a near-daily basis provide a critical customer base for local businesses and rental property owners. In fact, many of Castleton's entrepreneurs would likely have set up shop elsewhere if it weren't for the University.

The families of students and prospective students also fuel the regional economy. Without them, many restaurants, stores, and motels would probably not survive.

From that perspective, we are concerned about the Castleton "brand" and what any VSCS reorganization might do to it. Over the last decades, the University has very successfully developed its public image. This has supported both in-state and out-of-state recruitment and contributed to the value of a Castleton degree.

We worry that a change that would aggregate the three campus-based institutions under the umbrella of a name such as "Vermont State University at _____" (fill in the blank) would reverse the hard work Castleton staff have invested in forging a distinctive and positive institutional identity. In addition, in the public's eye, Castleton University and the Town of Castleton, Vermont, are tightly connected because of their common labels. That means that marketing efforts initiated by either party have the potential to benefit both.

For all these reasons, we urge you to be thoughtful, judicious, and measured in your decision-making about an institution that has for centuries been so important to this community.

We appreciate your considering our input.

Connecting all
Departments
(802) 468-5319

Manager - 203

Admin. Asst.-202

Tax Dept. -204

Town Clerk -201

Health Officer -207

Assessor -209

Zoning -208

Treasurer -205

Accounting -206

Police Department
(802) 468-2750

Highway Dept.
(802) 468-2459

Transfer Station
(802) 468-3005

Wastewater Dept.
(802) 468-5315

Fax - All Depts.
(802) 468-5482

On the web:
castletonvermont.org

The foregoing statement was unanimously adopted by the Board at its February 8, 2021, meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J. Leamy", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

James Leamy, Select Board Chairperson

[Signed by the Select Board Chair on behalf of the Board and with its authorization.]



Town of Castleton

263 Route 30N, P.O. Box 727, Castleton, VT 05735

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Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees
Office of the Chancellor
Vermont State Colleges
P.O. Box 7
Montpelier, VT 05601
February 11, 2021

Dear VSC Trustees:

The Castleton Community Development & Economic Revitalization Advisory Committee is a seven-member board whose goal is self-explanatory. We are writing this letter to you to express the close economic, social, and personal relationships between the people of the Town of Castleton and Castleton University. As you are aware the University traces its roots back to 1787 and has been the crucial thread in the fabric of our community ever since. Sharing the name, "Castleton" is a point of pride and an economic driver for our community.

This past year our board held a series of SWOT meetings with the citizens and business community and the University checks the boxes of greatest strengths and opportunities. I will not list the numbers of folks employed or the key role the students play in our economy as we are certain you are aware of these factors. I am sure that you are also aware of the cultural opportunities the university offers and the powerful interactions of the students and our community. I would like to touch on the intangible and priceless value of living in a town that shares its name with a university. To remove the name Castleton from our university would be tantamount to removing our last names. Our identities are tied together, and they are important identities. We are in part who we are because of proud names like "Vermont" and Castleton University.

We are all too aware of the dire financial situation of the Vermont State Colleges and have great respect for the board of trustees and the very difficult decisions you have in front of you. We would however respectfully ask that you consider a plan such as the one submitted by the Chamber and Economic Development board of the Rutland Region and let Castleton University retain its name and proud local identity.

Thank for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark Brown
Town of Castleton
CDERAC Committee Chairman

From: Scott, Jonathan F. <jonathan.scott@castleton.edu>
Sent: Monday, February 1, 2021 2:25 PM
To: Spiro, Jonathan P. <jonathan.spiro@castleton.edu>; Scott, Jonathan F. <jonathan.scott@castleton.edu>; Marie Scott <marie.scott840@gmail.com>; Gillen, John M. <jmg01040@csc.vsc.edu>; bramage93@gmail.com <bramage93@gmail.com>; Robert Gershon <robertwgershon@gmail.com>; Johnson, Robert <rj92506@comcast.net>; Brown, Luther M. <luther.brown@castleton.edu>
Subject: VSC PLAN

Hi Jonathan,

In response to the restructuring plans for the VSC, I hope I am not out of place in suggesting a few ideas and thoughts.

Some simple things first. In my years here, I have noticed that while Castleton has often done well, Lyndon and Johnson have struggled. Too often, the solution has been to take from our budget to support theirs. In other words, instead of being rewarded for our success, we have been penalized. Actually, I believe there is a need for these institutions in other parts of the state, but I also believe they should be supported by the State directly as needed, not by us and our budget.

If we join with them as one big VSC, there is a chance that, though we may be doing well, we will be pulled down by the lagging fortunes of the other institutions. We should be allowed to reap the benefits of our success, with the manageable goal of improving CU, and making it more attractive for future admissions.

Making us part of a larger unit, whose pieces are scattered all over the state, hours away, doesn't make any sense to me at all. It is like pretending to solve a leaking roof - the real problem - by moving the furniture around, or re-arranging the rooms. I realize it will be more expensive to fix the roof (i.e. the pitiful amount of support from the State), but that is where you have to begin.

We must ask what has made Castleton a success story, and build on that, not diminish it. Part of this I realize is geography. We serve a larger and more populated area - all of southern Vermont and Northern New York. Recognizing this, it has been good for us to give those in contiguous Upper New York, attractive deals on tuition, etc. We should continue that.

But the other part of our success, is that our faculty has instituted many innovative programs like our Core which balances Liberal Arts with Professional programs, or Soundings, or our unique FYS program, or the integration of academics with Cultural events brought in from many places featuring talented performers and thoughtful speakers. All this, as I have seen often, has helped to change and broaden our students while they are here.

But if we first must consider the impact on other Institutions, this will make it much harder and more cumbersome for us to be nimble and innovative within our own. Conversely, I have seen programs formulated at Lyndon, for example, being foisted on us in ways that did not suit Castleton.

In the past, and in very creative ways, Castleton has managed to become a unique College/University with its own distinctive Identity. This has helped to make us popular and successful, here in Vermont, elsewhere in the States, and even abroad. I think we need to continue on this path, and let Lyndon and Johnson do the same.

I believe the other part of our success has been underpinning our professional programs with a Liberal Arts curriculum. Indeed, it should not be forgotten that this has been the success of American Higher Education. In a fast changing world, educating students too narrowly for the needs of today, may not serve them well in the future. A broad education works better. Teaching students how to think, to know History, Culture, and the Arts (especially the many we have from small rural towns) gives them the breadth and depth for success throughout their lives.

I hope this is useful. Respectfully submitted,

JONATHAN SCOTT

From: [Peters, Stephannie R.](#)
To: [VSC Chancellor](#)
Subject: VSC reimagined
Date: Thursday, February 18, 2021 2:10:03 PM
Attachments: [S. Peters Final Dissertation 10.30.17 \(1\).pdf](#)

Dear Chancellor Zdatny

I am a part-time instructor at CCV (since 2002) and at VTC (since 2011), and have recently started in a full-time role at VTC. I worked in the K-12 system in Bennington for over 20 years. My career as a Vermont educator has been the most rewarding and fulfilling one could ever want, and am fortunate to have these roles.

I viewed last-night's listening session and have kept abreast of the VSC current challenges. I am a multi-generation Vermonter and a passionate educator (& learner) with a keen sense of the role in higher education for our youth, adult learners, workforce and communities.

My doctoral dissertation (Northeastern University) in 2017 was in-depth research regarding transferring from a community college to a 4-year institution to earn a baccalaureate degree. I found some of last night's statements as well as aspects of what VSC is untangling quite relevant to my applicable research. While I know your to-do list is overwhelming, I have attached it here in the event it is of interest and/or use.

I very much appreciate your work, especially in light of the current challenges.

Best,
Stephannie R. Peters

Stephannie Peters, Ed.D. | Director, Career & Technical Teacher Education
VERMONT TECH
Office of Continuing Education & Workforce Development
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From: Fred Bagley <fredbagleyvt@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 20, 2021 7:06 PM
To: Zdatny, Sophie E. <sophie.zdatny@vsc.edu>
Subject: Letter for Board

Dear Chancellor Zdatny:

The attached is a letter composed by Joe Kraus, former director of Rutland's Project Vision and current President of the Board of Trustees of Rutland Regional Medical Center, and myself a resident of Mendon. It expresses our concern regarding consolidation of the VSC's campuses and was published partially in the Rutland Herald last week. Regrettably, the final two paragraphs of our letter were omitted by the Herald.

We are requesting that your office forward copies of our letter to VSC's Board of Trustees, as it amplifies comments we made in your on-line listening session we made last week.

Thanking you in advance, I remain,

Fred Bagley
Mendon VT

The future of Castleton University (CU) is in serious jeopardy if the Board of Trustees of the Vermont State College System votes to consolidate it with Northern Vermont University (NVU, formerly Lyndon State College and Johnson State College) and Vermont Technical College (VTC.) The Board will be making their decision on February 22.

The contribution of Castleton University to the Rutland Region and the State of Vermont cannot be overstated. The nursing programs at the Castleton and Bennington campuses supply a steady stream of nurses to health care facilities, not just in southwestern Vermont but throughout the state. The University's education programs develop and nurture teachers and school administrators. The Resort and Hospitality Program provides highly trained employees for ski areas throughout New England. Graduate programs in social work and accounting bring professional training to local residents. CU's Natural Sciences Department has secured over \$1.5 million in grants for faculty/student research to study Vermont's ecology. Every year over six-hundred out-of-state students enroll at CU, bringing \$10 million a year into the state. The University's cultural and athletic events enlighten and entertain us throughout the year. Castleton's art gallery and dormitory in Rutland bring vibrancy to our downtown. CU is also the fifth largest employer in Rutland County.

It is likely to all go away if the Board votes to consolidate CU with NVU and VTC. Here's why: there are five member institutions in the VSC system – CU, Lyndon and Johnson (combined as NVU), VTC and Community College of Vermont (CCV.) For decades, each of those five institutions received one-fifth of the system's allocation from the Legislature. But when NVU was formed from a merging of Lyndon and Johnson, it received 40%, or two shares. The problem is that the combined student enrollment at NVU, even before the pandemic, was less than two-thirds of Castleton's. So, if there was, for example, \$10,000 to give out, CU received \$2000 for its student body of about 2000 students (roughly one dollar per student) while NVU got \$4000 for about 1300 students (well over \$3.00 per student.) That formula has been minimally tweaked in the last few years, but in essence, Castleton students are subsidizing NVU students. Remarkably, even with this disproportionate subsidy, NVU was losing \$3-5 million a year (pre-Covid) while CU was breaking even.

Everyone agrees that the State of Vermont has underfunded higher education. Vermont is consistently ranked one of the lowest in the nation in state support of its college system, and as a result has the highest in-state tuition. There is little likelihood that with the pandemic, reduced state revenues and many worthy competing needs that that will change anytime soon. To the credit of the Board of Trustees, they do recognize the current funding mechanism of the system is unsustainable. The problem is their proposed solution does nothing to solve it. In fact, it makes it worse, much worse, because it will require about \$164 million more over the coming years, on top of the \$30 million historically provided annually by the Legislature.

A consulting firm was hired to evaluate the system and make recommendations as to how to reduce costs yet maintain quality. The consultant's report clearly states, "Business as usual is not an option, nor is incremental change to the status quo. VSC is overbuilt for the size of its student population – in both personnel and facilities. Right sizing VSC will require some combination of increasing enrollment....and reducing the size of the enterprise." We could not agree more.

The problem is that Vermont's high school population is shrinking and the only way "increasing enrollment" will happen is to recruit out-of-state. Because Castleton brings in more out-of-state students than the other universities combined, consolidation would extinguish that strong brand recognition. This

leaves “reducing the size of the enterprise” as the only realistic solution. Regrettably, the consultant recommended only three options: 1) combine CU with NVU and VTC, or 2) combine CU with NVU, or 3) leave things the same. None of these scenarios would allow the VSC system as a whole to either expand enrollment or reduce costs. Not offered were two options that actually would “right size” VSC: 1) close underutilized and underperforming institution(s) or 2) dissolve the VSC system and allow CU, NVU and VTC to go their separate ways, with state subsidies based on the student enrollment rather than the arbitrary and capricious formula used now.

The future of the VSC system is not assured, no matter what decision the Board of Trustees makes. None of the choices are easy and there will be pain. But we submit that for the Board of Trustees to combine CU, NVU and VTC into one enterprise, tentatively known as Vermont State University, is the wrong decision at this time. Consolidation will almost surely lead to failure of the entire system as there will be virtually no money saved and the disruption will be enormous.

In spite of its historic strengths and relatively stronger financial status, Castleton University is not by itself capable of supporting the other institutions. In addition, there is little likelihood the Legislature will grant the requested funds for consolidation, on top of the bridge funding to keep under-performing schools open another year plus their usual annual allocation.

There is too much at stake for the VSC Board of Trustees to make an ill-advised decision at this time. We urge the Board at its next meeting to defeat or table any motion to consolidate CU, NVU and VTC, and instead come up with a plan that is financially sustainable. Failing that, if the Board does vote to begin the consolidation, it must commit to allocating state funds to its member institutions on a per-student basis, and preserve the Castleton University name. If the Board chooses to consolidate CU, NVU and VTC without a change in its funding allocation, we urge the Legislature not to budget any money to support the consolidation. That would in essence be a “no confidence” vote on the Board’s decision.