CASTLETON UNIVERSITY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF VERMONT
NORTHERN VERMONT UNIVERSITY
VERMONT TECHNICAL COLLEGE

VERMONT
— STATE COLLEGES SYSTEM —

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MEMORANDUM

TO: <u>Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee</u>
           Mary Moran, Chair
           Ryan Cooney
           Dylan Giambatista
           Bill Lippert
           Jim Masland

FROM: Kathryn Santiago, Assistant General Counsel *K. Santiago*

DATE: March 8, 2021

SUBJECT: DEI Committee Meeting March 12, 2021

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee of the Board of Trustees is scheduled to meet on Friday, March 12th from 1:00pm to 2:30pm by Zoom.

The focus for this meeting will be for the committee to establish its goals and plan of work and to have preliminary discussions in furtherance of identifying ways to improve equitable access to its educational programs and recruitment for employment for those who have been marginalized or underrepresented historically.

In preparation for the committee's discussion, in the accompanying materials is a draft committee charter and VSC General Education Final Proposal dated 3.4.2021.

Also, on the agenda are updates on the proposed anti-racism pledge, information concerning diversity, equity and inclusion academic and hiring initiatives, and information concerning gender identity and VSCS Information Systems.

I can be reached directly at (802) 224-3012 if you have any questions.

Thank you.

Cc: VSCS Board of Trustees
       Council of Presidents
       Academic Deans

Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee Meeting

Zoom Meeting/YouTube Stream
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. **Friday, March 12, 2021**

AGENDA

1:00 P.M. – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee Meeting

1. Call to Order
2. Discussion of draft Committee Charter
3. Update on proposed anti-racism pledge from VSC Social Justice
4. Information on DEI academic and hiring initiatives
5. Information on Gender Identity and VSCS Information Systems
6. Additional Business
7. Public Comment – sign up here: www.vsc.edu/signup
8. Adjourn

ITEM 1:

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee Charter

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee Charter

I.   Purpose

The purpose of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (or 'Committee') of the Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees (or 'Board') is to review the governance and operations of the Vermont State Colleges System (or 'VSC') in order to identify ways to improve equitable access to its educational programs and recruitment for employment for those who have been marginalized or underrepresented historically.

II.   Organization

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee shall comprise no fewer than three and no more than seven trustees.

The Chair of the Board shall appoint the Committee members and the Chair of the Committee.

III.   Meetings

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee shall meet a minimum of three times per year, or more frequently as circumstances require.

IV.   Responsibilities and Duties

a. Definitions: Provide a definition of the terms "diversity," "equity" and "inclusion" as applied to the VSC.

b. Board: Identify goals for diversity within the Board's membership.

c. Student Services: The Committee shall assess the effectiveness of the VSC in adhering to the spirit and intent of equal opportunity and its goals for diversity equity and inclusion in the provision of student services, as well as providing a safe environment that fosters the intellectual and personal development of students.

d. Faculty and Staff: The Committee shall assess the effectiveness of the VSC in ensuring equal employment opportunity, compatible with its goals for achieving diversity, equity and inclusion among its faculty and staff so that hiring reflects a variety of academic and professional backgrounds, qualifications, training and experience.

e. Non-discrimination: The Committee shall review the VSC's policies and practices in recruitment, admissions, employment, evaluation, disciplinary action, and advancement so as to support an inclusive atmosphere within the member institutions' communities that respects and supports people of diverse characteristics and backgrounds.

ITEM 1:

VSC General Education Agreement

Vermont State Colleges General Education Agreement
Course Clusters and Essential Learning Outcomes

FINAL PROPOSAL March 2021
CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION BY FACULTY ASSEMBLIES/COUNCILS

<u>Introduction</u>

This task force was charged with creating a system of transfer for general education courses within the Vermont State College system. We have attempted to develop a structure that has the added benefit of transparency—that is, that provides students with a clear understanding of what courses within a specific VSC institution's offerings will transfer to other VSC schools. Further, by limiting the focus of our work to the seven core requirements listed below, we have attempted to develop a system that allows individual VSC institutions to maintain distinctive features of their general education curriculum, particularly when these features are recognized as best practices. In this way, we hope to honor both the needs of our students and the independence of our faculties.

Our proposal consists of seven aggregated course clusters that all VSC institutions include in their general education program. They consist of:
1. Introductory Written Expression
2. Digital and Computing Literacy
3. Mathematics
4. Natural Science
5. Social Science
6. Fine Arts and Aesthetics
7. Humanistic Perspectives

In order for an individual course to receive a VSC designation, it must fulfill the minimum number of learning outcomes listed below each cluster. The particular guidelines for receiving a designation—and the means of resolving inter-institutional contradictions—are outlined below.

In addition to the clusters listed above, we recognize that all VSC institutions require students to fulfill both an oral communications and an intermediate writing requirement. However, because these requirements are currently met in very different ways at various VSC institutions— sometimes as a course, sometimes as a designation, sometimes as an embedded assignment— resolving transfer would likely require revisions at the institutional level that are beyond the purview of this committee.

While we assume that the actual system of designation will be determined by an agreement among the collective VSC registrars, we would suggest a simple "VSC" tag that appears on degree audits next to designated courses, followed by a tag that indicates which cluster requirement that course fulfills—e.g., VSC-WE for a course that fulfills the written expression requirement, VSC-NS for the natural science requirement, and so on. We would also suggest that these designations appear in any list of course offerings, as well as on individual course syllabi.

We recognize that several outstanding questions may still need to be addressed. It is our hope that our work here has provided a solid foundation for the inter-institutional committee described below to take up this work. Further, it is our hope that the dialogue and sharing of ideas between VSC institutions continues, to the benefit of our students.

Statement of Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
The Vermont State College System recognizes and acknowledges the historical and cultural context of privilege and oppression in educational systems, locally, nationally, and globally. As a public educational system, we recognize and rise to our call to provide student-centered learning opportunities for our students. This means centering our students as we design rigorous learning environments where all students learn, grow, and thrive. Centering our students through a lens of DEI requires us to face the realities of their lived experiences and provide educational experiences that are responsive to the world in which they live. This new model of Core Clusters reflects these values in both breadth and depth, and also provides students with the critical analysis experience needed to navigate their contemporary social, political, and cultural worlds. Full implementation of this commitment will require additional resources and staff development.

Memorandum of Understanding

1) The learning outcomes listed below are *minimum* standards. Individual institutions may have additional and/or higher-order learning outcomes to meet particular course requirements.

2) Institutions will determine which courses at their institution fit which cluster. These determinations will be made at an institutional committee level using the learning objectives below, not at the level of individual instructor or department. Transfer-receiving institutions will honor those designations. *Shared courses between institutions must fit the same cluster; on the rare occasions when this doesn't happen, see # 8 below.*

3) A single course cannot count for more than one cluster.

4) All institutions are expected to require *at least one* intermediate or advanced writing requirement *and* an oral communications requirement. The particular transfer policy for these requirements will need to be determined by the inter-institutional board described below.

5) As per NECHE requirements, in order to achieve an associate degree, students must take at least 20 GE credits, including at least one course from written expression, digital and computing literacy, mathematics, science, social science, and *either* Fine Arts and Aesthetics *or* Humanistic Perspectives. *Students have this choice.*

6) As per NECHE requirements, in order to receive a bachelor's degree, students must take at least 40 GE credits, including at least one course from each of these seven categories.

7) *Completion* of all general education program requirements at one VSC institution will be recognized at each VSC institution, appropriate to degree-level requirements. Completion of the general education program for an associate degree at one college, for example, would satisfy completion of associate-level general education at another institution. Completion of the general education requirements does not exempt a student from fulfilling all degree program requirements.

8) An inter-institutional board will resolve conflicts that arise between institutions, for example disagreements about cluster assignment of individual courses, as well as ongoing needs for revision to the cluster learning outcomes. Individual student requests for substitutions or exceptions will be handled by the relevant department or team at the individual institution.

Course Clusters and Learning Outcomes
The following document is a policy document, primarily intended for faculty and administrators. The VSC General Education Group is recommending that as a next step in 2021-2022, the outcomes be revised to student-centered language. As a recommended best practice, syllabi or course outlines should reflect how the course meets the cluster learning outcomes in student-centered language.

Written Expression
Students will be able to:
1. **Explain ways that language perpetuates systems of inequality and/or can be used as a tool for social transformation.**
2. Write papers that have clear theses (when appropriate), careful logic, proper use of evidence, and effective organization.
3. Recognize the use of evidence, analysis, and persuasive strategies including distinctions among opinions, facts, and inferences.
4. Demonstrate in written work an awareness of the relationship among writer, subject, audience, and purpose.
5. Examine and write about the personal and cultural implications of written communications.
6. Enact the process of drafting, revision, and editing.
7. Demonstrate information literacy skills: create an effective research strategy; use information sources as part of the research process; utilize institutional resources, specifically academic library. collections; evaluate and contextualize the authority of information sources; attribute academically appropriate sources in written course work.
8. Identify and use key terminology related to research practices, including textual citations in appropriate formats and styles.

To receive VSC designation, a course shall meet all of the above learning objectives.

Digital and Computing Literacy
1. **Explain how digital media perpetuate systems of inequality and/or can be used as tools for social transformation.**
2. Search, evaluate, communicate and cite appropriate digital information in an effective and ethical manner.
3. Determine when technology is useful and select the appropriate hardware and software to complete a variety of tasks.
4. Use digital information and technology safely and ethically.
5. Create media that accurately convey information, thoughts and ideas.

To receive VSC designation, a course shall meet 4 or more of the above learning objectives, and shall not exclude the first Essential Learning Outcome.

Mathematics

Students will be able to:

1. **Choose one or both of the following Learning Outcomes:**
   A. **Use mathematical reasoning to analyze social justice problems in a variety of contexts and determine whether approaches are just and equitable.**
   B. **Explain how knowledge created in the field of mathematics has contributed to and/or been used to dismantle social inequalities.**
2. Use mathematical reasoning to solve problems in a variety of contexts and determine whether their solutions are reasonable and sound.
3. Represent and communicate mathematical information symbolically, visually, and numerically.
4. Explain the logical reasoning behind their mathematical decisions.
5. Articulate the importance and limitations of using quantitative data and/or statistical methods in decision making.

To receive VSC designation, a course shall meet 4 or more of the above learning objectives, and shall not exclude the first Essential Learning Outcome.

Natural Science

Students will be able to:

1. **Choose one or both of the following Learning Outcomes:**
   A. **Use scientific reasoning to analyze social justice problems in a variety of contexts and determine whether approaches are just and equitable.**
   B. **Explain how knowledge created in the natural sciences has contributed to and/or been used to create, maintain, or dismantle social inequalities.**
2. Learn and apply the problem-solving methods of a scientific discipline.
3. Gather and interpret data using established scientific techniques.
4. Assess the accuracy and validity of scientific data and information sources.
5. Contextualize the role of science in real-world applications.

To receive VSC designation, a course shall meet 4 or more of the above learning objectives, and shall not exclude the first Essential Learning Outcome.

Social Science

Students will be able to:

1. **Choose one or both of the following Learning Outcomes:**
   A. **Explain how knowledge created in the social sciences has contributed to and/or been used to create, maintain, or dismantle social inequalities.**
   B. **Analyze social justice problems in a variety of contexts and determine whether approaches are just and equitable.**
2. Use theories and conceptual frameworks of the social sciences to describe influences on individuals and communities over time.
3. Explore the relationship between the individual and society as it affects personal behavior, social development and the lives individuals live.
4. Recognize and explain the social institutions, structures, and processes of global cultures and diverse societies.
5. Articulate the impact of behavioral and/or social scientific research on major contemporary issues.
6. Understand methods used to gather and analyze data and draw sound conclusions from social and/or behavioral research in an ethical manner.

To receive VSC designation, a course shall meet 5 or more of the above learning objectives, and shall not exclude the first Essential Learning Outcome.

Arts and Aesthetics

Students will be able to:

1. **Explain the impact of global and/or cultural diversity on the development of a particular artistic form.**
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the principles and elements used in the art form under study.
3. Demonstrate the ability to develop ideas and opinions about forms of human expression that are grounded in an understanding of and respect for the historical context of expressions and artifacts.
4. Demonstrate the ability to create or reinterpret artistic works through the development of skills of performance or skills of analysis and criticism.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the contributions of the arts to social change, thought, and/or wellbeing, whether individual or collective.

To receive VSC designation, a course shall meet 4 or more of the above learning objectives, and shall not exclude the first Essential Learning Outcome.

Humanistic Perspectives

Students will be able to:

1. **Choose one or both of the following Learning Outcomes:**
   A. **Explain how ideas and texts in the humanities have contributed to and/or been used to create, maintain, or dismantle systemic racial injustice.**
   B. **Use humanistic and/or historical thinking to assess a social justice problem and suggest a just solution.**
2. Analyze diverse primary texts, and/or forms of thinking from a variety of eras in order to explain changing perspectives on human expression and thinking.
3. Apply methodologies appropriate for the course's discipline in order to articulate meaning and interpretation of content in a way that honors diverse ways of knowing.
4. Describe how moral and ethical issues and theories pertain to personal identity and society more broadly.

To receive VSC designation, a course shall meet 3 or more of the above learning objectives, and shall not exclude the first Essential Learning Outcome.