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

VERMONT
— STATE COLLEGES SYSTEM —

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR
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To: Vermont State College System Communities

From: Chancellor Sophie Zdatny

Re: **Transformation Update #2**

Date: April 26, 2021

Dear Vermont State Colleges Community,

Our goal is to provide regular updates to you throughout the Transformation process as we work to unify Castleton University, Northern Vermont University, and Vermont Technical College under a single accreditation while maintaining the Community College of Vermont as a separate entity, and for the system to pursue administrative consolidation. These updates can be found on the transformation tab of the VSC website at www.vsc.edu/transformation.

WORK GROUPS

Some of you have wondered who is involved in the transformation planning. Thus far, the following groups are meeting on a regular basis to discuss and plan for transformation:

Council of Presidents (COP): Each week, the four college presidents and I meet to talk about system initiatives, update each other, and discuss our ongoing transformation. It is very important to the Board and to me that our transformation planning be executed in consultation with the Presidents.

Business Affairs Council (BAC): Each week, the Business Affairs Council (Deans of Administration and/or Directors of Finance) meets with CFO/COO Sharron Scott to share financial updates and discuss the system budget.

COP/BAC/OC: Additionally, the Presidents and Deans of Administration/Directors of Finance typically meet weekly with the Chancellor's Office (OC) senior leadership team to share updates, discuss transformation projects, and system initiatives.

OC Transformation Team: Since the first *Select Committee on the Future of Public Higher Education* report was released in December, a small team of senior leaders from the Chancellor's Office has met weekly to work exclusively on transformation work. This team consisted of me, CFO/COO Sharron Scott, Chief Academic Office Yasmine Ziesler, and Director of External/Governmental Affairs Katherine Levasseur. The *High-Level Plan for Evaluation of the Select Committee's Recommendations* approved by the Board on December 17th originated out of this group, along with considerable input and feedback from the COP, as did the *VSCS Structural*

Transformation Preliminary Analysis submitted to the Board on January 8th, and the *Project Plan for System Transformation*.

Since the Board approved the Project Plan in February, this transformation working group has expanded to include Chief Information Officer Kellie Campbell, Director of IT Doug Eastman, General Counsel Patty Turley, and Director of Human Resources Katrina Meigs. Members of this group are working with small function-specific groups across the institutions on initial administrative transformation projects.

Cross-Institution Working Groups: As mentioned in Transformation Update #1, the initial cross-institution groups include Marketing, Admissions, Registrars, Financial Aid, Development and Alumni Relations, IT, and Finance, and more. These groups are working with liaisons in the Chancellor's Office to complete some initial transformation projects. For example, this week, Marketing is releasing an RFP to solicit proposals for comprehensive audience research and brand strategy and development for the new combined entity. Meanwhile, the registrars, Accounts Receivable and Financial Aid are reconciling policies and procedures with the goal of identifying decisions necessary to achieve single operational processes. Over the summer, the Deans of Students will be working, along with the Office of General Counsel, to develop a uniform Student Code of Conduct for the new combined entity.

Some of you may be wondering why your group hasn't been asked to meet yet. These specific groups have some of the most critical initial projects and deadlines to meet, some of which must be completed before we can start other projects. We are looking forward to hiring our project manager shortly and expect additional teams to begin meeting soon. As always, if you have an idea or suggestion, please do not hesitate to reach out.

I have also been meeting every month with VSCS union leaders since October 2020 to share updates and hear feedback.

DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION PROJECTS

Initial interviews have been held for the VSCS Director of Transformation Projects. Second interviews will be held for the top three candidates with teams from across the institutions this week, with the hope of announcing a final appointment by the first week of May. At this point, given the strength of the final candidates, the VSCS will likely not be seeking to hire an external consulting firm to manage the transformation projects, although the VSCS may look to hire additional external expertise on an as needed basis. I want to thank Sharron Scott, who has chaired the hiring committee, along with Katie Mobley (CCV), Mike Stevens (NVU), Cathy Kozlik (Castleton) and Jean-Marie Clark (Vermont Tech) for serving on the hiring committee.

STATE FUNDING

We are continuing to work with the state to secure the additional funding for resources the VSCS needs to manage this transition and build a higher education system for the generations of today and the future. Our work with the Legislature and the Governor is ongoing to secure funding to support both our system needs and transformation needs, as well as additional scholarships and supports for our students. The State Senate is expected to finalize their budget recommendation this week and we expect the Legislature to finalize work on the budget by the end of May.

In the meantime, H.315 (an expedited budget bill) recently passed into law. This bill provides funding for three Vermont State Colleges Programs:

- Federal funding from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 ("ARPA") will be used to open 40 to 45 seats in Vermont Tech's Practical Nurse Program to upskill existing staff in long-term care facilities in Vermont.
- $3 million is allocated for a second workforce development program for Vermonters whose employability or employer has been affected by the pandemic with the opportunity to take up to two free classes within the VSCS. We will be rolling out this program in the coming months and expect to make public announcements about it soon.
- $3 million is allocated to VSAC to provide funding for Vermonters in the high school class of 2020 or 2021 to take up to two free classes at any VSC institution. We are coordinating with VSAC to stand up this program and expect to make a public announcement about it shortly.

INITIAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN

In January, the Marketing Directors across all four institutions, in collaboration with the Chancellor's Office, launched a six-week, multi-media marketing campaign to shore up confidence in the system and to bolster enrollment. This included social media, digital, radio, and TV advertisements. The ads pointed to a landing page, https://yourfuture.vsc.edu/. You can also watch the video ad on our Facebook page, here. This is the first of what we anticipate will be several marketing campaigns as we work to transform the system over the next few years.

ACADEMIC UNIFICATION UPDATE

rpk GROUP has been meeting with the chief academic officers, a faculty advisory group, Faculty Assembly presidents, and department chairs and will continue to collect feedback from faculty on its analysis of a unified academic portfolio through May 10th. Information about the analysis framework and a current draft of the data results will shortly be posted on a sub-page of the Transformation website (https://www.vsc.edu/transformation/), along with a link to ask questions and provide feedback. A Town Hall meeting with rpk GROUP for faculty is scheduled for this Friday, April 30th, from Noon-2:00 p.m.

Additionally, we have posted the position of Director of VSCS Libraries on our website (https://www.vsc.edu/employee-resources/job-postings/). This position will provide leadership to transform our current four academic libraries to a single integrated virtual library system supporting the Community College of Vermont and the new unified institution encompassing Castleton University, Northern Vermont University, and Vermont Technical College. A system-wide committee has been established to guide the search process. Members include Andrew Alexander (Castleton Faculty and Department Chair, English), Susan Currier (VTC Library Staff, Faculty Librarian), Billie Langlois (Castleton Library Staff, Acquisitions Coordinator), David Plazek (NVU Faculty and Department Chair, Humanities), Deborah Stewart (CCV Academic Dean). Yasmine Ziesler, Chief Academic Officer, will chair the search.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Information Technology (IT) will be a critical foundation to support our transformation work ahead. IT Council is meeting frequently, reviewing current services across the system and thinking ahead, mapping out projects to support transformation. One of those projects is the portal project-which just kicked off this past Friday. The new portal will provide a one-stop-shop to support a unified delivery to all academic and administrative systems. It will also serve as a valuable communication tool for us moving forward. *See* attached summary of the project, its timeline, and those involved.

PUBLIC INPUT

We will continue to work on soliciting broad input as our transformation continues. **We've established an ongoing opportunity to collect your feedback and encourage you to share it at this link.** Additionally, we will continue to accept public comments at Board and Committee meetings and will continue to post regular updates on our Transformation page.

I hope you will continue to reach out with your questions and concerns as this process unfolds. I will continue to keep you updated as decisions are made by the state and the Board of Trustees. Thank you for your continued engagement in this critical work.

With kind regards,

Sophie

Portal Implementation Project
Kick-off Meeting
April 23, 2021

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Project Overview

Background: One-stop-shop, flexible environment that reaches users based on role, supports centralizing system-wide communications, supports transformation

Key Features: Personalized dashboard for each user, unified delivery of academic and administrative services, ability to perform role-based targeted communications and hubs of interactivity

Scope: Assess the current portal to ensure important existing content has a new home and prioritize consistent design/templates across the system

System-wide initiative: Steering committee, working groups, thank you in advance!

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RFP Process

Vendor selected: ExLibris

CCV

Kim Barbour

Danielle Bresette

Jenney Izzo

Ryan Joy

Megan Tucker

Castleton University

Lori Arner

Gayle Malinowski

Sarah Chambers

James Lambert

Joann Larson

Jennifer Woodell

Northern Vermont University

Jonathan Davis

Jason Ryan

Sylvia Plumb

Vermont Technical College

Kellie Campbell

Amanda Chaulk

Michelle Graham

Erik Lightbody

VSC, Chancellor's Office

Meg Walz

Doug Eastman

Jill Carroll

Michael Martel

Tony Hashem

Project Leadership
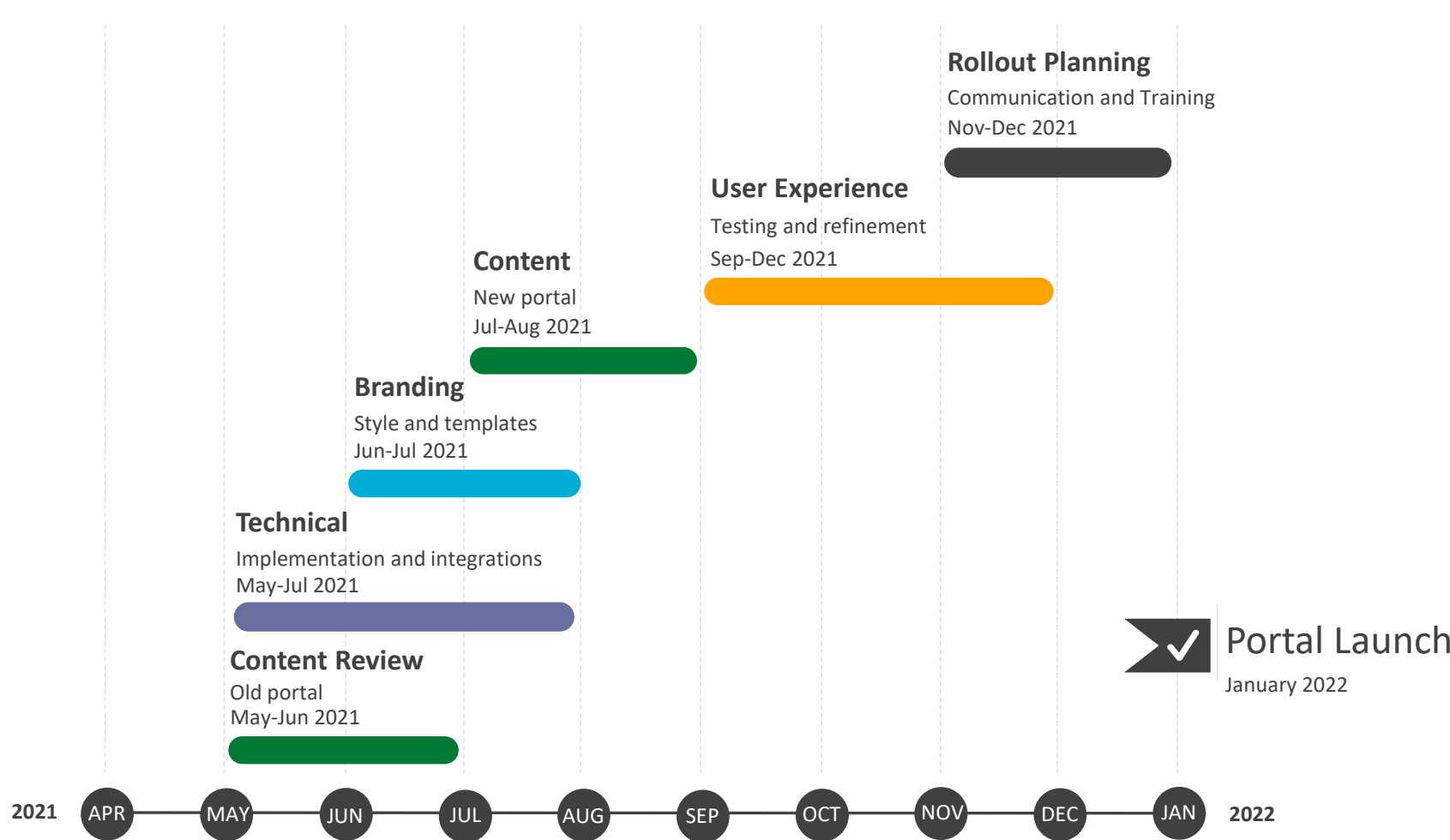
Project Sponsor

Kellie Campbell
Chief Information Officer

Technical Lead

Michael Martel
Director of Data Center Administration

Project Manager

Meg Walz
Director, Project Management

Project Timeline

Rollout Planning
Communication and Training
Nov-Dec 2021

User Experience
Testing and refinement
Sep-Dec 2021

Content
New portal
Jul-Aug 2021

Branding
Style and templates
Jun-Jul 2021

Technical
Implementation and integrations
May-Jul 2021

Content Review
Old portal
May-Jun 2021

☑ Portal Launch
January 2022

| 2021 | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC | JAN | 2022 |

Steering Group
Chairs from Working Groups
Estimated need
May-Oct ~5 hours/month – biweekly meetings
Nov-Jan ~10 hours/month – weekly meetings

Content Working Group
Estimated need
May-Aug ~10 hours/month – biweekly meetings

Technical Working Group
Estimated need
May-Jul ~10 hours/month – weekly meetings

Branding Working Group
Estimated need
Jun-Jul ~10 hours/month – weekly meetings

User Experience Working Group
Estimated need
Sep-Dec ~5-10 hours/month – biweekly meetings

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Content Working Group

Members

Jason Ryan (NVU)

Jonathan Davis (NVU)

Megan Tucker (CCV)

Gayle Malinowski (CU)

James Lambert (CU)

Sean Dailey (VTC)

Suzanne Pickett (VTC)

Jill Carroll (OC)

- Review content on the current portal and plan content for the new portal
- Estimated time
  - May-August
  - ~10 hours/month
  - biweekly meetings

Design Working Group

Members

Greg Warner (CCV)

Danielle Bresette (CCV)

Kate Richards (CU)

Carrie Clement (VTC)

Erik Lightbody (VTC)

Brandon Heanssler/
Sylvia Plumb (NVU)

- Focused on portal branding and look-and-feel
- Estimated time
  - June-July
  - ~10 hours/month
  - weekly meetings

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Technical Working Group

Members

Michael Martel (OC)

*Megan Tucker (CCV)

Tony Harris (CCV)

- Focused on technical setup and integrations
- Estimated time
  - May-July
  - ~10 hours/month
  - weekly meetings

User Experience Working Group

Members

Ryan Joy (CCV)
Kim Barbour (CCV)
Erin Wetherall (CCV)
Connor Gilbert (CCV)

Sarah Chambers (CU)
Jen Woodell (CU)
Shaun Williams (CU)
Paige Gallo (CU)

Jessica Huynh (VTC)
Amanda Chaulk (VTC)
Carrie Wright (VTC)
Jeanne Stella-Devani (VTC)

Gillian MacDonald (NVU)
Caitlin Wilkins (NVU)
Russ Weis (NVU)
Greg Petrics (NVU)

- Focused on the user experience, with student and faculty input, and user experience testing
- Estimated time
  - September-December
  - ~5-10 hours/month
  - biweekly meetings

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Steering Group

Members

One volunteer from each working group

- Small group responsible for high-level project decision making, including one person from each working group
- Estimated time
  - May-October
  - ~5 hours/month - biweekly meetings
  - November-January
  - ~10 hours/month – weekly meetings

Next steps

- Teams site
- Content Working group will start meeting soon to review content on the current portal
- Project communication structure
- Comments/questions/ideas

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