

Minutes of the VSCS Board of Trustees Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee meeting held Friday March 12, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. via Zoom - UNAPPROVED

Note: These are unapproved minutes, subject to amendment and/or approval at the subsequent meeting.

The VSCS Board of Trustees Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee met on Friday, March 12, 2021 via Zoom.

Committee Members present: Mary Moran (Chair), Dylan Giambatista, Bill Lippert (1:36 p.m.), Jim Masland

Absent: Ryan Cooney

Other Trustees Present: Karen Luneau

Presidents: Joyce Judy

Chancellor's Office Staff: Donny Bazluke, Network/Security Analyst
Doug Eastman, Director of Information Systems
Katrina Meigs, System Director of HR and Benefits
Jen Porrier, Administrative Director
Kathryn Santiago, Assistant General Counsel & System Investigator
Patty Turley, General Counsel
Sophie Zdatny, Chancellor
Yasmine Ziesler, Chief Academic Officer

From the Colleges: Sarah Chambers, Coordinator of Instructional Technology, Castleton University
Kathleen Mason, Coordinator for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Vermont Technical College
Hannah Miller, Faculty, Northern Vermont University
Miles Smith, Assistant Athletic Director, Northern Vermont University
Jamey Ventura, Associate Dean of Athletics, Northern Vermont University

1. Call to Order

Chair Moran called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. and the attendees performed a round robin introduction.

2. Discussion of draft Committee Charter

Chair Moran introduced the charter as seen on page 4 in the materials packet and invited discussion. Assistant General Counsel Kathryn Santiago shared that the charter was drafted using verbiage drawn directly from NECHE accreditation standards and definitions for Committee charters. Trustee Giambatista asked about the process of amending the charter after the fact, and Chancellor Zdatny replied that the process of amending the charter, which was done recently for other committees as part of amendments to the Trustee Handbook, is not prohibitive. Chancellor Zdatny raised the point that the charter does not include definitions for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Through discussion, it was agreed that the VSC Social Justice group would discuss the topic at their monthly meetings. Hannah Miller of Northern Vermont University agreed to be the point person for this work and Kathryn Santiago will forward some materials gathered regarding definitions. The Charter will be adopted as written but as the Committee moves forward, these terms will be defined and refined further.

Trustee Giambatista moved and Trustee Masland seconded the motion to recommend to the Board the adoption of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee Charter as written. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Update on proposed anti-racism pledge from VSC Social Justice

NVU Associate Dean of Athletics Jamey Ventura shared that a group of students showed interest in developing an anti-racism pledge for the colleges. A draft was created, and grant money was obtained. Experts have been identified to assist with furthering the pledge. NVU Assistant Athletic Director Miles Smith then shared further variables that the students discussed such as comparisons between the COVID pledge and the anti-racism pledge and what happens if students don't want to sign the anti-racism pledge. These issues are being explored now.

4. Information on DEI academic and hiring initiatives

Chief Academic Officer Yasmine Ziesler shared an update on the new General Education core set of requirements that are currently under review for adoption as a common core of requirements across the system. This work was charged by the Board as a result of a recommendation from the VSCS Forward Task Force. The Social Justice Group at the VSC reviewed the first draft of the VSC General Education Agreement proposal through the lens of diversity, equity and inclusion and the DEI learning outcomes in bold in the final proposal in the materials packet is the distillation of their recommendations.

General Counsel Patty Turley, on behalf of System Director of HR Katrina Meigs, then shared information on DEI hiring initiatives. Ms. Turley mentioned that HR Council has been working with the campuses on consistent approaches reflecting DEI in hiring. Ms. Meigs has consulted with Wanda Headings-Grant to potentially develop training related to DEI in hiring through the outlining of goals, optional instruction and workshops, and open communication with leadership.

5. Information on Gender Identity and VSCS Information Systems

Director of Information Systems, Doug Eastman, informed the Committee that a cross college cross function working group is being formed in an effort to make the VSC Enterprise Information Systems more gender inclusive. Members of this working group were recommended by the Presidents and are already involved in these issues on their campuses. Mr. Eastman stated that implementing these kinds of changes is not only technical but also requires awareness and training. This work is ongoing.

6. Other Business

There was no other business.

7. Comments from the public

There were no comments from the public.

Chair Moran adjourned the meeting at 1:58 p.m.