

To: Vermont State College System Communities

From: Chancellor Sophie Zdatny

Re: **Transformation Update #5**

Date: June 7, 2021

Dear Vermont State Colleges Community,

Our regular updates to you throughout the Transformation process can be found on the VSCS website at www.vsc.edu/transformation.

PROJECT MANAGER UPDATE

Wilson Garland, VSCS Director of Transformation Projects, started with the VSCS last week. His first priority is to meet with stakeholders across the system and to get up to speed on the current Transformation projects. Based on the information gathered, he will propose some project management processes and tools that we will use to add structure and alignment to the transformation initiatives. To assist Wilson and others in the transformation work, we have also posted a [Business and Process Analyst](#) position. This person will help us document our internal and student-facing processes across the institutions to identify opportunities for alignment and improvement.

NAME AND BRANDING UPDATE

The VSCS is in the process of hiring a firm to provide [Audience Research, Name, and Brand Strategy and Development](#) for the newly combined institution, unifying Castleton University, Northern Vermont University, and Vermont Technical College. The contract is being finalized and the firm is expected to be announced shortly. They will begin work this month and their first task will be to collect stakeholder input and conduct audience research to inform a name recommendation to the Board of Trustees. Based on their feedback and additional feedback received from the colleges, we are moving the decision of a name for the university back at least one month to allow additional time for audience research and stakeholder engagement. We anticipate that the Board will receive the work of the firm in the fall and will make a decision on the name for the new university at the September or October Board of Trustees meeting. The selected firm and the transformation team will be creating several opportunities for public and stakeholder input prior to the Board's decision.

ACADEMIC UNIFICATION UPDATE

The VSCS has been notified that it will be awarded a \$281,000 grant from the Davis Educational Foundation to support the work of faculty this summer on academic program optimization. As articulated in rpk GROUP's [final report](#), the recommendations for the summer optimization work vary by program focus area and include strategies that will strengthen quality as well as improve efficient use of resources. Such strategies include improving matriculation and completion rates, aligning curriculum across similar programs, and modifying or combining low-enrolled programs to create different degrees aligned with student interest. rpk GROUP further recommended that these optimization strategies target a 25% improvement in delivery efficiency.

HIRING/SEARCHES

Recognizing the significant work ahead of all of us for system transformation, there is a need for additional support in specific areas. There are a few positions that will be posted in the coming weeks to support the system Transformation work, such as the [Business and Process Analyst](#). These will be posted publicly [here](#).

Additionally, we are in the process of hiring a professional search firm to conduct an executive search for the recruitment of the first President of the new university. A copy of the RFP is available [here](#).

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

June 16th - Board of Trustees Meeting

August 4th - Board of Trustees Meeting

Additional information about Board and Committee meetings, including information on how to access the meetings may be found [here](#).

PUBLIC INPUT

We will continue to solicit broad input as our transformation continues. **We encourage you to share your feedback at [this link](#).** Additionally, we will continue accepting public comments at Board and Committee meetings and will post regular updates on our [Transformation page](#). The feedback received through the transformation page survey link is posted publicly each month on the transformation page.

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I will continue to keep you updated as the transformation process unfolds. I welcome your ongoing feedback and input. Thank you for engagement in this critical work.

With kind regards,

Sophie