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State Funding Provides Free Classes for Vermonters Impacted by the Pandemic

Montpelier, VT – Vermonters whose employment has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic can again take a free class or training through the Vermont State Colleges System (VSCS) this fall. The Vermont State Colleges – Castleton University, Community College of Vermont, Northern Vermont University, and Vermont Technical College—are offering numerous training options at all four institutions across many high-demand industries and via online and in-person formats.

Vermonters can learn more about these opportunities and register for classes at <http://vtworkers.vsc.edu>.

This opportunity is available to Vermonters in addition to the scholarships and free tuition programs previously announced by the VSCS.

Last fall, the VSCS piloted an initial workforce initiative, funded with federal Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF), in partnership with the state of Vermont. This first initiative served 971 Vermonters who took over 1,398 courses in fall 2020. Inspired by the success of the first program, the legislature funded additional opportunities for Vermonters, including the free courses launched today.

Students across the state saw career success with the first initiative. Vermonter Caitlin Moroney was furloughed last March. Through the first workforce initiative, she took two classes at the Community College of Vermont (CCV) and a third at Northern Vermont University, and working with Career Services at CCV, was able to land a new full-time job as a public health specialist with the VT Department of Health. “I am so so grateful for the opportunity,” she said of the free classes. “It was so overwhelmingly confidence-boosting and challenging in a really positive way...it certainly allowed me to take this massive leap career-wise, and I truly could not have done it without CCV and these courses.”

Another Vermonter who took a free upskilling class at Vermont Technical College valued the opportunity as well, saying “the self-paced course was excellent. The information presented was organized and easy to understand and the instructors easily maintained my attention with their presentation abilities. Being able to take this class allowed me to gain confidence in the possibility of taking ore online classes and hopefully finishing my bachelor’s degree.”

With the success of the first initiative and the endorsement of Vermonters who were able to take free classes last fall, the Vermont State Colleges System is excited to announce the launch of the second workforce initiative today.



VSCS Chancellor Sophie Zdatny noted, “the vision of the legislature in prioritizing workforce development, free courses, scholarships, and additional education opportunities for Vermonters this year will have resounding benefits for Vermont’s workforce for years to come. The high-demand of last fall’s initiative made it clear that Vermonters are looking for these opportunities and the Vermont State Colleges are here to help. We are thrilled to be able to offer classes again and look forward to reaching even more Vermonters this fall.”

Castleton University Interim President Jonathan Spiro added, "This workforce initiative is a tremendous boon to Vermont students and employers. It helps students who might not otherwise be able to further their education by reducing expenses and helps to meet the workforce needs in many of Vermont's essential industries. It also provides Castleton University with another tool to offer an affordable and accessible education. We are grateful to the Vermont Legislature and Governor Scott for this investment in our workforce and the Vermont State Colleges."

Elaine Collins, President of Northern Vermont University, agreed, stating “we are excited that Vermonters can once again recharge their careers through the VSCS workforce initiative like so many did last fall. With this funding, Northern Vermont University is able to provide both non-credit and credit-bearing courses to Vermonters impacted by the global pandemic so they can get back on track with upskilling for their jobs and careers. NVU is so grateful for this investment in Vermonters and our public higher education system.”

For the benefit of Vermont, the Vermont State Colleges system provides affordable, high quality, student-centered, and accessible education, fully integrating professional, liberal, and career study, consistent with student aspirations and regional and state needs. The Vermont State Colleges system includes Castleton University, the Community College of Vermont, Northern Vermont University, and Vermont Technical College. Learn more at www.vsc.edu.

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