VERMONT
— STATE COLLEGES SYSTEM —

TO: <u>Education, Personnel, and Student Life Committee</u>
Megan Cluver, Chair
Karen Luneau, Vice Chair
Janette Bombardier
Ryan Cooney
Dylan Giambatista
Mary Moran

FROM: Yasmine Ziesler, Chief Academic Officer

RE: EPSL Meeting on May 24, 2021

DATE: August 16, 2021

The EPSL Committee of the Board of Trustees is scheduled to meet on Thursday, August 19th from 1:00pm to 2:30pm by Zoom.

Following a brief update from the Chancellor on transformation work and plans for the beginning of the academic year, the majority of the committee's time will be devoted to a presentation on the summer academic program optimization work and projected next steps. A report on that work is included in the materials, and several faculty members will be present to share their experiences and proposed program optimizations.

Other items on the agenda for the committee to discuss are
- A report on the status of Policy 101 program continuous improvement reviews. Given the significant transformation work ahead to create the optimized program array, we are recommending that the Board suspend Policy 101 reviews for the 2022 and 2023 cycles of programs as outlined in the report.
- Potential revisions to Policy 109 related to the Board's adoption of rpk GROUP's program portfolio evaluation framework. Some initial concepts for discussion by the committee as identified by the Chief Academic Officers' Group include the incorporation of minimum thresholds for framework metrics, differentiation between CCV and the new combined institution, and EPSL's role in reviewing the results and subsequent actions resulting from an annual analysis using the framework.
- An update on preliminary results from the workforce partners survey launched earlier this month.

I can be reached directly at (802) 224-3025 if you have any questions.

Thank you.

Cc: VSC Board of Trustees
Council of Presidents
Chief Academic Officers
Student Affairs Council
HR Council

Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees
Education, Personnel, and Student Life Committee

August 19th, 2021

AGENDA

1. Call to order
2. Chancellor's Update
3. Approval of May 24th, 2021 Meeting Minutes
4. Summer Program Optimization Project Results
5. Policy 101 Status Update
6. Preliminary Discussion of Policy 109 Revisions
7. Update on Employer Partner Survey
8. Outstanding business
9. Comments from the public

MATERIALS

1. May 24, 2021 minutes
2. Program Array Optimization Report and Presentation
3. Policy 101 (PreCIP) Report

ITEM 1:

May 24, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the VSCS Board of Trustees Education, Personnel, and Student Life Committee meeting held Monday May 24, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom - UNAPPROVED

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

The VSCS Board of Trustees Education, Personnel, and Student Life Committee met on Monday, May 24, 2021 via Zoom.

Committee Members present: Megan Cluver (Chair), Karen Luneau (Vice Chair), Janette Bombardier (10:14 a.m.), Ryan Cooney, Dylan Giambatista, Mary Moran

Other Trustees Present: Lynn Dickinson, David Silverman

Presidents: Elaine Collins, Joyce Judy, Pat Moulton, Jonathan Spiro

Chancellor's Office Staff: Donny Bazluke, Network/Security Analyst
Kellie Campbell, Chief Information Officer
Katherine Levasseur, Director of Governmental & External Relations
Jen Porrier, Administrative Director
Sharron Scott, Chief Financial/Operating Officer
Patty Turley, General Counsel
Meg Walz, Director, Project Management
Sophie Zdatny, Chancellor
Yasmine Ziesler, Chief Academic Officer

From the Colleges: Nolan Atkins, Provost, Northern Vermont University
Sarah Chambers, Coordinator of Instructional Technology, Castleton University
Ana Gaillat, Dean of Academic Affairs, Vermont Technical College
Karen Madden, Director of Academic Support Services, Norther Vermont University
Tom Mauhs-Pugh, Provost, Castleton University
Tyrone Shaw, Faculty
Debby Stewart, Dean of Academic Affairs, Community College of Vermont
Beth Walsh, President, VSCUP, Northern Vermont University

From the Public: Mary Brumbach, Chief Strategy Officer, Dallas College

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Katie Hagan, Senior Associate, rpk GROUP

Cyndi Miller, American Federations of Teachers, Vermont

Rick Staisloff, Senior Partner, rpk GROUP

1. Call to Order

Chair Cluver called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

2. Approval of March 15, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Trustee Giambatista moved and Trustee Luneau seconded the approval of the March 15, 2021 meeting minutes. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Update on EPSL Data Dashboard: Employer Partner Survey

Chief Academic Officer Yasmine Ziesler explained that the EPSL data dashboard identified two separate metrics to be developed: outcomes for graduates, and employer perspectives on workforce development. The Employer Partner Survey is being created and distributed across all networks to conduct a needs assessment to find the gaps employers have and in what ways the System can support a Workforce Development strategy. Trustees expressed enthusiasm and support for this work.

4. Update on System-wide General Education Framework

Dr. Ziesler gave an overview of the work to date to address the Board's August 12, 2020 charge to develop a single general education program core. The proposal creates a fully transparent framework of seven requirements that each institution within the VSCS agrees to adopt as part of each institution's full general education program. Additionally, there is a statement of commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion arrived at through work by members of the VSC Social Justice Group. Dr. Ziesler noted that there is more work necessary to provide professional development for the integration of the DEI learning outcomes. She also noted that faculty have identified that the VSC graduation standards are now at least partially embedded in the new framework and that faculty are asking that the current approach to assessing the standards be suspended.

Trustee Cluver moved and Trustee Moran seconded the motion to recommend to the Board the commendation of the significant work accomplished by the faculty on the VSC general education working group and all academic governance groups to achieve initial implementation of the single system-wide general education program core. The motion was approved unanimously.

Trustee Cluver moved and Trustee Moran seconded the motion to recommend to the Board that it direct the VSC Chief Academic Officers Group to convene a system-wide

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general education committee for the next academic year to develop a plan to integrate the Policy 106 VSC graduation standards into the new general education framework and continue system-wide professional development in DEI to support implementation into the general education program, including how world languages fit into the program, with a follow-up progress report to be provided to EPSL by May 2022. The motion was approved unanimously.

5. Follow-Up Focus on Early College Programs: Dallas College

Chair Cluver introduced Dr. Brumbach, Chief Strategy Officer for Dallas College who gave a presentation on Exploring Early College High School and Pathways to Technology School Options.

6. Presentation on Academic Portfolio Recommendations by rpk GROUP

Chair Cluver reviewed the work being done by rpk GROUP, beginning in January with an academic program review across Northern Vermont University, Vermont Technical College and Castleton University. This was a collaborative process to deliver a framework for evaluation of academic programs, including identifying gaps in the existing academic portfolio relative to the needs of the Vermont labor market. rpk GROUP Senior Partner Rick Staisloff presented the final report to the Committee which can be found here. The three recommendations are: to adopt the Program Evaluation Framework, optimize the academic portfolio, and make final decisions on the recommendations for program investment and elimination.

Trustee Cluver moved and Trustee Luneau seconded the motion to recommend to the Board the adoption of the Program Evaluation Framework to guide review of the academic portfolio going forward. The motion was approved unanimously.

Trustee Cluver moved and Trustee Moran seconded the motion to recommend to the Board that it charge the Chancellor and the Chief Academic Officers to work with the faculty to develop a plan for program optimization and to report back to the EPSL Committee in August with an evaluation of that work and decisions on the program investment and elimination recommendations made by rpk GROUP. The motion was approved unanimously.

7. Other Business

There was no other business.

8. Comments from the public

Tyrone Shaw provided a comment urging the Board to support the joint resolution of the four constituent assemblies to rescind the graduation standards.

Chair Cluver adjourned the meeting at 12:18 p.m.

ITEM 2:

Program Array Optimization Report and Presentation

Program Array Optimization Project
Report to Education, Personnel, and Student Life Committee
August 19, 2021

Project Summary

The goal of this project has been to develop a comprehensive first draft of an aligned and streamlined academic portfolio for the new combined institution that prioritizes student success, statewide access, and financial sustainability. With support from the Davis Educational Foundation, the academic portfolio optimization project launched on June 24th with over 85 faculty participating. Academic programs and faculty were organized into 13 working groups with an academic affairs liaison providing support to each group; subsequently faculty self-organized into smaller subgroups and consulted additionally with colleagues beyond the working groups.

The charges to the working groups were as follows:

- Develop a single major or a single major with concentrations where enrollments are sufficiently robust;
- Identify opportunities to share courses, including general education service courses, across multiple programs;
- Expand access to programs and courses through delivery modality changes; and
- Design programs that incorporate "meaningful work" (civic engagement, service, internships, research) opportunities for our students to learn within and contribute to our communities.

Working groups submitted completed proposals on August 9th documenting the existing programs encompassed by the proposal and details of the optimized programs being proposed. These details included draft learning outcomes, projected enrollments, projected statewide access using new delivery modalities, projected access pathways from CCV, and preliminary curriculum designs. Proposals also addressed investment and elimination recommendations made by rpk GROUP.

Results

It is impossible to overstate the effort and accomplishment in a very short timeframe by the faculty involved in this summer's project. Collectively, they have produced a robust first draft of an array of quality, strengthened programs for the new combined university that is on track to meet the optimization goals. From a starting point of 250+ programs and concentrations across the three institutions—evaluated by rpk GROUP as 128 distinct "rolled-up" programs—the current proposals encompass a portfolio of approximately 101 programs, plus concentrations and minors, for the new combined university.

Among the optimizations proposed for the design of the new institution's academic portfolio are:

- Single (i.e. unduplicated) academic programs designed for students to progress successfully through a program at any of the campuses;
- Coordinated offerings and schedules to make it easier for students to choose from a wide variety of electives;
- Upper-level classes offered via a planned rotation of faculty across campuses;
- Distance learning technologies to enable students in smaller programs to be part of a larger cohort and benefit from a wider variety of faculty instructors;
- A plan to merge into a single statewide teacher education department committed to pre-service and in-service teacher development in optimized programs centered on inclusive education;
- Expanded access to non-traditional students via online sections in high-enrolled programs such as business and psychology and hyflex delivery options for engineering programs; and
- Improved instructional efficiencies by sharing courses across programs and concentrations and reducing total sections offered.

Faculty Concerns and Recommendations

Several of the proposals submitted included these introductory caveats:
- We respect faculty governance and expect that any proposal will work itself through the established processes, giving our peers the opportunity to discuss, debate, and consider the proposal in full light of day;
- We believe that curriculum development is a long-term project that requires more than the two months provided by the "optimization" schedule;
- We are guided by our respective disciplines that have developed over many years basic guidelines for what it means to be an undergraduate major in each discipline;
- We are committed to a liberal arts education which recognizes value in education beyond contributions to possible job needs, and we believe that communication and journalism are critical to a liberal arts education;
- We also believe that the liberal arts, and higher education generally, contribute immensely to economic development, and that a hyper-focus on a limited state-wide jobs-projection neglects that contribution;
- While understanding the fiscal constraints which propel the VSC toward "optimization," we believe that the major contributing cause of our current economic deficit is not failure of the faculty to be frugal and resourceful but rather a long history of underfunding from the legislature that is required to support the VSC "in whole or in substantial part with State funds," (16 V.S.A. § 2171).

Need for technology support was a common theme. Specific to the computer science programs, there is a need to provide access to specialized software to students beyond those accessing the software available in labs at the VTC Randolph and Williston campuses. The graduate programs in psychology identified the following as necessary to provide courses using a variety of modalities:

- IT support any time a course is running to address unexpected technological challenges
- Technology in the classrooms that will provide for a great virtual distance learning experience (quality internet service, exceptional audio and visual equipment such as cameras that follow who is speaking, audio at each seat to capture conversations and speakers to distribute sound sufficiently, display so students can see the other class members at distance learning locations, etc.)
- Training for students and faculty
- Accessibility for students with disabilities (audio and visual)
- School psychology program would need access to training materials if certain courses (assessment courses in particular) are offered in various locations. Also, there would need to be someone to supervise practice of test administration.

Additional individual concerns and recommendations included the following:

- Even though no programs in Mathematics were recommended for investment, we seek a Board of Trustee and Chancellor directive to initiate a system wide project on improving MAT 2021 Statistics I, including at CCV. The 5-year course data set provided by rpk Group indicates that 1.5% of all student credit hours produced by the VSCS were in MAT 2021, making it the second most taken course (by student credit hours) in the system. This course is a critical aspect of being an informed and educated member of society, and it is the recommendation of this workgroup that a project—led by the math faculty and with the support of the Board—be undertaken to improve and systematize this course.

- We believe all labs should be in person. Flexibility and accessibility among campuses can be achieved through hyflex options in courses without labs.

Preliminary Evaluation & Recommendations

Over the past week, the optimization proposals have been reviewed by the Chief Academic Officers' Group (CAOs), who have reached an initial consensus determination as follows:

46 programs as proposed meet the optimization charges and should move forward through the work of the VSCS transformation project teams and faculty governance processes, including a review for alignment with the mission of the new institution and financial sustainability.

39 programs require additional analysis and probable revisions to the current programs proposed in order to meet the optimization charges. Our projection is for the CAOs to work with faculty on this analysis and revision in the next two months before moving forward through the mission alignment and financial sustainability reviews and then faculty governance.

16 programs are projected to require significant additional work and review.

Rpk GROUP Recommendations for Program Investment

Among the programs recommended for investment in rpk GROUP's analysis were Business, Computer Software Engineering, Counseling Psychology, and Nursing. Common priority investments proposed for these programs included filling replacement faculty positions, targeted hiring incentives, and resources and support for marketing, recruitment, and program promotion activities. Computer software engineering also identified support strategies to boost enrollment, particularly women and BIPOC students historically underrepresented in this field, and nursing identified support for creative ways of delivering clinical experiences such as enhanced simulations.

Rpk GROUP Recommendations for Program Elimination

In the course of the optimization project, working groups were asked to comment on rpk GROUP's elimination recommendations in the "rolled up" analysis. Upon closer review, working groups identified that most of the underlying programs represented in this analysis were either already closed or incorporated into a newly optimized program or concentration. Of those programs not otherwise addressed, Sports Psychology was confirmed to be eliminated, the Master's in Music Education was recommended to be put on hiatus until after the new unified institution is launched, and the Master's in Software Engineering was recommended for continued improvement action and close evaluation.

Next Steps and Recommended Board Actions

With the launch of the VSCS Transformation project teams, the work on the academic program array will begin to transition into this project structure. Already project core teams and subteams have identified dependencies with the work to define the academic program array, and the proposed optimizations will serve as important points of information in the discovery work of sub-teams including programs and teaching and learning innovation. Work begun this summer by faculty governance leaders will also be critical to supporting the volume of proposed curriculum changes through the faculty governance process within the upcoming 2021-2022 academic year.

As the curriculum design, development, and implementation process will require significant time and attention over the next two years, we are also looking for all appropriate ways to expedite and otherwise stage the workload. For this reason, we are recommending that the Board take several actions. First, we recommend the Board adopt an expedited approach to its Policy 102 Approval of New Degrees and Majors for all optimized programs that have met optimization goals and charges and have been reviewed for alignment with NCE mission and financial sustainability. We project that by the next EPSL meeting scheduled for October 15, 2021, the vast majority of proposed programs will have met optimization goals and been reviewed for mission alignment and financial sustainability. We therefore propose to bring to EPSL this full slate of proposed programs with summary details for review and approval.

Second, as we project the curriculum transformation work to require significant effort for the next two academic years, we recommend that the Board suspend Policy 101, Program Review and Continuous Improvement Process or "PReCIP," reviews for the 2022 and 2023 review cycles. While we expect existing programs to continue ongoing assessment of student learning outcomes, the full five-year assessment cycle culminating in external program evaluations reported to the Board will best be re-established once the new array of programs have launched.

Summary of Proposed Program Array and CAOs Preliminary Evaluation
Note: programs are organized by summer optimization working groups designed to facilitate faculty collaboration.

Agriculture, Plant & Animal Sciences: 5 programs
    Veterinary Technology: review and refine proposal.
    Landscape, Agriculture & Food Entrepreneurship, Forestry, Diversified Ag: significant additional work and review anticipated.

Athletic Training, Exercise, & Health Science 6 programs
    Health Science, Exercise Science, Holistic Health, Health Promotion, Physical Education, Athletic Training: review and refine proposal.

Business & Accounting: 7 programs, 9 concentrations
    AS Business, BS Applied Business (+2 degree), Killington program: meets optimization goals.
    BS Business, AS/BS Music Business & Industry, MBA: review and refine proposal.

Communications & Journalism: 2 programs, 8 concentrations
    BA Media & Communication, BS Digital Communications: review and refine proposal.

Counseling & Psychology: 8 programs
    AS and BS in Psychological Science, BS Forensic Psych, AS Human Services and BS in Applied Psych and Human Services, MS Clinical Mental Health Counseling, MA Counseling: meets optimization goals.

MA/CAGS in School Psychology: significant additional work and review anticipated.

Education: 5 programs with 10 licensure and non-licensure tracks for graduate program
Early Childhood Ed 2+2 Program, B.A. Inclusive Childhood Education: meets optimization goals.
Early Childhood & Special Education, B.A. Inclusive Adolescent Education, M.A. Education, 10 licensure and non-licensure tracks: review and refine proposal.

Engineering: 12 programs, "stacked" as 6 associate and 6 bachelor's programs
AAS/BS Architectural Engineering Technology, AE Civil & Environmental Engineering Technology, AE/BS Computer Engineering Technology, AE/BS Electrical Engineering Technology, BS Electromechanical Engineering Technology, AAS General Engineering Technology, AE Mechanical Engineering Technology, BS Manufacturing Engineering Technology: meets optimization goals
BS Renewable Energy: review and refine proposal

Graphic Design, Fine & Performing Arts: 13 programs
B.A. and B.F.A. in Art, BME Music Ed, BA Music, BA Theater Arts, BA Performance, Arts, & Technology: review and refine proposal
BA/BFA Media Arts, BA/BFA Graphic Design, BA Visual Communication Design, BFA Animation Illustration, MFA Studio Art: significant additional work and review anticipated

Health Professions: 8 programs
PN-AS Nursing, RN-BSN, 4-year BSN, MS Nursing, AS/BS Radiologic Science, AS Respiratory Therapy, BS Dental Hygiene: meets optimization goals
Confirmed additional optimization question: maintain 2 separate accreditations for nursing
Note: new program in Dental Therapy pending

Humanities: 5 programs and 1 minor
BA History with minor, BA Interdisciplinary Studies, AA General Studies, BA Literature & Writing, BFA Creative Writing: meets optimization goals.

Math & Sciences: 17 programs, with 7 concentrations and one minor
BS Atmospheric Sciences: meets optimization goals.
BS Biology, BS Wildlife & Forest Ecology, BS Environmental Science, BS Climate Change Science, BS Natural Science for Secondary Education, AS/BS Mathematics, BS Statistics, BA Management of Information Systems, BS Computer Information Systems, BS Data Science, AS/BS Information Technology, AS/BS/MS Software Engineering: review and refine proposal

Professional Programs: 5 programs

BS Professional Pilot: meets optimization goals

AAS Automotive Technology, AAS Diesel Power Technology: significant additional work and review anticipated

AS/BS Construction Management: no optimization proposal submitted

<u>Outdoor Education and Leadership</u>: 1 program, 2 concentrations

Outdoor Education and Leadership: meets optimization goals

<u>Social Sciences:</u> 7 programs and one concentration

BA Political Science, BA Sociology, BSW Social Work, BA Anthropology, Archaeology, and Geography ("AAG"), AS/BS Criminal Justice: meets optimization goals

BA Global Studies: review and refine proposal

Program Array Optimization: Results and Recommendations

August 19, 2021 Report to EPSL

Charge from the Board

To the Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer:

"Work with faculty to develop a plan for program optimization and to report back to EPSL at its August meeting with an evaluation of that work and decisions on the program investment and elimination recommendations made by rpk GROUP."

June 16, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Project Summary

Over 85 faculty engaged, with input from other faculty colleagues

Supported by a $281,000 grant from the Davis Educational Foundation

13 working groups with academic affairs liaisons

Starting point: 250+ programs and concentrations (128 in rpk "roll-up")

June 24-July 6: Project launch and planning

July 6-August 9: Faculty working groups explore optimization strategies and develop proposals

August 9-16: Preliminary evaluation of faculty proposals

For the benefit of Vermont

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Goal of Optimization Work

Develop comprehensive first draft of an **aligned** and **streamlined** academic portfolio for the new combined institution that prioritizes **student success, statewide access,** and **financial sustainability**.

Optimization Charges for Working Groups

Singular programs: Develop a single major or a single major with concentrations where enrollments are sufficiently robust.

Shared curriculum: Identify opportunities to share courses, including general education service courses, across multiple programs.

Expanded access: Expand access to programs and courses through delivery modality changes.

"Meaningful work": Design programs that incorporate "meaningful work" (civic engagement, service, internships, research) opportunities for our students to learn within and contribute to our communities.

The "Human Challenge"

HOW DOES "PERSONALITY" OVERLAP WITH COMMUNICATION?

| Are you assertive? | Do you verbally express your feelings? | Does communication make you anxious? | What volume do you speak at? | At what speed do you speak? |
| Do you center yourself or others in conversation? | Are you an active listener? | How do you express your frustrations? | Do you directly address conflict? | Do you communicate with your body? |

Accomplishments

"This proposal represents our best efforts given time constraints to document our vision of what programs should be offered in the unified institution. Additional work is needed to improve upon the base presented here, but this proposal makes significant progress towards our unification goals."

Computer Science sub-group proposal

New Comprehensive Program Array

- Balance of liberal arts, professional, and technical programs

- Focused on VSCS mission for the benefit of Vermont

- Strengthened quality for students via unified, more diverse faculty

- Increased student access across campuses and via flexible delivery

- Greater efficiency via shared, aligned course offerings

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100+ quality programs from 250+ original programs and concentrations

Nursing & Health Professions	Business & Accounting	Athletic Training, Exercise & Health Sciences	Communica-tions & Journalism	Counseling & Psychology	Education	Engineering
8 programs (1 graduate)	7 programs (1 graduate)	6 programs (1 graduate)	2 programs	8 programs (2 graduate)	4 programs (1 graduate)	12 programs

Humanities	Math & Sciences	Professional Programs	Outdoor Ed & Leadership	Social Sciences	Graphic Design, Fine & Performing Arts	Agriculture, Plant & Animal Sciences
5 programs	17 programs (1 graduate)	5 Programs	1 Program	7 programs	13 programs	5 programs

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Aligned and streamlined academic portfolio prioritizing access, success, and sustainability.

The draft proposal combines History programs at three institutions (NVU-J, NVU-L, and CU) into one program. Students will be able to move through the program at any of the three campuses and coordination of offerings and schedules will make it easier for them to choose from a wide variety of electives. Whereas separate capstone classes are currently offered at the different campuses, one capstone experience will be offered from a smart classroom. The physical location of these classes will rotate between campuses. This will enable students to be part of a larger cohort and to benefit from a wider variety of faculty instructors. -History sub-group proposal

Clear Program Designs for Student Success

Each institution currently offers one or more programs that train students for careers in unique areas of industry…however, unique courses create barriers for both instructional efficiency and movement of students between institutions. In this proposal, we have remedied these deficiencies, creating a common set of courses with numerous opportunities for cross-campus instruction. The benefits to students are improved access to programs regardless of campus location, increased access to faculty expertise in areas of student interest, and degrees that prepare students for long-term success…

- Computer Science subgroup proposal

Expanded Program Access

The adoption of hyflex delivery will enable access via Zoom to lectures and computer labs for all first-year engineering technology courses. This is a new initiative for Fall 2021.   In summer of 2021 we collaborated with the IT dept to outfit 9 lecture classrooms and 5 computer labs with new instructor stations and second monitors to optimize the experience of students attending remotely and in the classroom. This delivery mode will greatly increase the access to non-traditional students with a goal of increasing enrollment in courses and programs.

– Engineering proposal

Commitment to Vermont and Our Mission

Our merging Education Department puts forth that preparing public educators is the oldest commitment of the Vermont State Colleges. As a merged department, we commit to preparing our future teachers and professionally developing our in-service teachers in optimized options that center on Inclusive Education. –Education working group

Increased Efficiencies

The new degree will offer students a robust but realistic program that is easily understood, conforms to all NECHE guidelines, is predictable in its offering of courses most likely to meet enrollment targets, and can be delivered across campuses via multiple modalities when appropriate...For example, we have reduced the number of sections currently offered annually from 53 to 44.

–English subgroup proposal

Six existing programs will become one Sociology BA, and forty-seven existing Sociology and cross-listed courses will be optimized by the elimination of six courses and conflation of nine redundant courses to thirty-two courses.

–Social sciences proposal

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Caveats, Ideas and Concerns of Faculty

- We respect faculty governance and expect that any proposal will work itself through the established processes.

- We believe that curriculum development is a long-term project that requires more than the two months provided by the "optimization" schedule.

...

- Initiate a system-wide project to improve MAT-2021 Statistics.

- Flexibility and accessibility among campuses can be achieved through hyflex options in courses without labs.

- We will need to ensure that all locations have enough telepresence-capable rooms to allow students participating remotely to have an equivalent experience.

Faculty Perspectives

Dr. John Kidder, Vermont Tech, Engineering

Dr. Hannah Miller, Norther Vermont University, Education

Dr. Andrew Alexander, Castleton University, Humanities

Program Investment Recommendations

For Business, Computer Software Engineering, Counseling Psych, Nursing:

- Faculty resources and targeted hiring incentives

- Marketing/Recruitment/Program promotion resources and support

- Support strategies to boost enrollment, particularly women and BIPOC students historically underrepresented (in software engineering).

- Implement creative ways of delivering clinical experiences in the limited healthcare agencies within the state including enhanced simulation experiences.

# Preliminary Evaluation

Consensus determination by CAOs:

Does the optimization proposal meet the goals and charges?

46 Programs Yes, optimized program fully meets the goals and charges and should move ahead.

39 Programs Review and refine proposal.

16 Programs Significant additional work and review.

Stage-Gate Process for Academic Program Array

Gate   Gate   Gate   Launch

Discovery → Design → Development → Launch → Review
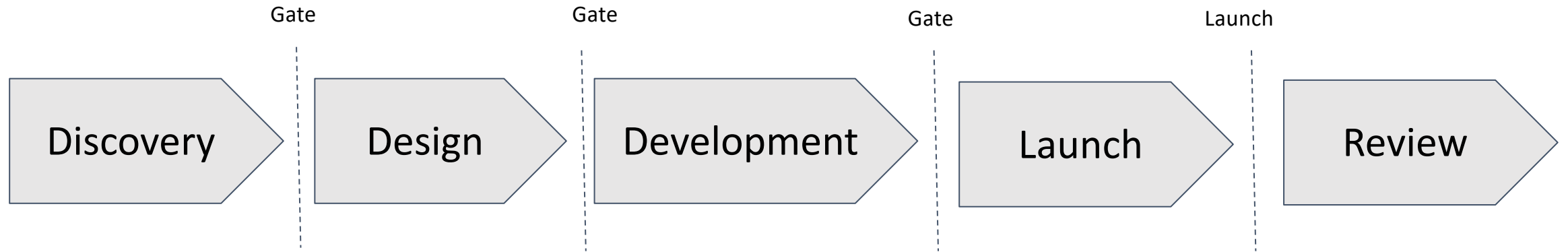
Discovery (through Oct 2021) includes:
- rpk GROUP analysis
- Program optimization proposals
- Delivery modalities and locations
- Mission alignment evaluation
- Financial sustainability evaluation

Design (through May 2022) will include:
- Revisions and final review of proposed programs via governance process.
- Delivery modality definition at program level.

Optimized Program Array Dependencies

Portfolio	VSCS System Transformation

Core Process Teams	Student Experience	Academic Operations	Administrative Operations	Workforce Development

Sub-Projects/ Tasks

Student Experience
- Admissions
- FA/Registrar
- Marketing/Branding
- Student/Resident Life
- Athletics
- IT: Web & ERP teams

Academic Operations
- **Academic Programs**
- Advising/Academic Support/ADA
- Libraries
- School Ops:
  - Faculty Support
  - Scheduling and Section Balancing
- IT: Academic Tech & School Ops

Administrative Operations
- Facilities Planning and Management
- Business Affairs/ Finance
- IT Services
- Human Resources
- Procurement
- Legal/Compliance

Workforce Development
- Industry Engagement
- CE Program Portfolio
- Customized Training/ Apprenticeships
- Registration & Student Operations

Next Steps for the Board

Recommended action:

- Expedite approach to [Policy 102 Approval of New Degrees and Majors](#) for all proposed programs that have met optimization goals and charges and have been reviewed for alignment with NCE mission and financial sustainability. (Majority of proposed programs projected for review at October 15, 2021 EPSL meeting.)

- Suspend [Policy 101, Program Review and Continuous Improvement Process](#) or "PReCIP," reviews for the 2022 and 2023 review cycles.

Future Work for EPSL:

Revise Policy 101 and 109.

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ITEM 3:

Policy 101 (PreCIP) Report

Policy 101 defines board standards for high-quality programs and directs a process at the college and system level to ensure continuous quality improvement. At the system level, this process begins with a system-wide professional development retreat for program leads, continues with the completion of a self-study report by each program, and culminates in a system review committee meeting to provide for peer and external feedback. Individual institutions support the PreCIP process with annual requirements for program assessment work. The aggregate results of program assessment and continuous improvement work are reported to the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) as part of the ten-year comprehensive evaluation process for regional accreditation.[1]

Key considerations for board members in ensuring academic quality include the ways programs assess student learning, the strategies used for program quality improvement, and the evidence of quality and student achievement resulting from program improvement efforts. This report summarizes recent work to strengthen program assessment and quality improvement as directed by board policy.

"PreCIP 2.0" Focus on Sustainable, Aligned Assessment Efforts

Beginning with the 2019 cohort of programs, the Chief Academic Officers group developed a revised approach to the PreCIP self-study ("PreCIP 2.0") that provided a stronger focus and support for the assessment of learning outcomes, aligned program assessment work with institution-wide efforts to improve student success and retention, and provided more comprehensive and program-oriented data. In the self-study reports, programs now review and reflect on the following measures:
- 15+ credit enrollment patterns for first-semester students in the program;
- Success rates for courses in the program; and
- Program completion rates (proportion of students completing the program as a percentage of all students enrolled in the program).

In the "PreCIP 2.0" approach, programs are also guided to use structured templates to support a sustainable approach to assessing all program learning outcomes on the five-year cycle. These structured templates include:
- A curriculum map outlining an "on-track" student graduation plan with key milestones;
- Program outcomes mapped to curriculum and co-curricular learning experiences; and
- Program activities and designated responsibilities for assessing all learning outcomes.

At this point, programs in the 2019 and 2020 cycles, with some exceptions for programs undergoing significant change, have completed their self-studies using the new approach. These programs have also had their reports and assessment plans evaluated by an external program assessment professional, who provided detailed feedback to programs on the learning outcomes definitions, assessment measures and evidence used, and sustainability of the assessment plan

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[1]See https://www.neche.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Making-Assessment-More-Explicit_E-Series-Forms.pdf.

and use of evidence to drive improvement. The 2021 cycle is in process, and two additional years (2022 and 2023 cycles) of program reviews remain to transition.

External Evaluator Feedback

The 2019 and 2020 cycle reports were evaluated by Dr. Mamta Saxena, Director of Assessment at Northeastern University, who has also provided training to report writers for the 2021 cycle. Some examples of the type of summary feedback provided by Dr. Saxena follows.

Criteria	Definition of a "highly-developed" assessment program	Summary feedback provided to individual programs
Assessable Learning Outcomes	Each outcome is stated in measurable terms, and there are explicit criteria for assessing students' level of mastery of each outcome.	"The outcomes are concrete, measureable, and well-aligned with the courses. However, the one measure defined is a survey, which is an indirect measure of learning as it is self-reported. Even for the survey, the criteria is not explicit (x% of learners will respond to y level for satisfaction or any other variable). There are no direct measures defined for assessing the learning outcomes." Assessable Learning Outcomes in this program evaluated as "emerging."
Assessment Plan & Data Collection	The program has a multiyear, fully-articulated and sustainable assessment plan that is routinely reviewed and revised, as needed.	"The report includes a comprehensive 5 year plan with concrete and reasonable timeline, actors, and deliverables." Assessment Plan & Data Collection in this program evaluated as "highly developed."
Use of Evidence to improve program/student learning outcomes	Through subsequent data collection, the program has "closed the loop" with evidence demonstrating improvement in learning outcomes. Faculty are highly skilled at making effective changes based on outcomes evidence.	"The narrative includes the improvement plans based on previous review, goals # 1-4 outline the changes made based on the recommendations. For example, the new SLOs or experiential learning opportunities. However, the report does not offer evidence of systematic and ongoing data collection with direct connections to improvement." Use of Evidence in this program evaluated as "developed."

Summary and Status of "PreCIP 2.0" Reviews

The following summarizes the five-year review cycle for programs across the system, with notes as to current status of reviews given the impacts of the pandemic in 2020 and the significant program transformation work underway in many areas.

2019
1. Applied technology: construction management, professional pilot tech
2. Criminal justice and sociology
3. History, social sciences, political science, economics, geography, and global studies
4. Behavioral sciences, human services, psychology and counseling

2020
1. *Engineering technology: Architectural, Civil, Electrical, Mechanical, Electromechanical
2. Fine arts, including animation and illustration (reviews suspended for most programs)
3. General education (reviews suspended given work on single set of VSC-wide requirements)
4. Liberal, interdisciplinary, and general studies
5. Music, Performing arts and theater (programs undergoing transformation exempted)

2021
1. Allied health
2. Business and accounting
3. *Education, including undergraduate and graduate teacher education, and physical education
4. Health sciences, exercise science, and sports medicine
5. Mathematics (reviews suspended in lieu of system transformation work)
6. *Nursing

2022
1. Agriculture and horticulture, including equine studies
2. Biology, environmental sciences, natural sciences, and STEM studies
3. Information technology and computing
4. Outdoor education/recreation/sports management

2023
1. Applied technology: automotive technology, diesel power technology, fire science, and veterinary technology
2. Communication arts and sciences, including journalism, digital communications, and graphic design
3. English, literature, and writing
4. Atmospheric and climate change science

*Programs exempt from PreCIP process as they undergo independent program accreditation reviews.