

To: Vermont State College System Communities

From: Chancellor Sophie Zdatny

Re: **Transformation Update #9**

Date: August 2, 2021

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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](http://www.vsc.edu/transformation).

## TRANSFORMATION TEAMS

The work of the Transformation teams is now underway.

The **Academic Operations Core Team** has held three meetings and is off to a very positive start. Team members have developed an extensive initial list of objectives and deliverables, intentionally elevating DEI in defining priorities, and are ready to convene and engage several of the sub-teams within the next two weeks. The team has also recommended to the Chancellor and Presidents a process for establishing a mission and vision for the New Combined Entity and planning for the accreditation of the New Combined Entity.

The **Student Experience** team is also off to a good start. In their third meeting, the team finalized the first iteration of its charter and drafted its own list of objectives and deliverables so that the sub-teams can convene and begin the discovery work that makes up the first stage of the project management process. In their status update for the Chancellor, Presidents, and stakeholders, they highlighted the need to have broad organizational and leadership involvement in strategic discussions about tuition and scholarships. They also raised an urgent need to begin drafting language and FAQs that can be used during Fall recruitment.

In the next few weeks, we will also kick off the **Administrative Operations** teams to begin work on aspects of transformation related to the administrative alignment and consolidation of systems and services. This core process team will ensure that we will have the right functional support and services in place for both the New Combined Entity and the Community College of Vermont once the system-wide transformation is complete. This work will focus on financial and facilities planning, employee services, IT services, procurement, and other processing and

compliance related operations. As we form the teams and workgroups for this work, we will be intentional about ensuring adequate representation and involvement of faculty and staff.

## TRANSFORMATION TOWN HALLS AND OFFICE HOURS

Over the last two weeks, Wilson Garland, the Director of Transformation Projects, has hosted a Town Hall and four Virtual Office Hours sessions to provide information about the goals of transformation and how we are organizing the work. Thank you to all who attended. **If you were not able to attend the Town Hall, the recording can be found [here](#).** At these sessions, we gained insights into areas where we need to provide additional information. The need for a stronger diversity, equity, and inclusion approach was reinforced. They also spurred ideas about how to better involve faculty, staff, and students in the transformation efforts while respecting the limited capacity people have to take on additional work. As the transformation projects progress, we will continue to hold additional sessions and find additional opportunities to communicate and collect input and feedback.

## NAME AND BRAND UPDATE

The Branding Identity team has been working with VisionPoint Marketing for the last few weeks to begin conducting the audience research that will inform the name and brand recommendations for the New Combined Entity. Listening tours are being scheduled for the college campuses for later this month. The schedule is:

- ***Vermont Tech (Williston & Randolph)***: Wednesday, August 11 & Thursday, August 12
- ***Castleton University***: Friday, August 13
- ***Northern Vermont University (Johnson & Lyndon)***: Thursday, August 26 & Friday, August 27

VisionPoint will be meeting with small groups of stakeholders at each campus (from 7-10 per group), including senior leadership, academic leadership and faculty, marketing and communications staff, enrollment and admissions staff, student life and student services staff, current and prospective students, alumni, and members of the greater community. The marketing directors for each institution are organizing the participants in this exercise, in collaboration with institutional leaders, to ensure a broad spectrum of views are represented.

In addition, VisionPoint will be holding a brand workshop on Monday, August 16<sup>th</sup>, to discuss some of the characteristics of the new university. Participants in the workshop will include a balanced and diverse mix of staff, faculty, students, and alumni.

Looking ahead there will be further opportunities for a broad range of stakeholders to participate in the name and brand identity work, including through surveys and other quantitative research methods.

## **PROCESS FOR PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH**

A reminder that, as noted in Transformation Update #8, the executive search firm with whom we will be working, Storbeck Search, will be providing a presentation on the search process at the upcoming August 4<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

## **UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS**

August 4<sup>th</sup> – Board of Trustees (Zoom)

August 19<sup>th</sup> – Education, Personnel, and Student Life Board Committee Meeting (Zoom)

August 23<sup>rd</sup> – Finance and Facilities Board Committee Meeting (Zoom)

September 13<sup>th</sup> – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Board Committee Meeting (Zoom)

September 20-21<sup>st</sup> – Board of Trustees Annual Retreat (In person)

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.

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