VISIONPOINT MARKETING

Vermont State Colleges System

New Combined Entity Naming Recommendation

Naming Recommendation | September 21, 2021

AGENDA

- Overview
- Research & Discovery
- Name Recommendation
- Looking Ahead
- Discussion and Next Steps

OVERVIEW

WHAT IS A BRAND PLATFORM?

We Are Here

Brand Name

Brand Pillars & Personality Traits

Messaging Points

Logo Mark

Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards.

— Søren Kierkegaard

RESEARCH & DISCOVERY

VisionPoint utilized the following research and discovery areas to inform our recommendations:

- **Listening Tours.** 31 group sessions with leadership, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members, and four individual interviews with students and senior leaders.
- **Brand Perception Study** with respondents including Vermont residents and stakeholders from all institutions, as well as the Community College of Vermont (CCV).
- **Virtual Brand Workshop** with 25 participants across all three institutions.
- **Deep-Dive Research** into each institution to understand their missions, visions, values, histories, geographies, and demographics.

Castleton

Northern Vermont University

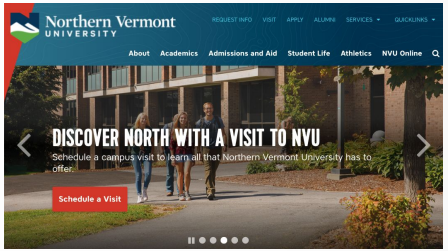
VERMONT TECH

RESEARCH & DISCOVERY

Brand and Marketing Audit for each institution, examining the creative qualities of existing brand, communications, and marketing materials and the ways in which each institution currently articulates the value of their experience.

Areas of review included:

- Websites
- Social media platforms
- Print and digital publications
- Digital ads
- Photography and videography
- Visual identity & brand guidelines
- Brand positioning
- Messaging
- Previous brand explorations and research



RESEARCH & DISCOVERY

Competitor/Peer Research for nine schools and one school system, including institutions that are in state, out of state, focused on technology, and offer both technology and liberal arts areas of study.

Institutions included:

- Champlain College
- Keene State College
- Middlebury College
- Oregon State University
- Plymouth State University
- Rochester Institute of Technology
- State University of New York at Cortland
- University of Dayton
- University of Vermont
- University of Maine System

Working and Learning
History
Outdoors
Skilled Faculty
Creative
Student-focused
Lyndon
Vermont Tech
Bad a**
Green
Education
Vermont
Career
Innovative
Dedication
Accessible
Determination
ROI
Rural
NVU
More than a number
Culture
Sense of Place
Entrepreneurial
Opportunities
Community
Applied Learning
Johnson
Welcoming
Connection
Hands-on
Hidden Gem
Castleton
Technical
Outcomes

They are consolidating to better suit the Vermont community as a whole. This way they can offer the best possible service to their students.

— Stakeholder Response

KEY TAKEAWAYS & DIRECTIONAL INSIGHTS FOR NAMING AND BRAND IDENTITY

1. **Vermont is intrinsic to your identity.** Relationship with community, workforce & economy, connection to student experience, and the environment. “Vermont is our campus.”
2. **Importance of “University.”** Through the Listening Tour sessions and feedback, the inclusion of University was critical to communicate the prestige, quality, and level of education provided.
3. **Advancement, Innovation & Technology.** The other theme we heard was a commitment to the future through advancement, innovation, and technology—transformative student experience, innovation and technology, and pioneering education in Vermont.

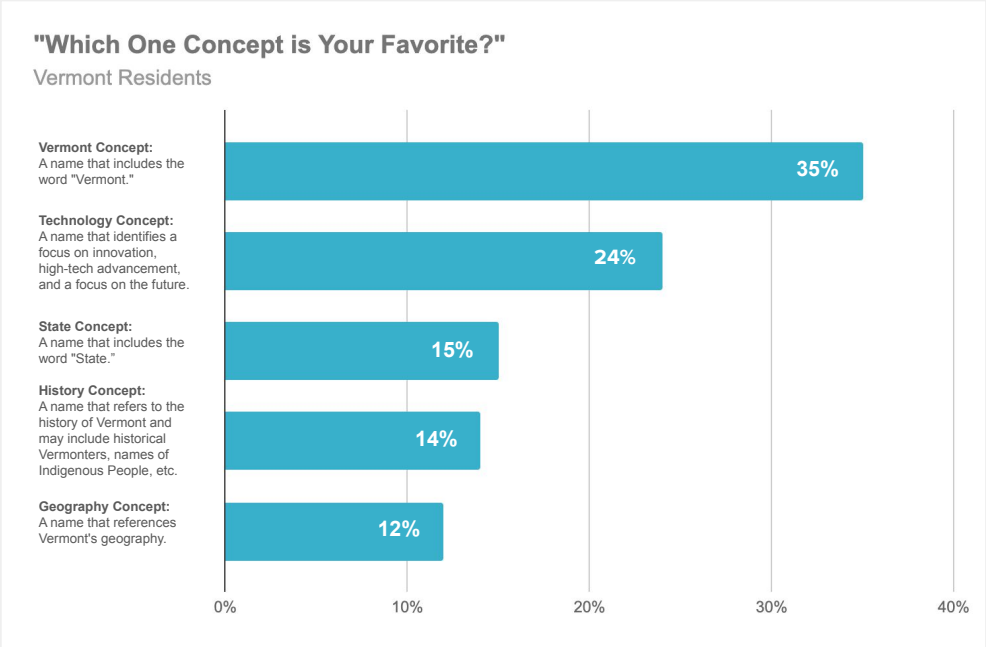
NAME RECOMMENDATION

VERMONT STATE UNIVERSITY

WHY VERMONT STATE UNIVERSITY?

The Vermont Concept was the most popular when aggregating the opinions of Brand Perception Study respondents across audience groups.

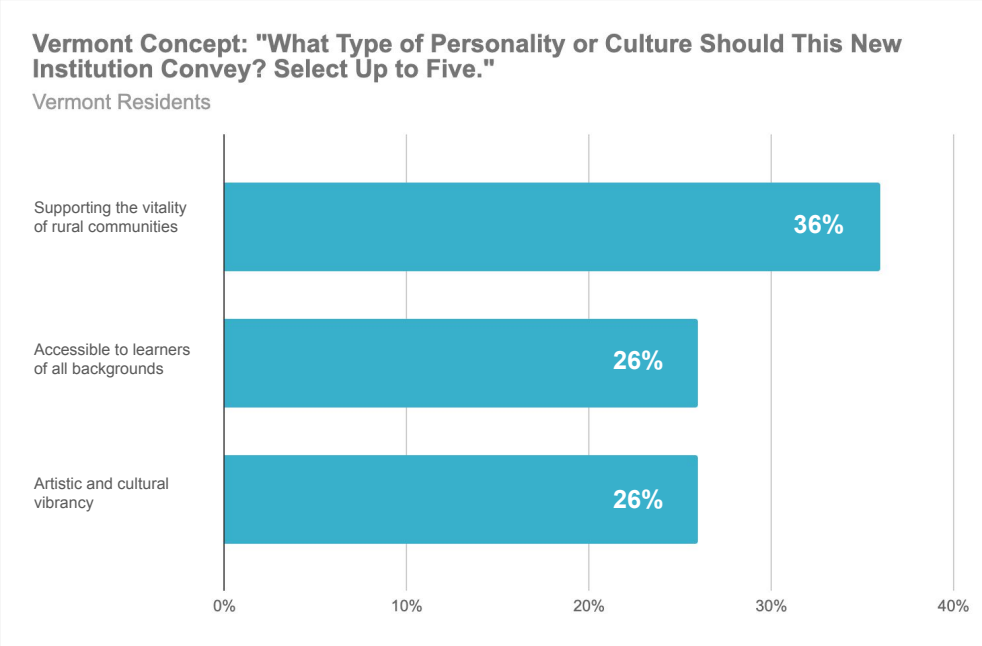
It was the first choice among state residents, **35%** of whom selected it as their preferred naming concept, as well as the first choice among alumni, faculty, and staff.



WHY VERMONT STATE UNIVERSITY?

The top associations with the Vermont Concept among state residents include key aspects of the new university's vision, such as:

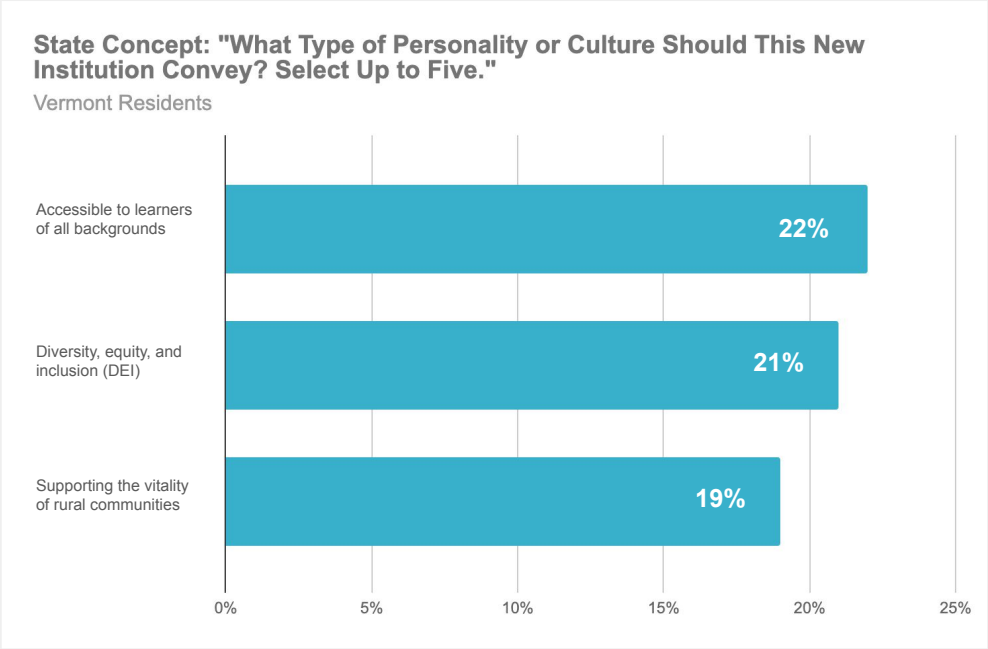
- Supporting the vitality of rural communities
- Accessible to learners of all backgrounds
- Artistic and cultural vibrancy



WHY VERMONT STATE UNIVERSITY?

The top associations with the State Concept among state residents also reflect key aspects of the new university's vision, including:

- Accessible to learners of all backgrounds
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)
- Supporting the vitality of rural communities



WHY VERMONT STATE UNIVERSITY?

- The name **emphasizes the state of Vermont** and conveys the strong aspects of being a public entity, such as accessibility, affordability, and a mission to serve the people.
- This naming structure provides a unifying platform and offers **flexibility in customization** as we continue in the brand development process to reinforce commonalities, such as the commitment to advancement, innovation & technology and the importance of technical & liberal arts education.
- The **simplicity and clarity** also offer an opportunity to explore specific identifiers for each campus such as location-based or programmatic-focused identifiers.
- The name reflects and reinforces the idea of **“Vermont is our campus”**.

LISTENING TOURS

“Love the mission that Castleton has and love that they serve Vermont. They also transform lives. There are people with a wide range of academic backgrounds and interests. **Castleton provides upward mobility for the residents which allows them to continue to serve Vermont.** There is a transformation of students and a genuine interaction throughout the whole college experience.”

— Castleton senior leadership member

“Vermont Tech is **transformational for many people**. [Students] end up being able to do jobs that they couldn’t otherwise do. They are trained to succeed. With just a high school education they can get very successful and rewarding jobs.”

— Vermont Tech faculty member

LISTENING TOURS

"NVU is very much a **part of not only our local community but the state as a whole**. It feeds our economy in a really big way... whether it's contributing to our workforce, the entrepreneurs that come out of the colleges, our teachers, our local governments — you name it."

— Johnson Selectboard and community member

"Vermont Tech is a state school so their **primary responsibility is to their constituents**. **They seem to cater to Vermont students.** The availability from a geographic perspective is an asset. The curriculum and staff are good. They do a good job of training their students to graduate with not only applicable skills but also the ability to learn and think critically."

— Engineering executive

COMPARABLE NAMES

Comparable names include: Michigan State University, North Carolina State University, Illinois State University, Pennsylvania State University, and the Ohio State University.

POSSIBLE SHORTHAND OPTIONS

Institution	Full Name	Shorthand
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY	**Michigan State University**	Michigan State, MSU
NC STATE UNIVERSITY	**North Carolina State University**	NC State, NCSU
ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY	**Illinois State University**	Illinois State, ISU
PennState	**Pennsylvania State University**	Most commonly “Penn State”
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY	**The Ohio State University**	Ohio State, OSU

LOOKING AHEAD

There is more ahead in the upcoming months! Further brand development will contextualize, reinforce and further express the **Vermont State University** brand.

- **Brand platform.** Pillars, personality, key messaging.
- **Exploration of brand name architecture.** Location-based, programmatic-focus, etc.
- **Brand visualization**. Logo marks.

Thank you!

VISIONPOINT MARKETING