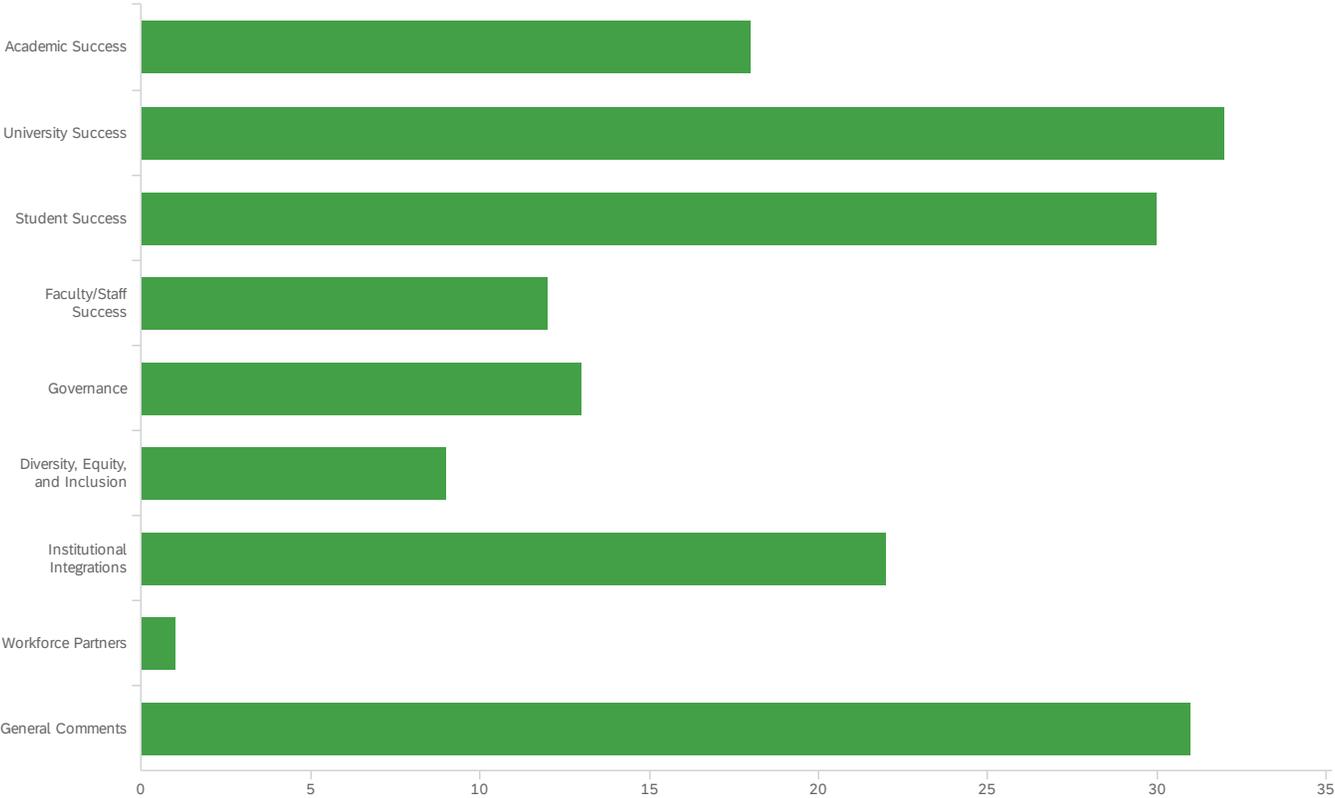


VSCS Transformation Public Comment Report

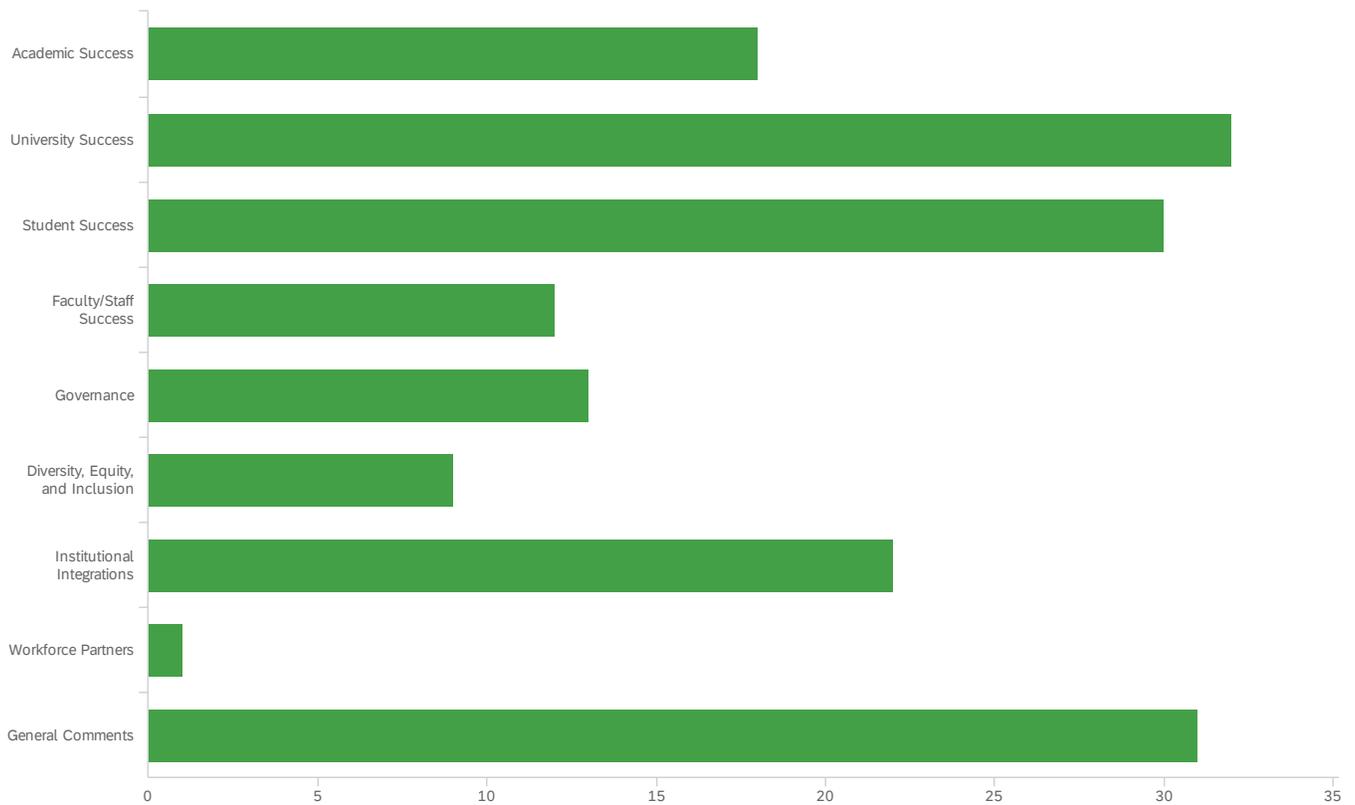
VSCS Transformation Public Comment - March 19, 2021

October 1, 2021 8:22 AM EDT

New Custom Page



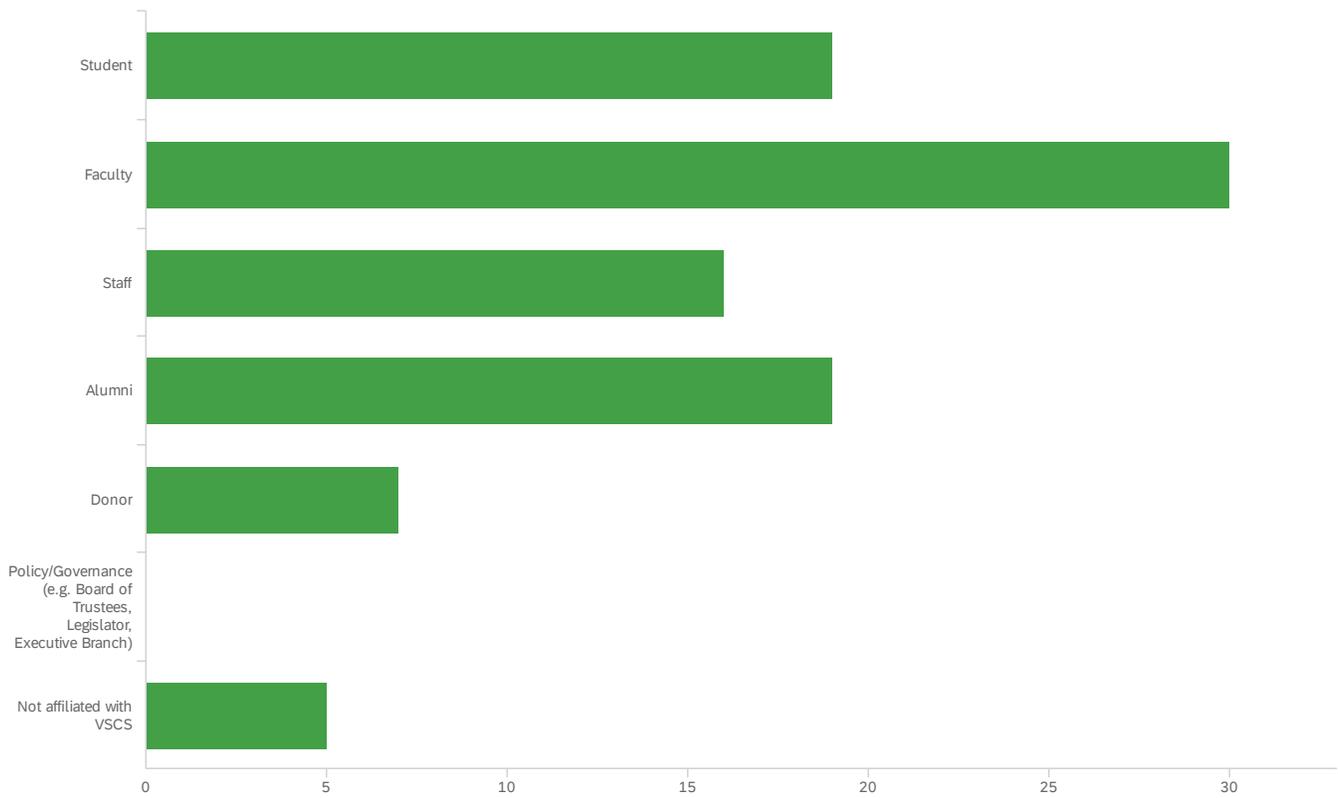
Indicate the category of your comments: (select all that apply)



#	Field	Choice Count
1	Academic Success	10.71% 18
2	University Success	19.05% 32
3	Student Success	17.86% 30
4	Faculty/Staff Success	7.14% 12
5	Governance	7.74% 13
6	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	5.36% 9
7	Institutional Integrations	13.10% 22
8	Workforce Partners	0.60% 1
9	General Comments	18.45% 31
		168

Showing rows 1 - 10 of 10

Click all that apply to you:



#	Field	Choice Count
1	Student	19.79% 19
2	Faculty	31.25% 30
3	Staff	16.67% 16
4	Alumni	19.79% 19
5	Donor	7.29% 7
6	Policy/Governance (e.g. Board of Trustees, Legislator, Executive Branch)	0.00% 0
7	Not affiliated with VSCS	5.21% 5
		96

Showing rows 1 - 8 of 8

If none of the categories of stakeholder in the prior question apply to you, please explain your interest and/or affiliation with VSCS:

If none of the categories of stakeholder in the prior question apply to you...

I am a member of the community of Castleton University.

I went to Lyndon my freshman year but graduated from UVM. I'm interested in the success of VSCS as a Vermont resident.

I am a parent - why is that not listed as a stakeholder - I am not surprised but am disheartened. The cost and sacrifice of a young adult attending college is shouldered by the entire family .

Why in God's name are you spending hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars to hire consultants and bring in temporary employees when the system is in crisis? If we're paying the Chancellor's Office for strategic leadership, why the hell are you farming that out to random third-party, for-profit organizations? What is your purpose? To hold meetings about holding a meeting about hiring a consultant and then meet to discuss the meetings the consultant wants to hold?

Alumni

I am a prospective student who would like to get more career education

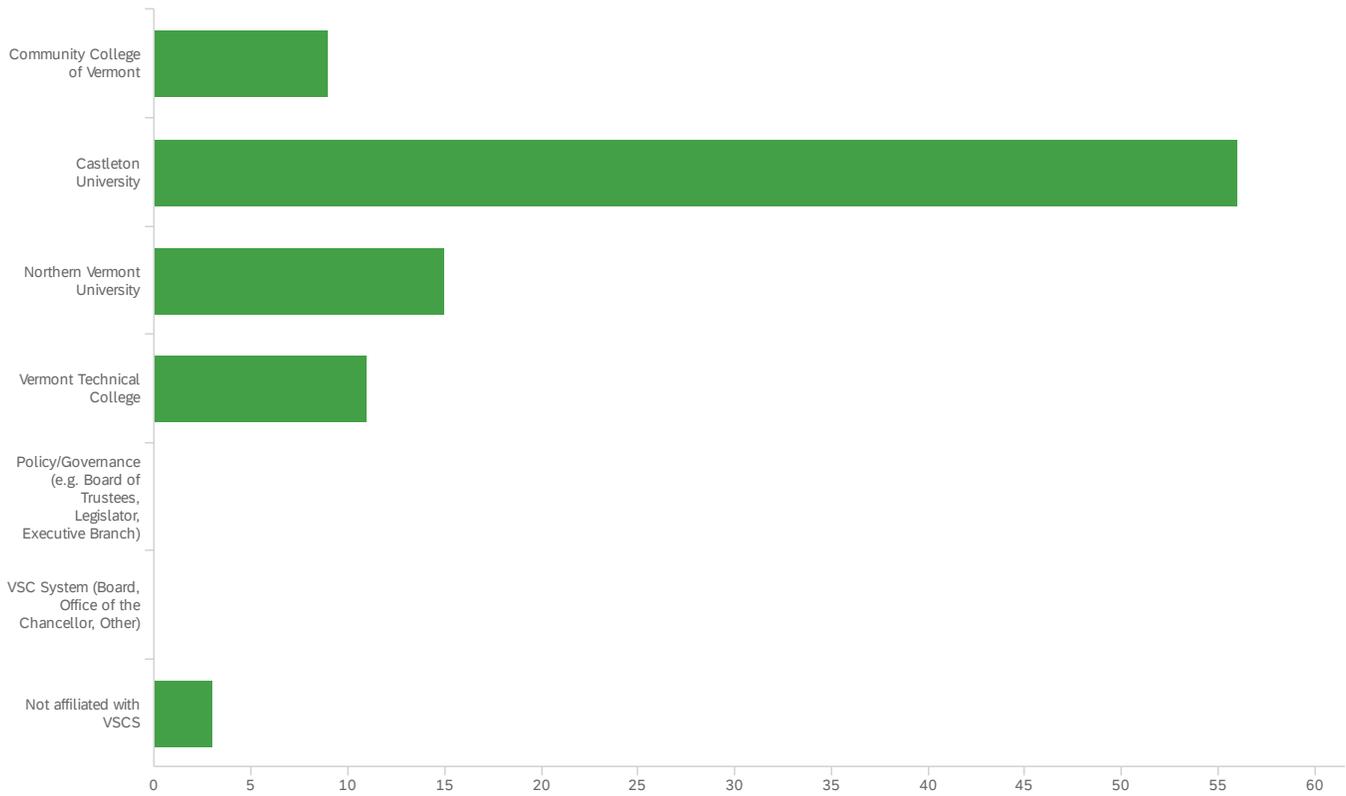
I am a prospective student of possibly Castleton or VTC, and a former student of CCV

I am a community member who cares about the success of the colleges, and a prospective future student who wants the colleges to still exist in the future. I have attended CCV, and have close friends who have attended and are employed at Castleton and VTC.

Professor Emeritus of the Humanities

Parent of current student

Please share the institution you are associated with: (select all that apply to you)



#	Field	Choice Count
1	Community College of Vermont	9.57% 9
3	Castleton University	59.57% 56
4	Northern Vermont University	15.96% 15
5	Vermont Technical College	11.70% 11
6	Policy/Governance (e.g. Board of Trustees, Legislator, Executive Branch)	0.00% 0
7	VSC System (Board, Office of the Chancellor, Other)	0.00% 0
8	Not affiliated with VSCS	3.19% 3
		94

Showing rows 1 - 8 of 8

What do you see as the potential strengths and successes of the system transformation?

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Strengths of new transformation are bigger networking pool for students, access to more classes for students and higher chance to keep all the state colleges operating.

I believe this is a flawed process, and one where the whole story was not shared with the public.

Streamlining, sharing costs, expanding offerings

More resources, more name recognition

I really do not see any for castleton

The system transformation will avoid complete loss and failure of the Vermont schools that could not survive in the modern worlds free market. The strengths of this will, among many things, allow the thriving Castleton University team help ensure those failing campuses don't go to waste.

I think combining the institutions is ok, but probably not the same name. Won't each still have different curriculums and goals, it seems it would be better to keep individual names for each university. branch and not make them the same. That is typically how other States do it as well. They are still different schools, with different majors etc? Or is that not the case and I'm mistaken?

None

Fiscal improvement

I appreciate that they VSCS is making DEI initiatives central to this work. This is central to our institutional mission, strategic plan, and retention of historically under-represented groups. It will be met with opposition, as it always has historically, and I'd like to encourage the board to persevere through push-back against inclusion and equity. These values are important to Vermonters.

A limited amount of savings in consolidating some of the back end work.

to make the ease of access and transition from CCV to VTC easier for adult students, who are parents.

Thus far? Nothing. Once again there is a ton of administrative bloat, wasteful spending on third-party companies and consultants, and poor communication.

No more internal competition for the same students, greater opportunities for all students, reduced administration

Efficiency and power in numbers

Efficiency-Positive Changes, which are necessary. Effective, and purposeful leadership!

I was hopeful in the beginning, but as of now I am very disappointed and don't see any real strengths.

Efficiency and access.

Coming together is a strength for financial reasons.

What do you see as the potential strengths and successes of the system tran...

It appears the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion "discussions" are slowly moving forward on the Castleton campus as well as through the BOT DEI Committee. That is progress (something is better than nothing)

Letting people do sports no matter which institution they attend.

none really, except - if done right - parity across campuses

I see the opportunity to enhance the college system in Vermont, making it more obtainable and affordable for Vermonters to utilize this amazing college system in state. Also the ability to offer programs in more areas around the state such as Nursing since there is a terrible shortage of nurse everywhere! Maybe even offer night/weekend classes as part of the program.

Cost efficiencies, sharing of resources

Possibly eliminating the Chancellor's Office and firing all the goddamn morons who put our system in this mess and yet have been given the power to get it out of it for reasons unknown

Faculty, students, alumni, facilities, reputation, community support, existing record of success.

I believe that the only strengths to this change are financial and it's disappointing that money is enough reason for these changes.

better services

Shared pool of resources, economy of scale

There are definitely benefits to the transformation. There is the financial benefit, but also the ability to allow for increased networking and ease of navigating degree options. Imagine, students will be able to do research within the Vermont's State College system to identify which unique college is perfect for them. Also, the system will be able to work as one to improve elements of each college/university and allow for networking between each.

Reduce costs of operation

Resources (financial, people, libraries, etc.) would be consolidated allowing there a chance to greatly improve one or more colleges/campuses.

Keeping our University alive.

I see strength in what a consolidation can do from a collective standpoint, but in a sense of identifying the system's own strengths and weaknesses and reallocating resources effectively. It can allow the Vermont State system to be steered in one direction. If executed properly this can provide a greater sense of "Vermont community" while not eroding each campus' individual sense of community.

Financial stability, allegedly

Maybe structural changes to current curriculum? Not sure. I don't see any strengths in it really.

The college system needs to streamline administrative costs. And this plan does that.

We have a lot to offer people and that will be seen by the students of the other schools who express interest in our location

I see tremendous opportunity to create a vibrant leader in higher education in a multi-campus state university. I am excited to be a part of such a transformative time.

What do you see as the potential strengths and successes of the system tran...

I do not see any strengths for the students at Castleton and feel we are losing our identity to a large public institution which is exactly what I did not want leaving HS

I see none except the state of Vermont covering their tracks after years of mismanagement.

possibility of coordinating across campuses and with UVM

Survival. Accessibility.

I think that for our department, the opportunity to reach other students from the northern part of the state is a potential strength

There can be benefits gained from economies of scale, not only in cost savings but by expanding offerings to students.

Reduce program redundancy across CU & NVU. Better crediting & transfer system between institutions--if CCV is willing to come to the table.

Economic interest, a way to save money and keep the college systems running financially in a stable condition

Reduced administrative costs. Increases access to programs for students. More transparency.

cost saving, strength in numbers, a more unified state college system, ease of transfer for students

Finally being able to start fresh

None

More funding

Perhaps a bigger shared pot of money allowing the schools as a group to coordinate on creating some new programs. Also, a possibility of coordinating the nursing programs on the various campuses. I think nursing should continue to be taught everywhere it is currently taught, including online; something that would be awesome would be if the nursing programs could all be fluid with each other, so students can seamlessly continue their education on a different campus if they want to in order to pursue other opportunities on that campus or if they need to because they move for an unrelated reason. I also see an increased possibility of students creating individualized majors and innovating across multiple disciplines. I think there should be a system-wide individualized major option. Students can create careers of the future.

easier transfer of course credits from one campus to another

It will ideally be more efficient, with no degradation of quality.

Nothing.

What do you consider are the potential weaknesses and risks of the system transformation?

What do you consider are the potential weaknesses and risks of the system t...

Weaknesses of transformation is losing site of the unique offerings that each campus has for students. Ex: one on one's with teachers, sports teams, living on campus with other students in your classes.

Please be careful with DEI...UVM (as seen in Washington Post and elsewhere) has increasing antisemitism

The risks include the schools losing their identity, in the case of Castleton, the name recognition and its reputation make it successful. This is one of the only schools that could stand on its own, and instead will bleed money to the other schools that are not able to cover their costs. I do not believe the proposal at hand solves the underlying problem. It tries to cover it up. In private sector business, if the school could not cover it's expenses, drastic changes would be made. Not changes that cost the taxpayers more money to rebrand the institutions with a name that will be confused with the University of Vermont.

As you know the majority of Castleton's 1st year FT students are for the first time out of state folks. Castleton recruits from a whole different pool of people as compared to the rest of the system. The Castleton name/brand has grown tremendously and draws students. Our brand promotes varsity athletics and is getting more known every year for our programs as well. When I look at the NVU merged website from a prospective student standpoint, I would have no idea why I would choose one campus over another, what they stand for, and in some cases, it is difficult to know if a program is offered at a campus. So far we have decided to change 'Colleges' to 'University' to turn the Vermont State Colleges into Vermont State University. To me this is not the big deal. The big deal is how will we brand Castleton, attract prospective students, and thus be financially stable moving forward. Branding as a single, ambiguous, disperse educational system does not drive recruitment. As our students continue to remind us, they are here for a four year residential experience. We MUST promote Castleton separately, and to a different audience than the other schools.

It feels like a precursor to closing campuses which I am opposed to. I hope that this will truly be able to keep all campuses open.

You are waiting too long for implementation. Complete it in 2022

Loss of identity - my daughter is already invested in her identity as a castleton spartan

The weaknesses are allowing too many different minds come together to make decisions. It can be very difficult to make decisions in the best interest of the whole when you're combining such a diverse system. There should be more time taken to consider large changes like how changing the name of the system would destroy the marketing campaign that's been in place.

I think it might weaken the strengths of each individual location and blur the identities. Unless all 3 Universities are essentially identical, which I assume is not the plan, then why use the same name? Each should have its own identity. Strength might be the ability to attend classes at any of the 3, adn or transfer between them with ease or change majors easily?

Loss of autonomy. Message to potential students and parents that we are unstable and unreliable to complete a 4 year degree.

The possibility of Castleton not being recognizable as one of the oldest institutions in the country. The history of Castleton back to 1787 is only available to present students and alumni. The athletic teams must continue on each campus to continue the identity and the goal to compete and gain success for numerous students.

One risk might be failing to invest in the people who are doing the work to make transformation happen. Retention of faculty and staff is important for morale.

Loss of community, Low quality academic programs because of not being able to meet the educational needs of the students we serve. Continuing to not hire lost positions so that individuals are doing upwards of five or more jobs. This is sousing a great deal of burnout and more people leaving. It is also causing low moral. Because the system is becoming so large people are not being heard. Leaders and administrators are too overworked to be able to have time to address the personal problems and they do not truly understand what they are asking people to do.

What do you consider are the potential weaknesses and risks of the system t...

The link from CCV to VTC was a very hard and confusing road. There were MANY misgivings and options that were not given freely, I am resentful about them. I wish that there were more than 1 single person who acted as a transition person. They need someone who does not reside or work primarily in Burlington, someone who is readily available and be more local.

Changing the name of Castleton University is a disservice to our students and our community. The NY SUNY System does very well with their schools labeled SUNY Albany and SUNY Binghamton, while still retaining the individuality of the campuses. It would be a travesty to not allow our campuses the same respect and freedom.

You don't listen. I resigned and am moving on to brighter and more functional pastures, but for the love of God, your top-down business-speak approach is just toxic and won't work. Not one of the leaders of this transformation appears to know what the hell is going on. Everything is buzzwords and nests of committees and smug "transition managers" who have never been in a classroom or worked one-on-one with a student. Our Chancellor is a labor attorney. Your mismanagement, and refusal to think outside of the cancerous, proven-failure trends wracking American higher ed, is going to doom this transition. I look forward to hearing how a year or two after you gut the faculty to afford your expensive, outsourced rebranding (just like "Do North" and the creation of Castleton "University") the system remains in financial crisis. But go on, hire another expensive outfit to write a \$300k report that is just the word "optimization" written over and over and over again.

I read two articles recently about the Vermont State College System (VSCS). One was actually a letter to the Board of Trustees from John Casella II and Lyle Jepson. While they are clear that "Now is the time to acknowledge the problem and boldly take action," they also expressed several concerns about the proposed Transformation Plan. They voiced strong doubts that the merger will achieve meaningful cost savings. Their ultimate concern for Castleton University is that the merger "will damage its brand" and thereby undermine Castleton's success in recruiting out-of-state students who are so "vital to our region's economy." This ill-conceived merger plan has the potential to do far more harm than good, and does not solve the real problem, cost. The second article, written by Lola Duffont, education writer for Vermont Digger, provides clear evidence that the problem is not a "demographic challenge" at all, but a cost problem. Free tuition programs made possible by the covid funding have been "maxed out" with Vermont students being put on "wait lists." Chancellor Zdatny admitted that "Student interest far exceeded our expectations." Carolyn Weir was not surprised, noting that "cost has been a key factor all along," with declining enrollments at VSCS clearly linked to affordability, not demographics. Yes, a single program which addresses affordability has turned a "demographic problem" into "wait lists" of Vermont students desiring a VSCS education! What more proof do we need that the real solution is investment in affordability? VSCS has been mislabeled as "broken" in order to promote an austerity driven transformation while the real problem is decades of underfunding. Vermont ranks 50th, dead last, in funding higher education. In fact, over the past 3 decades the family share of the cost of higher education at VSCS increased from 60% to 87% while the state share decreased from 40% to 13%. In no other state do students cover a larger share of the costs of public higher education than Vermont, where students shoulder 87 percent of the burden. And yet, despite Vermont's robust high school graduation rates, "demographics" are often blamed for declining enrollments at VSCS. The problem is not demographics; the problem is austerity. The good news is that the Vermont legislature has stepped up to begin to meet funding needs: \$21 million in bridge funding, \$30.5 million annual appropriation, a \$5 million increase. Sadly, the transformation plan will waste tens of millions of state dollars that could be better used to increase enrollment by reducing education costs for students and their families. In fact, the individual institutions within the VSCS have a track record of delivering true education and serving all of Vermont's communities. The future of that success is threatened by the perverse belief that austerity is somehow more "sustainable" than investment. Vermont's leaders need to recognize higher education as a public good worthy of our investment, and the VSCS needs leaders who whole-heartedly support that vision. It is not too late to act on the concerns voiced by Casella, Jepson, and so many other stakeholders and concerned citizens who have written letters, spoken up in meetings, and offered input opposing this plan. I urge the VSCS Board of Trustees to do the right thing for our young people and our future.

Campuses will lose their identity, administration will still be too high, focus is already on structure, process and staff than on students. I sit on both a VTC and a system transformation committee, and much of the direction seems already pre-determined by those in charge. While on the surface it seems like I have input, the direction of some of these committees is very directed, despite many attempts at providing lots of new ideas and comments.

We have worked SO hard to establish the "Castleton" brand name and I hope that the group looking at naming and marketing keeps that in kind as we all move forward.

Third party interested in payments and not results.

What do you consider are the potential weaknesses and risks of the system t...

You are farming out critical decision making to outside firms to develop strategic plans. Look at the RPK report. Seriously? All it talks about is "optimization" with no real plan to do that. I saw that the report cost \$300,000, or \$5,000 per page. So we set that money on fire. Now we're hiring more consultants to find a system president? Why does the Chancellor's Office exist? What do you do on a daily basis to earn your salaries? You want to cut \$5,000,000 from the system every single year. From where? Where is that money going to come from? You're not firing yourselves, so I'm sure a lot of professors and staff are going to lose their jobs. And you're the "decision makers" who led the state's system into this mess. I know Spaulding is gone, but the rest of you have been there throughout. At least acknowledge your culpability! Admit you screwed up. But you won't. And what are you brave souls doing to find us a system president? Nothing. You're once again farming it out to some consulting firm. How much is that going to cost? And when that firm recommends some third-rate professional administrators who subscribe to the "run academia like a business" model that is failing horrendously across the United States, you'll breathlessly report how excited you are to have "found" such wonderful candidates. This transition is going to fail. Badly. And its because its being "led" by a group who never see students, never teach, never do day-to-day work inside the academy, and who are more concerned about their job stability than the future of Vermont's public higher education. But I'm sure that once we keep hemorrhaging money you'll find more people who actually work with students to "optimize" out of a job until we're just a giant CCV.

Quality.

The primary weakness is the misguided vision as demonstrated by the following quote: "In a world where profit is consistently put before both people and the planet, climate economics has everything to do with ethics and morality. Because if we agree that endangering life on earth is a moral crisis, then it is incumbent on us to act like it." Naomi Klein The plan, as conceived, places emphasis on economic interests over people and the planet. I see this as a major flaw and believe can do much better.

Regarding Transformation Update #7 "These teams will help to define the student learning, support, and engagement processes for the new university and will provide recommendations for how to support these processes with technology." Why focus on "technology"? Why not be open to all manner of support for student learning and engagement? John Nesbitt, in his 1980's book Magatrends predicted that technology will solve all our problems within a couple decades. How is that working out? More recently, Eco-philosopher David Abram (who spoke at CU a few years ago) identified the three greatest threats to humanity: "war, greed, indifference." And yet, there are those who still believe that even more reliance on technology can solve humanity's problems. For example, the purpose of the Core Process Team on Student Experience is narrowly focused on how the student experience can be supported with "processes, data, and systems." A footnote indicates that "Other core process teams are planned for administrative consolidation and workforce development." Are there also "Core Process Teams" for overall purpose, vision, a team for humanity? If not, the plan seems sadly lacking. Martin Luther King's definition of true education, "intelligence plus character," suggests at least two relevant questions which might be important to consider as part of this transformation plan. 1- Are there ways, in addition to technology (processes, data, systems) to support these essential types of Intelligence? Naturalist Intelligence, Existential Intelligence, Intrapersonal Intelligence, Interpersonal Intelligence, Linguistic Intelligence, Musical Rhythmic Intelligence, Spatial Intelligence, Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence, Logical/Mathematical Intelligence. (Howard Gardner, Theory of Multiple Intelligences.) 2- Is the development of human character part of the student experience? If so, which character-related core values are prioritized in the plan? Failure to address these questions represents a major flaw in the plan.

Chancellor and Board of Trustees: I call your attention to an article in The Nation. <https://www.thenation.com/article/economy/universities-budget-cuts-covid/> The article warns about the transformation of higher education into an "industry... rather than a public good funded by taxes." Sadly, this exactly describes the VSCS transformation plan. In fact, the rpk GROUP's final report refers to higher education as an "industry" that serves the economy. We can, and must, do better! Barbara Madeloni, a facilitator with Public Higher Education Workers understands the problem: "We've been underfunding and defunding public higher education for a couple of decades now (referring to state and federal funding). This was an issue before the pandemic hit, and the crisis of the pandemic has been a place where there are universities that are stepping in and trying to take advantage of that and, in doing so, change the nature of what it means to be a public university—to have full access for all students, to have a broad and deep and liberatory education—and to instead narrow the purposes and possibilities of public higher ed to exert a sort of market- and commodity-based system on it, rather than to preserve it as a public good that is essential to democracy." Indeed, rpk GROUP report not only refers to higher education as an "industry," they use "labor market demand" as their criteria for "Academic Portfolio Recommendations." I question rpk Group's conclusion that eliminating programs and increasing class size will "improve access and opportunity." That makes no sense. Fewer course offerings and larger class sizes will make VSCS less desirable to prospective students. The plan has even bigger problems. The focus, a "workforce-centered future," and purpose, "to meet the needs of employers and the economy," are woefully inadequate as a vision and purpose for higher education! Upton Sinclair understood the problem: "We have allowed the education of our youth to fall into the absolute control of a group of men [and women] who represent not only a minority of the total population but have, at the same time, enormous economic and business stakes in what sort of education it shall be." The purpose of public higher education should be to "further the welfare of mankind" (Sinclair), not merely serve American capitalism. It is not too late to show true leadership and develop a plan that serves the needs of people and the planet. If you don't, who will?

VTC is a technical college— the others are not.

Appears the BOT is moving very cautiously, with plans to gather public input this fall. I worry that the large contingent of racist Vermonter who are already meeting and organizing.

What do you consider are the potential weaknesses and risks of the system t...

As a sport coach new to the system, name recognition of NVU is virtually nil. Most of the recruiting sites I use still know the schools as Lyndon State and Johnson State 3+ years after the merger. I'm trying to understand why the system can't do something like the Penn State system or UNC system and become University of Vermont - Lyndon, UV Johnson, UV Castleton, etc. Right now I need to buy new, branded equipment that will last 5-10 years (if not longer) and don't want to put our school name on the equipment as it will likely change soon. In addition, the shared admissions databases for the NVU campuses are a hindrance to recruiting due to both campuses trying to recruit the same students. In addition, the NVU website is not conducive to me recruiting student athletes. When looking at degree programs (and everything else) I have to tell them not to look at the Johnson info as they are our opponent (have already lost 1 student this way). The website should have 1 main landing page, then a separate set of pages for each campuses with no crossover...or separate sites for each campus (like other state system schools around the country) - like UNC Greensboro is separate fro UNC Pembroke or PSU Altoona is separate from PSU Behrend, etc.

Losing the identity and brand of each individual institution

Farming out key decision-making to people unfamiliar with the system, the campuses, the personnel, and the state, leaving the same useless bureaucrats who tanked the system to congratulate themselves on their "leadership" by holding another meeting

The Vermont State Colleges System (VSCS) has been described as "broken." The truth is that decades of underfunding forced the system to run on fumes. Finally, during a blizzard-like pandemic, it ran out of gas. Vermont ranks 50th, dead last, in funding higher education. In fact, during the past three decades, the family share of the cost of higher education at VSCS increased from 60% to 87% while the state share decreased from 40% to 13%. The final report of the Select Committee on the Future of Higher Education in Vermont asserts "Vermont's low level of support for its public institutions make them heavily reliant on funding from tuition revenue, a condition that has worsened through the years. Today, in no other state do students cover a larger share of the costs of higher education than Vermont, where students shoulder 87% of the burden." And yet, "demographics" are often blamed for declining enrollments at VSCS, despite Vermont's robust high school graduation rates. The problem is not demographics; the problem is austerity. The good news is that the Vermont Legislature has stepped up to begin to meet funding needs: \$21 million in bridge funding to finally fill the gas tank, \$30.5 million annual appropriation (a \$5 million increase) to help keep the tank full. An additional \$20 million will be spent on a system-wide transformation which, in my view, is an unnecessary engine overhaul when an oil change would do. While most agree it's too late to put the brakes on this transformation, it may not be too late to steer it in a more beneficial direction. Currently, we find ourselves in the passenger seat of an austerity-driven, transformation plan with various groups of consultants alternately at the wheel. For example, most concerning is the final report presented by rpk GROUP, a Maryland consulting firm hired to make "Academic Portfolio Recommendations." The consultant refers to higher education as an "industry" that serves the economy. Consequently, rpk Group has identified "gaps" in academic offerings using "labor market demand" as their criteria for evaluation. I believe it would be more beneficial to think of higher education as a public good with the potential to serve society as a whole. I question rpk Group's conclusion that eliminating programs and increasing class size will "improve access and opportunity." That makes no sense. These are thinly disguised cost-cutting recommendations. In addition to being austerity driven, the transformation plan is ill-conceived in that it places "workforce development" at the center and seeks primarily to "meet the needs of employers and the economy." This narrow focus is a major flaw in the plan. If we allow employers to hijack higher education in order to outsource their job training programs, who will educate our citizens? What we need is a broader vision that puts human development at the center and seeks to meet the needs of people and the planet. Our students deserve no less.

You are taking away school individuality, ruining the individual experiences of student who chose Castleton for a reason, there will be no president on campus which is absurd, and these cuts will take away opportunities to the students such as the cutting of more programs which are shared between the campuses.

bringing in bad leadership from the other schools and making Castleton just like johnson college was.

I chose Castleton (State College at the time) over UVM or other large state Unis because I did not want that large campus, large University feel. I had a visit at UMASS Amherst where it was so big, the different departments knew nothing about each other. I grew up next to URI and didn't want that. CSC was much more cohesive across disciplines because it was smaller and more intimate, that's what many out-of-staters went to VT for and really enjoyed meeting "the locals" who choose it over UVM. This was during a time of transformation, when the stadium was being built and many were concerned back then (2010ish) that the heart of the school would be lost by becoming overgrown

The biggest and most detrimental risk is that of each college/university losing their own uniqueness. That starts from the name of the school all the way to the degree options it has, and everything in between. I think it is very important that if you are to do a transformation, it should only occur if each college/university is able to maintain its current strengths and uniqueness, and strengthen the weakness with collaboration.

The whole brand of Castleton University will be lost and detrimental to the purpose of obtaining more students.

When applying for jobs, many employers ask where you went to school and got your degree. After the transformation, I feel as though that when you tell potential employers the name of the school you went to and they look up the school and find out that it doesn't exist, the employer may think that you have gave them false information. Also, there would be no form of validation to give to the student or an alumni like myself in that they actually went to a university and earned a degree.

What do you consider are the potential weaknesses and risks of the system t...

Coat for rebranding.

This transformation will erode the only feasible options for many students by eliminating programs that the particular schools they are going to offer. I know that if Castleton did not have the geology program when I enrolled, I would not have ended up in the Vermont State system. I am thankful the program lasted as long as it did. With the loss of programs comes the potential loss of faculty members with knowledge and experience that you will not find anywhere else. Losing programs may also contribute to losing students. I feel this may especially be true in the natural sciences departments where the ability to make it to a particular campus for necessary labs is critical. With my particular situation, I can say that I would not have been able to continue my degree program in the Vermont State system if the program or certain courses were eliminated, but remained "available in the Vermont State Colleges" as there would have been no other Vermont school that I could have feasibly commuted to. As an athlete (not at the college level) and general sports/athletic program lover it pains me to say that it may be more feasible to consolidate athletic programs rather than academic programs, especially in a system that does not offer athletic scholarships to the students participating in these programs. That said, I do not know what kind of funding the athletic programs bring into each school and how that gets allocated within that school. I do know that there are many students who are attracted to schools by their athletic program and the sense of community that those particular programs may provide.

Loss of identity and tailored approach to individual school needs. The name is honestly off putting. Keeping the original identities of the schools would go a long way to maintaining the small, campus with a big heart mentality of Castleton. With one President for the united schools, individual attention on campus would not be the same and harm the system as a whole. Unique identity is integral to the success of Castleton.

I am an Alumni of Castleton. I think this merger is a bit ridiculous. It's all a money thing it seems to me. If my old professors are emailing me saying this isn't the best thing for a school I graduated from, then I 100% stand behind them. Merging all VSC schools, losing all of their identities, and only having 1 president fro 3 campuses is absurd. You really lose that hometown feel. And the hometown feel is a HUGE selling point to incoming students and faculty members.

The state as a whole has worked hard to generate a name for our colleges and universities. If they come under one name we will loose what VTC and Castleton have become known for.

The name changes are going to put a huge dent in the Castleton spirit. The name of Castleton and our small town are important to us. We pride ourselves on being an extremely small school with big school experiences and opportunities. The name change is important to alumni and donors, they may feel that because of the name change that their time donating to the school is not worth it because it is no longer the institution it once was. We are the ones providing help to our more in debt neighbors and the only thing we don't want to come out of this is the change of the name. I understand that in order for it to be part of the change and a part of the same system it needs to be VSC but keep it VSC Castleton. The name is huge and changing it is so discouraging to the culture we have built.

1. Using CIP codes to design a framework for academic offerings across the campuses within the newly formed university is not a nuanced enough approach to determine Vermont's unique position in the higher-ed landscape. We have a unique brand and opportunity to attract students for the experience of college in Vermont. Where one program may look noncompetitive on a national job numbers basis, it maybe have demand as a Vermont program. 2. This analysis (rpkGroup) is incomplete as it excludes CCV and Online programs. The distinction between CCV and the other campuses results in a big blind spot in our evaluation of the system-wide efficiencies we seek. The boundaries between online and residential programs are being blurred more and more every day. Excluding Online programs from our reevaluation of academic offerings is arbitrary and motivated by policies that are not in service of our goal of achieving broad systemic optimization and efficiencies. We will not be able to have a holistic approach to managing the VSCS at a system level if, CCV and Online programs are somehow thought of as different or "special". Until we include the entire system that is VSCS, we will not achieve system level optimization.

Large no local control over decisions on campus - no identity - also I feel like the research at Castleton is becoming non important and we are becoming a large " workforce development " institution - no one on campus is happy and many freshman feel betrayed

We will lose countless out of staters due to this, and each campus I believe will suffer greatly from this. While we want kids from vermont staying, this move seems specifically geared to push away any outside students

cutting too many programs, making some programs unavailable to students if the only campus that offers it is one the student is not able to commute to or move to

The joining of Lyndon and Johnson was too superficial. This must be avoided this time. Vermont Tech is very respected in its own right, despite an unlovely and aging campus. It gets very high cost/benefit marks on a national basis. I'd hate to see it eclipsed by the merger.

What do you consider are the potential weaknesses and risks of the system t...

I have several concerns: 1. I know the incredible work that we have done at CU to build the Music Education and Music BA programs. We have gone through RIGOROUS Precip and ROPA reviews to be sure that we were offering a comprehensive degree program that is aligned with standards and comparable to other schools -- the music "education" program being offered at NVU is NOT the same standard of "music education" offerings -- it is more of a variety of independent studies and the end result is a "Licensure Option" which is not a degree that I would use to hire anyone looking for a music ed position. After hiring MANY music teachers, I look for the B.M. Ed first -- because that tells me that they have truly had the program that will prepare them best for the classroom. 3. The name change is of great concern. When it was announced that there would be a closure of NVU Johnson/Lyndon, alumni and the community rallied -- and some of that was for the PLACE that they graduated from and called home. For 234 years, the name of Castleton has been a staple of Vermont. Legacy students are proud to carry on the tradition of attending the small university. Taking away the name of the university takes away so much of that tradition -- and 234 years of tradition are gone. I was thinking of this with the commencement video and wondered about the Alma Mater -- which would never be sung again. 4. This transformation right now, as we recover from COVID and the loss of enrollment in addition to the incentives for students to attend community colleges for free, etc. is having an incredible impact on our abilities to recruit and build enrollment. We have had students audition that have chosen other colleges outside of the state due to the uncertainty of what is happening in the VSC right now. 5. I truly feel that the President of the University is the face of the college. It is great to see him/her on campus at events, etc. What will the Presidency look like with so many colleges to visit and immerse themselves in? Or will they just become a figurehead and name on a letterhead in some office in Montpelier?

I think the approach ignores the reasons that students choose VSC institutions; so many students want a small college environment that is based on relationships in learning.

A huge weakness in this plan is trying to change the name of Castleton University. Every single student I have spoken with on this topic is upset. EVERY single one. Renaming Castleton is a disservice to the students and the community built around the University. Castleton is an institution in the Rutland area, a cultural hub, and a place of pride. It belongs to the town of Castleton. Renaming the university will only cause dissatisfaction within the student body and community confusion. I implore the board not to change the name.

Vermont Tech will be swallowed up by the larger universities & their priorities.

Students not being able to have a ton of choice based on Vermont colleges they attend. While they will be different locations, I think courses and programs will unify between colleges, and some students may prefer programs (such as music education) at one college rather than the other. If they do unify and programs combine into one, I feel more students might leave VT because of limited options.

Losing the branding that institutions have worked for so long to create and uphold. Castleton, in particular, contributes more to the VSC system than any other individual institution. It risks more than any other in this merger and there is great worry that this will not be taken into consideration.

Staff, faculty and students could end up feeling lost in the system as it gets bigger.

Not changing old habits and investing into wasteful advertisements and in things that actually do not benefit students on campus (No offense, ask most students on campus and faculty, the "Do North Campaign" was a disaster and almost shutdown our school." Another major issue that occurs with this transformation is the fact that the administration and VSCS have no common sense in modern day economics, you guys are basically in the cave man age compared to other college campuses. This isn't meant to be an insult also, this is just the brutal honest truth coming from a student who cares about their campus and community and wants to see this area have more economic opportunities that will have more people attend schools in Vermont.

We are going to lose Castleton University. Loss of the school name.

We are losing history in eliminating the Castleton name as well as forcing CU to "bail out" other failing schools. We cannot expect CU to thrive while now handling the finances from other schools. This will allow CU to fall with the remaining schools.

Virtual classes taught by professors at other university locations. I have heard this is a possibility from my professors and am very against this. In person learning is very valuable and should be available to everyone who wants it.

possible loss of important programs, possible loss of geographic accessibility- for example, if the only courses in the topic I want to study in the Vermont system are located at a campus 2 hours from where I live, I won't actually be able to take those courses. Avoiding duplication of courses means that some people won't have any such courses within a reasonable distance they can travel. I very much hope that you will have LOTS of online courses and courses with online options so that people can still take courses they want to take, even if the only one is hours from where they live. You should keep all the online stuff and even increase it.

A lot of faculty disruption.

What do you consider are the potential weaknesses and risks of the system t...

When you read the goals and plans for the merger of the Vermont state universities and colleges, it does not sound like the intent is to create outstanding centers of higher education to attract students but instead to convert them to inexpensive, primarily commuter or remote learning vocational educational factories. That's not a university system. (My detailed comments and concerns are listed below in the 'other comments' section below.)

Losing our individual school branding is a big mistake. We run the risk of becoming "UVM-light" No discussion on how financially we will help BIPOC students.(Vermont continues to have a racist image) No commitment to academic quality is indicated.

It is upsetting as a student to see that the university I attend right now will undergo changes in the middle of my career here and we are not being given any information whatsoever until decisions have long been made. It is only going to deter more students due to the combination of campuses, and athletics.

What opportunities does system transformation provide?

What opportunities does system transformation provide?

Opportunities for transportation provides more career opportunities, classes and networking for all students.

No one should be required to say a pledge. Many do NOT believe racism is STRUCTURAL, and that EQUITY and deconstruction are MARXIST ideas

Eliminating redundancies, bringing more people to the table

growth

none -

This opportunity will provide the historic Castleton University to thrive on as the second Vermont University when other state colleges failed in their endeavors.

I honestly don't know.

More resources that will be shared, but that can happen behind the scenes.

I can think of only fiscal stability which should be available on each campus.

Opportunities for creativity and collaboration.

The create a working group or advisory subset for people in my position. The are other advisors and oversight when you are a veteran returning to college, but otherwise, there is no one. As an adult student and parent, I felt like I was misled and (if not for my outspokenness) would have fallen through the cracks. I an so incredibly saddened by the amount of working mothers whom I have seen simply quit. This is due to a lack of transition support. As well as the fact that there aren't any supports or people to call. This needs to change. For example, while attending CCV I was told on 4 separate occasions i need to finish my degree there BEFORE transferring. I now know this to be false. I am very concerned for the other mothers and adults who do not have another ear to listen or any to ask for advice or support. This also follows when transferring to a 4-year school. There needs to be a resource for parents as students, Specifically. Especially when so many more adults are seeking to expand their education. This is an entire demographic that is underserved and neglected. VTC could really excel and better serve this community.

Fire yourselves. Seriously. The average salary of the Chancellor's Office is \$80k a year. That's significantly higher than the average faculty salary across the entire system, and higher than the average salary of each of the system's constituent campuses. You are doing a bad job and paying yourselves very well for it. And that would be tolerable if you weren't A) underpaying the people who are working with students and B) overseeing a "transformation" that will result in ruination and chaos. The system would function better as a disaggregated collection of separate institutions rather than have so much funneled through your hands. It's not because you're bad people, or even because you're dumb - you're too far away from the actual process of education, student service, and campus life. Your understanding comes from reading the Chronicle and IHE and random thinkpieces in Bloomberg and fielding calls from consultant groups. That's why you can't lead and instead hire others - because, deep down, you know that you don't know what you're doing and, if you bring in a third-party "expert," you have someone to blame that isn't you for when the plan inevitably goes south.

Keep students in VT

It will highlight those that have taken and not given, who have a title but no ability to engage students, reorganize our financial team. The need for positive and effective LEADERSHIP!

It's an opportunity for you to provide some leadership. But instead you send out a PDF every two weeks talking about your brave work hiring consultants. I guess you're also farming a lot of work out to the same old VSCS-for-life dead-enders who also contributed to this mess, but hey, farming it out is farming it out, right?

What opportunities does system transformation provide?

Collaboration and strength across the system.

Nearly 2,000 years ago Lucius Annaeus Seneca recognized the need to differentiate and separate liberal studies from vocational training. In his writing he makes the claim that Liberal studies are "indispensible to the functioning of a free society." I encourage the Chancellor and BOT to revisit the plan's stated focus/purpose of higher education ("workforce development") and the plan's overall lack of vision so that a truly meaningful transformation can be accomplished.

The opportunity to create a vision and purpose that serve the needs of people and the planet.

It's fun and fashionable to be different, but not in the way the VSCS is right now. Enrolling at Northern Vermont University three-four years ago, I didn't know it was part of a system. To me, the "system" was two campuses wide. Castleton, VTC, CCV--I considered them competition colleges, not sister schools, for two years. The system transformation unifies the system branding to unknowing stakeholders and future stakeholders. It helps us create that prestigious "university" brand we're looking for.

The VSC should model the VT AOE's commitment to DEI efforts. The lack of progress signals that lack of importance.

Letting all students at all the college do all the sports at all the colleges.

not many in my point of view.

Done well, it could save public higher ed in Vermont. Done poorly (spoiler: we are here) it will not solve a single long-term structural problem facing the system. You can't consultant your way out of the fact that we are way too top heavy and that most of upper admin needs to get canned.

We have an opportunity to align public higher education with the our human needs and focus on the development of our true human potential. This plan seems not to recognize that opportunity and potential. .

The option to move away from the standard semester schedule and move toward a trimester system. Allowing for more in person classes to be taking at VT tech that they would not get at any other campus. For Example, enhancing the many STEM oriented programs that exist at VT Tech but only deliver a Certificate or Associates and get them to the Bachelors level. Once there moving toward the trimester schedule and have one trimester be a "techmester" allowing students from the other institutions to study those programs in person at VT tech. As a football coach I would love the ability to recruit Architecture, Engineering, Programming majors. These are the majors of the future and are high paying. A student could spend the fall and spring trimesters at the campus of choice and then take the winter trimester to be physically at VT tech taking those type of classes.

Strictly financial

possible better transfer

Hopefully, with a greater pool of resources and larger student body, programs can be brought back and added, or at least the existing ones bolstered against elimination.

Navigation ease, networking, collaborating for optimal student success.

Just in cost savings

Each campus can be themed differently based on degrees being offered. For instance one campus could be the sciences based while another campus is journaling and media, and another campus hosts business, law, and history (literature-based) degrees. This could allow more space for more classes, classrooms, and potential students. Each college could still keep their names potential for the most part (example: Castleton University is instead called the Castleton campus).

Unity.

This transformation may provide the opportunity for schools to access resources from each other that they may not otherwise have.

What opportunities does system transformation provide?

The ability to continue to provide educations

To establish VSCS as a industry leader in creative pedagogy and administration in service of our students.

Helpful for other institutions

The opportunity to take away what makes each of these schools their own.

possible coordination of programs, including in innovative ways. The one I'm thinking of now, and wishing for, is some way for the athletic trainer education to apply toward a doctorate in physical therapy, so if someone goes through the athletic trainer program and then works as an athletic trainer for a few years and then wants to become a physical therapist, most of the profession-specific coursework they did in the ATC program would transfer into the DPT program so they already have a lot of progress toward DPT. It would mean offering high-level skills in the athletic trainer program that transfer to physical therapy. Another idea of a way to coordinate: perhaps making the BS in kinesiology at Castleton its own degree that has some course options so that people can tailor it as pre-ATC (continuing at Castleton) or pre-DPT (continuing at UVM) or pre-PA or pre-med, or tailored to be in tandem with a BSN to give it a sports medicine / orthopedic emphasis.. So people could use the BS in Kinesiology program as a pre-professional track for a few various health care professions. They would go into those professions with the right prerequisites (the BS in Kinesiology would contain electives that people could choose between, to tailor it to the prerequisites for the field they want to pursue) and with a strong foundation in sports medicine that could be applied to a variety of health care fields. The BS in Kinesiology would be able to used as a versatile pre-health-care-profession sports medicine specialist track, rather than just being a BS degree thrown into a 5-year masters program, that has no value of its own. People could use it as a jumping off point for a variety of health care fields. So it would be a more meaningful degree in itself. It needs reworking anyway, because right now there seems to be a lot of repetition in the BS Kinesiology to MS in Athletic Training track. Also, since VT is a sprawly rural state and some people don't have the flexibility to move or commute long distances, there should be a lot of online options for courses and whole degrees. This can also save money on infrastructure and on-campus services. The state university system could be putting most of their resources into professors salaries and other essentials. Also, it is an opportunity to cut down administrative expenses. I don't know if maybe some administrators could re-skill as professors.

Reduce the number of people in administration. If you walked the hall of that area in Lyndon you saw a lot of empty offices and people not seeming to be working very hard. I put in a request regarding transfer credits (via e-mail) that got no response for over a year. Had to bring it up again twice before resolution. A combined administration (with few onsite people) could make this worse, so we would need a known "complaint" department.

I think if we considered turning CU into the Fine and Performing Arts School for VT would be one opportunity. We have the only true "stage" and facility of the colleges and this would definitely improve the recruitment/enrollment numbers -- instead of having NVU Johnson and CU fighting over the same students to keep programs going -- especially with the competition with UVM, this could create one STRONG program in one location which could turn us into the "school of fine and performing arts" choice for students in Vermont as well as out of state.

There is the opportunity to reduce administrative overhead.

Finance? Lower attendance cost for students?

cost saving, strength in numbers, more unified state college system

Opportunity for students

None

Provides a loss of jobs for professors who are released because of duplicate majors and programs.

Keep the Vermont university system solvent.

Ideally, if it's done right, a sustainable college system.

None.

What are the barriers to a successful transformation?

What are the barriers to a successful transformation?

Barriers to success is all faculty, students and the board all have to unite and believe in this transformation for it to work. While at same time not loss the uniqueness of what each campus brings to table for the students.

Marxist ideologies running the DEI show trying to indoctrinate students with Marxist ideas while taking their money and many of them are poor

The cost is absurd.

Campuses may still feel in competition with each other to survive

fear of change

Loss of identity loss of connection to traditions at a liberal arts university

The barriers are amongst the weaknesses. You are bringing together many boards, faculties, and communities and may fail to leave decisions in the hands of a bias few. More community should be involved and note the outcry.

The obvious one is the lack of acceptance by students, faculty, and the public in general. If people are not happy with the transformation or perceive it as not beneficial, or a failure, it will be mocked publically and could cause a lot of problems down the road. As a graduate of Vermont Technical College I fear this may weaken the previous outstanding reputation of the school.

Communication and Understanding of the moving parts and how they fit together.

The tearing apart of history for the schools. Especially Castleton which is treasured in the past. Long live the name and 1787!!!!!!

Not re-hiring when people leave so that we are scrambling to hold things together with less resources to do so. Faculty and staff doing the work of many people, and not seeing our institution invest in people, is tough on morale.

Lack of people to make it work. Expecting that one size fits all and doing a unilateral cut across all departments without looking at individual nuances. Not taking the time to listen to concerns and differences. Expecting things too soon and too fast.

Before actual implementation, there need to be representatives of all stakeholders, ie traditional, non-traditional, working parents who are also students.

All of it. Why did you hire this joke of a "manager" who has no relevant experience outside of failed attempts at app-based entrepreneurship? So he could design a transformation system in which each committee has thirty-seven subcommittees, each of which in turn has thirty-seven sub-subcommittees, and in which he is obligated to do nothing but congratulate himself for creating an insane system divorced from any best-practice? A temporary kingdom managed via color-coded TPS reports? C'mon. It's pathetic. You paid *how much* for this?

Not including all stakeholders

Same old, same old. Stagnation, complacency, and mediocrity.

The functional opacity of the process. When was the last time the Chancellor offered to meet with different staff and faculty? When was the last time any person in the OC came, via Zoom or otherwise, to answer individual questions? You're going to lose your best employees, and by that I mean "anyone who is good enough to get a job outside of this system." There's too much uncertainty among the people who actually do the work and they'll leave if they can. So you'll be left with the chaff. I guess you don't care, since you're keeping your jobs, so I'm sure you'll find more icebergs to ram the system into regardless of who's actually running the ship.

What are the barriers to a successful transformation?

The student experience as students may feel less affiliated with any given campus and therefore with the VSC as a whole.

The only barriers I see are a much too limited purpose and vision. The Chancellor's email notes how "critical" this work is. I agree, which is why this opportunity to make a real difference for our students, our communities, and our planet should not be reduced to an exercise in economic efficiency.

Narrow focus and misguided purpose. Details in comments above.

Proper marketing and branding, and administrative layout. We need a catchy name, logo, mascot, and colors that past, present, and future stakeholders can be proud of. Without it, it's NVU all over again with the POed alumni and divided student bodies. Please see "Other Comments" for administrative points.

The disaggregated rpk data has not been supplied to faculty, even though requests to release that data have been made. It will be difficult to begin to put together a unified academic plan without having all of the needed data.

closed minds (or maybe those who don't have creative responses to obstacles), people who haven't done research as to how the state systems in the rest of the country work, lack of funding from the State Legislature, lack of marketing/publicity outside of Vermont when transition is complete.

Resistant faculty and staff, concern from students and parents that a purely financial move doesn't protect their interests

The Chancellor's Office

This plan consistently values "efficiency" (doing things right) over effectiveness (doing the right thing). . The individual institutions within the VSCS have a track record of delivering quality and accessible education while serving all of Vermont's communities. The proposed austerity-driven transformation of the VSCS will negatively impact the ability to continue that success. The "problem" as clearly shown by the simple line graph in Fig.26 on page 67 is affordability. The people of Vermont deserve leadership with the vision to recognize higher education as a public good worthy of investment. The VSCS needs leaders who whole-heartedly support that vision.

The fact that while the administrative body may be for the merge, the students, alumni, and the majority of the university staff are strongly against it.

lack of understanding and too much of a single goal such as only caring about money and nothing else.

Getting so big that the details get lost. Leadership and oversight is better distributed at all levels rather than concentrated in one removed central office.

Pushing for each college/university to be "as one", since each are unique. Also reducing or moving departments that are working well at each college/university.

Many exceptional professors will leave making the brand of VSC lose prestige over time.

How are current students suppose to finish earning their degrees? Are all the faculty, staff, and professors going to be able to keep their jobs or are they going to have to go elsewhere? For students and alumni, how are they suppose to pay loans and other expenses to their universities during the transformation? If two of the three campuses close completely, will the third campus be able to handle the increased number of students, faculty, and staff? What if current students (both those who live on and off campus) are unable to return to college because they have to travel further than usual from home?

Executive level decision making that looks to consolidate schools in a system due to what is red and black in a ledger. Rushing to make a decision like this because of potential legislation deadlines instead of taking an extended period of time and working with many people in each institution to gather all of the factors that come into play before making a decision like this.

The concerns of your staff, faculty, alumni, and students.

The ability of the committee to listen to the communities the colleges are in.

What are the barriers to a successful transformation?

Rigid managerial system that relies on a corporate model of hierarchy and power. It is based on a model of domination, not partnership. Fundamental to the progression of systems towards sustainability is the reliance on partnership as a model for management and administration. The historical under-funding of higher education in VT and USA are tremendous obstacles.

Public opinion. Once the general public knows how badly the state has screwed up their educational funds they won't support it.

people thinking too small, mostly about survival of the university system

Unwillingness to give up separate campus identities. What are we going to do about logos, mascots, sports? And please, let's have an academic (serious-looking) logo, not one like NVU that resembles a corporation rather than a university. We need to look like UVM, not a diploma mill.

I think the main barrier is buy-in. Faculty, Students, Staff...buy-in is everything. We are seeing so many colleges closing or shuttering programs. There are so many concerns from faculty about what will exist after the transformation.

The barriers are many. First, all institutions are treated as if there were no differences. Each institution already has its own strengths and cultural identity. We risk losing that. Another barrier is that the process is overly prescribed by the Chancellor's Office, in my opinion. Despite "listening sessions" there appears to be a plan in place. Even the selection of the consultants chosen -- Page and NCHEMS -- were those with a history of merging institutions.

Limited knowledge for students on future actual academic changes

Lack of guidance from leadership. More transparency is required. Individuals offices do not know how the merger will work at a person-to-person level and who the various directors will be has led to a fair amount of confusion and distrust in the merger process.

Struggling through the territorialism, and protectiveness of local resources we are hearing about can be divisive.

Pay attention to what your students ACTUALLY want with their education and get rid of certain figures of authority.

Job opportunities lost.

Loss of students in schools because of students taking their funding to other schools. We do not pay for Vermont State University or the changes in our campus. We pay for Castleton, for NVU, for VTC.

Taking away the things that draw students to the colleges. Be careful not to take away things that are why people want to attend to VT schools and not somewhere else.

Too much input from non-stakeholding parties.

Unhappiness.

Are there other comments you would like to share?

Are there other comments you would like to share?

The new name needs to encompass all the campus in the name. For example Vermont State College Johnson, Vermont State College Castleton, Vermont State College Lyndon etc ...

People in our Education Departments support VT act 1, which is notable run by Mark Have, an anti-semite. Think. Don't just follow. Orwellian!

Aside from the merger, the name change is a concern. The proposed name is much too close to the University of Vermont and is guaranteed to create confusion among students looking to enroll.

I don't care for the name, Vermont State University. I think it is too similar to University of Vermont. I also don't want the individual campuses to lose their unique identities and brands. Maybe it could be something like Castleton, Green Mountains University. Or if you decide to go with Vermont State University, maybe you could say VSU Castleton, similar to the SUNY naming system.

Why is the comment sharing for the September 29th BOT meeting only available if you have a google account?

great idea, but mostly do it sooner rather than waiting so long

If this is going to be the name - It needs to be similar to UMass and become Vermont State - Castleton

Remember walking from Woodruff Hall, past the library, and towards the water fountain in between Jeffords Center and Stafford Academic Center? Seeing the plaques imbedded in the walkway showing the many names the school has taken along the way. The centuries of hard work in a few steps that leads to Castleton University. In my opinion, I don't think the name should be changed. First of all, the proposed name is very similar to UVM's... I think Castleton sounds like a prestigious name for what it is. There is a lot of impressive history that comes with that word. I'd want to see them keep that unique individuality. I haven't been following why they are doing the big merger but if these other Vermont schools have failed and Castleton has survived, why have them change the name?

I think I covered it above, my biggest point is I think it would be better to keep separate names for each location, not saying they should be changed, but will each location simply be "Vermont State University" at xxxxx?

Jonathan Spiro for President!!!

This is a bad idea and causing panic, hysteria, and an enormous amount of stress for employees.

Do not allow Castleton to become part of a different system and not continuing the depth and length of the school's history

Thank you for the transparency in the process and for the opportunity for public input.

I am very disappointed that VisionPoint will move forward given the unusable survey they put together. The data for that cannot be trusted. I say this as someone who has spent a career conducting surveys and teaching survey research methods. The survey they put out was atrocious.

The branding study coming up with a new name for the NCE states it will be surveying all sorts of parties who are already familiar with the VSC institutions. We need to draw future students who never knew about the VSC in the first place. There should be a survey of people who have no affiliation with the VSC and who have never even heard of the VSC, from places nearby and far, far away. We need to know how a new name will be perceived by the people we have wanted to reach in the past but never did.

I find it interesting that this new system is trying to do something that has already failed. I see many similarities between this and what happened with the NVU merger. If it was successful we wouldn't be doing this again and yet we are trying to do the same thing in the same way.

Are there other comments you would like to share?

I am interested in being involved in any efforts you will make to help represent students who are parents and students who are adults. Having seen so many Mothers quit college, due to a lack of knowledge. no one to listen or a place to turn, I am passionate about this! I represent the 40 yr old returning student and the working single Mother. I would like to do what I can to help other women in my previous position, get the education that is so necessary to true independence.

If you succeed in your mission - and you might! - you'll reduce the VSCS to a network of poorly-staffed and underfunded commuter learning hubs. A glorified CCV. And there's nothing wrong with a community college model, so don't take that as a dig at CCV. But here's the thing: we already have a CCV. We have a professional, "industry"-focused, "education-as-a-service," come-get-a-quick-associate's-degree institution of higher ed here in Vermont. We don't need you to gut out all the things that make in-person, on-campus learning what it is - which mostly boils down to well paid, secure, and academically free faculty and a smattering of student support services - in favor of a rebranding campaign and "optimization" and the literal dozens of employees of the goddamn Chancellor's Office doing whatever the hell you all do up in Montpelier all day. I know that all my writing is the equivalent of screaming into the void (or, more accurately, screaming into a sterile PDF that is promptly ignored by all of you brave decision-makers), and that's part of why I'm escaping this broken system for greener pastures, but Jesus, someone needs to speak truth to power, even if just a little bit.

I would like to address the late creation of a DEI working group that the Chancellor mentioned in her update on July 19. With the way things are moving, I worry that any framework identified by that group is going to be something that decision-makers later try to retrofit onto what's already been done so that we can claim to address DEI, rather than building equity into the university in all its aspects from the beginning. In other words, it seems like optical allyship (defined by Latham Thomas as "allyship that only serves at the surface level to platform the 'ally', it makes a statement but doesn't go beneath the surface and is not aimed at breaking away from the systems of power that oppress" <https://www.instagram.com/p/BiPDZkbFJFY/?hl=en>). By throwing DEI into a working group, after others have already been going for a while, you send the message that 1) it isn't foundational to all of the work we're doing, 2) it isn't important enough for the leadership to meaningfully engage with, and 3) active, ongoing, antiracist work isn't necessary for all of us. A framework is helpful, but it is only as good as the people enacting it. If they aren't well educated on the systemic issues that face oppressed and minoritized populations and who are committed to dismantling systems of oppression, it does more harm than good, even if they have good intentions. What anti-oppression work are the leaders of this system and transformation doing within themselves and within their communities? What antiracist work? Anti-ableist? Anti-sexist? Anti-classist? I encourage you to continue the list yourselves. Real change is absolutely critical, but it will not happen by committee. Each and every one of us is responsible for dismantling the systems of oppression that we've been socialized to accept. That work is not easy and it is not comfortable, especially for those who hold privilege and power. That makes it even more necessary for them, for us, to do.

I'm concerned that this comment will go into a void; how are public comments being managed? What is the procedure for including comments into the process? How is one to be confident that any comment is actually read? My substantive concern is the process that claims to be "student-centered" has not done any research, as far as I can tell, on student concerns and student preferences. I do not believe that the process should be governed entirely by what students want (after all, we are the experts in higher education), but it clearly needs to include student's voices. I am worried that any effort to speak for students without some broad effort to include student opinion will distort the majority viewpoint. How will student voices be included? And how can we be sure that those voices are representative. Lastly, I found it extremely arrogant in today's (July 26) town hall meeting that the project manager spoke about building student spirit and a sense of community rather than preserving the sense of community ("The Castleton Way") that has been built over decades.

the system should remain with the same name, Vermont State Colleges (or University) System, and keep the campus names. This gives all areas the ability to stay distinct and not have another blow like what happened with Jeb's announcements. The money we are spending on re-branding could be much better spent on internal transformation. Additionally, the transformation that needs to take place is internal structure, not necessarily external. A single marketing department could still market the "system", while suggesting in advertising there is a place for everyone in one of our 4 campuses, or the CCV/remote options.

I enjoy working on the Castleton campus and with its fine students. I am appalled at the lack of maintenance in every building, and sidewalk, but especially the entrance to our Campus center. The sign is rotted and breaking apart, the walkway is a tripping hazard and looks awful. Impression is everything, we need employees who care about this campus, where is the management? It is not acceptable when trying to attract any new students or bring in donors or alumni, most of the work is cosmetic and basic, but nothing ever gets done! I have pictures for anyone who would like to see the poor condition of what used to be a beautiful campus. I would be happy to make a project list, as it seems nobody sees anything or takes pride in working here. If we are paying managers to run the facilities and grounds, what are they doing? This has been 5 years now, what gives? I am a former Operations manager, Castleton needs someone to work, or nothing will operate. We have lost potential summer camps due to lack of building maintenance, it is pathetic and sad to me.

Grow a spine. Be honest. Stop hiring consultants. Go down to ground level and ask faculty and staff on a one-to-one level what needs to happen to fix things. Listen to your employees. Take ownership of your failures to this point. Develop a real strategic plan that fits Vermont's specific needs, culture, and demographics. This is a damn joke so far.

WHY ARE THERE NO STUDENTS INCLUDED IN THE "CORE PROCESS AREA: STUDENT EXPERIENCE"?? They should be heavily represented in that work.

Are there other comments you would like to share?

I realize this work is not easy, which is why effectiveness (doing the right thing) should take priority over efficiency (doing things right). I owned and operated small and mid-sized companies for decades before joining academia, so I am not naive about economics. I also know that education is a public good, not a business. Even though my background is business, I believe higher education should serve all of humanity, not merely the economy.

What are the core values undergirding this plan? I do not see mention of human values in the plan.

Vermont Tech is known for its Technical programs... I hope the name reflects this.

One struggle that I've seen on the NVU campuses since our mini-merge is the lack of leadership physically present. Students struggle to connect with our Executive Team because they are constricted to their offices and bounce between both campuses, not really spending time at either. We don't see them walking the halls or at the dining facilities. When we bring up infrastructure concerns, they can't believe our complaints. This is because they don't see them. They aren't around to see the chipped paint, rusted railings, missing banners, or dangerous potholes. I ask that when creating an administration for this new university model that there are Executive Team representatives (whether it's a Dean, a Provost, a President, whoever) physically present on each of our campuses. There needs to be an executive voice for all of our diverse cultures who actually sees and experiences what the students, faculty, and staff experience.

You should allow every student at every state college to participate in any sport at any of the state colleges. For example, a student at CCV who is taking online classes or a Vermont Tech student in Randolph should be able to do triathlon at NVU and skiing at Castleton. This is especially important for female students because sports are such an important part of personal growth for women. That is why Title IX is so important. Also, it would be a way to accommodate students with disabilities. Some students need a lot of exercise, for their brain to work well. A lot of people are like that. That is part of the purpose of high school and college sports. Exercise helps the brain work well short term, and it also helps with brain development and neurogenesis. Also, a cross-college sports policy would help allow full participation by students with physical disabilities who are limited in what sports they can do. Students with disabilities can participate more fully in sports if there are enough sports for them to choose from, that there's one on the list that they're able to do. If students can participate in any sport offered in the state college system, that would help students with disabilities be able to find one or two sports they can do.

State residents should vote in representatives who actually support education and are willing to fund it. I'm also dismayed at the turnover in employees I've seen in the past 10 months - not sure if people are retiring, tacking advantage of other growth opportunities, or jumping ship prior to the merger. High employee turnover is detrimental to success of an institution and the students.

I wish you all the best of luck with this transformation.

Giving one name to all these institutions and wiping away their individual identities is a mistake

This transformation is a joke and your "leadership" is why.

The plan's "vision" fails to embrace the potential of public higher education. Three examples: 1-Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. believed the goal of true education should be "intelligence plus character." The Select Committee notes the goal of providing "skilled labor" but makes no mention of human intelligence, no mention of the core values essential to the development of character. 2-Walt Whitman understood that "The role of those in power... is to train [educate] communities ... beginning with individuals and ending there again, to rule themselves." And yet those in power place participation in "democratic society" secondary to "preparing students for participation in the world of work." 3-Jane Goodall observes, "Bizarre, isn't it, that the most intellectual creature, surely, that's ever lived on the planet, is destroying its only home... I truly believe, only when head and heart work in harmony can we attain our true human potential." How can we even contemplate a "workplace-connected future" which ignores the climate crisis and the persistent environmental degradation that threaten any future at all on our planet? How can we have a discussion about the future of higher education that prioritizes "workforce development" but fails to even acknowledge the need for the development of "our true human potential"? Why does VSCS leadership seem not to understand what these great minds so clearly articulate? These are my concerns for the future of education in general: • Emphasis on STEM courses at the expense of the Humanities. • Emphasis on training workers at the expense of educating Citizens. • Allowing corporate interests to hijack higher education at the expense of our Democracy. • A misguided push for austerity (in the guise of transformation) at the expense of the Public Good. Eco-philosopher David Abram identifies the three greatest threats to humanity: "war, greed, indifference." These existential problems will not be solved by austerity. They can be solved with investment in a vision of true education based on core values - Human Intelligence plus Character.

Are there other comments you would like to share?

I understand that the Board is looking for a company to rebrand the merging schools, most of which have already rebranded in recent years. This will be an expensive process and wasteful process. We have boxes of letterhead from prior to the rebrand that was turned into scrap paper. There's also been a lot of upset around the identities of the individual schools within the larger merged entity, and we've been assured that each campus will be able to keep its identity. Given that, why not leave the branding as-is? SUNY has 64 campuses, all of which have their own branding and name conventions (<https://www.suny.edu/attend/visit-us/complete-campus-list/>). Some have SUNY in the name (SUNY Canton), some are identified as SUNY campuses outside of the name (University at Buffalo: The State University of New York), and some make no mention of SUNY at all (Cayuga Community College). If each campus kept its branding (maybe we could phase in "The Vermont State University" or whatever the new entity's name is, like Buffalo), it would save the enormous costs of rebranding and might even assuage some folks' fears about losing our institutional identities.

leadership should be local control since that leads to success in the past and any overall single leadership leads to them always dropping some schools from their attention. It is always the case in several examples around the state alone with that. Are any of the problems that have to lead the VSC into these positions been addressed such as poor program management, lack of changing majors etc. been addressed otherwise in a few years the system will be right back to this mess again.

I would certainly retain individual presidents at each campus, that is one way to distribute oversight and leadership.

A president should remain at each college/university to represent the institution. Then maybe there could be a board or individual that they collaborate/meet with. Name wise, you could leave current names and adding "A Vermont State College" at the end or something of that nature. Which allows for the same name, but now CU is part of something bigger, as are the other colleges/universities. As an alumni of Castleton University, which was Castleton State College at the time of my graduation, name is very important as well as many other things that made my decision in earning my degree there. As a student, I was looking at degree, location, size, and atmosphere/environment. Castleton marked all of those boxes. It is a small university/college with a big heart and it should stay that way. Furthermore, I wouldn't be where I am today if it were not for the professors, and Natural Science Department as a whole. Keep what is working and collaborate to improve.

Castleton University should remain independent from the fusion of the Vermont State Colleges initiative.

How would the local communities around these colleges be affected by the transformation (examples: volunteering of college clubs, income to local businesses, fulfilling the work force in the area)?

As an alumni, it is difficult watching the University change it's name so many times in such a short time period. Although I understand the circumstances, I do not feel good donating back to the university just yet knowing the funds are being used to change the name again and again.

To those actually making this decision at whatever upper levels it is being made at I say this, the goal of a university system should be offering educational opportunities to its students. Unfortunately university systems are operated much like elderly care facilities, as businesses. I do understand that a university cannot run without the money it takes to (insert list of operational needs here), but speak to the faculty and students about where they think priorities should be when allocating funding. You might then find a better direction in which to steer the ship. An obvious cornerstone of university systems is research and polling. I hope that this survey is a good-faith attempt at that and that the responses are truly taken into account, not just a feel good measure taken for the sake of appearance. I say with pride that I graduated from Castleton University and I will not be hung up on having to say something along the lines of "I graduated from VSU - Castleton" or something like that. I am a Spartan and I think this point can be easily navigated in this conversation by pointing that aspect out to people on both sides of this debate. It can only be successful though if the folks at the different institutions are gauged for their ideas of what makes the Vermont State University system what it is, and what makes each individual university what it is and truly trying to combine those ideals. Obtain the buy in from the people on this ship and use their input. Do not look at what is said on these surveys and say "that's nice, but people above my pay grade want to go in this other direction." Think critically, don't be afraid to take the chance on doing what's right instead of what you feel that other people will be happy to see.

I think the current plan of combining of the Vermont State College system is flawed and will harm the established identity of Castleton.

According to our records in the Atmospheric Sciences Department, we have had 63 graduates in the past five years. This should be corrected in the latest rpK report which incorrectly states that only 39 Atmos SciBS degrees have been awarded during this period.

I would encourage you to consider adopting a new model of leadership that is based on systems theory and optimizing innovation. Centralized management models are not serving us, and they are rooted in historical traditions of domination and colonialism. You are not thinking creatively about the administrative model, only prescribing creative solutions for the academic arm of the institutions. This is not a system-level approach.

When I was recruited I was told over and over Castleton was a small arts and science based university with a personal feel - I do not want a virtual library I do not want a president that oversees 4 colleges nothing is personal about that - I am an out of state student there are no tuition programs for me and the athletic fields and library as well as the dorms need updating

Are there other comments you would like to share?

While we all want the "good" vermonters to stay, we have to acknowledge there are many bad people living here and people we don't want at our institutions. By making these schools all into one, you're inviting many people in who should never be around a college campus, and you're pushing away the ones who will excel. Lots of castleton students will tell you how weird it is to have 25-30 year olds with families creeping on them at a party or around campus. It's already a bad place to be, don't make it worse.

There are various types of students and stakeholders that it would be wise to think about. Typical aged college students, non-traditional aged college students looking for professional development, and also the communities and what they need for work force development. Where there's a worker shortage, could influence what programs get offered. Also, VT needs to take more advantage of HRSA scholarships and loan repayment programs, through the types of programs offered at our universities. Those are full ride scholarships and there are many HRSA designated areas in VT. That's a huge source of potential revenue. But we would need to offer programs in the professions those scholarships are for. Which we should do anyway because there are worker shortages in those professions. Psychotherapists (no program in our university system?), social workers (UVM has a program), physician assistants (no program in our university system), nurse practitioners (no program in our university system), dentists (no program in our university system). We're getting very little from the HRSA program just by not offering the types of programs that the grants pay for. That is a mistake. We should have those programs in our university system. Having a combined university may allow us to pool resources to start programs that are professions that are needed in Vermont and where students can use HRSA scholarships to attend.

I am a 77 year old degree student. For cost reasons, I have been working on finishing my BA at both Johnson and Lyndon for many years. I have always felt that the schools make little effort to encourage older students. The "traditional" student mindset has seem cast in iron. I read in the press about other schools that are more welcoming to us OWLs (Older Wiser Learners), while NVU just takes us for granted (although professors appreciate us). Since the modern undergraduate is so reluctant to speak up in class, we are needed as catalysts. Give us a club, free tuition after 65, and publicity (mugs and T-shirts?) There are more of us in Vermont every day. Use us...

In NH, we have the University System of NH -- but the universities of KSC, PSU, and UNH are still very different campuses with their own identities. I truly feel that the re-naming to one name will take away so much of the history and legacy that the institutions hold dear. Additionally, we have a FINE music education program and music program at CU with three full-time professors which is a reason that we are successful. I am struggling to understand why NVU has no full time music program personnel and they just lost their "dept. head" and are still promoting a full music program. I LOVE teaching at Castleton. I love being a part of the Castleton Way and bringing the Castleton Spirit to our students and faculty. I love the campus and the community and am passionate about the amazing students of the CU Fine and Performing Arts Dept. and supporting them to become the best musicians and music teachers they can be.

I feel that the transformation process, despite the claims and rhetoric, is not focused on student needs. I also think that the process is overly focused on "workforce development" poorly defined. While it is extremely important that the VSC institutions prepare students for productive careers, it is overly focused on projected employment needs in Vermont. In other words, the objective is to serve the "projected" needs of Vermont businesses not to promote the best interests of the students, whose tuition, because of under-funding from the state, is the primary source of the system funding. We have professional programs that prepare students for careers in related fields, but the liberal arts prepare students to be adaptable, critical thinkers who could launch successful careers in a wide array of areas.

New name: Vermont State University. Stop the "brand bullying" from CU & its surrounding communities!

N/A

Castleton University, to its furthest extent, should be able to remain as independent as possible and retain its own identity. This institution, on all quantifiable scales, contributes more into the Vermont State College system than any other institution. There has been word that data from each college will be integrated so that numbers will operate as a single unit - it is imperative that all data, even under a single system, be tracked from each institution.

RE: Branding/Naming - I like how other states have state college systems in which they use their locations as an indication of their differences. For Instance: Vermont State College: Johnson or Vermont State University: Johnson.

Get rid of Jeff Bickford.. this is a request of students, faculty, and the community. This man is a major reason people are leaving the Johnson Campus.

This transformation wasn't the best idea ever. This is happening without our control. Not many people agreed with this. We will be pulling off funds to attend Castleton if this did happen. We will let future students know that this is occurring. Parents will not like this merger because of increased funds.

Are there other comments you would like to share?

I believe this has been done so the wrong way and it will lead to a larger lack in student body. After just a small survey from close students, many of them are upset at the merger and all of which said if changes were so large and bold, moving schools is a large priority. I think the fact that the students having 0 knowledge and say in where our money funds will lead to the demise of the system you all said would help.

"Castleton" has a lot of name recognition, such as when successful professionals talk glowingly about their student experiences there. You need to keep "Castleton" in the name. "Vermont State College at Castleton," for example. Don't remove the "Castleton" name. That would make it harder to attract students. There are some things about "Castleton" that are legendary. Like the Tom Heffernan era of the Nordic ski program. You lose legendary status if you drop the word "Castleton" from the name. That is just my opinion from having grown up in NH hearing about "Castleton." "Castleton" is famous in a very positive way. The small, rural, reasonably priced state college with excellent academics, very friendly and respectful staff, and awesome though humble athletic opportunities. A quietly awesome place, awesome by having very high quality things to offer, not by being high-pressure. People fell in love with what they were doing, developed solid knowledge and skills, and made life-long friendships there. Castleton's athletic training program is at the cutting edge of the field. People speak more highly of "Castleton" than they do of "Dartmouth" on average, in NH, and "Dartmouth" is in NH. You need to have the word "Castleton" in the name.

I know that the Chancellor has assured us that this ship has sailed, but I can't resist, so.... Whenever I think about the future of the VSCS, which is often, I always conclude that the best course of action for the VSCS is to implement the third option suggested by the Select Committee on the Future of Higher Education in Vermont in its December 4, 2020, report. That option calls for Castleton University to remain Castleton University and to continue to have its own president. It also calls for Castleton University to embrace the administrative consolidation and academic realignment recommended by the report. I think this option is best for CU and for the system for these reasons: 1. I agree with President Dave Wolk that the Castleton University "brand" is important. I prefer the word "reputation." We are known inside and outside of Vermont as a friendly, student-centered institution where the virtues of kindness, honesty, and decency are valued and promoted. We have tried to express that spirit in the phrase "the Castleton way." Dave tried to capture it in the line, "the small college with a big heart." This reputation matters because so many of our students come from small high schools and the prospect of going to college with hundreds, and maybe thousands, of other people can be unbelievably intimidating. You probably know Darren Perron. He is a reporter and news presenter for WCAX. Darren applied to only one college when he was a senior in high school. That college was Castleton. He knew he could thrive here, and he did. He is not the only student who has had this experience. From the students who have wanted to be high school teachers and coaches to the students who have wanted to be nurses in delivery rooms and cancer wards, Castleton has been a welcoming institution that lets them know that we will help them fulfill their dreams. If Castleton University becomes a part of a larger institution, how do we know that it will keep its present reputation and appeal? We might well be seen as just a non-descript part of a new university, not any different from all the other parts, a victim of bureaucratic standardization. "The branch with a big heart" won't do much for our enrollment, that's for sure. Why force Castleton to abandon its reputation, when it's so easy to keep it? We can retain the name AND be part of Vermont State University. Our letterhead might look something like CASTLETON UNIVERSITY, a member of the Vermont State University System. Sounds good to me. 2. I also think Castleton University should have its own president. The president represents the institution. He or she speaks for the university to our students, staff, faculty, alumni, and supporters in the area and around the state. The president promotes and insures the health and welfare of the university. The report suggests that in place of a president, the university will have a "campus CEO." Well, what will the duties of this person be? If the campus CEO has the same duties as our current president, then why not call the campus CEO a president? And if the campus CEO does not have the same duties, then what duties does he or she NOT have? Moreover, I strongly believe that someone who is only responsible for Castleton University will have a deeper concern for it and more time to advance its mission than someone who is responsible for three or four institutions. After all, there are only so many hours in a day. I should mention that I do not expect the president to have the same salary and benefits that previous presidents have had. Given the financial problems of the VSCS, serving as the president of Castleton University would have to be seen as an act of love. I think there are a number of talented people who would be willing to do this. They would be following the example of Edwin Colodny, who served as interim president of UVM during its difficult days either for no salary or a very modest one. 3. Keeping the names and presidents of the three universities will cut back on the conflicts that are bound to occur between the chancellor and the presidents. It will be clear that the presidents preside over the institutions and the chancellor presides over the system and the presidents. If there are only two presidents, as the report recommends, and one of them presides over a two-year institution, I think the president of VSU will want to take over more and more of the duties assigned to the Chancellor in the report. Most of the chancellor's duties apply to VSU, not CCV, and because the president of VSU is responsible for the direction and welfare of VSU, that president will want a stronger and stronger voice in deciding what the tasks and destiny of VSU will be. "Who's in charge here?" will become an increasingly troublesome question. I fear that the preceding paragraph makes me seem jaded. I'm not. I am, however, experienced. I have been associated with Castleton and the VSC for over 50 years. I have worked with many presidents and chancellors. Conflicts among them are inevitable, but the more we can do to minimize those conflicts, the better. Option 3 will do that. Option 1, the one presently in favor, will not. Thank you for reading my long comment. I appreciate it. All the best.

For the people designing the new portal, please allow the option for two-factor authentication (2FA) when logging in to the new portal.

I just finished reading the Chancellor's latest "update." I did not see the phrase "quality education" indicated anywhere in that message. Just wondering if delivering a quality education to our students is still part of our VSC mission. If so, why is it never mentioned?

I think, for the sake of faculty sanity, it would be prudent to have some sort of preliminary statement about how the reorganization will affect hiring, particularly part timers. Obviously, some consolidation and elimination of redundancy will mean some job losses, but it would be nice to know how integration may affect long time part time faculty who have been teaching at a particular institution.

Are there other comments you would like to share?

In reading the Select Committee's Report, there are multiple references to teaching more classes online so that students from each campus can take the same class simultaneously and avoid duplicate classes. After 3 semesters of online/Zoom classes, I think it has been well established that most students do not learn well this way. Students also do not choose to go to residential campuses to stay within their room and take classes. Barring Covid restrictions in the fall and beyond, students need to be in a classroom the vast majority of the time and in front of a professor. As the parent of an out-of-state student, paying higher tuition and room & board, I can tell you that if a significant percentage of classes are planned to be remote that will not be a viable situation for my son. There's also the concern that there will be a reduction in class offerings and majors. My concern is that even if students can finish out the majors being eliminated, they will likely be impacted by exiting faculty. A significant concern I have is that you are not considering the brand recognition that currently exists with all of your institutions, especially Castleton University. It has a long-reaching, positive reputation known throughout the country, thanks, in part, to students who come here for sports. They also have international students who bring home their experiences and share with others in their country – which may encourage others to attend Castleton. Professors include Fulbright Scholars. Employers know the quality of its graduates. Castleton has been around for 234 years. It is obviously doing something right. If you make the Castleton name just a location suffix in a generic VSU name, all this history, name recognition and reputation will be lost. NVU has already gone thru a rebranding less than 3 years ago. As I've heard and read, it is still feeling the repercussions of their name change. If you change their name again, not only will you experience that same identity issue and confusion, you will have wasted all the money that has already been spent on rebranding. I don't know a lot about Vermont Tech but from what I have read and listened to on your forums and board meetings, they are quite unique and very well respected for their curriculum. Why would you want to ignore this and change their name? With rebranding comes expense. The reason for the merger is financial. Why spend millions of dollars when you already have established brands within your system? This money can be spent where you most need it: attract and increase enrollment, offer scholarships, etc. There is no reason why the transformation cannot be accomplished without changing the names of each school. I think a lot of hesitancy toward the merger is what has occurred with NVU over the past few years. As two separate colleges, their struggles led to the merger to NVU. Not more than 2 years later, with continued financial woes and declining enrollment, the previous chancellor felt there was no other option but to close these campuses. Understanding more money will be infused by the state and cost reductions will help but what is the proposal to increase enrollment to maintain the viability of the programs? Is it just more affordable tuition? If the student population in VT is getting smaller, perhaps additional attention to getting more out of state students, who bring in a larger tuition payment, should be considered to maintain the viability of the state universities. It would bring additional money to the schools and to the community and potentially result in students remaining in VT after graduation, becoming residents in the state and contributing to the growth of the economy. Money that would be spent on rebranding could be used to have more interaction with high school guidance counselors within VT and other states to encourage students to attend VT state universities by promoting the outstanding education and value they can offer. A big part of keeping schools viable is STUDENTS! I understand that the primary intent of a state university is to educate its residents at a reasonable cost. I'm sure adding out-of-state students are a financial benefit but may not be a focus. My son selected Castleton because of its program, its reputation, its history, its commitment to students, small class sizes, faculty relationships, football program and coaches, the beautiful outdoors and the general feel of belonging he felt when he walked on campus. You shouldn't discount or dismiss this. One-size-fits-all is not what attracts students. That's why each of these schools has a separate identity. You can still make necessary financial cuts and implement one set of policies and procedures for all and still keep each school's identity. If not, they become impersonal and generic. Each university meets the needs of its community as well. You don't want to lose those attributes. I know you will be hiring a team to implement these changes. You need educational experts for this transition – someone to make tough decisions. If a campus or satellite location must close to keep the state university system flourishing, then do it. Otherwise, you will be right back here in another few years. A long term plan is definitely necessary along with administrative consolidation but not at the detriment of students. Keeping each school's identity and brand reduces rebranding expense and avoids the loss of reputation and recognition. I also hope that each campus will retain a presence of qualified staff and administration in each department. There are many things students need to talk with staff about in person. You lose that personal touch speaking with someone on the phone or on a Zoom call. This entire merger is a huge undertaking and while it is essential to be completed as quickly as possible, it does seem rushed. It is my hope that everything will be thought out completely and prepared in a manner that will lead to immediate success upon implementation. We've already seen that the previous NVU merger did not solve the issues. Even if finances are consolidated, I strongly believe that it would be prudent to have each campus report financials separately so that you can identify what works and what does not. Putting it all together makes it difficult to identify needed adjustments in a particular location. Thank you for all the time and work you and the Select Committee has put into this transformation. I hope my concerns and comments will be considered.

Students and parents especially need to be put in the loop, not left out. More money is going to be lost due to the lack of communication and the behind the scenes work going on. We were originally told it would be 2024 which would be my senior year, and now it is apparently 2023 which would be directly in the middle of my career. As someone who graduated high school in 2020 during Covid, and started as a freshman in college in Covid, it is really upsetting to see that I'm also going to be screwed over for my junior and senior years of college.

I believe this idea has been put forth before, but given the beauty of our Johnson (and Lyndon) campus(es), I think there is significant revenue to be raised by renting out our venue(s) for weddings and other special events. Please see this article for ideas:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2019/11/college-campuses-wedding-venues/601792/>

End of Report

