


MEMORANDUM

TO: VSCS Board of Trustees

FROM: Sophie Zdatny, Chancellor 

DATE: May 13, 2022

SUBJECT: Board of Trustees Meeting on May 13, 2022

Trustees:

Materials are now available for the Board meeting scheduled for **1:00 p.m. on Monday, May 16, 2022**. The meeting will take place via Zoom and will be livestreamed on YouTube.

Following approval of the minutes, the Board will receive reports from the Executive Committee, DEI Committee, and Audit Committees. Two action items are expected during these reports. The first is an amendment to the VSC's Bylaws, and the second is review and approval of the VSCS Diversity Statement.

Our Chief Financial and Operating Officer, Sharron Scott, will offer a resolution regarding the formal designation of legal signers for a Northern Borders Regional Commission grant proposal. This action simply documents the authorities already provided for under VSCS Bylaws.

Our Director of Government and External Affairs, Katherine Levasseur, will provide a **legislative update** as the legislative session winds to a close.

Trustee Ryan Cooney will be stepping down at the conclusion of his term. We will honoring the service of Student Trustee Ryan Cooney at this meeting.

Following public comment, the Board will enter executive session. We do anticipate that action will be taken upon exit of the session. The concluding item of the agenda will a discussion on system-wide shared services.

cc: Council of Presidents
Academic Deans
Business Affairs Council
Student Affairs Council

Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees Meeting
Zoom Meeting/YouTube Stream
Monday, May 16, 2022 at 1:00 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Call to order
2. Approval of Minutes
 - a. April 18, 2022 Board Meeting
3. Report from Executive Committee
 - a. Motion/vote amendment to Bylaws
 - b. Review revised Gap Analysis
 - c. Overview of Onboarding Process for Trustees
4. Report from DEI Committee
 - a. Motion/vote on VSCS Diversity Statement
5. Report from Audit Committee
6. NBRC Grant – Motion/vote
7. Legislative Update
8. Resolution Honoring the Service of Student Trustee Ryan Cooney
9. Comments from the public – sign up here: www.vsc.edu/signup
10. Executive session – the Board is expected to take action upon exiting the executive session
11. Shared Services – motion/vote
12. Additional Business
13. Adjourn

MEETING MATERIALS

- Item 1: April 18, 2022 Meeting Minutes
- Item 2: Proposed Amendment to Bylaws
- Item 3: VSC Board Gap Analysis
- Item 4: Onboarding Materials
 - a) Checklist
 - b) Outtake page from Onboarding Packet
- Item 5: VSCS Diversity Statement Materials
 - a) Summary of Feedback for the Diversity Statement
 - b) Diversity Statement Revision Comments
 - c) VSCS Diversity Statement v2.1
- Item 6: NBRC Grant

ITEM 1:
April 18, 2022 Meeting Minutes

**Minutes of the VSCS Board of Trustees Meeting held Monday, April 18, 2022, at 2:00 p.m.
via ZOOM – UNAPPROVED**

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

The Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees met on Monday, April 18, 2022, via ZOOM.

Board members present: Lynn Dickinson (Chair), Megan Cluver (Vice Chair), Janette Bombardier, Ryan Cooney, David Durfee, Adam Grinold, Shirley Jefferson, Bill Lippert, Karen Luneau, Mary Moran, David Silverman, Shawn Tester, Sue Zeller

Absent: Jim Masland

Presidents: Joyce Judy, Tom Mauhs-Pugh, John Mills, Pat Moulton

Chancellor's Office Staff: Donny Bazluke, Network/Security Analyst
Kellie Campbell, Chief Information Officer
Kathrine Levasseur, Director of External and Government Affairs
Jen Porrier, Administrative Director
Sharron Scott, Chief Financial/Operations Officer
Toby Stewart, System Controller
Patty Turley, General Counsel
Sophie Zdatny, Chancellor
Yasmine Ziesler, Chief Academic Officer

From the Colleges: Nolan Atkins, Provost, Northern Vermont University
Jae Basiliere, Director, Center for Teaching & Learning, Northern Vermont University
Roy Brock, Dean of Administration & Finance, Northern Vermont University
Beth Camp, Student Success Specialist, Vermont Technical College
Sarah Chambers, Coordinator of Instructional Technology, Castleton University
Mary Cooper, Center for Academic Success Coordinator, Vermont Technical College
Barb Flathers, Executive Assistant, Northern Vermont University
Ana Gaillat, Dean of Academic Affairs, Vermont Technical College
Laura Jakubowski, Chief Budget & Finance Officer, Castleton University
Siobhan Anderson-Judkins, Coordinator of Residence Life, Vermont Technical College

Mary Kathryn Juskiewicz, Associate Dean for Outreach & Support, Vermont Technical College
Andy Pallito, Dean of Administration, Community College of Vermont
Dannielle Spring, Chief Budget & Finance Officer, Northern Vermont University
Laura St. George, Williston Coordinator at Ctr for Academic Success, Vermont Technical College
Denise Rhodes, Consultant, Finance & Registration Services, Castleton University
Beth Walsh, President, VSCUP, Northern Vermont University

From the Public:

Jen Harriger, Reporter, NBC5
Steve Leo, Managing Director, Storbeck Search

1. Chair Dickinson called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.
2. Approval of April 11, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Trustee Zeller moved and Trustee Moran seconded the motion to approve the minutes from the April 11, 2022 meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Report from EPSL Committee – Approval of Faculty Fellows

Trustee Cluver asked Chief Academic Officer Yasmine Ziesler to share information with the Board on the two nominations for Faculty Fellow before the Board. Dr. Ziesler shared that these two nominees are both leaders in their field and both of their proposals are centered on helping fellow faculty prepare for the launch of Vermont State University. Gina Mireault, a professor of Psychology and Chair of the Behavioral Sciences Department at Northern Vermont University will be focusing on learning/working communities. Chris Boettcher, an English professor and the inaugural Chair of Castleton's Center for Teaching and Learning, will be focusing on the development of the "face to face plus" pilot.

Trustee Moran moved and Trustee Luneau seconded the motion to approve the nominees of Christopher Boettcher and Gina Mireault for Faculty Fellowships for 2022-2023, as set forth in Resolution 2022-005 and Resolution 2022-006. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Report from Finance & Facilities Committee – Approval of CCV Northern Lights grant

Trustee Silverman shared information about the Community College of Vermont's pass-through grant with Northern Lights. Trustee Silverman stated that the grant offers professional development, career advising, and registry supports for early childhood educators and afterschool professionals.

Trustee Silverman moved and Trustee Luneau seconded to approve the CCV Northern Lights Grant. The motion was approved unanimously.

5. Report from Presidents

Vermont Technical College President Pat Moulton shared that the recent Vermont Tech NECHE accreditation focused visit was very successful. President Moulton went on to share that a mediated settlement with Lucky S Ranch has been reached. Finally, Vermont Tech is proceeding with a reboot of their Agriculture Program at the Randolph campus and they are looking forward to renovations at the farm. Part of those preparations include the sale of the 80-cow dairy herd, a one year lease of Vermont Tech crop land, and a one year lease of Vermont Tech farm infrastructure. Vermont Tech is in the process of evaluating the proposals for those sales and leases.

Castleton University President Tom Mauhs-Pugh shared that in the initial CU adopted budget there was projected a \$9 million deficit but the budget is currently forecasting a \$2.3 million deficit. CU was able to close this gap by seeing an increase in tuition, room and board, increasing sales and services, saving on supplies and travel, and holding vacant positions open. There was also a federal HEERF grant offset that contributed. For fall 2023, applicants are running 20% higher than the previous year at this same time and deposited students are 6% higher.

Community College of Vermont President Joyce Judy shared that one of its students has received national recognition as a 2022 Phi Theta Kappa distinguished member. CCV is seeing a continuing trend with growing interest in online and remote learning and they continue to add sections to their already broad offering of online courses to meet the growing demand. President Judy also shared that she has been asked to serve as a Commissioner with the New England Commission of Higher Education.

Northern Vermont University President John Mills shared that recently, on the Johnson campus, there was a dedication of the Mamadou N'Diaye Resource Center, named in memory of a former NVU student. This center was created by the Coalition of Minority Students as a safe place for people of color and is open to all students, faculty, and community members as a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion resource center. NVU also announced the expansion of the Lyndon Learning Collaborative, in conjunction with the Lyndon Learning Institute to provide the opportunity for eligible Lyndon Institute juniors and seniors to obtain up to two full years of college academic credit through college-level courses offered by NVU. Lastly, President Mills shared that Gina Mireault was awarded an NIH grant for the next four years to support up to twenty students to work on grant-funded research on magic and humor in babies. President Mills shared that this is a highly competitive grant.

6. Comments from the public

There were no comments from the public.

7. Executive Session

At 2:38 p.m. Trustee Luneau moved that the VSCS Board of Trustees enter executive session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) to discuss the appointment and employment of a public officer. She further moved that the Board enter executive session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(E) to discuss pending civil litigation because premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body involved at a substantial disadvantage. Along with the members of the Board present at this meeting, the Board invited Steve Leo

from the firm of Storbeck Search, the Chancellor, and the General Counsel to attend. Trustee Moran seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

The Board exited executive session at 4:06 p.m.

Trustee Luneau moved and Trustee Cooney seconded the motion to approve Resolution 2022-007, Appointing Dr. Parwinder Grewal to serve as the first President of Vermont State University and to serve as the President of Castleton University, Northern Vermont University, and Vermont Technical College for the 2022-2023 academic year. The motion was approved unanimously.

Dr. Grewal thanked the Board for their work in turning a crisis into an exciting opportunity and expressed his excitement at being able to transform higher education.

Chair Dickinson thanked the Search and Screen Committee and its Chair, Megan Cluver, as well as Storbeck Search and Sharron Scott for their work on the search for the first President of Vermont State University.

8. Additional Business

There was no additional business.

Chair Dickinson adjourned the meeting at 4:12 p.m.

ITEM 2:
Proposed Amendment to Bylaws

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO BYLAWS

ARTICLE V - ~~INSTITUTION~~ CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Section 1. **Institutional** President - The President is the chief executive and administrative officer of a member institution. The responsibility for selection of institutional presidents lies with the Board of Trustees after consultation with the Chancellor and representatives of the affected institution, including faculty, staff and students. The President is directly responsible to the Chancellor for the effective operation of the institution within system-wide policies and objectives as approved by the Board of Trustees. The Chancellor exercises direct supervision of the President. The Chancellor shall also make recommendations to the Board, as appropriate, on the compensation, reappointment, non-reappointment, and discharge of the President. After considering the Chancellor's recommendations and its own assessment of the President's performance, final authority in these matters shall rest with the Board. In cases of potential discharge of the President during his/her contract period, the Chancellor has the authority to suspend a President with pay pending Board of Trustees consideration of the matter.

Section 2. **Workforce Executive Director** – The Executive Director is the chief executive and administrative officer of the Workforce Development Division. The responsibility for selection of the Executive Director lies with the Board of Trustees after consultation with the Chancellor and relevant constituencies. The Executive Director is directly responsible to the Chancellor for the effective operation of the division within system-wide policies and objectives as approved by the Board of Trustees. The Chancellor exercises direct supervision of the Executive Director. The Chancellor shall also make recommendations to the Board, as appropriate, on the compensation, reappointment, non-reappointment, and discharge of the Executive Director. After considering the Chancellor's recommendations and its own assessment of the Executive Director's performance, final authority in these matters shall rest with the Board. In cases of potential discharge of the Executive Director during the contract period, the Chancellor has the authority to suspend an Executive Director with pay pending Board of Trustees consideration of the matter.

ITEM 3:
VSC Board Gap Analysis

VSC Board Gap Analysis Action Items – ONGOING ITEMS

Based on feedback from Executive Committee on 5/2/22

Gap	Action Item	Responsibility	Notes
Accountability	1. Regular accountability checks	Chair, Chancellor	Updated accountability matrix to be provided at June 2022 Board meeting.
	2. Review BOT Committee charters and practices	Chair, Chancellor	Ensure dashboards and metrics are available and visible at the start of Board/Committee meetings
	3. Ensuring accountability cascades.	Chancellor, Presidents	Establish and maintain accountability at every management level at new university, as well as at CCV and in OC.
Self-Assessment	Coordinate & facilitate a regular process for Board self-evaluation and development	Executive Committee	The Board to make transparency a key success metric to which it holds itself accountable, with regular self-assessment. Explore best practices for Board accountability and transparency (with assistance from the Chancellor). Discussion with full Board at June 2022 meeting to plan for September retreat.
Role Clarity	1. Onboarding	Chair, Chancellor	Presentation provided to Exec Committee on comprehensive onboarding process for new members, including checklists and materials. To be shared with full Board at May 2022 meeting.
Succession	1. Succession plan for Chair	Chair	Annual update of the short-term, emergency succession plan for the Board Chair.
	2. Succession plan for Chancellor	Chair, Chancellor	Annual update of the short-term, emergency succession plan for the Chancellor.
	3. Succession plan for other Sr. Leadership positions	Chancellor, Presidents	Survey critical management positions for succession plans and update annually.

ITEM 4:

Onboarding Materials

- a) Checklist
- b) Outtake page from Onboarding Packet

VSCS TRUSTEE ONBOARDING CHECKLIST

Task	Date accomplished	Contact person	
Obtain contact info mobile home email physical address spouse			
Obtain info to create username/email for trustee (get info from MM)			
Welcome with Board Orientation Packet			
1 on 1 review of contents of Orientation Packet (zoom or in person)			
Email/username tutorial			
VSC website			
Obtain bio/post			
Zoom tutorial			
Expense Reports			
Conflict of Interest			
Meet with Board Chair			
Meet with Chancellor			
Meet with Sr. Leadership			
Meet with Assigned Committee Chairs			
Remove departing trustee information (list)			
Add to all calendar notices			

[Trustee Contact Information](#)

[Committee Assignments](#)

[Board and Committee Meetings Schedule](#)

TRAININGS:

#1 VSC Board of Trustees' Authority & Locating Responsibility | Presentation plus training on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6aKx0BkKZQ> (training begins at 19:28)

#2 Board Development: Presentation on VSCS Budget | Presentation plus training on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4OPl8Xsxwio> (training begins at 1:53)

#3 Board Training on Policy 316: Protection of Minors and Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect | Presentation plus training on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aj39YefRXXw> (training begins at 4:30:23)

#4 Board Training on Fiduciary Duties of the Board | Presentation plus training on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aj39YefRXXw> (training begins at 4:49:16)

Board and Committee meeting Minutes and Materials are all located here:

<https://www.vsc.edu/board-of-trustees/meeting-materials/>

Board Policies and Procedures:

<https://www.vsc.edu/board-of-trustees/policies-procedures/>

Links to College Websites:

<https://ccv.edu/>

<https://www.castleton.edu/>

<https://www.northernvermont.edu/>

<https://www.vtc.edu/>

Our Transformation Page:

<https://www.vsc.edu/transformation/>

Collective Bargaining Agreements are all located here:

<https://www.vsc.edu/agreements-personnel-handbook/>

ITEM 5:

VSCS Diversity Statement Materials

- a) Summary of Feedback for the Diversity Statement
- b) Diversity Statement Revision Comments
- c) VSCS Diversity Statement v2.1

Summary of Feedback for the Diversity Statement

Socialization of the Vermont State College System (VSCS) draft diversity statement began in March with various college groups. CCV and VTC also sent the draft statement directly to faculty and staff with a link to collect feedback and a mechanism to indicate whether or not they approved of the statement in concept. Employees were informed that feedback collected during the socialization of this statement would be shared with other groups, including the VSCS Board of Trustees' DEI committee and other VSCS college personnel.

Our communications began with an introduction to the effect of:

We believe there is value in making a public declaration about our commitment to the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice both from a future-focused perspective but also from an accountability perspective. We also believe there is benefit to establishing a common statement for all the VSCS colleges. This draft statement was based, in part, on the Vermont Declaration of Inclusion as well as Governor Phil Scott's [Proclamation of Inclusion](#).

Please note: this statement is but one more step towards institutionalizing CCV's common core objective of nurturing a welcoming, diverse, inclusive learning and working environment. This diversity statement is one we hope will be embraced by employee groups, including faculty, staff, and union leadership, as well as student groups. Like the student pledge, a diversity statement should be seen as a foundational progress in the VSCS' overall efforts to enhance professional knowledge of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice.

We are keenly aware that for any such statement to be meaningful, it must be grounded in action.

Overall, the feedback for a system-wide Diversity Statement has been positive. But, the percentage of our community who provided feedback and who are actively engaged in DEI work is relatively small. It seems likely that the majority of the VSCS employees remain apathetic or neutral to this work and our efforts. We must continue to be intentional and persistent about explaining how and why diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice issues are critically important to the overall success of our institutions and community at large.

CCV

On the whole, 28 individuals elected to vote and/or formally comment on the diversity statement. Twenty-six individuals were in favor of the statement in concept, one was neutral, and one person abstained.

In its presentations, CCV paired the draft statement with its draft DEI Strategic Action Plan. Work continues to develop the plan, but in brief, every action must be in support of our overarching goal/core objective: To nurture a welcoming, diverse, inclusive learning and working environment.

CCV's three priorities are:

Priority 1: Build the Cultural Foundation

1.1 Expand and Deliver DEI General Education and Training: Grow Employees' Cultural Competency and Incorporate DEI Principles Into the Work

1.2 Use Intentional DEI Practices in Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention of Employees

Priority 2: Provide Student Support and Resources to Promote Inclusivity

2.1 Expand and Deliver DEI Education and Training: Grow Students' Cultural Competency

2.2 Promote Inclusive Scholarship and Teaching

Priority 3: Establish and Strengthen Community DEI Engagements

3.1 Within VSCS

3.2 With Other Institutions of Higher Education in Vermont

CCV Employee Comments:

1. I am happy to see the system adopting a diversity statement.
2. I know that this is just a general statement and there are probably further more detailed resources to come, but here are a few thoughts I had reading through it:
 - I think it is important to directly acknowledge the historical (and ongoing) role of higher education in enforcing social/racial/economic inequities and access to power. Higher education has played a major role in enforcing socioeconomic and racial inequities in our society -- through who access to these institutions and the cultural norms of academic discourse. (And as we break down these barriers higher education can also play a role in empowering individuals from traditionally underserved backgrounds.)
 - Should a diversity statement could include something about curriculum? - i.e. a commitment to actively seek out underrepresented voices and uplift diverse perspectives?
 - I would like to see a more explicit commitment to critically examining how the resources and services we offer affect and are utilized by people from different backgrounds and perspectives and how well we are meeting the educational needs of different populations. (As someone who generally works with online resources, I would include issues of accessibility and universal design here as well.)
 - I would like to see something about the need to bring diverse voices into these conversations and decision-making processes – both through diverse staffing and through coordinated outreach to diverse user groups.
 - Finally, as a librarian, I would like to see something on providing students the critical framework to think about issues of information/education equity and access. And how that relates to the scholarly communication process and what information is thought of as important/or credible in our society.

Thanks for pushing everybody to think about these important issues!

3. I have been considering writing my own Diversity Statement to help me to focus on how I want to walk in the world. Creating an institutional statement is taking a step forward in building a common understanding of what we all can expect around diversity and inclusion.
4. It seems to me that there is remarkable and undeniable value in clearly expressing the VSCS' recognition of the value of diversity and inclusiveness. I hope very much that this diversity statement encourages engagement with the VSCS from all of Vermont and serves as a measuring stick by which we can evaluate our work.
5. I support the efforts of the diversity statement. My biggest concern is that at CCV that will mean that faculty will not get compensated in any way for participating in any training while all other staff and administrators will. I hope you will not build a diversity statement and vision for CCV that rests on the shoulders of uncompensated faculty.
6. Why does first paragraph state "We condemn racism" and then in second paragraph it states that you formally condemn all discrimination. The first paragraph, to me, feels exclusive simply because it is the first paragraph that sets the tone of your entire document. As a female with a documented disability I might feel slighted by this opening statement.
7. This statement is extremely important given that we face a climate in which many are actively seeking to denigrate particular groups and craft oppressive laws, such as the FL "Don't say gay" bill. As an institution of higher education, we must stand on the side of human dignity and respect, and insist that our community unequivocally commit to these standards of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
8. It is important to articulate this value.
9. I believe there is value in the concept of a Diversity Statement. It can communicate a desire or commitment on the part of the college community to become more intentional about commitment to diversity. My feeling is that a diversity statement is one way to share that intention; more important is that the diversity statement is just one small part of the community's work, and that the "talk" of the statement is backed up with the "walk" of the work, college wide.
10. Swap "ability" in place of disability in Paragraph 1.
11. In the last sentence, revise to eliminate saying "diverse" twice.
12. My suggestion is to take this up in class – to help normalize the diversity statement and encourage its adoption throughout CCV.
13. Could this be included on the website near CCV's mission? Can we include in the materials for the faculty Great Beginnings training?
14. Presenting the statement during the new faculty orientation sessions would help normalize the diversity statement and encourage its adoption throughout CCV.
15. As COVID restrictions loosen, organize ways to bring people together to engage, to talk, to think about DEI.
16. It can be discussed at every CCV meeting during a two-month period. There can be a survey or google doc where each group can share thoughts and ways THEY will help socialize the statement.

VTC Comments:

1. Change title to Statement of Inclusion.
2. Any diversity statement needs to include disability as a diversity issue.
3. I think it is a great idea that will set us apart and will help make it clear that all are welcome and supported here.
4. I think the draft statement is very well done.
5. In the introductory paragraph, it seems that drafting a statement is a forgone conclusion: "A diversity statement should be seen as foundational progress in the VSCS' overall efforts to enhance professional knowledge of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice." It also seems like its drafted. "institutionalizing a culture of nurturing a welcoming, diverse, inclusive learning and working environment." So, why ask?
6. I feel the draft is great and I support it. Your point about education and training is critical as well as backing this up with practice and policy!
7. There is only one line...one phrase...that gives me apprehension. Where it reads, "we formally condemn all discrimination in all its forms," that means any and all discrimination. We do want to discriminate based on merit. We do want to discriminate based on appropriate biases (I am biased toward quality work vs. deficient work, and I grade accordingly). I know "all its forms" is meant to be from a DEI perspective here, but that is not what the phrase says, and I'd encourage much more precise language. Other than that, I find it concise, easy to understand, and easy to support.
8. I'm in many conversations about 'data driven' and I'm a big fan of data. But I'm aware that we're short of data in many areas. I wonder how we plan to get data and if we plan to post it in a transparent fashion. - Do we include wealth inequity in our definitions of diversity? In today's Vermont I think that issues of wealth, educational experience, family responsibilities and work commitments represent much of our existing 'diversity'.
9. Please, let's make sure this does not end up just as a tokenism gesture, but as an expression of true commitment.
10. The sentence "We condemn racism and welcome all persons..." should in my opinion be two separate sentences; one condemning bigotry in all its forms, including but not limited to racism, and the second being an affirmative statement of inclusion.
11. reluctant because this has only been shared across one campus
12. The need for such a statement seems odd especially on top of all the other diversity/inclusion statements that already exist at and around the college and at a state and federal level. Because of this redundancy it sounds like a reaction to an incident that happened and makes me question why such a statement is even necessary. Why not also make a statement about why the college condemns murder and theft since those are equally laudable statements? Broadening the list of welcomed persons in paragraph 1 to include political opinion and

health status including vaccinations would help to show a genuine commitment to inclusivity. As it stands there is a sense that the college is welcoming but only to people with certain political opinions. The second to last paragraph touches on a good point, that community members do not hold one single identity but rather many intersecting ones which make them unique. While I very much like this statement, it is immediately contradicted in the last paragraph upon stating "we actively pursue the inclusion of diverse students, faculty, and staff" as if there are some students and staff who are more diverse than others and should therefore be included more. Rather than focusing on how to check off the highest number of diversity boxes the college should focus on treating people like genuine individuals where everyone is seen as somebody unique and diverse since we all have different experiences. Nothing is more welcoming to students, faculty, and staff than being treated like an individual with unique traits; as opposed to being treated like a member of a "diverse group" for diversities sake.

13. You are on the right path.
14. This is great! 2 things to consider...are we avoiding the term "anti-racist institution" for any reason? Also, a large part of this kind of work is the commitment to "belonging" as the end goal and a constant work in progress. Just some things to consider, in case you hadn't yet. Thank you!
15. This should be renamed to be a statement of Inclusion
16. Diversity statement title can come loaded Instead something like: Statement of Inclusion
17. I am concerned that anything we come up with needs to be matched with implementation; policies have not been matched with actions in the past
18. I think it is very important for the Vermont State University to publicly share a Diversity Statement that we not only believe in but determine our best practices based on it.
19. It is important to not trigger negative reactions in people who are uncomfortable with 'overzealous' diversity support. For example, if the word 'discrimination' is used, it might well be coupled with 'prejudicial'. We are not trying to make everyone the same; we are trying to help everyone feel part of the same community.
20. I really think this work is critical and our support in this is vital. As an educational institution, we need to fully articulate our collective goal to create a more inclusive community.
21. I am in favor with reservations that the university needs to build capacity in order to follow through with these ideals. It can't be solely the employee's responsibility with limited capacity to put into practice the pillars mentioned. Although I believe in what is being proposed, data informed practices and training take time and this needs to be built in to the culture rather than extracurricular activities.
22. I hear what others are saying about not including a "negative" statement in the mission statement such as the one below, but I believe it needs to be included. I would like to see it at the end. By moving it to the end, I would like to see the removal of the pronoun "We condemn" and replace it with "Vermont State University condemns..." to be absolutely clear that the entire

university condemns racism. "We condemn racism and welcome all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, age, or disability, and want everyone to feel safe and welcome in our community."

Castleton

Jae presented the feedback to the Castleton University community at a transformation town hall meeting on March 10th. The statement was circulated in advance, and approximately 65 people were present for the discussion. The conversation was introduced by President Maus-Pugh, and then Jae facilitated the dialogue. What followed was a robust conversation about the function of a diversity statement and the content of this statement in particular. Conceptually, the community was in favor of a diversity statement existing.

Castleton Feedback

- Is this statement measurable in any way? How will we hold people accountable to these values?
- The diversity statement should have a website page associated with it that includes resources as well as information about VSCS actions in support of DEI/SJ (this is a follow-up to the question about accountability.)
- The order of the bullet points should be revised to lead with the personal and make the statement more relevant to individuals
- Sexual orientation is missing from the identity list in the first paragraph
- It would be effective if you followed the section about intersectionality up with some language about good and effective allyship.
 - Is this an example of a resource that could be housed on the website associated with the statement?
- If this statement is a statement of institutional investment, then that needs to be followed up with action. (2 additional people chimed in in support of this specific statement.)
- Institutional investment could look like:
 - Personnel dedicated to DEI and SJ work
 - Course releases for significant engagement with DEI work
 - The availability of a DEI learning community
 - Dedicated physical spaces on our campuses for DEI work
 - Mandatory trainings for faculty and staff
- I want there to be a DEI clearinghouse so we can share what's going on across campuses
- How will this statement increase student engagement with DEI issues?
- There need to be incentives for participating in this work
- Faculty and staff need to have time to engage in this work

NVU

The diversity statement was distributed to the entire NVU community, and discussed in great length at both the Johnson DITF and Lyndon FAIR meetings. A number of faculty and staff who weren't able to attend those meetings also submitted comments over email. Conceptually, both Lyndon and Johnson respondents were in favor of the diversity statement existing, although the folks who took the

opportunity to provide feedback represented a fairly small subset of the community. Several people raised concerns about the potential impact (or lack thereof) of a statement like this.

NOTE: Feedback that paralleled edit for clarity suggestion received elsewhere (i.e. define the DEISJ acronym) are omitted from this list.

NVU-Johnson Feedback

- How is this different from the antiracism pledge? Too many pledges will feel overwhelming
- The way the statement calls out racism twice makes it seem like race is more important than other identity categories
- How will the institution support this statement? Will there be tangible action taken?
- Tangible action could look like:
 - Hiring staff to focus on DEI work
 - Supporting existing staff with budget lines
 - Flagging courses that teach DEI content and highlighting them in a separate place
 - Honor DEI work in tenure and promotion process (or annual staff evaluations)
 - Offer financial support for people to attend conferences and workshops on DEI issues
 - Bring in outside speakers
- Since Johnson has adopted the Vermont diversity statement, should we do that instead? What is the advantage of a VSCS-specific statement?
- I don't trust that this statement will be anything but empty virtue-signaling; I want accountability.

NVU Lyndon Feedback

- A diversity statement is an important first step in moving towards an institution that values all of its members
- "I don't want people to feel safe and welcome in our community, I want people to **be** safe and welcome."
- Is there a way to acknowledge that experiencing discrimination affects a students' sense of belonging?
- Change fair and equal to fair and equitable
- Consider ending the statement with a tangible commitment: "So that we may actively challenge systems of oppression."

VSCS Diversity Statement v2.0 Revision Comments

1. Added sexual orientation to the list of identities in the second sentence. (Note: we recognize that sexual orientation does not constitute a protected class, but felt comfortable adding it because this is a community values statement and not a legal doctrine.)
2. Swapped “ability” for “disability” in the list of identities (same note as in 1 above)
3. More clearly defined DEISJ as an acronym
4. Changed the order of the three pillars to lead with the personal
5. Added the following sentence to the second paragraph: “We also acknowledge that education is both destabilizing and exhilarating and that learning necessarily involves hard conversations and moments of disagreement.”
6. Changed the end of the first paragraph from “want everyone to feel safe and welcome” to “want everyone to be safe and welcome.”
7. Changed “fair and equal treatment” to “fair and equitable”
8. Changed “nurture true belonging for our diverse community” to “nurture true belonging for our entire community.”

Draft VSCS Diversity Statement

2/28/22

The Vermont State College System (VSCS) is committed **to nurturing a welcoming, diverse, and inclusive learning and working environment**. We condemn racism and welcome all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, age, or disability, and want everyone to feel safe and welcome in our community.

As an institution of higher education, we formally condemn all discrimination in all its forms, commit to fair and equal treatment of everyone in our community, and strive to ensure all our actions, policies, and operating procedures reflect this commitment.

Our commitment is based on three pillars of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice:

- **Data informed Practices:** We make decisions and examine our policies and practices based on valid and reliable data sets and how those decisions, policies and practices may positively or negatively impact different populations.
- **Professional Knowledge of DEISJ:** We are committed to providing faculty, staff and students access to training and learning about how their knowledge of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice topics impact their professional and educational work.
- **Personal Knowledge of DEISJ:** We are committed to providing faculty, staff, and students opportunity for personal growth to increase their understanding of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice related topics so that they can then apply that information to their lives, their community engagements, and their career.

We recognize our diverse community members do not hold a single identity that may impact their belonging, or access to educational or professional opportunities. Each person holds multiple and intersecting personal and social identities that must be recognized as they engage in learning and professional development.

We actively pursue the inclusion of diverse students, faculty, and staff; break down barriers impacting access to education and professional growth for all; and nurture true belonging for our diverse community.

VSCS Diversity Statement v2.1
04/25/2022

The Vermont State College System (VSCS) is committed **to nurturing a welcoming, diverse, and inclusive learning and working environment**. We condemn racism and welcome all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, or ability, and want everyone to be safe and welcome in our community.

As a system of higher education, we formally condemn discrimination in all its forms, commit to fair and equitable treatment of everyone in our community, and strive to ensure all our actions, policies, and operating procedures reflect this commitment. We also acknowledge that education is both destabilizing and exhilarating and that learning necessarily involves hard conversations and moments of disagreement.

Our commitment is based on three pillars of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice (DEISJ):

- **Personal Knowledge of DEISJ:** We are committed to providing faculty, staff, and students opportunity for personal growth to increase their understanding of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice related topics so that they can then apply that information to their lives, their community engagements, and their career.
- **Professional Knowledge of DEISJ:** We are committed to providing faculty, staff and students access to training and learning about how their knowledge of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice topics impact their professional and educational work.
- **Data informed Practices:** We make decisions and examine our policies and practices based on valid and reliable data sets and how those decisions, policies and practices may positively or negatively impact different populations.

We recognize our diverse community members do not hold a single identity that may impact their belonging, or access to educational or professional opportunities. Each person holds multiple and intersecting personal and social identities that must be recognized as they engage in learning and professional development.

We actively pursue the inclusion of diverse students, faculty, and staff; break down barriers impacting access to education and professional growth for all; and nurture true belonging for our entire community.

ITEM 6:
NBRC Grant

Northern Borders Regional Commission Grant

The Vermont State Colleges System is submitting a grant application to the Northern Borders Regional Commission (NBRC) in the amount of \$349,760 to support the purchase and implementation of six new telepresence classrooms. This technology will support the addition of 270 new seats of the VSC's nursing programs as they merge into a single program under the new Vermont State University.

The proposed equipment is described as Telepresence 2.0 in that it constitutes an upgrade over systems currently available at the VSC. Telepresence 2.0 classrooms will feature large monitors for displaying remote participants, cameras with tracking capabilities to provide a continuous focused view of the instructor, highly improved microphones and sound systems, and a wide range of other features designed to enhance student engagement and retention.

While this grant falls below the board approval threshold, the grant application, due no later than June 3, 2022, requires a board resolution clearly stating who has the legal authority to sign binding documents should the grant be funded.

The resolution, found on the next page, formally documents for NBRC that the Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer for the corporation have the necessary legal authority to sign the documents.

VERMONT STATE COLLEGES SYSTEM
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
RESOLUTION 2022-008

NBRC Authorized Signers

- WHEREAS, The Vermont State Colleges is applying for a Northern Borders Regional Commission (NBRC) grant to support Nursing Telepresence Sites; and
- WHEREAS, NBRC requires Board authorization to formally document who has the legal authority to sign any and all NBRC documents necessary should the grant be funded; and
- WHEREAS, The bylaws of the Vermont State Colleges state the Chancellor of the Corporation is the chief administrative officer and shall have all the duties, responsibilities and authority that commonly pertain to that position; and
- WHEREAS, The bylaws of the Vermont State Colleges state the Chief Financial Officer of the Corporation supervises and directs the financial and business affairs of the Corporation; therefore be it
- RESOLVED, All legally binding NBRC documents may be signed by the Chancellor or Chief Financial Officer of the corporation in the event the grant is funded.
- .

be it Approved: _____ 2022

Eileen “Lynn” Dickinson, Chair of the Board of Trustees