

Minutes of the VSCS Board of Trustees Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee meeting held Monday, October 30, 2023 at 11:00 a.m. via Zoom - APPROVED

The VSCS Board of Trustees Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee met on Monday, October 30, 2023 via Zoom.

Committee Members present: Shirley Jefferson (Chair), Betsy Bloomer, Megan Cluver (11:40 a.m.), Bob Flint, Perry Ragouzis

Absent: Bill Lippert, Jim Masland

Other Trustees Present: Lynn Dickinson, David Durfee, Karen Luneau, Sue Zeller

Presidents: Joyce Judy, Mike Smith (Interim)

Chancellor's Office Staff: Jen Porrier, Administrative Director
Sophie Zdatny, Chancellor
Yasmine Ziesler, Chief Academic Officer

Shared Services: Donny Bazluke, Network/Security Analyst
Kellie Campbell, Chief Information Officer
Sarah Chambers, Director of Learning Technologies, Vermont State University
Sarah Potter, Chief Human Resources Officer
Kathryn Santiago, Associate General Counsel
Sharron Scott, Chief Financial & Operating Officer
Patty Turley, General Counsel
Meg Walz, Director, Project Management

From the Colleges: Kelley Beckwith, Vice President of Student Success, Vermont State University
Karry Booska, Director of Career Development, Vermont State University
Mary Brodsky, Dean of People and Culture, Community College of Vermont
Rich Clark, Faculty, Vermont State University
Aurora Hurd, Assistant Director of DEISJ Outreach and Accountability, Vermont State University
Denise Rhodes, Student Financial Support Specialist, Vermont State University
Sarah Truckle, Vice President, Business Operations, Vermont State University

Beth Walsh, Co-President, VSCUP, Vermont State University

1. Call to Order

Chair Jefferson called the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m.

2. Public Comment

Professor Clark raised several issues of concern, including the lack of a DEI representative on the Castleton campus for a year, the Supreme Court's recent rulings on race conscious admissions, the quality of the annual compliance courses, and the perceived failure of Vermont State University in making real strides to address structural racism, rather than performative acts and empty promises. Beth Walsh provided a comment stating that stabilizing the Vermont State Colleges in an equity issue. Ms. Walsh felt that our state cannot adequately serve our citizens if the efforts to right-size our campuses, faculty, staff, and administration make it impossible to function.

3. Update on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) at the Community College of Vermont

CCV's Dean of People and Culture Mary Brodsky shared an update on activities since the May 5th committee meeting. Dean Brodsky stated that five new members have been appointed to CCV's DEI committee, four of whom are students. The committee of eleven is comprised of students, faculty and staff and all appointments are made by President Judy. CCV's DEI committee meets monthly. The committee has reaffirmed CCV's top three DEI priorities: building their cultural foundation; providing student support and resources to promote inclusivity; and establishing and strengthening community engagements. CCV offers a non-credit DEI course called Foundations of Equity and Inclusion. All members of the President's Council have taken the course. In the spring a modified version will be offered to CCV faculty. CCV has also held "chat and chew" events, the most recent of which was focused on what is happening with Israel and Hamas. A BIPOC Student Affinity Group, open to both CCV and VTSU students, offers a safe space for BIPOC students and their allies to meet and connect across disciplines. A communication about an upcoming meeting will be sent out shortly.

4. Update on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Social Justice (DEISJ) at Vermont State University

Assistant Director of DEISJ Outreach and Accountability at VTSU, Aurora Hurd, gave an update on successes and challenges of the DEISJ department. Their presentation can be found [here](#). In addition, Aurora shared that they have been meeting with Professor Clark and Kayon Morgan (student leader of Castleton's NAACP Chapter) every couple of weeks to address their concerns. Vermont State University is currently negotiating with a candidate to fill the position of Chief Diversity Officer. Aurora recently attended an event with the State Office of Racial Equity and is working on a climate survey to be released either this semester or in the spring.

5. Update on student proposed Anti-Racism Pledge at VTSU

Student Trustee Perry Ragouzis shared some historical context on the development of the Anti-Racism Pledge. Trustee Ragouzis stated that three years ago, the students of Community College of Vermont, Castleton University, Northern Vermont University and Vermont Technical College formed a coalition to promote anti racism within the VSC in a grassroots fashion. The pledge was developed by the students, then approved by the Board in May of 2021. The goal was to share the pledge with students, faculty, and staff system-wide for their signature and commitment to the goals of the pledge. As students have graduated, there has been a delay in launching the pledge but the hope is to launch the pledge this academic year system-wide. Trustee Ragouzis is planning to schedule meetings with the Chancellor and the Presidents to discuss their interest in providing a statement about the importance of anti-racism that can be shared with the pledge.

6. Approval of Meeting Minutes
 - a. January 18, 2023
 - b. May 5, 2023

Trustee Cluver moved and Trustee Ragouzis seconded the motion to approve the January 18, 2023 and May 5, 2023 meeting minutes. The motion was approved with one abstention.

7. Other Business

There was no other business.

Chair Jefferson adjourned the meeting at 11:49 a.m.