

AFT Vermont Legislative Platform 2014

Reclaiming the Promise of Public Higher Education



State supported higher education provides opportunities for children of working families to earn a degree and live a middle class life. State colleges and universities also provide workers opportunities to further their careers with affordable continuing education and certifications. Whether it is an early educator who wants to provide the best possible service for the children she cares for, or a recent high school graduate who isn't sure yet what he wants to do for his career, Vermonters should have access to high quality, affordable higher education.

A majority (84%) of Vermonters who go to college in Vermont stay and work in Vermont. Supporting public higher education is supporting the public good.

AFT Vermont requests that the Vermont legislature support the following in order to reclaim the promise of affordable, quality higher education for all Vermonters.

Increase Vermont's investment in our state colleges and university.

An investment in higher education should be an investment in Vermont. Vermont is in next-to-last place in the nation with regard to investment in state higher education, with our current state funding at only 8.5% of the operating budgets of UVM and the Vermont State Colleges¹. AFT Vermont supports moving over the next 10 years toward our 1980 funding levels of 51%.

There is hereby created as a part of the educational system of the state of Vermont a public corporation to be known as "Vermont State Colleges," which shall plan, supervise, administer, and operate facilities for education above the high school level supported in whole or in substantial part with state funds....

-16 V.S.A §2171(a)

Offer Vermont students options that do not depend on the student loan industry.

AFT Vermont supports efforts that will reduce overall student debt in Vermont, and especially efforts that mean that fewer Vermont students will be attached to the student loan industry. At the same time, we believe, as stated above, that it is important to decrease the amount of funds that students must borrow, through increased state investment in the Vermont State Colleges and UVM.

Spend more of our higher education dollars on students.

AFT Vermont encourages the Vermont legislature to take steps to reduce excessive upper management costs within the VSC and UVM, and put into place accountability measures that ensure that more of our state investment is spent directly on students and on tuition expenses. AFT Vermont also supports ensuring that Vermont higher education funds are dedicated to Vermont students attending the Vermont State Colleges or the University of Vermont.

¹ Total operating expenses for the VSC is \$185 million. The state appropriation for the VSC is \$24 million. The total budget for UVM is \$604 million. The UVM state appropriation is \$43 million.

http://www.vsc.edu/about-vsc/VSC_Office_of_the_Chancellor/VSC%20Fall%202012%20Sourcebook%20of%20Institutional%20Data.pdf

http://www.uvm.edu/~ofabweb/Buddoc_2014.pdf