

Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs Committee

Wednesday, January 22, 2014

Barbara E. Murphy, President, Johnson State College

I am pleased to be with you this morning to speak a little about Johnson State College and how we are preparing students for successful careers in Vermont—and especially—given the context of this discussion-- northern Vermont.

Among the 25+ major programs that Johnson State College hosts are several that prepare graduates for meaningful work in our Vermont economy and in the valuable sectors of tourism, travel, recreation, environmental sciences, and health sciences.

Our hospitality and tourism management program, since its inception, has both local and international opportunities for our students—an early acknowledgement that to build a successful career in the industry, one needs awareness and skills in cross-cultural experiences. This is not to suggest our curricula give short shrift to ‘thinking locally’.

Indeed, our alum Steve Cook who serves as Deputy Commissioner for the State of Vermont Tourism and Marketing would stress the importance of the two internships he completed as a business and HTM student during his time at Johnson.

Internships are a cornerstone of a JSC education as they are for our sister colleges. As just one example, Jay Peak is currently hosting Adventure and Wilderness Leadership Outdoor Education student as terrain park supervisor. While this outdoor education student is, well, outdoors, other JSC'ers serve as interns at the front desk scheduling and supervising, in guest services, and-- in the planning stages-- at the Newport City Renaissance Corporation.

Our graduates will be well-prepared with the skills of leadership and communication, an appreciation for the environment and the guest experience or customer experience, whether that guest/customer is here for a day or a season.

We are particularly proud of our environmental sciences programs as students learn to be stewards of Vermont's land and water as well as proficient in assessing environmental working conditions, whether this means monitoring or disaster clean-up. While we hope these skills are needed as infrequently as possible, how important to have a workplace person trained with the lab and response skills to get Vermonters back to work after a spill, a flood, or other disaster.

We have graduates, as well, engaged in regional planning and transportation planning. Again: important areas as we develop new businesses, new resorts, new factories.

I am confident we have the programs and capacities to prepare students for good jobs—well-paying and continuing-- as we look at Vermont's large scale development, whether that is the Northeast Kingdom or beyond. Jobs that lead

to promising careers will continue to depend on a good balance of specific context-based skills and the general skills of speaking, collaborating, and resilience.

We at JSC want to continue to be a resource not just to the students who study on our campus, but, also to those adults in place in their communities. Through our community-based Bachelor's degree program, adults can build on the skills and learning acquired at work or through the Community College of Vermont to complete their programs through weekend and online coursework. This allows busy and responsible Vermonters with families and jobs to realize their degree and credentialing goals.

Other ways we are connected to conversations and initiatives in the Kingdom include offering our classroom and faculty as a learning lab. For example, this past fall semester the students in the Human Resource Management class presented their mock recruitment and retention plans for Jay Peak Resort and the new developments to one of the Human Resource Associates from Jay Peak who Bill Stenger asked to attend the presentation. Through activities such as that one, our students learn to think strategically about the industry and the importance of human resources. If we were of service to Jay Peak, that was an added benefit.

We have completed a new accounting certificate to prepare Vermonters to enroll in and complete the needed coursework to meet VT's standards to sit for

the Accounting exam. Our intention is to deliver this program throughout the state as possible and see it as meeting 'real time' needs.

I was reminded in preparing for today of a session hosted by the Speaker of the House and University of Vermont on Education and where its focus ought to be to prepare our young people . Guest speaker Tony Wagner listed his "survival skills" and said that never have the skills desired by the workplace and essential to a successful education and, I would add good citizenship, been more in sync.

They are:

CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

COLLABORATION ACROSS NETWORKS AND LEADING BY INFLUENCE

AGILITY AND ADAPTABILITY

INITIATIVE AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

EFFECTIVE ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

ACCESSING AND ANALYZING INFORMATION

CURIOSITY AND IMAGINATION

In concluding, while I have focused on several specific JSC programs, I would be remiss—especially in this committee if I did not mention that we have programs, as well, in political science, in history, in education, in communications—programs that encourage and insist on broad skill and talent development so that we can ensure the entrepreneurs, teachers, neighbors, community members and legislators we want representing our towns and villages.