

AFT Vermont Legislative Platform 2016

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.

AFT Vermont believes the state of Vermont should provide 51% of funding for both the University of Vermont and the Vermont State Colleges. We request that the Vermont legislature support the following in order to reclaim the promise of affordable, quality higher education for all Vermonters.

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)

Restrict the amount of Vermont financial aid that heads to out of state colleges and Universities. (H.423 / S.142)

- Only 42% of first-time college freshmen in Vermont stayed in-state to attend college, compared to 84% of first-time freshmen nationwide.
- \$4.7 million, or 24% of all VSAC grant funds, were used by students attending out-of-state schools in FY13. This represented 4.9 percent of the state's total budget for higher education.
- Limiting the drain of these funds from the state means that \$4.7 million goes back in to the state higher education institutes.
 - In FY 14, Vermont allocated \$68.7 million for UVM and the state colleges , leveraging the state grant funds going out of state would mean a 7% increase in state funds supporting these institutions- attained without raising a dime of revenue.

If the Vermont legislature regulates and taxes the sale of marijuana, then the state should dedicate a portion of the anticipated \$25-\$75 million in revenue toward funding the Vermont State Colleges and the University of Vermont.

- 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.

Allocate an additional 1% over the growth of the General Fund to fund higher education.

- AFT Vermont supports the recommendation of the Act 148 Working Group. That committee's report can be found here: <http://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Legislative-Reports/Act-148-2014-Interim-Study-of-Higher-Education-Funding-FINAL-Jan-22-2014.pdf>.

Create a \$2 Occupancy Fee on Vermont hotel rooms, which could generate up to \$12 million a year in revenue for higher education. (S.126)

- This occupancy fee of \$2/bed/night is estimated to raise \$11-12 million/year.