

1. Providing professional leadership to his or her department and to the College
2. Representing the department to the administration and communicating administrative views and directives to the department
3. Coordinating the activities of the faculty and the department in the recruitment and review of applicants for appointment to the faculty
4. Assisting the Academic Dean, or designee, in the orientation of new faculty
5. Preparing and recommending course offerings, schedules and assignments to the Academic Dean or designee, such work to be carried out in accordance with this Agreement and any College or decanal guidelines. The chairperson will participate with other chairs and the Dean as needed in setting the overall College course schedule
6. Scheduling and presiding over meetings of the department to discuss department needs, activities and recommendations
7. Working with Admissions and the Dean to set enrollment and retention targets for the department and leading the faculty in developing recruitment strategies for the department
8. Preparing and recommending a budget for the department and monitoring the administration of that budget once it is adopted by the College
9. Coordinating all departmental academic advising including acceptance of majors, fulfillment of degree requirements and assessment of equivalency and transfer credit
10. Receiving student complaints and making efforts to resolve student/faculty disputes before such matters reach the Dean

My name is Linda Olson and I am a long time faculty member at Castleton University, thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak. Vermont currently rank 49 out of 50 states for state support for higher education, New Hampshire is the only state that ranks below us. This means we have one of the highest tuitions in the country for public higher education and our students graduate with more student debt than students from other states. This lack of state support for higher education is not a new one. State support has consistently been reduced since 1980. In 1980, state appropriations covered 51% of the costs of the VSC. Currently they pay for 13% of the costs. The state has level funded higher education since 2008, but as you know level funding is actually a cut in funding as costs rise. Since 1980, the burden of higher education costs has been transferred to tuition which has consistently gone up and has impacted our Vermont families.

While Vermont is among the highest in the country for high school graduation, 40% of our students do not go on to some form of post-secondary education. I can't help but think cost is an issue. In the VSC, 83% of our students are Vermonters, 84% of our students stay and work in Vermont after graduation and 57% of our students are first generation college students. Public higher education in Vermont serves a public good and needs the support of the state. In the enacting legislation in 1962, the state Legislature promised to support the VSC "in whole or substantial part". It is time they live up to that promise.

There are also other ways to support public higher education. I encourage the state to protect, invest, and build the Higher Education Trust fund, to restrict VSAC portability to in-state accredited institutions or out of state institutions with reciprocity agreements. I also encourage the state to find alternative resources to fund higher education like supporting the Occupancy Fee Bill and dedicating those resources to higher education also if the state makes marijuana legal dedicate a portion of that revenue to higher education.

Linda Olson

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