

From: Jim Hildebran [jimhildebran@gmail.com]

Sent: Monday, February 25, 2019 9:28 PM

To: Theresa Utton

Subject: testimony for Budget hearings on 2/25/2019 in Winooski -- CCV

My name is James Hildebran. I live in Richmond VT and have taught courses at VTC as an Adjunct Instructor for over 20 years.

I have also taught for the past two years at CCV in Winooski. I want to express my support for the Governor's proposal to increase funding for Vermont State Colleges by \$3 million. While this proposal is a great start at making college more affordable for Vermonters, the VSC Chancellor's proposal for \$5 million increase each of the next 5 years is a truly bold initiative. Vermont ranks 50th out of 50 states in support of state colleges and universities. It is shameful that Vermont holds the distinction of being last in supporting higher education.

The Chancellor's proposal would move us closer to the average of all states.

Back in 1980, two years after I moved to Vermont, state appropriations covered about 50% of the costs of the VSC. Today 40 years later the state's commitment to public higher education is less than 20%. This cost shifting has placed a much greater financial burden on the students attending college plus the addition of higher student loan debt after graduation. I am acutely aware of how stressed many of my students are with many holding jobs while attending college. The majority of my students come to class at the start of the semester without a textbook. Why? The price of new textbooks in the physical sciences I teach, are generally in the range of \$200 each. These same students are waiting to make sure their schedules don't change and then when they do get a textbook it is a rental or used book.

If we truly want to be proud of our system of higher education in Vermont the funding must be increased. Remember that most of the VSC students are Vermonters, over half are first generation college students and most want to stay in Vermont -- if only they can get a quality education which is the stepping stone to a good paying job.

Thank you for hearing me out,
James Hildebran