

Vermont by Degrees

NVU—Liberal Arts and Professional Programs Prepare Students with Skills Employers Demand

At a time when there is much discussion about the direction of higher education in Vermont, Northern Vermont University (NVU) has taken form through the unification of two well-regarded colleges—Lyndon and Johnson state colleges. This innovative move has strengthened NVU and made it an invaluable resource for Vermont, students, and employers.

As part of our work in defining NVU, we created a brand centered on our sense of place—Do North. With a brand so strongly based in our location—set amidst the mountains, lakes, streams, and trails of the northernmost section of Vermont—it is no surprise NVU was recently named one of the top 20 schools in the nation for outdoor enthusiasts.

NVU combines nationally recognized liberal arts and professional programs with hands-on experience, tailored to the working world. Starting in year one, students participate in internships, travel, and collaborative research. In fact, 95% of our seniors participate in an internship or practicum as part of their studies. At NVU, students develop the soft skills employers demand – creative and critical thinking, communication, problem solving, teamwork and collaboration, and research. Through the university's general education curriculum, students think through solutions for some of society's biggest challenges, with an in-depth course in climate change, social justice, or sustainability.

This combination of liberal arts and high-impact, practical experience results in success for our students as they begin their careers. And it means employers are able to hire the staff they need for their local businesses—banks, resorts, nonprofits, schools, law enforcement, weather stations, and more.

Our degrees are designed to develop critical thinkers prepared to serve in the 21st century economy. We are growing our workforce development programs by offering and expanding our associate's degrees and expanding the offerings of the Center for Professional Studies, which delivers boot-camp-style skills training to meet the complex needs of adult learners. Classes like data analytics, project management, and Microsoft skills provide workforce readiness that is in high demand by employers across all industries.

Continuing to meet the needs of today's students, NVU has expanded the number of programs and certificates offered through NVU Online. This program serves a large number of adult students who are working full-time jobs and need a flexible, online approach to complete their higher education. NVU Online is highly sought by Vermonters with 76% of enrolled students coming from in state.

This fall NVU will offer a new data science degree on both campuses. And our climate change science degree—one of a few such degrees in the country—prepares students to become effective leaders and problem-solvers. A new integrated performing arts degree—performance, arts, and technology—will educate students with the core skills of project management, communication, and active listening through dance, music, and theater.

Additionally, NVU is at the forefront for educating mental healthcare providers and substance abuse counselors in Vermont. We have expanded our reach in Vermont and beyond, graduating mental health professionals ready to work in the fields of substance abuse, childhood counseling, and more. NVU's psychology and mental health counselling students intern and gain on-the-ground experience at

Vermont Department of Mental Health agencies throughout the state of Vermont, working in the areas of mental health and substance abuse, and addressing the opioid crisis.

Just as importantly, as NVU brings students to Vermont to learn and earn their degrees, many of these people fall in love with the state and all it offers and choose to stay. By investing in Vermont's higher education system, we don't just invest in our students and serve our employers, our schools also grow the creative economy, encourage entrepreneurship, and attract people to Vermont. People fall in love with the beauty, the small towns, the outdoor recreational opportunities, and they stay. Simply put, NVU maintains current talent and recruits and retains new talent to Vermont.

Northern Vermont University is a strong, innovative institution with a bright future. We have been strengthened by our unification. We are graduating engaged, critical thinkers eager to serve in the 21st century economy. Committed to our students and to the economic, educational, environmental, and cultural vitality of Northern Vermont, support of NVU is a sound strategic investment.

- Elaine C. Collins, President, Northern Vermont University