

2/18/20

Dear Governor Scott and all members of the Vermont General Assembly,

I am writing as a Vermont resident, taxpayer and adjunct professor at NVU-Johnson (formerly Johnson State College) of thirty-one years. We are stripped bare. Our President Elaine Collins works tirelessly and the faculty on our campus are positive and diligent educators who work for the benefit of Vermont residents...83% of our students, for less pay than most educators in the country. I myself after 31 years of service do not have a savings to live on; my salary is so poor my monthly payment to Vermont Health Connect is under ten dollars. Now in my sixties, after dedicating my life to Vermont education I wonder who is going to take care of me. If I work until 70 I will get \$1400.00 a month. When I add up house and automobile insurance, property taxes, heating and electric I have \$1400.00 left for all my food and activities for the year, that is roughly \$117.00 a month. And who will care?

In a state that is currently worrying, complaining, even panicking about the loss of our young people. The main reason they are leaving is for better pay and more educational options and who can blame them. Currently courses are being stripped from our NVU catalog so there are less offerings, faculty and staff have been greatly reduced. What will students even have to come to? The administrators are going too far in making us lean. So much so faculty question if the administrators of the VSC really know what happens in education. I have heard that their numbers increased, their salaries are far larger and I wonder who really scrutinizes the top as the worker bees are asked to do more and more for less. The administration emails suggestions about how to make our classes more economical for our students, such as using e books. This is insulting. Don't you think we have our students in mind first? Students come for course selection and professors, if we are reduced more there will be nothing to come to and in our darkest thoughts faculty wonder if Vermont wants a state college system at all. And yet we work tirelessly and oddly enough happily because we believe in what we do, we are good at what we do, we are professionals.

Do you know that the merger between Lyndon and Johnson reduced the student work-study program? Now that we are consider one institution the Johnson campus work-study hours were cut in half and in some departments non-existent. Vermont students with loans can't even earn the work-study hours they were granted. This is money for their educational supplies and food. Some of them have work-study plus one or more off campus jobs.

The State of Vermont used to fund the college system at 51% and is now down to 14%. We rank 49th in the country for support of higher education! Our salaries are some of the lowest in the country while our tuition is high. I hope you see supporting higher education through funding helps all of Vermont. At the People's Academy public forum about this issue, many businesses said they cannot find

employees. Their employees could be Vermont State College students. Serious funding could be a win-win for all.

Thank you for reading this. I am sorry if it late my husband just had a heart attack and his care came first.

Sincerely, Victoria Patrick Zolnoski