VSCS *Forward* Task Force

House Education Testimony

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Guiding Vision

The Vermont State College System will provide a high-quality education that is **accessible and affordable** and prepares students for the workforce and the needs of the 21st century.

This education includes **different experiences for different students** such as post-high school traditional students, students looking to work and go to school simultaneously, students interested in specific credentials and trades, and continuing education for all ages.

VSCS *Forward* is optimistic about a reimagined future for the system that is robust, creative, and sustainable.

VSCS *Forward* Stakeholder Survey

Distribution:

     All VSCS internal stakeholders (students, faculty, staff, administration)
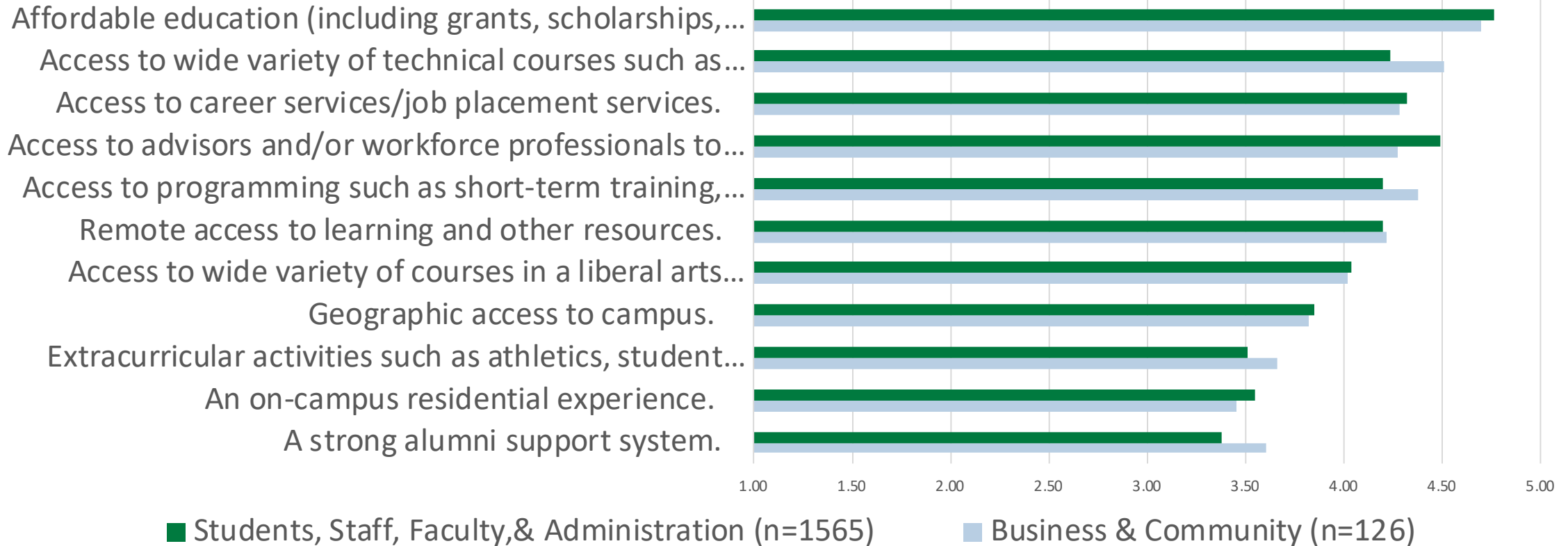
     400+ high school partners (Dual Enrollment/Early College, VSAC Outreach)

     400+ employer/workforce development partners

2400+ responses in 5 days = 400+ hours of input

Focus on: Priorities, Strengths, and Opportunities

Ranking Priorities

Chart of ranking priorities comparing "Students, Staff, Faculty, & Administration (n=1565)" (green) and "Business & Community (n=126)" (light blue), scored from 1.00 to 5.00:

- Affordable education (including grants, scholarships,…
- Access to wide variety of technical courses such as…
- Access to career services/job placement services.
- Access to advisors and/or workforce professionals to…
- Access to programming such as short-term training,…
- Remote access to learning and other resources.
- Access to wide variety of courses in a liberal arts…
- Geographic access to campus.
- Extracurricular activities such as athletics, student…
- An on-campus residential experience.
- A strong alumni support system.

■ Students, Staff, Faculty,& Administration (n=1565)   ■ Business & Community (n=126)

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Workforce Preparation Perceptions

Stakeholders outside of the system are generally satisfied that students graduate from the VSCS with skills for the workforce.

Ninety-one percent of those who responded (n=132) are either "very satisfied" (45.5%) or "somewhat satisfied" (45.5%); six percent are somewhat dissatisfied, and 3 percent are very dissatisfied.

When asked what knowledge or skills are missing from VSCS graduates, many stakeholders referenced a need for more hands-on experience and more focus on communication skills.

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School Counselor Perceptions

Thinking only of students who choose a VSCS institution - Why do students choose VSCS?

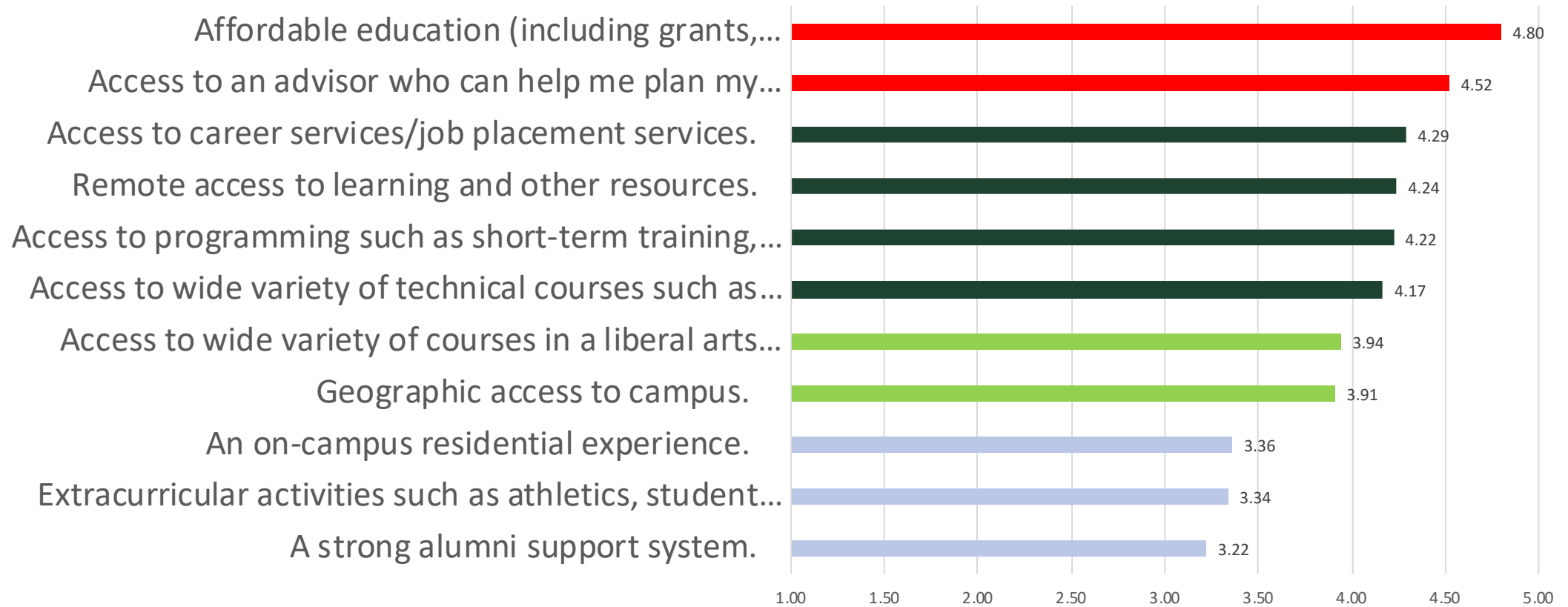*What are those students looking for?*

affordability

proximity to home

small, welcoming communities

What are some reasons students do NOT choose a VSCS institution?

more affordable alternative, further from home, beyond Vermont, not rural, larger in size and with more breadth of programming, more competitive academically

Priorities Rated by Students

Priority	Rating
Affordable education (including grants,…	4.80
Access to an advisor who can help me plan my…	4.52
Access to career services/job placement services.	4.29
Remote access to learning and other resources.	4.24
Access to programming such as short-term training,…	4.22
Access to wide variety of technical courses such as…	4.17
Access to wide variety of courses in a liberal arts…	3.94
Geographic access to campus.	3.91
An on-campus residential experience.	3.36
Extracurricular activities such as athletics, student…	3.34
A strong alumni support system.	3.22

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August 12ᵗʰ
VSCS Board-Approved Recommendations for Action

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Improve Affordability & Preserve Access

Recommendation 1:

As the majority of academic program overlap exists between Castleton and Northern Vermont University, charge a combined CU/NVU academic affairs group to develop clear evaluation criteria for review of duplicate and low-enrolled programs and a draft proposal for consolidation, increased investment, and/or closure.

This proposal should preserve student access to programs through consortium agreements, consolidation of programs to single majors, and telepresence/hybrid delivery models.

Work to be completed by October 1.

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Expand Access & Operational Efficiency

Recommendation 2:

As CCV and Vermont Tech operations both serve large proportions of high school students and working adults across the state, charge CCV and VTC to review data and develop a plan for shared operations and opportunities to expand program offerings in co-located spaces.

Work to be completed by October 1.

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Increase Flexibility for Today's Students

Recommendation 3:

Develop a single general education program core and make this available in person and online.

Recommendation 4:

Develop a plan for students to have flexible access to course offerings from all system institutions across the state. We recommend a structure that allows all students, including students in rural parts of the state, to take courses online or at telepresence locations.

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Next Steps

- Convening working groups for each recommendation.

- Continue inclusive, transparent processes for representation and communication of work.

- Expect to leverage previously awarded CRF funds where appropriate to support facilitation and consultant expenses.

- Ambitious timeline with frequent status updates to Board.

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