

Rebecca Buck

From: Theresa Utton-Jerman
Sent: Wednesday, February 12, 2020 5:29 PM
To: Rebecca Buck
Subject: FW: Budget Priorities 2020

From: Olson, Linda J. <linda.olson@castleton.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, February 12, 2020 2:41 PM
To: Theresa Utton-Jerman <TUTTON@leg.state.vt.us>
Subject: Budget Priorities 2020

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to express what we want to see as budget priorities this year. I would like to see the state adequately support public higher education. Here is my testimony:

1. Vermont currently ranks 49 out of 50 states for state support for higher education
 - a. This results in one of the highest tuitions in the country for public higher education (Second highest tuition in the country)
 - b. This means our students on average graduate with more student debt than students from other states
 - c. The employees of the VSC on average have lower salaries than in employees in comparable institutions elsewhere
2. There has been a dwindling of state support:
 - a. Vermont has not always neglected higher education, but state support has consistently been reduced since 1980. In 1980, state appropriations covered 51% of the costs of the VSC. Currently they pay for less than 14% of the costs.
 - b. Since 1980, the burden of higher education costs has been transferred to tuition which has consistently gone up.
 - c. Sharing a personal testimonial of a student who had to leave college because of the financial burden would be powerful too.
3. Facts about our students:
 - a. 83% of our students are Vermonters
 - b. 84% of our students stay and work in Vermont after graduation
 - c. 57% of our students are first generation college students
4. An Investment in PUBLIC Higher Education is an Investment in Vermont:

a. Since the majority of our students stay and work in Vermont after graduation, an investment in their education truly is an investment in the future well-being of the state. They are our teachers, nurses, small business owners.

b. We have an aging population, it is critical that we keep our young people in Vermont after graduation.

5. What can we do?

a. Support the Chancellor Spaulding's proposal for 5 million increase each year for the next 5 years (25 million total) to bring us up to the national average in terms of state appropriation

c. Support free tuition for all Vermonters at all VSCS colleges and universities

Thank you so much!

Linda Olson

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