



# VSCS Transformation Proposal:

A 21st Century Public-Access System of Higher Education  
for Vermont

*February 22, 2021*

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# INTRODUCTION

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We are proposing a revolutionary transformation of the VSCS to become the adaptable and innovative public higher education system Vermont is asking us to be. This is the future we are working towards, and with investment from the state and the support of Vermonters, we can pioneer a new higher education system.

As we do this work to envision the Vermont State College System of the future, we are converting many of the challenges we have confronted, both pandemic-related and financial, into opportunities for transforming the system to better deliver for Vermont and the students we serve for decades to come.

As we think about change, we are focused on 3 key questions:

- o Does it meet the needs of students?
- o Does it meet the needs of the State?
- o Does it contribute to the VSCS's financial sustainability?

We have developed this transformation proposal consistent with the recommendations of the initial and revised reports from the state's *Select Committee on the Future of Public Higher Education in Vermont* ("Select Committee"). In doing so, we acknowledge the many contributions of our stakeholder communities and the diversity of perspectives that were received by NCHEMS and considered by the Select Committee as they prepared their report, as well as the extensive public feedback that has been submitted to the VSCS's Board of Trustees.

The Select Committee was created by the legislature "to assist the State of Vermont in addressing the urgent needs of the Vermont State Colleges (VSC) and develop an integrated vision and plan for a high-quality, affordable, and workforce connected future for public higher education in the State." Act 120, Sec. A.10(a) (2020). Given this charge to the Committee from the legislature, we believe that the VSCS is best positioned to secure the additional state investment required to transform the VSCS to meet its mission,<sup>1</sup> if its transformation aligns with the recommendations of the Select Committee.

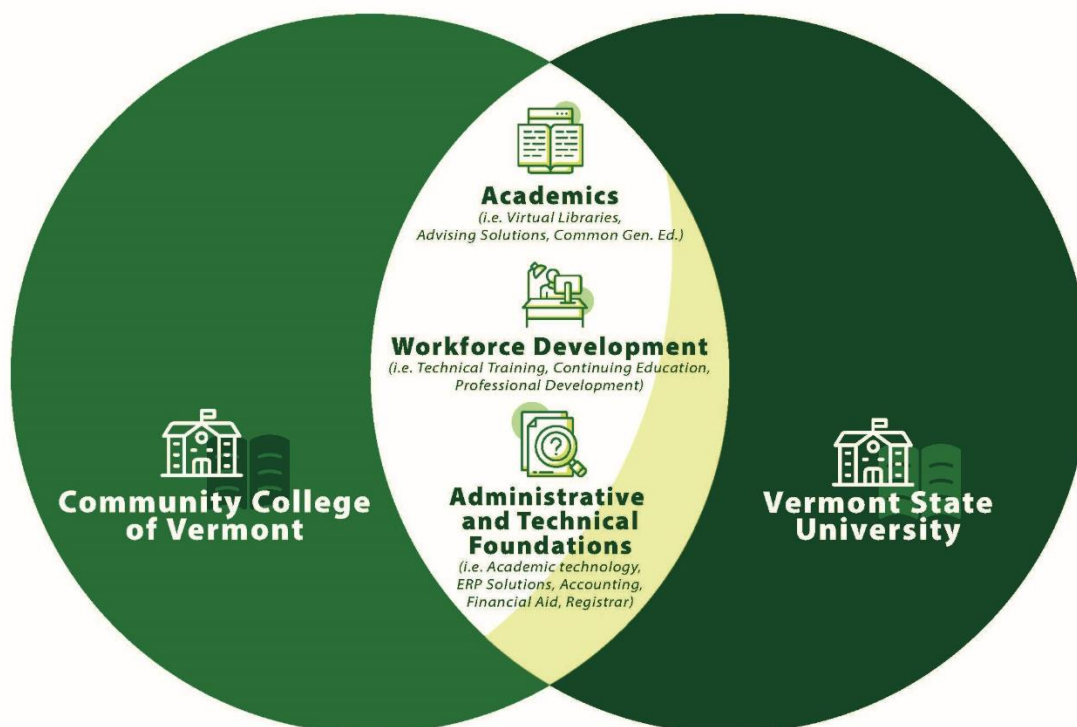
Our proposal for transformation is centered on an overall organizational structure for two complementary institutions and significant administrative consolidation as recommended by the Select Committee, and is grounded in three foundational principles that reflect the mission of the VSCS:

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<sup>1</sup> "For the benefit of Vermont, the Vermont State Colleges system provides affordable, high quality, student-centered, and accessible education, fully integrating professional, liberal, and career study, consistent with student aspirations and regional and state needs." See VSC Mission at <https://www.vsc.edu/board-of-trustees/strategic-planning/>.

- Student success is our singular goal
- Education for life and a lifetime
- Vermont is our community

The transformation proposal thus envisions the two complementary institutions closely connected with a shared core of programming and administrative services, which can be visualized as follows:



Therefore, we recommend that the Board approve this Transformation Proposal and authorize the Chancellor to commence the significant work that will be required to move forward. This includes seeking an advisory opinion from NECHE, issuing a Request for Proposals for a professional project manager (individual or firm), and planning the most effective way to execute the implementation. We recognize that this transformation work can only succeed if:

- (a) the VSCS receives the necessary requested funding from the legislature;
- (b) our proposal for a common accreditation and the associated substantive change proposals are approved by NECHE; and
- (c) there is not a further flare-up or worsening of the global pandemic (such as a more deadly variant against which vaccines are ineffective) that further adversely impacts our institutions and the wider world.

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# PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES FOR TRANSFORMATION

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## I. STUDENTS AND THEIR SUCCESS ARE OUR SINGULAR GOAL

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We are committed to delivering the higher education and continuing education Vermont and Vermonters need, while preserving the high-touch, personalized approach and close-knit communities that the VSCS is known for. We seek to better serve students where they are, with a learning modality that works for them, on a schedule that works for them, with the courses, programs, and credentials, both credit bearing and non-credit-bearing, that provide them with the skills they need to attain their life and career goals, and at a price they can afford.

The VSCS of the future will rely on regular evaluation of program relevance, quality, and sustainability to focus on continuous improvement of academic program offerings, with the goal of ensuring Vermonters continue to have access to affordable programs that meet students' needs. This work will require thoughtful evaluation of the tradeoffs between quality, access, and sustainability, as well as sustained innovation of flexible delivery models for academic programs and essential student support services in order to increase access and success to a greater diversity of students across the state.

In making its recommendations for structural transformation of the system, the February 12, 2021 report issued by the Select Committee ("SC Report") states that: "The VSC system should retain its capacity to deliver high-quality liberal arts programming and a coherent general education curriculum that can be accessible to students at all its campuses. Ensuring this requirement is met need not be in conflict with the need to also align programming more closely with the workforce needs of the state and of the local community, and with the post- graduation employment expectations of VSC students." SC Report at 55. The Report further identifies "gaps in the provision of postsecondary education and training that meets the needs of students—especially adult learners—and the state." *Id.* at 57. Recognizing that a critical issue for the VSCS is to transform in ways that achieve greater "critical mass" and lower costs via better economies of scale, preserving and expanding access, quality, and sustainability will require an investment in faculty development, technology, and new program delivery models. "If the vision for VSC is to be fully realized most faculty will have to be able to teach their courses using a variety of modalities." *Id.* at 53.

### TRANSFORMATION GOALS

#### **Assure Student Access State-wide**

- Support faculty development of new flexible delivery models that combine in-person and virtual learning opportunities
- Develop core of virtual library services to support all students statewide
- Develop a common general education program delivered both in person and virtually
- Increase pathways from CCV to high-demand baccalaureate programs

- Ensure course credits are recognized system-wide
- Design for seamless access to courses and programs across the new university
- Expand use of the decentralized model of delivering high demand programs to reach more diverse, working adult populations

#### **Strengthen Academic Program Offerings**

- Regularly evaluate programs for investment, re-invigoration, or discontinuation
- Strengthen program innovation and experiential learning opportunities for students via faculty collaborations across disciplines and employer/workforce partnerships
- Develop meaningful internship and apprenticeship experiences for which students can receive academic credit and, where possible, wages to help cover the costs of attendance

#### **Preserve High-Touch Student Support**

- Expand student advising and support service models to provide relationship-based support to meet the needs of different students independent of a student's physical location

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## **II. EDUCATION FOR LIFE AND A LIFETIME**

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Our schools provide a comprehensive, experiential education that prepares students for the world of work and for participation and enrichment of a democratic and civil society. We prepare students for jobs and careers needed to grow Vermont's economy. We create opportunities for Vermonters at every point in life, from early college and dual enrollment programs for high school students, to degrees and credentials of value for working adults and those seeking to upskill and reskill. A renewed focus on the educational needs of Vermonters of all ages, coupled with the needs of employers for skilled employees, is fully compatible with maintaining high quality liberal arts programming. "[T]he term [workforce relevancy] should be broadened to incorporate the liberal arts recognizing that these programs impart skills that are highly valued in the workplace (communications, problem solving, etc.) and that they also prepare students for a less specific set of occupations[.]" SC Report at 46.

Moving forward, the VSCS needs to develop even more high-quality educational opportunities that meet the needs of students, employers, and the state, by expanding the availability of credentials of value, such as degrees, credentials, and certificates that will enable students to secure higher-paying employment or advance at work. Additionally, we need to continue creating stackable credentials and pathways within degree programs to provide maximum value and flexibility to our students.

The Select Committee notes that Vermont produces relatively few sub-baccalaureate credentials (associate's degrees and high-quality certificates) compared to other states. *Id.* At 22-23 (Figure 16). Vermont is among 10 states with no more than two percent of the population



with the latter credential—tied for last in the nation. With a focus on strengthening and aligning workforce development and continuing education business processes currently in existence across the system, the VSCS will provide more Vermonters with the opportunity to achieve credentials of value. *Id.* at 55 (“VSC institutions will ensure that programs are aligned with current and future workforce needs by . . . Leveraging evolving educational models such as stackable credentials (certificates) with clear labor market payoffs.”).

A transformed VSCS will provide a single point of contact for employers seeking further education for their employees and will work with employers by “soliciting employer input into the development of programming for short-term certificate programs with clear labor market returns, developing non-credit programming to meet immediate employer needs” and “creatively seeding and nurturing entrepreneurship throughout the curricula and through development of specialized programs.” *Id.* at 51.

## TRANSFORMATION GOALS

### **Increase Number of Vermonters with a Credential of Value**

- Offer sub-baccalaureate to master’s level degrees
- Create credit and non-credit certificates and programs for high demand fields
- Develop pathways to move Vermonters up the career ladder with industry recognized credentials

### **Provide a Single Point of Contact for Employers**

- Actively seek out new employer partners
- Develop new and strengthen existing relationships with the business community and related state agencies
- Create a front door where employers can find ready-made upskilling and reskilling options for their employees, as well as the creation of custom programs
- Offer a one-stop shop for those seeking to reskill/upskill
- Increase integration and visibility of existing resources, such as Vermont Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center (VMEC), within the VSC and promote throughout Vermont

### **Provide Access to the Breadth of Workforce Development, Continuing Education and Professional Studies Across the VSCS**

- Build connections and capacity across the VSCS and all of its academic programs to provide the best fit programs and credentials for employers and Vermonters
- Create working and learning communities that bring businesses and non-profits into the campus community to deliver real world programming
- Connect students to meaningful, relevant and preferably paid internships/work experiences

**Ensure Speed and Nimbleness**

- Create non-credit bearing activities responsively and work with faculty to develop credit-bearing opportunities aligned with academic programs

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**III. VERMONT IS OUR COMMUNITY**

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The Vermont State Colleges System serves all of Vermont, from its rural hills and valleys to its cities and towns. Rural public institutions such as the VSCS provide crucial educational and employment opportunities to local residents, serve as economic, social and cultural anchors in their host communities, and help to educate workers in high demand local industries.

The VSCS of the future will maintain a physical presence at its current locations. However, its current physical footprint is too large and includes assets that are underutilized, which are costly to operate, expensive to insure, and difficult to maintain. Through careful analysis and benchmarking of our existing asset base, the VSCS will reduce its physical footprint by selling, leasing, or demolishing underused assets. Savings derived from the reduced physical footprint will help to reduce the VSCS's structural deficit.

The Select Committee Report recommends that the VSCS take steps to analyze its inventory of physical facilities for ongoing suitability to the needs of students, communities, and others including employers. Such steps may include repurposing spaces for use by firms or other organizations willing to enter into a partnership/leasing arrangement and for converting spaces for innovative uses capable of helping to fuel local economic development activities. Preference should be given to uses that provide students with opportunities for experiential learning or are otherwise part of an intentional academic strategy to cultivate entrepreneurial initiatives. SC Report at 88.

**TRANSFORMATION GOALS****Maintain physical presence at all primary locations**

- Students living near Castleton, Randolph, Williston, Johnson, and Lyndon will continue to have commuting access to campuses, as well as virtual access to other campuses
- Sustain local economies and provide socio-cultural opportunities
- Continue and grow business partnerships with local employers and relationships with community organizations

**Reduce Facilities Capacity**

- Consolidate operations to reduce needed infrastructure
- Sell, lease, or demolish underused buildings
- Minimize the square footage requiring maintenance



- Reduce the volume of deferred maintenance
- Lower insurance premiums and reduce risk
- Attract businesses and potential employers to locate on campus, building learning and working communities, and developing paid internship opportunities

#### **Reimagine Residential Experiences**

- Right size the number of available residential beds to match the anticipated student need
- Enter into public-private residential partnerships for repurposing and redeveloping residence halls
- Provide options for reduced-cost residential options with fewer student activities
- Offer short-term housing options for hybrid and low-residency programs
- Maintain full residential experience options for those who desire a more traditional experience

#### **Relocate System Office Personnel from Existing Facility**

- Relocate system operations staff to college campuses or continued telework

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### **IV. CONSOLIDATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

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The Vermont State Colleges System needs to function as a consolidated system, rather than “a confederation of institutions,” to realize the benefits of scale and to overcome “the habits of history.” SC Report at 68. Consolidated and modernized administrative services must add value through cost reductions, improved service for students and employees, and workable solutions to common problems. *Id.* at 74. Moreover, the Select Committee concluded that: “The VSC system should spare no effort to aggressively move to coordinate administrative service operations. This task should not wait for decisions on structure [*i.e.* common accreditation for three of the institutions] to be finalized, as the need to forge the path forward on achieving efficiencies in this area is a critical requirement for reducing costs over the long term.” *Id.* at 73.

Consolidation and modernization of administrative services will include the development and enforcement of a standardized set of policies and procedures for services system-wide, with delivery of services both in-person and virtually. Although functions may be centralized, this does not mean physical centralization in the Chancellor’s Office. Instead, functions may be centralized on an individual campus that has particular expertise in a particular area or where such expertise can be created. Clear reporting relationships will need to be established.

Several of the areas that will be consolidated, or have improved consolidation, include: procurement, financial aid, registration, admissions, marketing, information technology, and human resources.

To be successful, administrative consolidation requires a highly professionalized project management approach, with dedicated focus and a clear set of targets and success metrics.

## TRANSFORMATION GOALS

### **Develop a Culture of Service**

- Create a service-oriented mindset across all administrative services, with a student-centered focus

### **Identify the Best-Fit Organizational Model**

- For each administrative consolidation, identify the best-fit organizational structure to oversee the work, *i.e.* select the model and technology that best balances student success with financial sustainability

### **Strengthen Operational Governance**

- Implement consistent policies and procedures to minimize duplication of effort and improve efficiency, thereby reducing costs
- Develop procedure manuals to allow cross college and cross campus support

### **Improve Reporting, Record-Keeping, and Compliance**

- Increase compliance with local, state, and federal laws and grants requirements
- Increase data reporting capacity for operational efficiency and to drive strategic improvement

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## PROJECT PLANNING

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Change is not a discrete event, and while the breadth of transformation proposed here is revolutionary, it is also building on the considerable experience and dedicated efforts to date to achieve change across the system. The leadership, faculty, and staff of NVU have demonstrated, for example, that a new brand and vision for education in rural communities can be developed while honoring the proud traditions and identities of individual institutions and programs. Vermont Tech has drawn on substantial efforts by its faculty, staff, and industry partners to work on transformation efforts specific to its programs and operations. Faculty across the system, including at Castleton and CCV, have transformed their teaching in response to the pandemic and are working together to design a general education curriculum grounded in robust learning outcomes with a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The system's labor unions at Castleton, NVU, and VTC have collaborated to contribute a vision

for a single consolidated institution that has informed the Select Committee's work. All of these efforts are important and position the system to undertake the work proposed here.

### **PROJECT PLANNING QUESTIONS**

On January 15, 2021, the Board of Trustees approved exploration of the Select Committee's recommendation to transform the VSCS into a two-institution system, composed of the Community College of Vermont and a combined entity comprised of Castleton University, Northern Vermont University and Vermont Technical College. In addition to this structural reconfiguration, the Select Committee recommended—and the Board approved exploration of—aggressive administrative consolidations and an academic program review.

The Board of Trustees requested that the Chancellor, in consultation with the Presidents, explore and address a number of project planning questions:

- Development of a project roadmap and timelines for structural reconfiguration, administrative consolidations, and academic program review
- Identification of key decision points and the decision structure
- Required resources
- Success metrics

Transformation to the Vermont State Colleges System for the future is an enormous undertaking that will require substantial time and money. If supported by additional funding from the legislature, the transformation will position the VSCS to evolve and adjust to the disruptive forces confronting higher education nationally, to become financially sustainable, to provide greater access to education to an increasingly diverse range of students at an affordable price, to continue to be economic engines in the rural parts of the state, to serve as social, economic, and cultural anchors in host communities, and to play a critical role in meeting Vermont's future workforce needs.

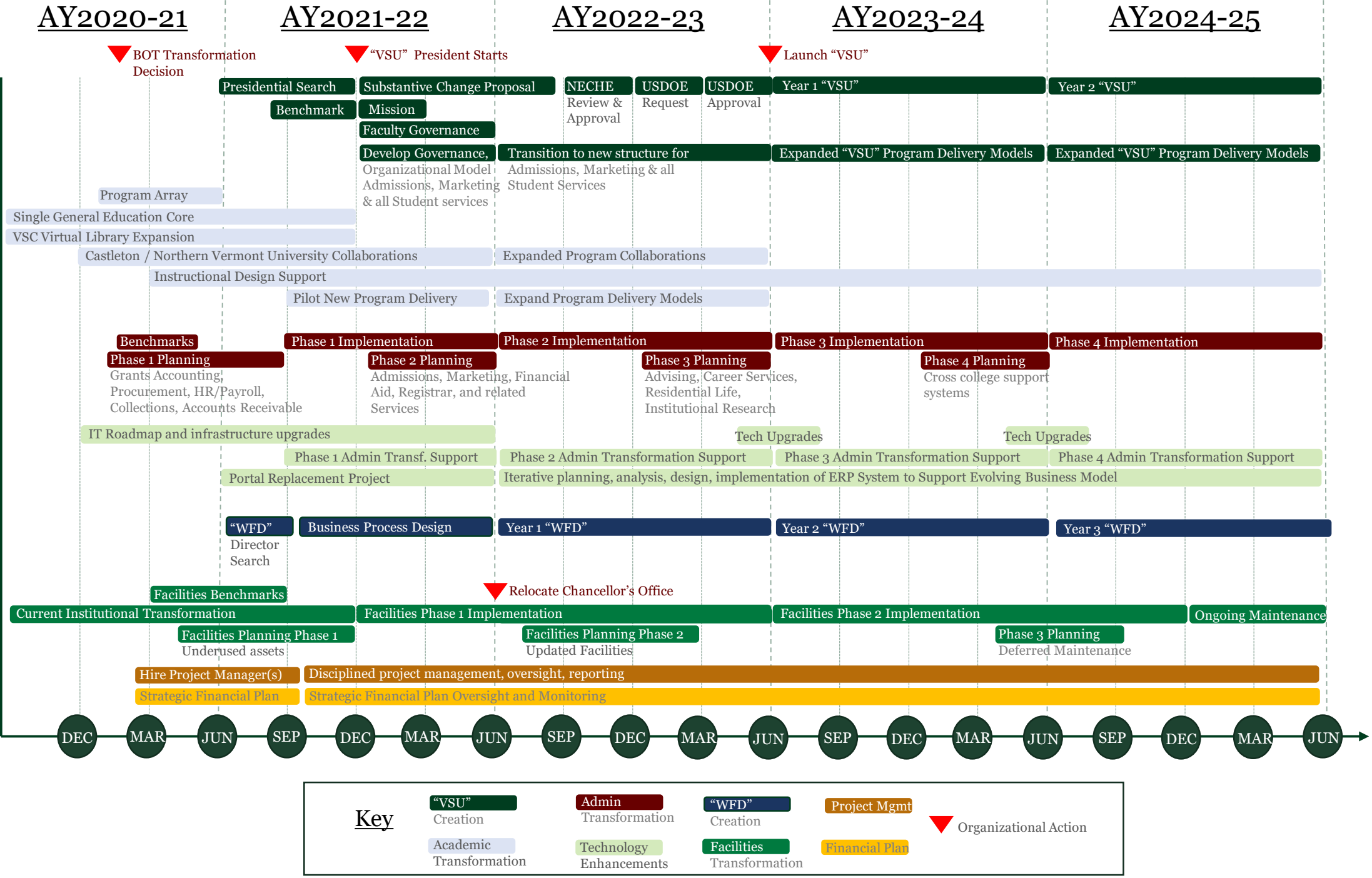
To be successful the project will require strong vision and leadership, disciplined project management, establishment of relevant success metrics, exceptional change management, and collaboration among all stakeholders.

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### **PROJECT TIMELINE AND ROADMAP**

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As noted previously, the VSCS has already started to undertake several key initiatives in advance of this project. These initiatives include creation of a single general education core curriculum, expansion of the VSCS virtual libraries, academic collaborations between Castleton University and Northern Vermont University, and a review of the VSCS's program array.



**Project Management** - If the Board approves the proposed resolution, detailed transformation planning will begin immediately with the issuance of a Request for Proposals for an individual or firm to establish a *Project Management Office*. The director (or consulting firm) in charge of this function will be responsible for supporting all transformation efforts, establishing clear measures of success, providing disciplined project management approaches and practices, offering guidance and expertise regarding organizational change, and will regularly report progress to the Chancellor and Board of Trustees.

**Academic Programs** – To determine the appropriate academic program array for a combined Castleton University, Northern Vermont University and Vermont Technical College, the VSCS has already contracted with rpk GROUP. Chief Academic Officer Yasmine Ziesler is leading this project, supported by the chief academic officers and in consultation with faculty. In addition, work is already underway to expand the successful Hartness Library model (CCV and Vermont Tech) to create a system-wide virtual library.

**Common Accreditation and Single Leadership Structure** - A national search for the President of “Vermont State University” will be launched in June 2021, with the expectation that the new president will be in place by January 1, 2022. The president of “VSU” will be responsible for overseeing the substantive change process, development of the governance processes, and transformation of the three separate institutions into a single accredited institution by July 1, 2023. The presidents of Castleton, Vermont Tech, and Northern Vermont University will continue to lead the operations of their individually accredited institutions until the effective date of the accreditation change.

**Admissions, Financial Aid & Marketing** - Recognizing the long lead time necessary for recruiting students (starting in sophomore year of high school), the admissions, financial aid and marketing teams across the colleges will work together to create the “VSU” brand, develop marketing materials and financial aid strategies, and launch admissions recruiting in the fall of 2022. This will allow recruitment of students to “VSU” while each institution continues to operate separately until July 1, 2023.

**Finance & Human Resources** - Administrative transformation benchmarking and planning will begin immediately in the areas of grants accounting/administration, procurement, collections and Accounts Receivable. By fall of 2021, the VSC will begin implementation efforts regarding these key areas. Previous consolidations of Payroll and Benefits will continue to be refined and incorporate Human Resources processes.

**Information Technology** – Work on a strategic plan for Information Technology and development of a system-wide Help Desk is already underway. In addition, IT Council is working on developing and implementing a new portal that will offer an improved user experience for students, faculty, and staff. One critical area regarding IT that needs to be finalized is the need for the architecture of the current Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system to be redesigned to support administrative transformation and increased capacity for data reporting. The decision of whether to undertake this concurrent with the creation of “VSU” will be finalized as part of the IT roadmap process.

**Workforce Development/Continuing Education** – The VSCS recognizes that it must focus on the need of Vermont and Vermont students for increased sub-baccalaureate degrees and non-degree certificates and credentials. To that end, there will be one Director of Workforce Development to serve as a single point of contact system-wide for workforce development and continuing education programming. Accordingly, a business plan and redesigned business processes will be developed during Academic Year 2021-22 for a full launch by July 1, 2022.

**Facilities** – Work on the physical transformation of the Vermont State Colleges commenced in FY2020. This work will continue with the identification of underused assets. These underused assets will be evaluated for conversion to other academic uses, renovation for use as part of public-private partnerships or working and learning communities, sale, or demolition.

**Strategic Financial Plan** – The Select Committee’s Report includes a schedule for reducing the VSC’s structural deficit over a five-year period of transformation, which is dependent on additional state investment in the significant work and cost of transformation and ongoing investment in the VSC to improve its capacity to meet the needs of students and the state’s goals. The work of transformation will require the development of a strategic financial plan and careful monitoring of financial benchmarks. This strategic focus on the financial plan for the system builds on action already taken by the Board in August 2020 to adopt a new approach to system-wide budget development.

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## KEY DECISION POINTS

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The Board of Trustees has a fiduciary responsibility for the Vermont State Colleges and thus has ultimate responsibility for approving major decisions and reviewing transformation progress against the plans and benchmarks to be established. A summary of key decision and review points for the board is outlined below.



<u>JAN-JUN '21</u>	<u>JUL-DEC '21</u>	<u>JAN-JUN '22</u>	<u>JUL- DEC '22</u>	<u>JAN-JUN '23</u>	<u>JUN '23-JUL '24</u>	<u>JUN '24-JUL '25</u>
<b>February '21</b> Approve Transformation Project Plan	<b>September '21</b> Approve facilities transformation benchmarks	<b>March '22</b> Approve "VSU" Mission  Review "WFD" business plan	<b>August '22</b> "VSU" (NVU, CU, VTC jointly) submits substantive change proposal to NECHE	<b>March '23</b> Approve program changes (requires NECHE approval)  "VSU" requests Title IV Organizational Change	<b>September '23</b> Review "WFD" 1st Year progress  Review administrative transformation 2nd Year Progress  Review facilities transformation 2nd Year Progress	<b>September '24</b> Review "VSU" 1 <sup>st</sup> Year Progress  Review "WFD" 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Progress  Review administrative transformation 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Progress  Review facilities transformation 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year Progress
<b>March '21</b> Chancellor, CU, NVU, and VTC request Advisory Opinion from NECHE	Approve administrative transformation plan phase 1  Name "WFD" Executive Director	<b>June '22</b> Approve "VSU" Governance Model  Approve system budget for FY23 (final year prior to "VSU" launch)	<b>September '22</b> Review administrative transformation 1st Year Progress  Review facilities transformation 1st Year Progress	<b>June '23</b> Receipt of USDOE Title IV Organizational Change	<b>June '24</b> Approve administrative transformation plan phase 4  Approve system budget for FY25	<b>June '25</b> Approve system budget for FY26
<b>May '21</b> Receipt of NECHE Advisory Opinion  Approve administrative transformation benchmarks	<b>December '21</b> Name "VSU" President effective 1/1/2022  Approve mission and financial benchmarks of "WFD"  Approve facilities transformation Plan	Approve administrative transformation plan phase 2	<b>December '22</b> Receipt of NECHE Substantive change proposal approval	Approve system budget for FY24 (first year of "VSU")  Approve administrative transformation plan phase 3		
<b>June '21</b> Approve Academic Program Array  Establish "VSU" President & "WFD" Executive Director Search Committees  Approve system budget for FY22						
Review progress against plans and project benchmarks at every board meeting						

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## REQUIRED RESOURCES

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As discussed earlier in this report, transformation will take substantial time and money. The timeline shared in the preceding pages is aggressive, recognizing the system's urgent need to transform for financial stability, as well as to support the needs of Vermont and Vermonters.

It is no secret that the VSCS has extremely limited bench depth across the entire organization. Adding aggressive transformation of the size, scope, and complexity proposed in this report would overwhelm the system. Therefore, adequate resources to support the transformation endeavors are required. The VSCS estimates that transformation will require approximately \$20 million over four years to successfully consolidate the three colleges into a new institution, conduct aggressive administrative consolidations, and complete facilities transformations.

The primary categories of spending include:

**Project Management, Change Management, and Staffing (\$3.5M)** – These projects will require disciplined project management and oversight throughout every activity. Careful planning, oversight, and structuring of each project activity will be necessary. As will development of implementation timelines that involve detailed change management and communication plans. Additionally, the VSCS will require supplemental staffing and support to allow highly skilled internal resources to wholly dedicate their time and attention to the project objectives.

**Administrative Infrastructure & Consolidations (\$3.6M)** – A 21<sup>st</sup> Century organization requires technology that supports remote working and communication with students. Hardware, software, and support systems will be necessary to develop activities that better support students, lead to greater compliance, and drive down costs.

**Academic Infrastructure & Consolidation Activities (\$2.3M)** – One of the pillars of transformation is a focus on educating Vermonters for life and a lifetime. To do so, the VSCS must be able to meet students where they are through technology by increasing accessibility to courses regardless of physical location, offering adaptable means of course delivery, at times and places where students wish to do their course of study. This category will also support curriculum design and the creation of a new institution from Castleton, Northern Vermont University, and Vermont Tech.

**Accreditation, Legal, and Compliance (\$100K)** – As with all large endeavors, there are substantial costs associated with the creation of a new entity. This category includes funding to support faculty in the development of the required substantive change proposals for NECHE, as well as funding to support the legal services necessary to support the creation of the new university.

**Physical Infrastructure, Facilities, Plant, and ERP System (\$5.25M)** – The VSCS has 145 buildings comprised of more than 2.3 million square feet of assignable space. Additionally, the System is undergirded by a single Enterprise Resource Planning System (ERP) that supports all of aspects of VSCS work from accounting, to payables, to registration, to financial aid. Together this physical and technological infrastructure requires transformation to support a financially

sustainable system. In regards to physical spaces, in addition to large-scale projects that will be funded by the Capital Bill, numerous adjustments to space will be required. These changes, like changing interior and exterior signage (including the green signs on the highway and black signs in towns) to changing the paint color on the wall to match a newly established brand, add up quickly. Additionally, the VSCS ERP system, installed about 20 years ago, will require substantial upgrade, or wholesale replacement to support a two-institution system.

**Marketing & Branding (\$5.25M)** – This important category addresses all of the work necessary to support the creation of the new university’s brand identity and to market the university for the first three years. Taking advantage of the lessons learned from the creation of Northern Vermont University, this category includes work to ensure that all existing institution names are easily found and accessible via search engines, and college search sites so that current and prospective students will easily and readily find their way to the new university.

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## TRANSFORMATION EXPENSES

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Estimated transformation expenses as outlined previously will be necessary over a four-year timeframe. To achieve the desired outcomes and project objectives, the spending is front-loaded in the first two years in order to prepare for the launch of the new university by the start of FY2024, *i.e.* the fall of 2023. It must be noted that these are early estimates that will be refined in the coming months. It is expected that the total expenses will remain the same, however the timing and/or allocation may change.

### Estimated Transformation Expenses (Amounts Rounded to \$1,000)

Work Category	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	Total
Project Management, Change Management, Staffing	1,500	1,500	250	250	3,500
Administrative Infrastructure & Consolidations	3,000	500	100		3,600
Academic Infrastructure & Consolidations	650	1,500	150		2,300
Accreditation, Legal, Compliance	75	25			100
Physical Infrastructure / Facilities, Plant & ERP	2,000	1,500	1,000	750	5,250
Marketing & Branding	750	2,000	1,500	1,000	5,250
Total Estimated Transformation Expenses	7,975	7,025	3,000	2,000	20,000

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## SUCCESS METRICS

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Overall, the Vermont State Colleges System must achieve a minimum of \$5 million in savings for each of the next five fiscal years, through cost containment, administrative efficiencies, and modest increases in enrollment (primarily among non-traditional students). Thus, the first step of each transformation activity will be to establish clear benchmarks of success. These success metrics will be tracked and monitored by the Project Management Office as part of the overall project structure and will be reported on regularly.

Work has begun on answering these questions through the engagement of the consulting firm rpk GROUP. This project builds on the work of the CU/NVU academic affairs group that was created in the fall to respond to the Board's charge that Castleton University and Northern Vermont University conduct a review of duplicate and low-enrolled programs. One of the outcomes of that work was a recommendation that the system develop a balanced set of evaluative metrics for ongoing program evaluation. rpk GROUP has been hired to:

1. Develop a framework for evaluating current academic programs within the VSCS portfolio;
2. Identify gaps in the VSCS's existing academic portfolio relative to the demands of Vermont's labor market;
3. Recommend an ideal portfolio of programs that meets the needs of Vermont students and the work force; and
4. Design action plans to help the VSCS implement the recommended academic portfolio.

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## **"For the BENEFIT of VERMONT..."**

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The VSCS, like every system and institution of higher education in this particular moment of global human history, can and must transform. We are fortunate to have the benefit of significant engagement and support from our governor and legislature, our faculty, staff, students, and stakeholder communities, and most importantly, Vermonters. While there will be many challenges ahead and the plans outlined here will necessarily evolve, our mission, which begins "For the benefit of Vermont," will remain true.