



The Re-vision and re-brand of the Agriculture program at the Randolph Campus of Vermont State University

# Stakeholder Engagement

- 40+ subject matter experts gathered with VTC faculty and staff, to identify the strengths of this long standing program and to identify a path forward that is responsive to the needs of future producers, food system businesses and regional consumers.
- 11 listening sessions with alums, community members, former and current faculty and staff, and industry experts in beef, goats, dairy heifer grazing and value added businesses.
- 191 survey responses collected from alumni, community members and food system stakeholders.
- This combined expertise was both a guide and a check on our work and the recommendations developed by the 4 Teams over the past 10 months.



# Transformation Process Leadership

**Process Leadership Team – met weekly May 2020 to Fall 2021 and bi-weekly since May 2020**

- Prior VTC President, Patricia Moulton
- Louise Calderwood (co-chair), Echo Hill Farm Maple Products
- Regina Beidler (co-chair), Organic Valley
- Ellen Kahler, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund / VT Farm to Plate

**Steering Committee – met monthly between June 2020 – May 2021**

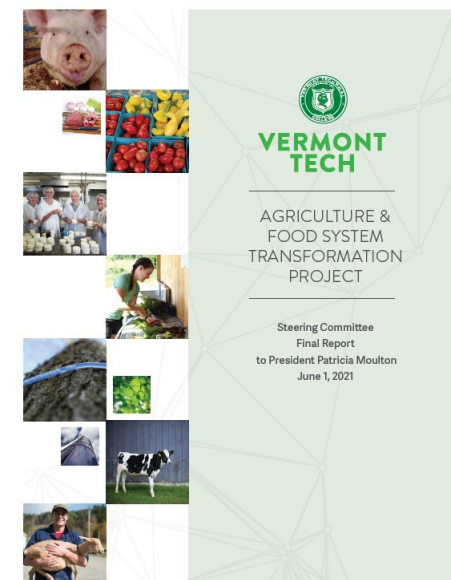
- Marc Mihaly, retired, VT Law School (Member of Vermont Legislature)
- Philip Ackerman-Leist, formerly of Green Mountain College and Sterling College
- Jed Davis, Cabot Cooperative Creamery, Sustainability Director
- Dan Tobin, assistant professor -- UVM CDAE
- Kate Finley Woodruff, UVM - Associate Dean of UVM CALS
- Laura Ginsburg, VT Agency of Agriculture
- Meg Nelson - VTC alum, Nelson Farms and Shadagee Farm (dairy) [alum]
- Steve Schubart - VTC alum, Grass Cattle Co. (grass-fed beef) [alum]
- Molly Willard -- representing VTC faculty/staff

**4 Work Teams comprised of Steering Committee members, various subject matter experts, alumni, business people, faculty, and staff met from June 2020-April 2021**

- ✓ **Survey & Input Committee: Met numerous times**
- ✓ **Program Models Development Team: Met 7 times**
- ✓ **Culture & Curriculum Team: Each met 6 times**
  - ✓ **Dairy Sub-Committee of Culture & Curriculum Team:**
- ✓ **Business Case Team: Met 19 times**
- ✓ **Communications & Outreach Team: Met 7 times**

**Since the Final Report was released in June, 2021:**

- ✓ **An Advisory Committee of 18 meets quarterly**
- ✓ **New funding has been raised, curriculum has been updated, a new internship program is being developed, a meat cutting training ‘lab’ is in development, new staff is being hired, the VTC Farm is being re-imagined, and our web presence and outreach materials are being updated.**
- ✓ **All recommendations from the earlier stakeholder process have been met or are in process.**



# The new Center for Agriculture and Food Entrepreneurship at VT Tech is in alignment with the VT Agriculture & Food System Strategic Plan 2021-2030

**GOAL 5:** Vermont farms and food system businesses have sufficient, diverse, and reliable employees, and there are accessible and equitable opportunities in Vermont to gain the knowledge and skills for food system careers.

## OBJECTIVES:

- ➔ The number of food system employers who report labor shortages will decrease.
- ➔ The number of K-12 schools offering food system-related curriculum and/or career information will increase.
- ➔ The percentage of graduates from Career & Technical Education agricultural, natural resource, and culinary programs who are employed or enrolled in further study in their field will increase.
- ➔ The percentage of graduates from Vermont's postsecondary food and agricultural education programs employed in Vermont's food system will increase.
- ➔ The number of students enrolled in food system-related licensed apprenticeship, certificate, and stackable credential programs will increase.

## EXAMPLE INDICATOR:

Labor Shortages in Vermont Food System



**50%**  
of large food system employers say hiring challenges hold back their businesses.



**40%**  
of small food system employers say hiring challenges hold back their businesses.

Recommendation from the [Labor & Workforce Brief](#): Develop additional affordable and accessible training programs such as apprenticeships, certificates, stackable credentials, and concurrent degrees. Much of this work can be done by individual educational institutions, for example by Vermont Technical College.

## The Plan:

Hands-on Learning for the Next Generation  
of Farmers and Food Entrepreneurs

Growing Enrollment to 125 FT students  
by 2030



# Program Re-Brand: Create a Center for Agriculture and Food Entrepreneurship

*within the School of Agriculture, Plant & Animal Sciences*

**Agriculture and Food Entrepreneurship  
Associates Degree**

(+ keep Diversified Ag BS and 2+2 Program)

**Professional & Continuing Education  
Training in Agricultural & Food  
Entrepreneurship**

(Branded integration within CEWD)

**Strong Advising for  
Internships,  
Apprenticeships &  
Careers  
Key Component of  
VTSU**

**College Farm**

(Retooled based on core curriculum offerings)

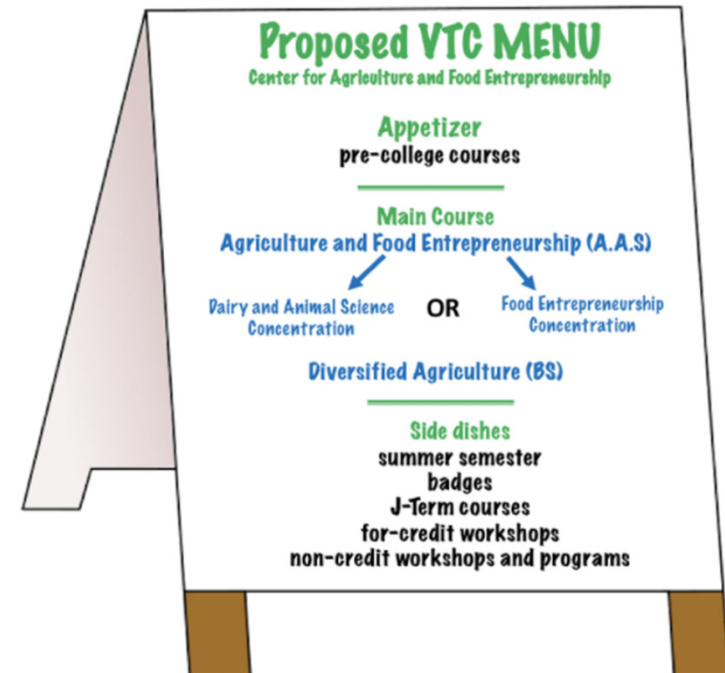
**Allied Services Curriculum  
Opportunities**

Diesel Tech, Forestry, RE/Green Energy, Elec Eng Tech, Mfg Eng Tech, Entrepreneurship, HVAC, Arch Eng Tech, Computer Software Eng, Electromech Eng, Software Dev, Web Dev, Construction Mgmt

# Degree Re-Brand: Agriculture and Food Entrepreneurship, A.A.S.

*with concentrations in Dairy and Animal Science or Food Entrepreneurship*

- Lead with one Associates Degree with core coursework; BS still available
  - With 2 possible concentrations to start
- Ability to expand program by adding concentrations in additional areas in the future
- Introductory courses, workshops, short courses, etc. can be bundled and added to the curriculum
- Incorporate credentials in degrees as well as continuing education and customized trainings train and certify students with specific industry skills





# Strengthen What's Working:

Existing curriculum that is still relevant and needed will largely be maintained, including the 2+2 program, in partnership with UVM.



## Expanded Offerings

Increase the number and variety of short courses, certificates, summer program and J Term offerings with the opportunity to use more online and hybrid learning delivery.

Embedded Industry Recognized credentials a pillar of VTSU and the new Ag program.



## Focus on Hands-on Experience at VTC Farm in Year 1 and Off-Site Internship in Year 2

VTC is known for applied, hands-on educational experiences. By focusing the **first year** on learning basic farm and food production skills at the **VTC Farm** and through field trips and guest speakers, students will be provided with a strong foundation for an agriculture and food education.

An introductory internship in the fall semester of **year two**, followed by an advanced **off-site internship** with more responsibility within the same placement will provide an opportunity for students to not only understand multiple aspects of the business, but also focus on a project with a valuable outcome to the mentor.

**YEAR ONE  
ON THE FARM.**

**YEAR TWO  
ON THE JOB.**

### THE PROMISE...

- Students are prepared with the skills, knowledge and experience to begin work in the field of food and agriculture upon graduation.

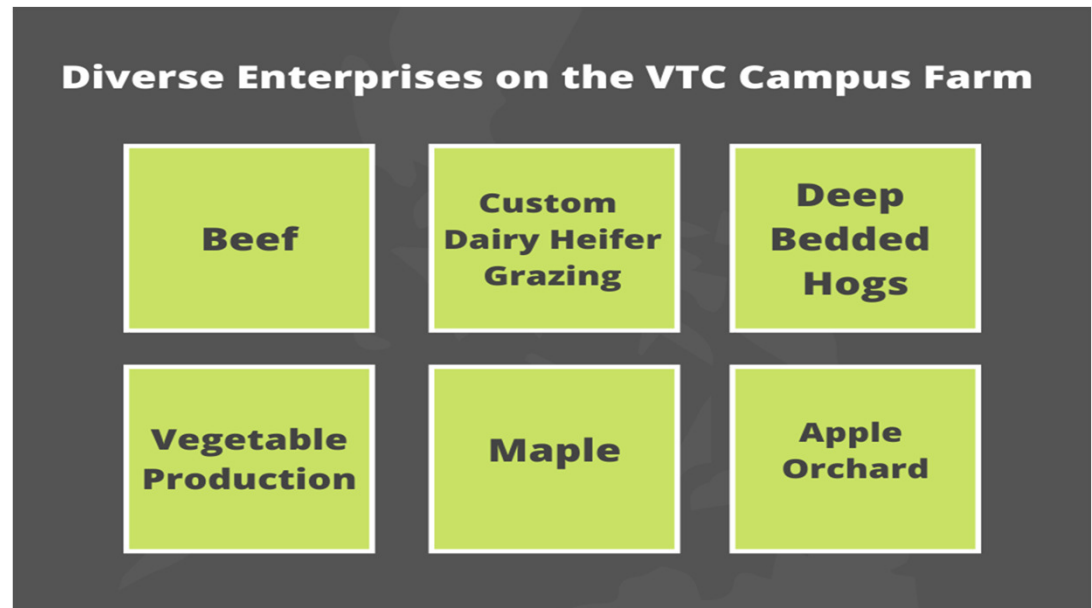
### THE RESULT...

- Associate's Degree with a concentration
- Hands-on applied learning
- Internship credits for "on the job" experience
- Possible credential courses that provide specific training and certification

VERMONT TECH

## VTC Farm Update:

- Sold the Milking Herd in May, 2022; leasing the barns and grazing to a neighboring farm
- Will expand diversity of experiences on the VTC Farm with planned infrastructure improvements
- Students interested in Dairy Farm Management can do so at off-site Internship locations near by, while still being supported by classroom learning
- New farm enterprises will reflect emerging market opportunities that include Dairy AND other ag products





# Accomplishments thus far:

- Completed recommended analysis for the meat cutting teaching lab, curriculum and farm upgrades.
- Conducted final engineering and design of the meat cutting teaching lab
- Obtained \$767,000 for the new meat cutting teaching facility including \$387,000 appropriated from the Legislature last year! THANK YOU!
- Obtained over \$2.4 million dollars in total grant, state and institutional funds to enable:
  - Hire a full time Director for the Center for Ag and Food Entrepreneurship
  - Hire a full-time meat cutting lab Director to oversee construction and operations
  - Hire a full-time Internship Coordinator to sign up farms and food businesses for the 4 semesters of off-campus internship and assist the Director
  - Construct a meat processing/teaching facility on campus in Randolph Center



# THANK YOU! Questions?

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