

March 15, 2026

Dear Chair Scheu and Members of the House Committee on Appropriations:

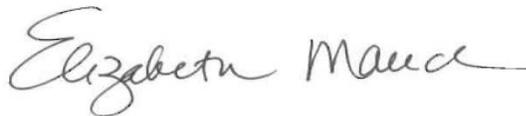
As you finalize your budget deliberations, I am writing to express the Vermont State College System's strong support for **VSAC's Freedom & Unity Scholarship**.

We are encouraged that both **House Education and House Commerce** have prioritized this program in their budget memos at **\$2.3M**, specifically recommending an expansion of eligibility by raising the income threshold from **\$60,000 to \$80,000**.

This scholarship is far more than traditional financial aid; it is a strategic investment in the potential of Vermonters. By lowering the barriers to associate and bachelor's degrees, we are making higher education a reality for adult learners, returning students, and first-generation college attendees.

Thank you for your leadership and your dedicated commitment to Vermont's students.

Sincerely,



Dr. Elizabeth K. Mauch  
Chancellor