

**Vermont Select Committee on the Future of Public Higher Education**  
**Monday, September 21, 2020 - 3:30pm**  
**Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

**Present:**

Members: Briar Alpert, Sen. Baruth, Heather Bouchey, Sarah Buxton, Megan Cluver, Daniel Daley, Suresh Garimella, Scott Giles, Steve Gordon, Rep. James, Joyce Judy, Sandy Mayotte, Devin Tingle, Jeff Weld, Sophie Zdatny

Others: Sally Johnstone, Dennis Jones, Wendy Koenig, Tom Little, Joyce Manchester, Michael Thomas, Candace Williams

**Minutes:**

3:30pm      Introductions

3:45pm      Discussion of Process & “Rules for Engagement”

Dennis Jones begins by stating NCHEMS’s work will be data driven and present facts to address short and long-term issues. It will work to garner engagement of stakeholders across the state and will ask for the Select Committee’s help to reach key individuals and promote inclusive work. NCHEMS will build off of existing reports and current analysis being undertaken by VSCS. There will be people with viewpoints that are diametrically opposed but this committee will hear them, and all members of the Select Committee will have equal voice. The project must move quickly and result in an action-oriented blueprint for moving forward. There will be roles for the executive office, the legislature, VSCS, UVM and the business community and others who will be asked to participate in a solution. Ultimately, this work will be future-oriented and the Committee will keep Vermont’s needs 20 year from now ever in our minds. However, the Select Committee must own the work, report and vision to be successful.

Action item: Members of the Committee should send recommendations for stakeholders to engage in this process to Chrissy Gilhuly.

3:55pm      Brief data exhibit to promote a common understanding of current conditions in Vermont

See posted slide deck.

Sandy Mayotte asks for clarification about where agriculture falls in the Change in Employment by Industry chart.

Sarah Buxton points out that the interplay between job turnover and growth can skew occupational data and looking at specific jobs and openings is beneficial.

Suresh Garimella asks about subsets of Allied Health professions and growth in demand therein.

Dennis Jones notes that NCHEMS will do a much deeper analysis to inform the report and continuing discussion of employer needs.

Steve Gordon shares that organizations that he's affiliated with have conducted an exhaustive analysis of healthcare workforce needs and a plan to meet them, including policy proposals. Steve will send that report to Dennis

#### 4:10pm      Discussion of a Shared Vision for Priorities & Principles

- Themes from the initial survey of Select Committee members
  - See posted slide deck.
  - Survey Question 2:
    - Heather Bouchey posits that any discussion about access should also include success, and that there's focus on getting students to the finish line and completing a credential.
    - Sandy Mayotte's question: What is the definition of postsecondary opportunity? Dennis responds that NCHEMS broadly defines it as the completion of any credential after high school. We're lacking good data about the number of certificates awarded by non-higher education institution providers, such as employers.
    - Sarah Buxton: We could also define the target recipients of postsecondary education. Focusing on the learner could create solutions beyond short-term certificate programs and the like. We need our system to meet the needs of Vermont learners and not the other way around.
    - Dennis Jones states that our system must be student-centered, influenced by the needs of other parties, such as employers.
    - Suresh Garimella doesn't quibble with the term "student-centered" but we must inform students of career-pathways as this information isn't self-evident.
    - Joyce Judy asks the group "What did you study in college and how does that relate to your profession?" We must recognize the foundational skills that are within a college education that are valuable in careers.
    - Heather Bouchey adds that student-centered goes beyond the curriculum and courses of study and includes the structures of delivering education and training. What are the unintentional barriers we've created for today's students?
      - Heather shares this link for definitional purposes:  
<https://vwdb.vermont.gov/committees/training-and-credentialing-committee>
    - Jeff Weld contributes that, as a first-gen college student, college was the best option but that it's not as much about the path as continuation of lifelong learning. High school students are presented with an either-or proposition: they attend college or they don't. At Casella, workers enter

through high school technical programs and then earn technical credentials and develop interests in leadership. We need to better show lifelong learning opportunities to Vermonters.

- Survey Question 3:
  - Sandy Mayotte points out that there are challenges for small employers in offering work-based learning. We're looking for a student to become a part of our culture and for the ability to get an ROI.
  - Daniel Daly shares that it's critical to establish a relationship with the PK-12 system. Many students don't have the fundamental math and writing skills to be successful (and this challenge exists for employers too). Without pointing fingers, there has to be strong collaboration to ensure students' success in postsecondary education.
    - There's some Zoom conversation about the EMC2 program and opportunities to expand it.
  - Jeff Weld adds that we need to address and establish the value proposition of postsecondary education -- to communities, businesses and students/families.
    - Candace Williams shares a NEBHE report on public and private value of postsecondary education: <https://nebhe.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/New-England-Value-of-Higher-Education-UPDATED-August-2019-1.pdf>
  - Survey Question 4:
    - Sarah Buxton points out that the absence of programs could be important to discuss due to a characterization of VSCS's role in offering certain types of programs. Additionally, there is some overlap between courses of study offered by UVM and independent colleges, as well as certification programs awarded by adult education centers. We could address these perceived "lanes."
    - Suresh Garimella reframes Sarah's point by posing the question of how to show program demand against supply.
    - Scott Giles brings up how multiple funding streams impacts how they're made available to students. This is particularly important when considering pathways.
    - Dennis Jones notes that alignment of funding streams can leverage their overall impact, rather than create a sense of competition.
    - Steve Gordon comments on the barriers that exist for educating new nurses, stemming from the state's education and training structures and systems.
  - Survey Question 5:
    - Sarah Buxton contributes her view that the Select Committee's charge in studying the VSCS's structures means that looking at physical operations is within the scope.
    - Sally Johnstone reframes this topic as studying the state's needs and how existing structures and systems serve those needs.

- Steve Gordon points out that institutional closure, especially among independent institutions, is a reality.
  - Daniel Daly asks, “How far into the weeds and specific do we go?”
  - Dennis Jones responds that their proposal would look at VSC in light of how it operates within a state context and to what end?
- Survey Question 6
  - Expected outcomes

Dennis Jones asks if there are any topics that we'd be remiss not to address?

Devin Tingle shares that he was concerned about the definition of student and broadening the definition of could include out-of-state students, adults, etc.

Jeff Weld adds that preserving physical campuses shouldn't necessarily be the focus, which came to be the response to Jeb Spaulding's proposal. It missed the opportunity to explore fresh ways to deliver on the VSCS's mission.

Sarah Buxton wonders at what juncture do we discuss altering the charge of VSCS? Is there a way to formalize its relationship with employers? It could result in creating an employer relations unit, for example.

Sophe Zdathy notes that the Board of Trustees creates the mission. The Board recently discussed the VSCS's strategic plan and mission. How will this group interact with their work?

5:20pm Roadmap/Schedule of Future Meetings and Process Considerations

NCHEMS is requesting a second meeting of the Select Committee in November to initiate enough conversation and feedback on the draft report.

Action item: Candace Williams will reach out to find that second time to meet in November. Sophie Zdatny notes that November 16 would not be feasible for a second meeting for her, Joyce Judy and Megan Cluver.

The next meeting will take a look at more data and tackle the finances of the VSCS.

Respectfully submitted,

Candace Williams  
New England Board of Higher Education