

Steering Group of the Vermont Select Committee on the Future of Public Higher Education
Tuesday, September 29, 2020 - 3:00pm
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Present:

Members: Briar Alpert, Heather Bouchey, Sarah Buxton, Megan Cluver, Joyce Judy

Others: Sally Johnstone, Dennis Jones, Joyce Manchester, Brian Prescott, Michael Thomas, Candace Williams

Minutes:

- I. Feedback on 9/21/20 Select Committee meeting
Joyce Judy heard from Select Committee and Steering Group members, who had positive comments about the first meeting.

- II. Discussion of engaging the Select Committee at each meeting
 - a. Data presentation
 - b. Use of survey and summary of results
 - c. Sign off on any key items

Brian states that we want to engage the Select Committee with some provocative ideas in survey format, as well as ask them to sign off on key ideas and topics.

Dennis mentions that more data and analysis will be shared with the Committee than what is ultimately shown in each of the meetings, in order to keep them discussion-focused.

One question that Joyce has had from the Committee was how they'll be engaged between the monthly meetings and use the meetings as a time to process data and findings in the meantime.

Michael adds that Select Committee members could be asked to take part in stakeholder engagement activities and report back on them during the Select Committee members.

Sarah Buxton asks what the final decision was on convening subcommittees. Are there discrete tasks or discussions that need to happen that subcommittees could move forward? Brian responds that his recollection was that creating subgroups was put on hold until there was a clear charge for them. Megan adds that we should consider all the other task force and committees underway already, breakdown their findings and outcomes and react from there. It's important to find time to hear and digest the ideas of the Steering Group members. Briar explains that everyone is seeing the roadmap unfurl. The Steering Group could agree on the elements of that roadmap, get the Select Committee's input and move forward. Briar's top are:

- Gain broad agreement on total credential needs and build awareness of where they must come from

- Discuss options for alternative structural/delivery models that would allow VSC to be financially sustainable.
- Briar broke up during the last one.

Michael suggests identifying the top five necessary topics to grapple with and use working groups to get broad agreement on recommendations within these areas. Another could be the relationship between the institutions and VSC, UVM and other education providers. Joyce would add other financial-related topics, like insurance concerns, shared learner management systems, etc.

Sarah shares an example from her work where conversations can feel duplicative when they happen individually with UVM, VSC, etc. and on top of that, use of different information systems can make collaboration difficult.

There are opportunities for conversations where VSC and UVM could learn a lot from each other.

In the Zoom chat, Megan notes: I fully support what Joyce is suggesting, and believe that there are significant opportunities. There was an effort toward this end (at the direction of the legislature) last year that concluded that there were no material opportunities. I don't know who has this report (and do not agree with the findings), but it would be a good piece of information to get to the NCHEMS team.

Brian asks for input on the draft second survey. Megan suggests distilling the survey findings for the Select Committee and ensuring anonymity for honest responses.

III. 10/19/20 Select Committee meeting agenda items

Brian states that the goal of the meeting will follow the roadmap:

- Overview of activities undertaken since the last meeting
- Confirm the Select Committee's proposed goals for the state and its learners.
- Discuss NCHEMS's financial and sustainability analyses of VSC
- Input on the stakeholder engagement plan.

Joyce asks that we refer to the roadmap in the meetings and in correspondence to share agendas, to remind everyone of where we're going and whether any changes to it have been made.

IV. Overview of process for stakeholder engagement

This is moving up as a priority and the public is invited to participate and weigh in. Some conversations have happened or they are in the works. NEBHE will assist with convening broader focus groups. Dennis mentions that we will make it explicit that one on one conversations will be had with each member of the Select Committee.

Joyce thinks that it'd be useful to understand people who are not considering postsecondary education. She's concerned with the people we're leaving behind. Brian outlines some ways to reach that population. Sarah mentions that there's some frustration from the adult CTE providers about potential exclusion of their role in the ecosystem. VTDOL is promoting policy aims to strengthen alignment there and the legislature is interested in understanding the linkages between certificate programs and VSC.

Michael suggests convening all the entities that train people post-high school.

VT Board of Trustees was interested in convening stakeholders but Joyce asked them to send names to her or Sophie to be pulled into this work – this will avoid duplicating efforts.

V. Public comments and questions

A member of the public asked whether the Select Committee is considering the health and sustainability of the communities in which the campuses exist. Joyce responds that the answer is yes, as dictated in the legislation. All of the colleges are a part of the economic fabric of the communities they serve.

Respectfully submitted,

Candace Williams
New England Board of Higher Education