

Steering Group of the Vermont Select Committee on the Future of Public Higher Education
Tuesday, October 13, 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. Overview of 10/19/20 Select Committee Meeting agenda

Topics for Monday's meeting will include:

- II. Progress report
- III. Curated environmental scan data and brief discussion
 - a. What else from the provided slides stood out as vital? Any surprises?
 - b. Modeling credential needs and sources

Sarah asks a question here about the goals of modeling credential needs. Brian explains that it's a heuristic model to show how far a state may be from its stated attainment goal. It's adjusted based on the student through- and outputs. For Vermont, the model shows various improvement scenarios against the model and it estimates the state will be about 48k credential-holders short of the goal. Sarah shares that it may be useful to consider the implications of CARES Act spending and users. For example, incumbent workers who would benefit from earning credentials awarded by VSC. There could be accommodations or adjustments based on current, COVID-related findings about the adult learner market, employer and labor market needs.

- c. What data are missing (recognizing that NCHEMS is still collecting it)?
- IV. Review and discussion of Select Committee survey results

NCHEMS would like the Select Committee to endorse the goal statements articulated in the second survey. NCHEMS will share insights and observations about the survey responses and how they might translate to recommendations and action items.
- V. Overview of stakeholder engagement plan
- VI. Public comments and questions

- a. Members of the public, please share comments and questions at higheredcommittee@leg.state.vt.us
- b. *Please be advised that with few exceptions, any submitted documents are open to the public*

VII. Update on stakeholder engagement activities

- a. Refinements to plan
- b. Outreach to Select Committee members and others

We've taken feedback from the Steering Group. NEBHE will help identify stakeholders from unions, faculty assemblies, executive agencies and existing special groups/task forces for early focus groups in preparation for the first report. A second set of focus groups will occur after the holidays and include employer and business representatives, students, community leaders and other education and training providers.

VIII. Discuss Select Committee survey results

Brian: A revised goals statement has been shared based on results of the second survey of the Select Committee. Most respondents were not prepared to accept this statement as it was originally written. However, a lot of the feedback could be easily accommodated. These statements are meant to be grounding and foundational for the Select Committee to own the ultimate set of recommendations. Changes included:

- Focus on adult learners
- Broaden goals to beyond VSC
- Language change around “productivity” verbiage
- Ensure access to broadband and technology
- Shift towards continuous improvement and learning
- Address role and contributions of UVM and the state’s postsecondary education system

Ideally, this revised statement is accepted by the Select Committee on Monday, October 19.

Steering Group thoughts include:

- Heather: Points within the “innovate” section may be capture elsewhere in the document or may be too general
- Heather: The program alignment point should explicitly address labor market and employer needs that ultimately serve a much broader array of students
 - Joyce: Decisions and clarifications like this are a cultural shift on which require the whole Select Committee to agree and support
 - Joyce: This is also related to use of public dollars and funding higher education
- Sarah: There may other values to pull out of this survey, for example the state’s PK-12 standards that note the global context of education’s purpose

- Sarah: Specificity around “changing VSC’s functions” might be necessary or use the phrase “changing VSC’s structure”
 - Briar/Joyce: It could also be useful to address financial viability and/or innovation in this case
- Sarah: Do we mean “attracting and retaining talent” from both outside and inside the state? For example, attracting academics at certain levels or reskilling incumbent workers. Brian’s response is that it’s that too few students who enroll from out-of-state stay to live and work in Vermont, which is both a workforce and workplace problem.

IX. Next steps

X. Public comments and questions

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Respectfully submitted,

Candace Williams
New England Board of Higher Education