

Steering Group of the Vermont Select Committee on the Future of Public Higher Education
Tuesday, January 5, 2021 - 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:

Joyce Judy remarks that the 12/4 draft report was submitted to the Legislature and Governor's Office and members of those bodies have all spent time reviewing it.

Brian Prescott addresses:

- I. Review of new draft report content planned for 1/12/21 Select Committee meeting includes:
 - a. Feedback related to impression that work is recommending expanding the role of the Chancellor's Office
 - b. Discussion of analysis re: cost of inaction
 - i. Chancellor Spaulding's estimation for his closure proposal was \$19 million but that seemed optimistic due to assumptions
 - ii. Other estimates point to costs of up to \$13 million to close one campus

Joyce adds that additional information about the financial assumptions underlying the cost savings related to the consolidation would be useful.

Brian notes that added clarity about enrollment projections based on recapturing students who disengaged with postsecondary education during the pandemic will be seen. Part of the solution should be improving the lackluster college going rates of high school graduates and recruiting adult learners.

Sarah asks whether the economic impact of the campus would be consider part of the cost of closure/inaction.

- c. Affordability Standard – this will be better flushed out to show how well Vermonters are being served economically
- d. Adult CTE and ABE – still learning about how these systems intersect with the colleges and universities in VT
- e. State Work Study Program – the state has made investments in work-based learning, so NCHEMs' work will reflect alignment with the existing set of activities

These changes will be reflected in a redlined draft to be shared on Friday, January 8.

II. Review of selected case studies

- a. Still in progress. VTC's unusual program offerings have made it difficult to find case studies where peers have undergone consolidation.
- b. Moreover, the rather recent crisis of declining numbers of high school graduates means we're in a new era of solutions that have not been on the table previously, such as consolidation.

III. Select Committee 1/11/21 meeting agenda

- a. Review of changes to the report
- b. Update on stakeholder engagement plan

IV. 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*

No public comments.

Respectfully submitted,

Candace Williams
New England Board of Higher Education