

Vermont Select Committee on the Future of Public Higher Education
Monday, November 23, 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, Joyce Manchester, Brian Prescott, Michael Thomas, Candace Williams

Minutes:

I. NCHEMS's progress report

James: Will we'll continue to elaborate on this report or add content per the legislation?

Judy: We will refine and expand on this report. We needed to take a more holistic approach than the legislation started out with.

Prescott: We're leaving some subjects for later reports, giving time for more discussion and work.

Baruth: In the version I'm looking at, there are still numbers and figures missing, which is troubling. What is the plan for seeing a report with those inserted.

II. Discussion of revised draft interim report, specifically:

- a. Executive summary
- b. Revised resource allocation section and draft funding schedule

Alpert: Specify to what entities the recommendations apply. For example, consider use of VSCS vs. postsecondary education.

Baruth: There were differing opinions in the House and Senate. To square the circle, this initial report should track with Briar's suggestion of focus on the four target areas for the VSCS but use the later reports to look more broadly.

Buxton: Taking the broad view allows us to explore innovation with adult CTE programs and funding.

Mayotte: Consider market share. Postsecondary education could apply to a new market share on short-term credentials and certificates.

Prescott: The finance piece should focus on VSCS but goals for the state of Vermont should be inclusive.

Garimella: It makes sense to focus now on VSCS. The learner goals as they are may not be as representative of UVM's students. I recommend search and replacing postsecondary education with VSCS. It's less confusing to spell things out specifically.

James: Is the total you're expecting from the legislature the \$72.5 million? What numbers add up to that?

Prescott: Yes.

(Brian and Dennis proceed to explain the projected funding figures, from about 55 minutes on)

Alpert: How will this land in the legislature?

Baruth: I suggested this could cost hundreds of millions. The reactions were a feeling of fear-mongering or disbelief. This will be a dose of realism.

Zdatny: I understand these numbers to include lost revenue.

James: There was significant support for bridge funding and this committee, so to the extent that people see a transformative solution there will hopefully be bipartisan support.

Buxton: We should be careful in our use of words around deferred maintenance, such as "demolition."

Gordon: Efficiency gains or enrollment increases calls for more detail.

Prescott: Some of these include new student populations and partnerships with employers that could bring in revenue.

Daley: The discussion about deferred maintenance have been going on for a longtime, so I don't think the public will have strong opinions about particular institutions. Greg Petrics did analysis showing enrollment correlated with tuition.

Cluver: Affordability is elusive. Is there enough money to truly drive up enrollment given how far off the mark we are.

Weld: And what is the cost to educate each student?

Giles: Affordability looks different from various prospective student populations.

Gordon: Education may be in the same boat with virtual learning as healthcare is with telehealth.

Judy: There will be more demand for creative online education. At CCV, synchronous online courses are popular.

Mayotte: We're seeing greater participation in conferences and professional development now that people can join without disrupting their lives.

Baruth: If we do single accreditation, a positive thing is people's ability to take classes anywhere and anything. It was confusing to read that each campus would develop a focus and that the single institution would be made up of colleges.

James: How can we communicate our vision for innovative delivery of postsecondary education, in terms of the student experience with online learning?

Prescott: In-person interaction is significant for quality reasons, as well as student support. But online learning can enable institutions to reach more students with greater flexibility, and resulting in high quality learning.

III. Next Steps

NCHEMS will provide the final draft on Wednesday, December 2nd. The Select Committee members will provide last items of feedback or concern by Thursday, December 3rd.

IV. Public comments and questions

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

Summarized by Joyce Manchester.

Respectfully submitted,

Candace Williams
New England Board of Higher Education