

Minutes

VSAC Programs & Services Committee Meeting

November 21, 2014
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Board Room, VSAC Offices
10 East Allen Street
Winooski, VT

Committee Members Present: Martha Heath (Chair), Dave Larsen, Dennis O'Brien, and Katharine Hutchinson

Committee Members Absent: Pam Chisholm

Other Board Members Present: Dodie Mitchell

Staff Present: Marilyn Cargill, Patrick Leduc, Tom Little, Mike Stuart, Scott Giles, and Kristi Rocheleau

Martha Heath called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m., and a quorum was declared present. The Committee reviewed the agenda and proceeded to take up the first item of business.

Approval of Minutes

Upon a motion made by Katharine Hutchinson and seconded by Dennis O'Brien, the Committee approved the meeting minutes of September 12, 2014, by unanimous vote, with all members voting.

Federal Update

Scott Giles touched on federal updates:

- Education Loans – Scott has met twice with the Vermont Congressional delegation to determine next steps regarding the IRS' U.S. Treasury ruling on tax exempt financing for parent loans. VSAC has not issued any parent loans, so there is no current liability; however, there is still an interest in pursuing this option.
- Senate Trends – The Republicans have the majority in the U.S. Senate. It is still unclear what this will mean for higher education policy in the next two years.

Vermont Update

Scott Giles presented an update on the various statewide committees VSAC is involved with, including the Green Mountain Imperative, the S.40, Vermont Strong Scholars, and Financial Literacy Task Force committees.

In addition to the statewide initiatives, VSAC is also in the process of preparing for its 50th anniversary. More on planned activities will be shared with the full Board.

Outreach Update

Patrick Leduc provided an update on outreach initiatives, including:

- 58% of eligible schools have signed on to access Naviance, the career and college planning system that replaces Vermont Guidance Central. Patrick continues to explore partnerships in the state, and will be reaching out to the community and the Vermont Agency of Education to discuss next steps.
- Lamoille Union High School was chosen as the site for an aspirations pilot supported by one-time funding to VSAC from the Legislature. A year-long program has been developed, and the kick-off event will be on November 25. Exploration of the expansion of the pilot to a second school is underway.
- VSAC is in the process of organizing focus groups in an effort to identify new ways to engage the community in career and college planning initiatives.

Operations Update

Marilyn Cargill shared:

- The Dual Enrollment Stipend program was launched in mid-July. Usage of the program was lower than expected for the fall semester. This is probably the result of the fact that high school students had already selected their classes the previous spring, and therefore were not aware of the availability of a stipend to offset costs for books, travel, and other fees. New literature promoting the program was sent to superintendents, principals, and school contacts in hopes of increasing awareness and usage of the stipend program during the spring semester. A report on the program is due to the Legislature in January.
- Last year, VSAC worked with nine high schools to pilot a federal FAFSA Completion Project. VSAC has now expanded this program to include all high schools. Schools who sign a Memorandum of Understanding are able to upload senior class names to a new online system in order to determine whether students have completed a FAFSA and Vermont incentive grant.

Scott disclosed that there are two finalists for the VHEIP contract. VSAC is in the process reviewing the details and will provide an update once due diligence on the finalists is complete.

Committee members did not have questions on the standing reports previously distributed.

Grant Policies – ongoing annual review

The Committee continued its ongoing annual policy review, discussing next steps for Veterinary Students, Tuition Waivers, and Approved Schools. Marilyn Cargill will work directly with Vermont colleges and universities on the Tuition Waiver policy. After discussion, the Committee recommends leaving next steps for the Veterinary Students and Approved Schools policies to Tom Little's discretion.

Adjourn

There being no other business, the Committee adjourned at 12:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Cargill, Assistant Secretary