

Minutes

VSAC Programs & Services Committee Meeting

November 21, 2016
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

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

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

Committee Members Absent: Sarah Buxton

Other Members Present: Dodie Mitchell

VSAC Staff Present: Scott Giles, Tom Little, Marilyn Cargill, Patrick Leduc, Laurie Oliver, and Kristi Rocheleau

Others: NA

Chair Martha Heath called the meeting to order at 10:12 a.m., and a quorum was established.

Approval of Minutes

Upon a motion made by Katharine Hutchinson and seconded by Dennis O'Brien, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the Programs & Services Committee record of September 19, 2016, as presented.

Grant Policy – ongoing annual review:

The Committee continued its ongoing review of grant policies. Marilyn walked Committee members through three policies and recommendations.

Awarding Incentive Grants – This policy states that Vermont Incentive Grants are awarded according to the concept of equal opportunity funding, whereby VSAC attempts to ensure that each applicant has the same amount of resources up to a certain level of assistance. The policy defines that each grant equals the level of assistance determined annually by the Board of Directors, minus the resources defined for parents' contribution, dependent student savings, independent student's contributions, and Federal Pell Grant. The Committee supports the policy and recommends clarification language to the Student Savings section. Marilyn will update the document to include the example discussed during the meeting and will circulate the changes prior to the December 12 Board of Directors meeting.

Awarding Basic Incentive Grants – This policy follows the same guidance as the Vermont Incentive Grants, and further defines eligibility for the Basic Incentive Grant and how resources shall be considered. The Committee agrees with the policy and suggests that the same language be used for this

policy that is being used in the Awarding Incentive Grants policy to define student savings. Marilyn will update and circulate the document prior to the December 12 Board of Directors Meeting.

Citizenship – This policy states that to qualify for a Vermont grant, a student must be a United States citizen or an eligible noncitizen as defined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for that academic year. The policy includes the definition of an eligible noncitizen as currently defined by the FAFSA; the policy definition will be modified when there is a change to the FAFSA definition. The Committee discussed various populations, and Scott Giles shared a joint statement in support of diversity, equity, and inclusiveness that a number of Vermont education and business leaders recently released. The Committee supports the policy as written.

Upon a motion made by Katharine Hutchinson and seconded by Dennis O'Brien, the Committee voted unanimously to accept the Citizenship policy as presented, and Awarding Incentive Grants and Awarding Basic Incentive Grants with clarified language for the Student Savings section.

Risk Review: System Development

Patrick Leduc outlined the risk category of System Development, providing a definition, the current inherent risk, oversight & controls, and the residual risk. The Committee agrees that the controls in place effectively reduce the probability and impact of the risk to a medium, and supports the Executive Leadership's approach.

Operations Update

Marilyn Cargill announced that the Marketing Department will now report to her. There is currently a search in place to hire a Director of Marketing and Communications.

Private loans continue to outpace projections for both the parent and student loans. Marilyn then turned the Committee's attention to standing reports, calling attention to the improved loan delinquency as a result of improved strategies in place.

Federal Update

Scott Giles relayed that it is too early to speculate on the impact of election results on higher education and other education initiatives; however, it appears more likely that reauthorization will move forward as a result of Republicans gaining control of the Senate. Scott then referred Committee members to a document outlining guiding principles for non-profit, state-based, and state-chartered organizations that make education loans, which is receiving positive support from members of Congress..

In response to questions about Treasury, Scott communicated that efforts are still underway to modify language. At this point, it appears unlikely that VSAC will have an answer in the near future.

Vermont Update

Scott Giles then kicked off the Vermont update, theorizing on the impact of the election.

The Executive Team then provided the following updates:

- A Results-Based Accountability (RBA) study of the non-degree grant is underway at the request of the Legislature. As part of this effort, data collected from a survey sent to roughly 1,200 non-degree recipients is being analyzed. At the request of Committee members, Marilyn will circulate the full report to the group once it is complete.

- Career and Education Wellness has officially signed on a client and delivered a well-received presentation. There are six active conversations with other businesses.
- October activities included a FAFSA Completion initiative with the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) and Vermont college partnerships. A second initiative is planned for January and will include a high school competition to encourage 70% FAFSA completion rates.
- VSAC's role in Advance Vermont is increasing. Currently the partnership is in the process of developing a steering committee of 20-25 business and community leaders who have interest in the training and education needs in the state. The goal of this initiative is to build broad-base support for the investment in training.

Other Business

There being no other business, the Committee adjourned at 12:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Cargill, Assistant Secretary