

# Minutes

## VSAC Programs & Services Committee Meeting

May 15, 2017

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, Dave Larsen, and Matt Trieber  
**Committee Members Absent:** NA  
**Other Members Present:** Dodie Mitchell, Chair  
**VSAC Staff Present:** Scott Giles, Tom Little, Marilyn Cargill, Patrick Leduc, Mike Stuart, and Kristi Rocheleau  
**Others:** Tom Cheney, Program Director, 70x2025

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m., and a quorum was established.

### Approval of Minutes

*Upon a motion made by Dave Larsen and seconded by Katharine Hutchinson, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the Programs & Services Committee records of March 27 and April 17, 2017, as presented.*

### Grant Policy – ongoing annual review:

Marilyn Cargill walked members through three existing policies:

**Non-Discrimination** – This policy states that the VSAC grant program does not discriminate on the basis of any status or condition prohibited by Vermont and federal laws. The two changes introduced to the Committee included the title change from Discrimination to Non-Discrimination, and the addition of Vermont and federal law language. These changes do not alter the overall intent of the policy.

**Late Applicants** – VSAC grants are awarded on a first come, first served basis as long as funds are available each fiscal year. This policy defines how VSAC grant applications received after the cut-off date are handled, who determines the date at which applications can no longer be funded, and the communication protocol should funds be cancelled due to insufficient funds.

**Withdrawals** – Marilyn recommended that this topic be removed from the policy library. This document refers to the procedures in place should an individual decide to withdraw their application. The Committee agreed that this Withdrawals procedure should be removed from the policy manual.

*Upon a motion made by Katharine Hutchinson and seconded by Dennis O'Brien, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend the full Board approve the Non-Discrimination and Late Applicants policies, as presented.*

## **Operations Update**

The Committee then transitioned to the Operations Update.

- Marilyn Cargill provided operations updates.
  - 2017 grant awarding is underway. The introduction of Prior-Prior-Year (PPY) tax information for the current awarding cycle has made it challenging to determine the funding status compared to prior years. The team is looking at both year-over-year monthly data as well as months out since application launch to help provide a better picture. Marilyn will update the Committee as the awarding season progresses.
  - The survey selection day held on April 13 was well received by staff. In response to a Committee Member question, Marilyn will follow up with Committee Members on the number of applicants who applied and received multiple awards, and the number of scholarships that were reviewed in-house versus by an external group. Marilyn reminded members of the competitive nature of scholarships, the unified application and essay to encourage students to apply for multiple scholarships, and the stewardship to the donors.
- Patrick Leduc shared that VSAC, in collaboration with several Vermont partners, has applied for the Education, Innovation, and Research (EIR) competitive grant offered by the US Department of Education. The purpose of this five year, 4.5 million-dollar grant is to increase post-secondary degree attainment. The grant recipients are awarded in September, and if Vermont receives the grant, VSAC will be the financial agent for all transactions.
- Scott Giles provided a summary of the bond market process for 2018 parent and student loans, noting the strategy, timing, and next steps.
- Tom Cheney summarized the recent 70x2025 workgroup meeting. The next steps include identifying existing programming, defining credential of value, creating statewide programming to fill gaps, and determining indicators to track progress. A retreat for the governing council and a convening for all members are planned for late June.

Martha asked for questions regarding standing reports, College Pathways, and Senior Survey. In response, Marilyn shared that in an effort to get senior survey results out to our partners faster, VSAC will increase the frequency that we publish senior survey data and short briefs. The Research department will also take one substantive research report each year. On the College Pathways front, attendance was down approximately 17% this year, in part due a decrease in Chittenden County attendance at the Saint Michael's College event, and a snowstorm on the date of the Castleton event. There being no questions regarding standing reports, Martha transitioned the team to the Federal and State Updates.

## **Federal & State Update**

Scott Giles briefed the Committee on federal updates regarding Treasury, tax reform, the Omnibus Appropriations Bill, the FAFSA Data Retrieval Tool, and solicitation. He then transitioned to the State Update, noting that since the Legislature was still in session, no final decisions regarding the appropriations and aspirations funding are finalized. In other Vermont news, Scott shared that VSAC is working with the Vermont National Guard on a proposed \$500,000 program for purposes of providing free tuition to Vermont National Guard members.

Marilyn Cargill then communicated that the Dual Enrollment Stipend intended for students who meet specific income requirements is out of funds. It doesn't appear that the State will allocate additional funds to this program for the upcoming year; VSAC is in the process of reaching out to dual-enrollment designees to communicate that funds for the 2016-2017 academic year have all been committed. In response to questions, Marilyn noted that there are roughly 19 students on hold, and potentially more in the pipeline.

**Other Business**

There being no other business, the Committee adjourned at 12:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Marilyn Cargill, Assistant Secretary