

# Minutes

## VSAC Programs & Services Committee Meeting

November 23, 2020  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

### Zoom Videoconference Meeting

**Committee Members Present:** Martha Heath (Chair), Dave Larsen, Chuck Soule, Pam Chisholm, Dennis O'Brien

**Committee Members Absent:** N/A

**Other Members Present:** Dodie Mitchell, Chair, and Caleb Elder

**VSAC Staff Present:** Scott Giles, Marilyn Cargill, Patrick Leduc, Mike Stuart, Tom Little, Jodie Ducharme

**Others:** N/A

Chair Martha Heath called meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. on the Zoom virtual meeting platform with all present able to hear one another throughout the meeting. With a quorum established, the Committee took up the first order of business.

### Approval of Minutes

*Upon a motion made by Pam Chisholm and seconded by Dave Larsen, the Committee Members voted unanimously to approve the Programs & Services Committee Minutes of September 21, 2020, as presented.*

### Grant Policy – Ongoing Review

Marilyn Cargill reviewed each of the following policies, noting that the last time they were reviewed and approved by the Board was in 2017:

- **Self-Supporting** – Marilyn reviewed the policy and noted the only change is to increase the amount of support a student can receive to \$3,300. Marilyn also noted a clarification was made to the policy to specify that this policy is specific to the Vermont State Grants.
- **Non-Discrimination** – Marilyn reviewed the policy and noted there were no proposed changes.
- **Late Applicants** – Marilyn reviewed the policy and noted there were no proposed changes.

In response to questions, Marilyn reviewed the extenuating circumstances in which we may be able to waive parental information for self-supporting students who are still considered dependent based on the federal definition.

*Upon a motion made by Chuck Soule and seconded by Pam Chisholm, the Committee Members voted unanimously to recommend that the full Board approve the Self-Supporting, Non-Discrimination, and Late Applicants policies, as presented.*

### **Interest Relief for VSAC Borrowers**

Scott Giles updated the Committee on \$1.9 million in Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) money that has been allocated to provide interest relief for borrowers impacted by COVID-19. Marilyn noted that an internal team will be meeting this week to discuss next steps with plans to apply the benefit by mid-December.

### **Operations Updates**

Marilyn Cargill briefed the Committee on the following efforts:

- Ways that VSAC is staying connected to students and families during COVID-19, including VSAC Shows You How webinars and Zoom meetings.
- COVID-19
  - VSAC Technology Scholarship, created from Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) Dollars
  - VSAC Appeals for State Grants and funding from CRF Dollars
  - Ongoing counseling and support of loan customers
- Autorenewal of Grant Applications

Scott Giles provided an update on the upcoming VSAC Annual Meeting, noting that due to the pandemic it will be virtual and held in two parts. Scott extended an invitation to any members who would like to attend all or part of the Annual Meeting. Scott also provided updates on Blackbaud and the VHEIP contract extension.

Patrick Leduc reviewed work that is being done by the recently formed DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) workgroup noting that one of the goals is to ensure that we are creating opportunity in our community and not unintentionally creating barriers for those that we want to fully serve.

### **Federal Update**

Scott Giles reported on the outcomes of the recent election, discussed the Federal Relief Package, and provided an update on Account Maintenance Fees which he noted have been extended.

### **Vermont Update**

Scott provided an update on the Taskforce on Postsecondary Education and the Vermont Colleges current plans for the spring semester. He noted that more information will be forthcoming.

Tom Little reviewed changes to VHEIP in the tax bill, noting that he would be providing the Committee with more information prior to the January meeting.

**Other Business**

There being no other business, the Committee adjourned at 11:57 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Marilyn Cargill, Assistant Secretary