

Minutes

VSAC Programs & Services Committee Meeting

January 25, 2021
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Zoom Videoconference Meeting

Committee Members Present: Martha Heath (Chair), Dave Larsen, Chuck Soule, Pam Chisholm

Committee Members Absent: N/A

Other Members Present: Dodie Mitchell, Chair, Caleb Elder

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

Chair Martha Heath called meeting to order at 10:01 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 Dave Larsen and seconded by Pam Chisholm, the Committee Members voted unanimously to approve the Programs & Services Committee Minutes of November 23, 2020, as presented.

Grant Policy – Ongoing Review

Marilyn Cargill reviewed each of the following policies, which were last reviewed in 2017. Marilyn noted there were no proposed changes to any of these policies:

- Part-time Students
- Full-time Students
- Graduate Programs

The Committee discussed the policies and Marilyn responded to questions.

Upon a motion made by Pam Chisholm and seconded by Chuck Soule, the Committee Members voted unanimously to recommend that the full Board approve the Part-time Students, Full-time Students, and Graduate Programs policies, as presented.

Select Committee Report

Scott Giles briefed the Committee on work being done by the Select Committee, formed in response to challenges that the Vermont State Colleges are facing and tasked with providing a report on the future of higher education in Vermont. The Committee engaged in a conversation about work being done by the Select Committee and Scott responded to member questions.

Operations Updates

Marilyn Cargill provided a final update on the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) dollars announcing that between July 1 and December 12, 2020 VSAC was able to get just over \$5.5 million into the hands of students in the form of grant appeals, technology scholarships, foster youth scholarships, and borrower relief. Chair Martha Heath thanked VSAC staff for the impressive work that was done to get these funds to students.

Marilyn noted that private loan origination is down and at the end of the year we currently are on track to commit \$37 to \$38 million, which is under target.

Marilyn updated the Committee on the VHEIP program, announcing that assets hit a record high, surpassing the \$500 million mark, and both contributions and new accounts outperformed FY21 projections through December.

Mike Stuart gave an update on private loan rehabilitation, providing the Committee with background on the program, and announcing that the program has successfully allowed over 100 private loan borrowers to rehabilitate their defaulted private loans since July 2020.

Marilyn provided the Committee with an update on grants, noting that many colleges have pushed out start dates for the spring semester so we are not seeing the volume of applications that we would normally see. She noted that we are monitoring the numbers closely. She also noted that Microgrants are up significantly, primarily due to increased need for technology.

Marilyn gave an update on loan servicing, explaining the confusion that customers are experiencing because payment relief and 0% interest has only been extended to loans held by the Department of Education, not to loans held by other servicers. Marilyn noted the efforts being done by staff to reach out to customers to explain options that may be available to assist them. Mike provided an update on servicing by the Guarantor on the defaulted portfolio.

Marilyn announced that VSAC's upcoming Scholarship Day will be the week of April 5, 2021 and extended an invitation to all Board members who would like to participate. Marilyn noted that more details will be shared once they are available.

Federal Update

Scott Giles gave a federal update, which included potential areas of focus related to student loans during the first 100 days of the new administration.

Vermont Update

Marilyn Cargill provided an update on the proposal that VSAC submitted to the Governor's administration for Free Tuition at CCV. The Committee discussed the proposal and members of the Executive Committee responded to questions.

Tom Little gave an update to the Committee on new leadership in the Vermont Legislature.

Other Business

There being no other business, the Committee adjourned at 11:59 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Cargill, Assistant Secretary

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