

Minutes

VSAC Programs & Services Committee Meeting

March 23, 2026
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Boardroom, VSAC Offices
10 East Allen Street
Winooski, Vermont 05404

Committee Members Present: Ryan Dulude (Chair Pro Tem), Tim Chamberlin, Dave Larsen, Clarence Davis, Mary-Katherine Stone
Committee Members Absent: Martha Heath (Chair)
Other Members Present: Dodie Mitchell
VSAC Staff Present: Scott Giles, Tom Little, Patrick Leduc, Meghan Metzler, Brad Fallon

Chair Pro Tem, Ryan Dulude called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. With a quorum established, the Committee took up the first order of business.

Approval of January 26, 2026, Minutes

Upon a motion made by Dave Larsen and seconded by Tim Chamberlin, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the Governance Committee meeting minutes of January 26, 2026, as presented.

Public Comment

There were no public comments given during the public comment period.

Grant Policy – Ongoing Review

Ryan Dulude asked Patrick Leduc to speak on the policies in review.

- Participation Agreements – Patrick Leduc let the Committee know that the policy had no material changes. Updates were centered around expanding background information.
- Gift Tolerance – The policy was updated to include the tolerance amount, and other changes were mostly grammatical in nature.

Upon a motion made by Tim Chamberlin and seconded by Dave Larsen, the Committee Members voted unanimously to recommend that the full Board approve the Participation Agreements and Gift Tolerance policies, as presented.

Annual review

Patrick Leduc reminded the Committee that these three policies are reviewed annually, and for efficiency the review of all three are now being bundled.

- Income Cutoff and Awarding – The policy had no material changes and management is recommending that the cutoff remained at \$160,000.
- Awarding Vermont Grants – The policy had no material changes, and management is recommending that the basic incentive grant remains \$1,000.

- Parent/Student Contribution Cutoff – As per the policy, the parent/student contribution cutoff was increased to \$33,847 for FY27, and there were no other material changes.

The Committee asked questions that Patrick Leduc answered.

Upon a motion made by Tim Chamberlin and seconded by Dave Larsen, the Committee Members voted unanimously to recommend that the full Board approve the policies: Income Cutoff, Awarding Vermont Grants, and Parent/Student Contribution Cutoff, as presented.

Operations Updates

- Loan Originations – Patrick Leduc reviewed loan origination growth for FY26. He expects there will be changes to VSAC’s loan attributes for FY27 in response to the Graduate and Parent PLUS loan cap changes, from the Reconciliation Bill (HR1). The Committee engaged the Executive Committee in dialogue.
- Rural Health Transformation Workforce Component – Patrick reminded the Committee that the Rural Health Transformation Fund was created by HR1. From that fund, Vermont’s DOH was awarded \$195M in a grant to be disbursed between FY26 and FY30. As part of the grant’s workforce components, VSAC is working with the Vermont Department of Health to finalize new Health related forgiveness loan programs.
- Award Advisor Updates – The app’s use has grown to 500 people across 25 states. Currently, VSAC is partnering with nine other state agencies and likely a tenth soon. Patrick also mentioned that the app received positive feedback last week at the EFC Annual Membership Meeting.
- Grant and Scholarships Internal Audit – Meghan Metzler provided an update to the Committee that the first internal audit administered by our new vendor was on Scholarships and Grants. The focus of the audit was on compliance, eligibility and disbursements, and no exceptions were identified.
- Standing Reports – Patrick Leduc reviewed items of interest from the previously distributed reports.

The Committee engaged Patrick Leduc and Meghan Metzler in conversation.

Federal Update

Scott Giles began his update by pointing out to the Committee that at this moment most government officials are focusing on DHS funding, the Iran conflict or mid-term elections. Despite this, the Department of Education is continuing to transfer responsibilities they have previously had to other departments, for example, TRIO and EOC were transferred to the Department of Labor, and defaulted student loans were transferred to the Department of Treasury.

Scott transitioned to EOC updates.

- COE’s lawsuit (that VSAC filed to join) is still with the Federal District Court.
- In the recent appropriations bill EOC funds were authorized so the program is expected to continue.
- Scott believes that new EOC grant application information will be available in the next few weeks.

Scott concluded his update that Senator Peter Welch introduced a bipartisan bill, the State-Based Education Loan Awareness Act, that would allow colleges to more easily inform students and families

about loans offered by state agencies or nonprofits. Scott entertained questions from the Committee on his federal updates.

State Update

Scott Giles provided a state update. The Legislature is continuing to move forward with the budget process. It appears that the House Appropriations Committee will move out their bill this week with a 3% increase for higher education. The bill will likely include \$2.3 million in one-time funding for the Freedom and Unity Scholarship, and an increase in VSAC's authority to use a portion of its funding for the Aspirations Partnerships. The Committee engaged Scott in a discussion.

VSAC Updates

Scott Giles started his update by recapping to the Committee that: VSAC's day at the State House is March 24th, VSAC Scholarship Day is April 15th, and there is no plan to go to the Bond Market this year.

Scott then turned his focus to VSAC's ability to respond to the changes in higher education financing from HR1. Programs like 802Opportunity, Freedom and Unity Scholarship, and the forgivable loan programs will help undergraduates. For graduate students, adjustments to VSAC's loan programs are in process, and VSAC continues discussions with Vermont Colleges and Universities. Scott, Patrick Leduc and the Committee had a dialogue on VSAC's response and the challenges colleges and universities are grappling with.

Other Business

There being no other business, the Committee adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Leduc, Assistant Secretary