CASTLETON ON THE MOVE

REVISED TO REFLECT 2018-2023 PILLARS, PRIORITIES, AND STRATEGIES

Castleton University

Introduction

In 2013, after a yearlong process that included seven committees comprised of 60 volunteers, Castleton University implemented its current strategic plan, *Castleton on the Move*, a blueprint for the University's next decade.

Now, at the plan's midpoint, a committee of University and Vermont State Colleges System leadership, community stakeholders, students, and alumni, which was convened by Castleton President Dr. Karen M. Scolforo, has provided an update to assist in moving the plan to its completion and prepare the University for the future.

The updated plan provides a more concise roadmap for the next five years, consolidating the original seven "destinations" into four pillars, supported by several priorities.

As a proud member of the Vermont State Colleges System, Castleton seeks to strategically align its pillars and priorities with the VSCS Mission and Priorities for the benefit of Vermont.

Vermont State Colleges System Mission

For the benefit of Vermont, the Vermont State Colleges System provides affordable, high quality, student-centered, and accessible education, fully integrating professional, liberal, and career study, consistent with student aspirations and regional and state needs.

Castleton Mission Statement

APPROVED SEPTEMBER 27, 2018 • VSCS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

To understand the Castleton Way, which guides the university in all its endeavors, is to engage in respectful relationships in an inclusive, student-centered environment; to appreciate our learned and compassionate faculty and dedicated and caring staff; to strive to learn, use, and teach sustainable environmental practices; and to participate in strong community partnerships.

Castleton's transformational education emphasizes undergraduate liberal arts and professional studies while also offering graduate programs. The University prepares its diverse students for relevant and meaningful careers in a global economy, advanced academic pursuits, and responsible citizenship.

Vermont State Colleges System
Strategic Priorities

1. **INCREASE THE CONTINUATION RATE OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ON TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION.**
   - Provide effective leadership and advocacy, with partners, on the urgent need to increase postsecondary affordability and attainment while sustaining program quality.
   - Expand strategies (e.g. Introduction to College Studies, dual enrollment, "try a major" events) targeted at current populations of high school students who are not continuing with postsecondary education.
   - Expand existing and create additional flexible academic pathways into and through our degree programs, including providing meaningful certificates and associate degrees.

2. **IMPROVE THE RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES AT OUR COLLEGES.**
   - Implement degree maps to create clear curriculum paths to graduation.
   - Improve access and use of data and advising technologies.
   - Develop multiple delivery models for degree completion, including online, connected classrooms, and flexible schedule options.
   - Continue to increase comprehensive and strategic approaches to student support services.

3. **BECOME A MORE ATTRACTIVE DESTINATION FOR VERMONT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES.**
   - Create a positive brand at the VSCS level that supports the unique characteristics of each college and is rooted in the sustained quality of the academic experience.
   - Continue to improve technological and physical infrastructure.
   - Enhance relationships with school counselors statewide.
   - Establish VSCS celebration and support of academic excellence (e.g. VSCS Hall of Fame).

4. **SERVE WELL MORE WORKING AGE VERMONTERS.**
   - Improve and expand flexible and online delivery of programs across the VSCS to increase number of degree programs available to students statewide.
   - Work with employers on needs assessment and flexibility of delivery.
   - Improve the entire technology infrastructure of the system to ensure that it is user friendly and competitive.

5. **OPERATE AS A MORE INTEGRATED SYSTEM TO EXPAND STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES AND ACHIEVE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES.**
   - In addition to maximizing productive collaboration and integration across the entire system, develop strategic alliances between Johnson and Lyndon State Colleges, as well as Vermont Technical College and Community College of Vermont, intended to complement and/or supplement their individual strengths and weaknesses.
   - Improve the entire technology infrastructure of the system to ensure that it is user friendly and competitive.
   - Review the financial model of the system to ensure institutional stability and explore financial incentives that support collaboration and system interconnectedness.
   - Reduce transferability and course-sharing barriers to expand the diversity of student academic and co-curricular learning opportunities.

6. **INCREASE STATE FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND OTHER SUPPLEMENTAL REVENUES.**
   - More effectively advocate for state support.
   - Increase grant-writing capacity in the system.
   - Collaborate on shared fundraising resources.

FOUR PILLARS

GUIDEPOSTS FOR THE FUTURE

TRANSFORMATIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE

(VSCS Strategic Priorities 1, 2, 3, 4)

GROWTH & RELEVANCE

(VSCS Strategic Priorities 1, 2, 3, 4)

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

(VSCS Strategic Priorities 2, 3, 4, 5)

ADVANCEMENT

(VSCS Strategic Priorities 3, 5, 6)

TRANSFORMATIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE

(VSCS STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 1, 2, 3, 4)

Priorities & Strategies

1. **INNOVATIVE APPROACH**
   - Initiate new delivery models including:
     - Cooperative education
     - Competency-based education
     - Distance education
     - Online education
   - Increase and improve co-curricular offerings including internships, research, community engagement, clubs and organizations, and recreational opportunities.
   - Provide outstanding teaching and learning technical support and a robust, secure, and reliable technical infrastructure.

2. **RIGOROUS ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE**
   - Adopt "explore career options in this field" as a learning objective in all programs.
   - Offer courses that prepare students to pursue a career in their field, prepare for graduate entrance and/or professional tests, self-promotion in the job market, and financial literacy

3. **NEW PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**
   - Implement faculty task forces to research and develop new programs and review current programs for cost effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability.
   - Align all current and future programs with market demand and employment statistics so as to expand successful programs, phase out costly/irrelevant offerings, and successfully fund new program launches.

4. **BALANCED APPROACH TO FACULTY EXPECTATIONS, DEVELOPMENT & RPT**
   - Launch an online faculty training center that orients new faculty to our community and provides ongoing assistance with pedagogy, advising, and professional development.
   - Provide faculty with a realistic understanding and balance in the "three-legged stool" of teaching, scholarship, and service.

GROWTH AND RELEVANCE

(VSCS STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 1, 2, 3, 4)

Priorities & Strategies

1. **REALISTIC PROJECTIONS**
   - Provide sound enrollment projections supported by historical and future trends data.
   - Expand enrollment through comprehensive enrollment strategies including:
     - Expansion of geographic recruitment areas
     - Encouragement/empowerment of alumni, faculty, staff, and students
     - Increase first-year enrollments through an increased presence in high schools, technical centers, and within communication to parents & counselors
     - Increase transfer enrollments by expanding articulation agreements, pathways, and on-site delivery

2. **MARKET RESEARCH & TRENDS DRIVE DECISIONS**
   - Utilize common data set, CIRP, and other primary research.
   - Utilize census, labor statistics, and other secondary research.

3. **EXPANDED INTERNATIONAL RECRUITMENT**
   - Focus on international schools with an English curriculum.
   - Engage in Blue Chip recruitment trips twice each year.
   - Increase scholarship opportunities and utilize athletics recruitment.

4. **DIVERSITY & INCLUSION INITIATIVES**
   - Increase graduate, online, non-traditional, minority, and dual enrollment through a number of new initiatives including awareness campaigns, academy development, scholarships and grants, and increased course/credential offerings.

5. **IMPROVED RETENTION, PERSISTENCE, AND GRADUATION RATES**
   - Provide student support services including:
     - Appointment of a director of retention
     - Outreach to current students via Castleton Support Team
     - Dispense “completion scholarships” to needy upper-class students
     - Expand other scholarship and grant programs
   - Implement the “Think Thirty/15-to-finish” campaign.
   - Pay close attention to activities and co-curricular options when developing degree maps.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

(VSCS STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2, 3, 4, 5)

Priorities & Strategies

1. **BALANCED BUDGETS**
   - Utilize new enrollment strategies and other recruitment and retention initiatives to increase revenue.
   - Examine ROI on budget spend to maximize impact.
2. **RESTRUCTURE & RIGHT-SIZING**
   - Complete two-year implementation of restructure to align revenue and expenses, from incentivized retirements, complete position elimination and departmental consolidations.
   - Establish marketing budget to promote growth initiatives.
3. **ESTABLISH MARGINS**
   - Generate new programs, strengthen current programs, and increase opportunities for interdisciplinary course offerings.
   - Closely monitor spend to budget, adjust as needed.
4. **REPLENISH RESERVES**
   - Prioritize surplus allocation to replenishing.
   - Closely track all accounts to ensure posts are appropriate and accurate.

ADVANCEMENT

(VSCS STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 3, 5, 6)

Priorities & Strategies

1. **STRATEGIC FUNDRAISING PLAN**
   - Develop strong donor relations through multiple opportunities for targeted touches.
   - Offer naming opportunities including:
     - Academic programs
     - Schools
     - Athletic, Academic, and Residence Life facilities
   - Focus fundraising on scholarship generating, including multi-year "Together We Will Change the World" campaign
   - Focus on alumni relations, growing signature events, and improving donor retention.
   - Implement internal giving campaigns and challenges that increase student, faculty, and staff support.

2. **BRAND & VALUE STATEMENT = "OUR STORY'**
   - Develop and implement comprehensive integrated marketing communications campaign, including strong internal communications.
   - Establish student-centered influencer marketing practicum to support academic departments.

3. **GRANTS PURSUIT & ACQUISITION**
   - Hire Director of Grants.
   - Focus on program development and growth initiatives.

4. **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, PARTNERSHIPS, AND TOWN/GOWN RELATIONS**
   - Gain membership on local boards, attendance at chamber mixers, Rotary functions, and other community-oriented events.
   - Active participation on Bridge Committee.

5. **PROMOTION**
   - Showcase academic excellence through faculty and student achievements.
   - Increase quality and frequency of internal and external newsletters, alumni magazines, and quarterly/annual reports.

Castleton

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