NECHE ACCREDITATION PROGRESS REPORT

[DECEMBER 1, 2021]

VERMONT TECH

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Introduction

Vermont Technical College (Vermont Tech) is pleased to submit this progress report to the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) in response to the April 27, 2021 letter from the Commission following the College's Comprehensive Evaluation and reaccreditation by the Commission.

The purpose of this report is to report progress in five areas identified by the Commission:

1) Enhancing the institution's financial stability with attention to achieving its enrollment goals, including for the M.S. in Software Engineering program, diversifying its revenue resources, and implementing its plans for "rightsizing" the institution;
2) Continuing to develop a comprehensive approach to the assessment of student learning and using the results for improvement;
3) Continuing to strengthen its Institutional Research function and the use of data for decision making, resource allocation, and planning;
4) Continuing to strengthen planning initiatives and the linking of institutional plans with those of the Vermont State College System;
5) Reviewing foundational policies and procedures to ensure the efficacy of operations and making these policies easily available to members of the campus community.

In addition, in a letter dated February 17, 2021, the Commission advised the College:

"…that the report submitted by Vermont Technical College be accepted, and the institution be granted approval to offer its current courses and academic programs via distance education through Spring 2022."

The same letter requested the following:

Vermont Technical College is asked to submit a report by January 15, 2022 for consideration in Spring 2022 that gives emphasis to the institution's success in offering its current courses and academic programs via distance education as evidence that "the institution has a demonstrable record of success in implementing the results of its planning."

This progress report treats the request above as a sixth area of focus.

The following contributed significantly to this report: The President, the Dean of Academic Affairs, the Dean of Students, the Dean of Administration, the Associate Dean of Administration, the Assistant Dean of Admissions, the Executive Assistant to the President, the Interim Institutional Researcher, the Department Chair of Computer Information Science (specific to the M.S. in Software Engineering Program) and other faculty who are leading and participating in Academic Assessment.

The first draft of this report was completed in October and shared with the President's Executive Team and revised based on their feedback. In November, the report was sent to the entire college community for review and comments. The revisions based on those comments were sent to the President for her final approval before the report was submitted to NECHE.

Institutional History

Since its founding 155 years ago, Vermont Tech has continuously evolved to meet the educational needs of the state and its workforce. In Public Act No. 1 of 1866, the Vermont legislature established the first public schools in Vermont devoted to the education of teachers. The schools were located in Randolph, Johnson, and Castleton. The Randolph State Normal School served in this capacity until 1910, when the legislature determined that there was a need for a state agricultural school and established the Vermont School of Agriculture (VSA) at the Normal School site. Over its long years of service, the VSA graduated many Vermonters who were distinguished by their numerous and notable contributions to agriculture and government.

In response to evolving educational needs, technical courses were added to the offerings of the school in 1957 and the institution was given a new name reflecting this expanding mission: Vermont Agricultural and Technical Institute (VATI). It was the first technical institute in Vermont with an initial enrollment of approximately 75 students. By act of the 1961 legislature, VATI and the state teacher colleges (Castleton, Johnson, and Lyndon) were placed under the control of a newly created public corporation known as Vermont State Colleges (VSC). The Community College of Vermont joined the other state colleges in 1975.

The name VATI was changed to Vermont Technical College on July 1, 1962 and the College was authorized to grant associate of applied science degrees. The associate of engineering degree was first granted in 1965. On May 7, 1993, the VSC Board of Trustees approved the College's first baccalaureate degree program: The Bachelor of Science in Architectural Engineering Technology.

Vermont Tech Today

Nursing programs were added to the College curriculum in 1994 when Vermont's three schools of practical nursing became part of the Vermont Tech community. Beginning in the Fall of 1996, Practical Nursing became a credit-bearing program that could be applied toward a two-year Associate Degree in Nursing from Vermont Tech. The Bachelor of Science in Nursing was added in 2013.

By authority conferred by the Vermont legislature, the Trustees of the VSC have authorized Vermont Tech to grant the degrees of associate of applied science, associate of science, associate of engineering, and bachelor of science with a major in the program pursued. The Vermont Academy of Science and Technology (VAST) at Vermont Tech has Independent School Approval for grade 12 from the Vermont State Board of Education. In 2015, Vermont Tech's NECHE (formerly NEASC) accreditation was updated to include the offering of master's degrees with the launch of its Master of Science in Software Engineering.

The following programs are accredited by the Engineering Technology Accreditation Commission of ABET: Architectural & Building Engineering Technology; Architectural Engineering Technology; Civil & Environmental Engineering Technology; Computer Engineering Technology; Electrical Engineering Technology; Electromechanical Engineering Technology; Mechanical Engineering Technology.

The Dental Hygiene associate degree program is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation.

The Nursing programs, including the LPN and RN re-entry programs, are approved by the Vermont State Board of Nursing. All Nursing programs are accredited by the NLN Commission for Nursing Accreditation (NLN CNEA)

The Respiratory Therapy program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care.

The Veterinary Technology program is accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association as a program for educating veterinary technicians.

In July of 2016, Patricia Moulton was named the Interim President and assumed her position by September. There was a national search where Moulton was a candidate. She was the successful finalist and was offered the position. The Board of Trustees named Moulton the College President at their March 25, 2017 trustees' meeting. As she took her position, one of her first named objectives was to lead the College through a formal strategic planning process. President Moulton's goals for the development of a plan were articulated as:

- The plan sets the direction for the college and establishes priorities. It defines how Vermont Tech views success and prioritizes strategies/actions to get the College there.
- It gets everyone all on the same page, rowing in the same direction to achieve the goals of the College.
- It helps focus decision-making. There are many good ideas for new programs or initiatives.
- The plan will help the College determine which ideas fit best, which do not and which may want to be pursued in the future.
- It helps to better align resources to goals.
- It helps with communicating the College's strategic direction.
- It lets the college community and its partners know where the College is going and how to get there. It gives stakeholders a clear sense of how they can support Vermont Tech's success.

The Strategic Plan was a major theme of the College's 2020 NECHE Comprehensive Evaluation Self-Study.

On April 17, 2020, the former Chancellor of the Vermont State College System (VSCS) made a bold proposal to structurally change the Vermont State Colleges System through campus closures. That plan was quickly rejected by the Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees and accompanied by a swell of stakeholder support, and put the VSCS on a path of accelerating plans toward creating a more sustainable future. In May 2020, President Moulton created a Transition Advisory Taskforce (TAT), comprised of 15 members representing students, faculty and staff and all of the collective bargaining units. The charge was to assist in the development of a plan to transition the College – Vermont Tech specifically, not the VSCS – to a highly sustainable and stable institution. Important in that work was being a community of colleagues that represented our broad community, providing a framework and filter to support an inclusive gathering of ideas and priorities. The group developed "guardrails" for all ideas submitted and helped rank and organize over 400+ ideas into themes. With those themes in mind, specific "buckets" and priorities started to surface.

The TAT handed off their organized work to a Drafting Committee, comprised of colleagues serving on TAT and also serving as Executive Team members, who worked through specific project charters that align with the themes that emerged through the TAT work. Members of the Drafting Committee include President Moulton, Dean of Administration Tyler, Dean of Academics Gaillat, and Dean of Students Enser. Prioritizing a project management approach to this work, the project charters seek to identify clear goals, deliverables, timelines, stakeholders, budget, and more. The Drafting Committee spent several working days organizing the charters and recently presented drafts to the TAT for feedback and input:

TAT Charters:

Transformation of Physical Infrastructure
Nontraditional Pathways
Enhance Enrollment Pathways
Establishing a Culture of Assessment

The final versions of the Charter documents were uploaded to College's website in January 2021. Charter Team leads have recruited volunteers to collaborate on the implementation of each charter moving forward. Importantly, the College has transitioned from its 2018-2023 Strategic Plan to this transformation work as its strategic planning process. As detailed in the report that follows, the continuity between the 2018-2023 document and project charters is linear, with direct association of the earlier objectives found throughout the charters.

AREA OF FOCUS: *1) Enhancing the institution's financial stability with attention to achieving its enrollment goals, including for the M.S. in Software Engineering program, diversifying its revenue resources, and implementing its plans for "rightsizing" the institution*

Despite the destabilizing force of the pandemic, the institution closed each of these past two unusual years with significant operating surpluses, increasing its strategic reserves and setting aside funds in carry forward for immediate availability. We are poised to meet another potentially tumultuous economic year with great flexibility, and have the financial resources to anticipate challenges and opportunities, rather than to merely react to them.

As we strive to maintain and enhance the institution's very stable financial performance of the past five years (FY's 2017 through 2021, with a cumulative operating surplus of $6.0M), our goals are four-fold:

1. ELIMINATE UNPROFITABLE INVESTMENTS, FREEING RESOURCS TO INVEST IN CORE MISSION:
    a. Campus Offices
    b. Biodigester (annual cost; administrative drain)
    c. Vermont Enterprise Center-VTEC is under contract to be purchased (annual cost; administrative drain; sale price; reinvested in master plan)
    d. Norwich Farm (annual cost; administrative drain; sale price; reinvested in master plan)
    e. Other Buildings
2. DIVERSIFIED REVENUE: Leverage existing infrastructure to increase market penetration and diversify revenue streams
    a. Increased state support (external support during pandemic; increase over the past few years; projected VSCS-level increase over the transition.)
    b. Trial program: dormitory leases (% res hall capacity utilized; $$ annual revenue)
    c. VT-MC (projected programmatic revenue)
3. ENROLLMENT GOALS: In coordination with Vermont State University, re-balance academic portfolio. Invest less in contracting markets
    a. Randolph Center Campus
    b. Nursing expansion (program growth over past decade; new cohorts & sites 2020 through 2023; external funding opportunities)
    c. Dental Therapy (funding; building fit-up; anticipated enrollment)
    d. Strategic Enrollment Management
4. M.S. IN SOFTWARE ENGINEERING: Conditions to continue or close-out

1) ELIMINATE UNPROFITABLE INVESTMENTS, RIGHT-SIZE INSTITUTION

Description:

As described above, in late 2020, President Moulton convened a Transition Advisory Task Force with a specific charge to address issues associated with "right-sizing" and investing strategically in Physical Infrastructure (TAT – PI). The opportunity she presented to the group, as part of our "Transforming VTC" strategy, was outlining a clear and forward-thinking plan for our physical infrastructure to ensure a sustainable future for Vermont Tech.

An immediately actionable centerpiece of this charge was to begin eliminating current enterprises that are unprofitable and/or otherwise draining resources. To that end, divesting of the Norwich Farm, the Vermont Technical Enterprise Center and the anaerobic biodigester leapt to the top of the priority list. In each instance, the programming associated with these enterprises had largely run its course and the legacy costs associated with maintaining facilities outstripped any value for current Vermont Tech students.

Broadly, physical infrastructure planning is to be conducted in alignment with the vision being outlined for transforming our academic programs/student experience and seeks to prioritize college dollars toward directly impacting a student's return on investment. Identified goals include:

- Consolidate classrooms, labs, offices on the Randolph Campus to enable the sale of assets.
- Consolidate offices, classrooms and labs on the Williston Campus to regain space for possible expansion and/or new programs.
- Where appropriate, initiate work-from-home options as a permanent solution for staff to reduce commuting time and reduce footprint.
- Sell buildings in Randolph Center and identify future/needed footprint in Williston.
- Engage in a master planning process, facilitated by an external partner and engaging the College Community, that creates a sustainable and strategic roadmap for investment. Scope includes ALL campuses and sites.
- Invest significantly in renovation to buildings that we maintain.
- Carry forward a sustainable and predictable budget model for continued investment.
- Liquidate unused physical assets in Norwich, Vermont (Norwich Farm).
- Liquidate unused physical assets on Randolph Center.
- Eliminate investment in Biodigester.

Actions:

The TAT-PI team kicked off its work in January 2020, with its membership reflecting diverse stakeholders in the community.

Meeting almost weekly ever since, the team has accomplished nearly every objective in the first two (of three) phases in the project timeline. These included:

- Assessing the office and meeting space needs of Admissions; Academic Dean's office; Continuing Education and Workforce Development; IT; Bookstore; and Marketing/Communications - considering the advent of work-from-home and/or hybrid policies.

- Communicating and implementing identified moves.
- Completing a market assessment and studying the viability of properties for sale or lease.
- Engaging real estate professionals for the sale of appropriate properties.
- Obtaining Board of Trustees' authorization for sale of 4 of the 5 identified properties.
- Performing financial analysis of available resources and how they can be deployed to support physical infrastructure priorities.
- Conducting comprehensive Master Planning Process (that seeks to strategically align with academic vision planning).

Divestment in Norwich Farm, the Vermont Technical Enterprise Center and the Biodigester, given all that is involved in these processes, was identified as a keystone strategy early on, and that work continues to date. Sales are pending for both the Norwich Farm and Vermont Technical Enterprise Center. The Biodigester was brought off-line and an RFP was issued to explore turning over operations to a third-party. We have yet to identify an appropriate digester partner, so at this point, we anticipate commencing the decommissioning by June 2022. These facilities in profile:

	Approx. size / description	**Approx. value**	**Maintenance burden**	**Approx. annual upkeep & op cost**
Norwich Farm	farmstead, mobile home lot; 2 private residences; pasture land; micro-dairy processing facility	$1.75M	Plowing; grounds; septic maintenance; bridge maintenance; facilities maintenance; utilities	$65K / YEAR in direct expense, administrative time and effort not included
VTEC	2 large off-campus buildings (approx. 10,000 sf each) on a multi-acre campus; cold storage facilities; large parking lots	$1.1M	Plowing; grounds; custodial; facilities maintenance; boiler; elevator; utilities	$70K / YEAR in direct expense, administrative time and effort not included
Biodigester	Multiple steel buildings on campus proper; 3 large cylindrical tanks; genset connected to grid	$4.0M	Plowing; grounds; facilities and mechanical maintenance; highly specialized equipment service and maintenance; utilities	$160K / YEAR in net direct expense, administrative time and effort not included

Projections:

The sale and/or repurposing of multiple properties continues to be a high priority, as is resolution on the final disposition of the digester. Once the sale of both the Norwich Farm and Vermont Technical Enterprise Center are complete (est. Fall 2021), there are three additional properties in Randolph Center to be researched and potentially sold or leased to a third party. These properties include:

- Allen House
- Red School House
- Langevin House

The College finalized its new Master Plan in the Fall 2021 and immediately began implementation. The Master Plan will prioritize subsequent projects, which will be queued-up in turn based on available resources. The TAT-PI team will remain the group charged with implementation. The focus will continue to be on reducing costs/overhead and focusing resources on mission-critical infrastructure.

2) DIVERSIFIED REVENUE SOURCES

Description:

Historically, Vermont Tech has been largely dependent on Net Student Revenue (Tuition, Fees, and Room and Board, net of Scholarship expense). Between FY 2016 and FY 2019, an average of 77% of Vermont Tech's unrestricted revenue came directly from students. Recognizing that such an economic dependence leaves the institution vulnerable to changing market conditions and potential enrollment swings, but acknowledging the danger of engaging in ventures beyond our mission and core competency, Vermont Tech has made revenue diversification a priority, but *when and only when* non-educational enterprises are compatible with the institution's core educational mission. The institution has been aggressively pursuing two particular suitable areas of diversification. First, the institution, in cooperation with the Vermont State College System, has campaigned to increase the institution's access to state appropriation funds. (Vermont has, for some years, been at the bottom of post-secondary funding, nationally.) Second, the institution has sought to leverage valuable but underutilized aspects of its *existing* infrastructure.

Actions:

Appropriations:

Between FY2012 and FY2017, Vermont Tech saw a cumulative increase of only $400,000 on its (then) $5,400,000 appropriation—an annual growth rate of less than 2%. In FY 2019, Vermont Tech's unrestricted base state appropriation of $6,400,000 represented 17% of our total revenue. Actions taken to increase this revenue included consistent lobbying efforts by VCSC (system), unions, stakeholders, etc. that have led to two large increases in the College's base appropriation:

1. Updated VSCS methodology for allocating appropriation to constituent institutions, defined by VSCS Policy 403 implemented in September 2018, now utilizes enrollment-based formulas to allocate appropriation more equitably between VSCS institutions. This methodology change increased the institution's portion of the

shared appropriation by ~$0.2M in the first year of the policy's phase-in, and smaller amounts over the following years.

2. Over this period, Vermont state appropriations increased by 7.8% per year: during FY 2022, Vermont Tech will receive $8,000,000—24% of our total budgeted revenue.

Rental of Unutilized Residence Hall Space:

Even before the pandemic, the Randolph Center Campus residence halls were not full: as of the last fully residential year, FY2020, the College filled 435 of 534 beds, a utilization rate of 81%.

This is a result of a long-term enrollment trend for the Randolph Center-based academic programs that has been one of steady decline. Though the institution's overall enrollment was almost identical in 2020 as in 2010 (1,679 and 1,663 respectively), the Randolph Center campus population has declined by 202 students—an annualized attrition of about 2 1/2 % per year.

Fall HC enrollment, by FY and campus:	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Delta, 2010->2020	Annual gro
Randolph	905	917	892	885	807	718	730	734	731	717	703	532	-202	-2.5%
Williston	417	445	399	409	385	366	372	411	400	419	442	394	25	0.6%
Other Physical Location	341	296	316	351	329	394	359	371	381	363	446	468	105	2.7%
Online					24	66	86	115	109	115	88	82	88	#DIV/0!
Grand Total	1,663	1,658	1,607	1,645	1,545	1,544	1,547	1,631	1,621	1,614	1,679	1,476	16	0.1%

Further compounding matters, the pandemic dramatically limited student demand for dormitory space. In FY2022, we are housing only 240 students in Randolph—a utilization rate of less than 50%. Consequently, the institution finds itself with valuable physical assets—the residence halls—which are not generating the levels of revenue expected at the time of their construction.

Given this unused capacity, which will continue to be an issue post-pandemic, the institution has been exploring alternative uses of residence hall space. As of FY2022, Vermont Tech is conducting a pilot trial of a program to lease select, whole floors in our residence halls to outside institutions. The Vermont Law School, located in South Royalton, Vermont, has a need for space for their students and has executed a one year, $150,000 lease, for one floor in the south wing of our "Old Dorm." There are currently 14 of their students in residence. Further, the Vermont Department of Mental Health has the need for housing for their "Traveling Nurses" program and has executed another $150,000 lease, for a second floor in the south wind of our "Old Dorm" currently housing 10 of their nurses.

The College is hopeful that, should this arrangement prove mutually fruitful and operationally manageable, it will be able to expand the program in future years. Alternatively, the soon to be completed Master Plan for the Randolph Center campus envisions creative reuse of this residence hall through a partnership with a developer or sale.

Vermont Manufacturing Collaborative (VT-MC):

The institution owns and maintains extensive manufacturing laboratories and equipment in its Morrill Hall; these facilities are primarily used to support the Mechanical Engineering Technology and Manufacturing Engineering Technology academic programs. However, through a unique opportunity provided by the U.S. Department of Defense, the institution has been able to apply a large amount of external funding to stand up the "Vermont Manufacturing Collaborative"—a partnership model that will provide learning and collaboration opportunities to students while collaborating with local industry. This enterprise—just launching—has a target for operational revenue of approximately $1,000,000 per year.

The Vermont Manufacturing Collaborative (VT-MC) was officially launched and seed-funded on March 11th, 2020 through a Department of Defense contract within a program called *The National Imperative for Industrial Skills*. The national program intends to accelerate the adoption of Advanced Manufacturing by U.S. businesses and significantly grow the capable workforce. T. Additionally, the Center will be an educational hub for learners of all types including early educational awareness (K-6), strong STEM engagement (7-12), technical and vocational schools, colleges and universities, and continuing workforce training / upskilling.

Through strong support from Senator Patrick Leahy, Vermont Tech was awarded an $11.9 million program contract to create the first advanced manufacturing education, research, and development facility in Vermont by building collaboration between higher education and regional industry. The funding will be used for construction, advanced manufacturing equipment procurement, curriculum development, and staffing for ~3 years. Approximately $5M is being invested in purchasing leading-edge advanced manufacturing equipment. The equipment portfolio was developed through industry identification of current and future needs across the entire product development process of ideation through production.

Upon completion of the National Imperative for Industrial Skills contract, in October 2022, Vermont Tech retains ownership of all assets and developed materials for continued service delivery. The national program's intent is to seed-fund, and jump-start, a financially sustainable entity for continued acceleration of Advanced Manufacturing within the United States.

Service and Revenue Channels:

There are many other potential service channels that can deliver revenue for sustained operation and growth for Vermont Tech as the need for workforce development, product demonstrations, and high-end tech services are vast. After the program contract period, VT-MC intends to generate revenue between $1M - $2M annually through a variety of sources including grants, training, product demonstrations, and high-end tech services.

Grants – Many ongoing grants exist to support the educational introduction and teaching of STEM topics, such as through the National Science Foundation. Grant opportunities are abundant in the workforce development sector including DoD and EDA. Advancing technology capabilities in military and commercial sectors is another likely grant avenue. (Target Revenue $500k annually)

Training and Education – Learners of all types create new revenue opportunities. The Advanced Manufacturing Center's tools can significantly enhance the College's existing and future curricula in many fields, attracting a wider student base. Several tool manufacturers have already reached out to discuss a service-center training model for new and existing employees. America Makes offered access to their current database of 50k job openings for AM trained workers. (Target Revenue $360k annually)

Product Demonstrations – As companies consider investing in Advanced Manufacturing technologies, understanding process capabilities is paramount. Several companies have already approached VT-MC about producing samples using different processes and characterizing the results so that an informed technology investment decision can be made. (Target Revenue $240k annually)
High-end Technical Services – The VT-MC Advanced Manufacturing Center at Vermont Tech will house some leading-edge capabilities that are currently sparse across the US. As VT-MC works towards helping more companies acquire these advanced capabilities, there is significant opportunity to provide these services while engaging students in real-world advanced manufacturing. Some of these services include x-ray metrology, sintering capable heat treatment, and real-time melt-pool analysis. Additionally, the Center will house a full-range idea-to-production tool portfolio, creating incubator space and product-based start-up support potential. (Target Revenue $400k annually)

Projections:

Efforts to diversify revenue will continue to be integrated into our business planning cycle, and relieving our dependence on student revenue continues to be a strategic priority for the College.

The College and the VSCS intend to continue pressing for increased appropriation: The State of Vermont Legislature has recently demonstrated their increased support for the missions of the Vermont State Colleges and Vermont Technical College. Over the coming years, we expect to continue to communicate the unique value of a Vermont Tech education to the Governor and Legislators, and believe the state will make funding Vermont Tech programs a priority.

The trial enterprise leasing residence hall space is off to a favorable start and an expansion of this program is likely in coming years. In addition, the prospects for Vermont Manufacturing Collaborative are positive and are projected to generate significant revenue for the College.

3) ENROLLMENT

Description:

The profile of the student body at Vermont Technical College has changed dramatically over the past decade, and is likely to continue doing so. In AY 09-10, more than 50% of the institution's attendees called Randolph Center their home campus; 24% of students were enrolled in a growing group of loosely related programs in the Nursing and Health Occupations fields. Over the decade that followed many factors disrupted Vermont Tech's sense of core identity. To name a few: demographic changes in Vermont and New England have decreased the pool of graduating high school students; changing student, parent, and industry expectations have redefined the way value is perceived in academic settings; an increased perception of the need for a technically adept workforce has highlighted the value of a comprehensive technical education in our legislature and communities; and (to say nothing of a global pandemic) an aging Vermont population has increased the need for trained health care workers, ready to make a difference in the workforce.

Academic Year 20-21 found the institution fundamentally changed. The Randolph campus now only represents 36% of our students; Nursing and Health occupations account for 35% of the institution's overall enrollment. The Schools of Agriculture and Engineering have seen average annual enrollment declines of 11% and 5% respectively over the past 5 years, a period in which Nursing and Health occupations grew, on average, by 3% annually.

With student tuition and fees representing roughly three-quarters of the institution's overall revenue (73% in our FY2022 budget), the impact of these *ongoing* changes in our enrollment profile simply cannot be overstated: Vermont Technical College's ability to secure financial sustainability in the coming years relies first and foremost on the institution's ability to adapt its academic portfolio to meet the changing market in which it exists.

Actions:

Pivot to Nursing and Allied Health

Given the sustained and continuing increase in demand for graduates in the Nursing and Health Occupations fields, the number one portfolio management initiative for Vermont Tech has been to pivot resources towards these rapidly growing programs. As mentioned above, Nursing & Allied Health (NAH) Programs have seen exceptional growth rates over the past ten years, and now represents 35% of the institution's enrollment.

a. Nursing Programs
    i. Enrollment response to the pandemic: The COVID 19 pandemic has increased much needed awareness and urgency surrounding the nursing shortage. Vermont already had a pre-pandemic shortage of nurses and insufficient number of nursing school graduates annually. The shortage has been exacerbated in the past two years due to increased burnout in working nurses.
    ii. Financial support: Vermont Tech is currently facing unprecedented financial support of its nursing programs and nursing students through legislative scholarship opportunities and various grant programs. State and Federal lawmakers are focusing on growing additional nursing capacity with Vermont Tech and three other institutions in Vermont offering nursing education. The Bachelor of Science in Nursing online program enrollment nearly doubled in fall 2021 as a response to the free tuition scholarship provided by the Legislature. Additionally, enrollment has increased at Vermont Tech's Randolph Center, Morrisville, Rutland, Williston, and St. Albans sites this Fall. Lastly, the Legislature has allocated funding to create 45 new nursing seats in collaboration with long term care facilities in Vermont.
    iii. Environmental factors: Additionally, more patient care facilities are coming forward with requests for their own designated cohorts or an ability to support employees and grow their own – Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, Porter Medical Center, Northwestern Medical Center, Rutland Regional Medical Center.
    iv. 5-year growth rate, 2016-2021: If these rates continue—a reasonably probable future, not a guaranteed one of course—NAH could represent 44% of Vermont Tech's 2026 enrollment and 51% of its 2031 enrollment. Vermont Tech would, in this case, be first and foremost an institution of Nursing and Allied Health. The institution *needs* to be aware of—and strategically responsive to—this potential course of events, setting investment in, and the assignment of resources to, NAH as its highest priority.

b. Allied Health Programs
    i. Dental Therapy Program. With significant external funding support, and enthusiasm from the community and legislature, the institution is developing the first regional program in Dental Therapy.
        1. In 2016 Vermont passed a law permitting the practice of dental therapy. The dental therapist's role on the oral health care team is akin to a nurse practitioner or a physician's assistant in the medical world. Their value is realized when they are employed in both rural or urban areas that are underserved and implemented to the highest and most comprehensive scope of their practice.

2. Vermont's law requires that any dental therapist licensed in our state would need to also be a dental hygienist and graduate from a Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) accredited dental therapy program. Vermont Tech is home to the only CODA accredited dental hygiene program in the State; therefore, it made the most sense for the College to build a career laddering program. In May of 2017, Vermont Tech hired Dr. Cheyanne Warren to develop the program and submit it for accreditation.

The initial grant to establish the Dental Therapy programs was from The Kellogg Foundation to support Dr. Warren's salary for one year; this was taken over in year two of program development by an additional stakeholder Community Catalyst while VTC was waiting to hear back if we were awarded a 1.6 million-dollar HRSA grant for the program start up and implementation, a grant that was ultimately received. In addition, Pew Charitable Trusts have sponsored our business plan development as well as taken over the development of our external rotation sites totaling over $200,000.

The College received an additional grant from the Dental Trade Alliance foundation in the amount of $25,000 for some educational materials the rest of which have been primarily covered by our HRSA grant. Additional funding of $125,000 came from the McClure and Hoehl Foundations to cover some of the capital costs of installing the simulation lab for the program.

Finally, due to COVID delays on our overall program timeline, the State of Vermont has completed our budgetary needs with an additional $400,000 to cover the funding gap for personal, distance learning equipment, renovation costs to install equipment and accommodate a larger cohort of students. This should facilitate program launching by the Fall of 2023.

Once the program achieves initial CODA accreditation, our market research has determined that the majority of our initial applicant pool will be students previously trained as dental hygienists. Based on market demand and CODA accreditation supervision ratios, the College has determined that on-site maximum enrollment would be ten students for this pathway. In addition, the program could accommodate six more students in the three-year program. Once program retention rate has been determined, the goal is to graduate a total of around 16 students annually. The College has also been working with other sites in both Vermont and Maine in order to offer our advanced standing 16-month pathway at a distance with the clinical education being delivered at an affiliated site in order to expand our enrollment and help bring this educational model to other states that have passed the law. Enrollment at these sites would be sustainable with cohorts of 4-6 students.

Dental recruitment for all provider types to Vermont is challenging and expanding our clinic in Williston in order to educate larger cohorts of students would not be a wise use of resources. Students should be educated and recruited as close to the communities they plan on serving as possible. Having Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) or other non-profit dental clinics or even larger for-profit clinics that could partner with Vermont Tech in order to deliver the clinical education will be the best path forward for students and providers alike. It also will prevent the College from having to dedicate more resources to space, technology, equipment and supplies where the utilization of that space will not be as robust as it would be in community clinics.

ii. Nursing Program

1. The College has added nursing cohorts in Berlin, Rutland, Littleton-Lancaster, NH, and Keene, NH.
2. The College has also increased capacity, and are educating more students, at Randolph Center, Morrisville, Williston, and St. Albans.
3. Planning is underway to increase capacity at Lyndon, with addition of a face to face stand-alone cohort and the addition of long-term care cohorts (through both our telepresence technology, and through non-traditional scheduling).
4. The College is implementing a *free tuition* scholarship through Vermont's Critical Occupations legislation, and are leveraging an EDA grant to renovate a skills lab in Lyndon.
5. The College is aggressively pursuing many other grant opportunities for nursing scholarship that are now presenting.

Strategic Enrollment Management

Much of the long-range enrollment goal-setting has been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The institution's enrollment declined by 12% between Fall 2019 (1,679 enrolled) and Fall 2020 (1,476 enrolled). In the Spring 2020, President Moulton convened a Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) committee to develop an integrated system for improving student and institutional outcomes related to enrollment. SEM planning at the institution allows for a data-informed process with the goal of enhanced student enrollment, retention and persistence, supporting the institution's ability to undertake future strategic initiatives.

This group, including a team of administrators, faculty and staff, was charged with creating a working plan to achieve the established enrollment and revenue priorities of the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan and to develop a five-year enrollment plan. Completion of the Strategic Enrollment Management plan was originally scheduled for the summer of 2021. However, given the recent announcement of Vermont Technical College merging to be a part of the Vermont State University by 2023, administer, faculty and staff time was shifted to other priorities. Instead, by recommendation of the SEM committee, President Moulton has disbanded the SEM team and has asked that short-term enrollment targets for the next two years be monitored by the Retention Support Group that meets weekly to discuss tactics for enrollment and retention.

Going forward, the Student Experience Core Team for the VSC is looking at ways to plan strategically around enrollment for the new Vermont State University. Admissions Associate Deans and others from all three merging institutions meeting weekly to develop plans and targets. The planned consolidation includes an initiative to restructure and optimize the Academic Portfolio

Vermont Tech is continuing its contract with EAB for enrollment services (we are in the 2nd year of a 4-year contract) to expand the "top of the funnel" for enrollment. Focus will remain on Nursing and Allied Health as the faster growing programs, with additional emphasis on engineering, computing and professional services. Further, the VSCS is putting forth a recommendation for a second round of "Critical Occupations" scholarships for the coming academic year and is including engineering on the list of critical occupations given the tremendous demand in the Vermont workforce for these skills.

Projections:

As of the time of this report, the institution is projecting stabilized FY2022 tuition and fee revenue (down 1.7%, roughly equivalent to an anticipated Fall 2021 headcount of 1,458). The institution is sufficiently well funded and holds enough funds in reserve to manage this level of diminished revenue for a short period. As noted above, moving forward, the institution is planning for controlled growth in Nursing and Allied Health as it continues to prioritize investment in these areas, and *modest* recovery in its other programs as face-to-face campus operations are normalized. The goal is sustainable enrollment levels (1,500+) by Fall 2023.

More specifically, the College anticipates an aggregate enrollment growth of 2% over the next two years, to 1,522 students, reaching 550 students in its Nursing and Allied Health programs by Fall 2022 ((Fall '20 enrollment at 522, 3% growth trend, favorable economic conditions, continued and sustained emphasis on investment in these areas) and partial rebounds in its other programs to 970 (1,150 Fall 2019, 934 Fall 2020).

Another goal is to increase residence hall occupancy over the next two years, currently 50%, to roughly three-quarters of pre-pandemic residency. FY2022 room & board revenue projections have rebounded significantly: up 140% from last year to an anticipated $2.6M for the year, up from $1.1M the prior year. (FY2019, the final pre-pandemic year, revenue was $4.3M). The College anticipates another significant rebound in occupancy in FY2023; current residence hall occupancy is 44% (240 occupied of 534 beds—just over half of pre-pandemic benchmark of 81%, 435 of 534): as operations normalize, the College anticipates residence hall occupancy will once more become an attractive alternative for students.

4) MASTER OF SCIENCE IN SOFTWARE ENGINEERING

Description:

The College agrees that enrollment in the MSE program has been below expectations. The primary drivers of this trend have been a lower number of working software professionals enrolling as part time students and fewer undergraduate students pursuing direct progression into the MS program through a 4+1 plan.

On its own, the 4+1 option does not represent an appealing value proposition for students. The earning potential of a student with an MS degree and no applicable work experience is not substantially higher than that of a student with a BS in the field. Therefore, students are hesitant to invest another year of tuition money for an uncertain payoff. To make the program more appealing as a 4+1 option for undergraduates, we are assessing the feasibility of a paid graduate internship program, where students who are enrolled as full-time MS students could work part-time with a local employer, gaining valuable experience in the field. This would allow students to command a much higher salary upon graduation and make the degree's payback time more reasonable.

Increasing the number of working software engineers who pursue the MS degree will also require consultation with local employers. The College needs to determine if there are program content or modality changes that would make the program more appealing to their employees.

Actions:

The program needs a long-term champion to guide it over the coming years. Professor Damon, the program's originator, is nearing retirement and although Professor Ouellette has taken on some of the administrative burden associated with running the degree, he does not possess the

domain knowledge to instruct many of the program's core classes. A search for a new faculty member to augment and eventually replace Professor Damon's expertise that began in the 20-21 AY was not successful and the College is planning to reopen the search in November with the goal of the new hire being in place for the start of the 22-23 AY.

It is also worth noting that the program is already structured with several operational efficiencies that make its enrollment threshold for profitability relatively low. First, since its graduate students are taking CIS department classes exclusively, a higher percentage of tuition revenue goes to support the program than it does for undergraduates who must also fund instruction of required general education courses. Second, of the 45 credits required for the degree, 25 come from courses that are cross listed with undergraduate sections, all of which are either required for existing degree programs or can be taken as an elective. Third, the required projects courses are all run as independent studies, which are guaranteed to generate a profit due to their low instructional costs. Therefore, the program only involves a commitment to teach 11 credits of regular graduate-only sections. Because of these factors, the break-even enrollment for the program is small, approximately 5 FTE. However, for program health, it is important to have a larger student cohort than this, and the College will not continue the program unless it has a realistic chance of stronger enrollments and can address all three issues identified below by the end of the 21-22 AY.

Projections:

Although the current proposal recommends continuing the program, prompted by its internal assessment and the recent NECHE review, the College is actively investigating whether the program has long-term viability. The College has identified three issues that need to be addressed:

- Establishing a graduate internship program that will boost program enrollments as a 4+1 option for undergraduate software engineering students.
- Successfully hiring a replacement for the program's current champion, who is nearing retirement.
- Improving academic processes around the program, such as assessment and section creation for graduate project courses.

For the program to continue, all three issues must be resolved by the end of the 21-22 AY, and work on solutions is underway. If we are unsuccessful addressing these three issues, we will look to program curtailment or a complete restructure.

AREA OF FOCUS: *2) Continuing to develop a comprehensive approach to the assessment of student learning and using the results for improvement*

Description:

As stated in the introduction, the majority of programs at Vermont Tech hold external programmatic accreditation. The 2020 Self-Study regrettably lacked full reflection on this area and, therefore, created the impression of a diminished extent for the assessment of student learning activities at the College. All of Vermont Tech's externally accredited programs assess student learning at the course and program level, based on the requirements set for them by their accreditors. As only a partial list of these assessment initiatives was presented to NECHE in the College's Self-Study, this follow-up report provides a full list for consideration as Appendix A.

In addition to its externally accredited programs, the rest of the offerings at Vermont Tech have also engaged in assessment at the course level in the past couple of years with an emphasis on the assessment of general education and gatekeeping courses. However, the College recognizes that there remains the need to develop a system for assessment of student learning at the programmatic level. Towards this end, the College recently contracted with Weave (https://weaveeducation.com/) to implement an assessment of student learning repository and analysis system for the institution.

Actions:

To further strengthen and expand the necessary culture of assessment across all academic areas of the institutions, an Academic Assessment, Transition Advisory Taskforce (TAT) sponsored, Team was created during the Fall 2021 semester. This team is comprised of faculty and staff within Academic Affairs and is chaired by the Academic Dean. A project charter has been created outlining goals and objectives; the Team has met a few times and work has begun (see Appendix B).

As part of the activities of this team, a job description for Assessment Coaches (faculty leads) was developed (see Appendix C) and two faculty member volunteers were selected for the position. The Assessment Coaches will co-chair the Assessment Team and, as stated in the job description, will lead the activities of Assessment Day programming and deployment of the Weave platform. The College already signed the contract with Weave and customization of the platform is underway. This instrument will aid with the archiving and organizing, as well as reporting of academic assessment data for general college-wide use, as well as for specific program and College accreditation needs.

Projections:

To date, no comprehensive, college-wide, inventory of assessment practices and artifacts has been organized, but with the use of the Weave platform, and with the effort invested by the Dean, the Assessment Team and Assessment Coaches, such an inventory will be developed in the near future and maintained on a regular (semester) basis.

The Assessment Team, under the leadership of the Assessment Coaches, will also plan future Assessment Day activities for the institution. These events will be mainly focused on the needs of the faculty in order to better support assessment of student learning at the course and program levels. A keynote presenter for the upcoming assessment day event has been secured, and the planning for the day will be the main activity of the Assessment Team in the upcoming month. In addition, professional development opportunities related to assessment have been and continue to be offered to faculty, both at the entry level as well as at more advanced domains.

Co-curricular assessment will also be developed on a concurrent track. Organized by personnel outside of Academic Affairs, it will share resources including keynote speakers, mini workshops, etc.

AREA OF FOCUS: *3) Continuing to strengthen its Institutional Research function and the use of data for decision making, resource allocation, and planning*

Description:

The Chancellor's office of the VT State Colleges has an IR person who provides data to IPEDS and other reporting needs for the entire system including Vermont Tech. The Chancellor's office is also undertaking a re-work of the Colleague database and the system Portal to become a better repository for college-wide and system data. Until this work is complete, however, Vermont Tech will need to maintain its current databases. The College therefore currently lacks adequate institutional research resources to provide the proactive, data driven planning and evaluation it desires.

Due to budget constraints, Vermont Tech's full-time institutional research position was eliminated in 2015 and the duties added to an existing employee. While this has enabled the College to provide basic reporting, the time available is inadequate to provide data needed to properly assess academic progress or to provide the regular data needed for a variety of planning and evaluation needs. Given the planned and pending unification of Vermont Tech with Northern Vermont University and Castleton University to one combined new university, Vermont State University (VSU), it was however not the right time to hire a Director of IR and Planning, a position planned for the new combined entity. Vermont Tech's President therefore determined that the best avenue forward was to pursue a Data Analyst position to ensure both the College's immediate needs were met and also to help facilitate the transition to the VSU.

The Data Analyst position will provide regular (monthly, quarterly, annual) updates on selected benchmarks; respond to regular data needs for retention, enrollment management, academic assessment; and more. The position is reporting to the Academic Dean and working closely with the College's Executive Committee. In September 2021, the President asked her Executive Committee to *draft* 5-8 critical benchmarks to track and monitor progress in a variety of areas across the College. These areas will include retention rates, finances, placement rate, student satisfaction and potentially others. Once determined, the proposed benchmarks will be vetted with the Senior Leadership team and then regularly shared with the community through the President's monthly meeting with faculty and the Staff Council.

In addition, as part of its Transition Advisory Taskforce initiative, Vermont Tech has instituted a planning process to further develop a "culture of assessment and continuous improvement" at the College (discussed in **Area of Focus 2**). This project charter will be led by the Academic Dean in collaboration with the faculty and the Executive Committee.

Actions:

Regarding the discrepancies between the Data First forms and the narrative in the 2020 Self-Study, these have all been reconciled with most corrected during the Visiting Team's virtual visit. The differences were mainly due to timing issues with between when the forms and the narrative were completed.

Once the best path forward for Vermont Tech was determined given the pending unification, the position of Data Analyst was posted on September 2, 2021.

In the interim, a part-time IR position began in August to collect and provide data related to Vermont Tech's Perkins Funding activity. Maura O'Riordan started in late August as the Enrollment and Retention Research Coordinator.This position is Perkins funded and has started collecting and analyzing data related to the Perkins Grant reporting and initiatives.

Projections:

As the benchmarks for the College are drafted, they will be reviewed by the Senior Leadership team, vetted at staff and faculty meetings, as well as presented to the entire community for feedback.

A first task of the new Data Analyst will be assessing whether the college's existing data is sufficient to support the current and newly identified key benchmarks and, if not, developing a plan to collect the needed data. The goal is an initial report on benchmarks and dashboards by NECHE's Spring 2022 visit.

AREA OF FOCUS: *4) Continuing to strengthen planning initiatives and the linking of institutional plans with those of the Vermont State College System*

Description:

Vermont Tech is poised to continue its work of educating tomorrow's leaders in the professional and technical fields in demand in Vermont and the region. To maintain this crucial role, while providing the close-knit community that fosters student success, the college must do its part to address structural financial issues in the VSC system. In May 2020, President Moulton created a Transition Advisory Taskforce (TAT) who developed four transformational initiatives:

Physical Infrastructure

As part of the "Transforming Vermont Tech" strategy, outlining a clear- and forward-thinking plan for the physical infrastructure is critical to ensure a sustainable future for the College. This planning must be done in line with the vision being outlined for transforming academic programs and the student experience and look to prioritize investment to directly impacting a student's return on investment. In addition, the College needs to ensure its physical assets (in size and scope) are on par and in-line with the needs of academic programs and student experiences.

Overall Project Goals:

- Consolidate classrooms, labs, offices on the Randolph Center campus to enable the sale of assets.
- Consolidate offices, classrooms and labs on the Williston campus to regain space for possible expansion and/or new programs.
- Where appropriate, initiate work-from-home options as a permanent solution for staff to reduce commuting time and reduce footprint.
- Sell buildings in Randolph Center and identify future/needed footprint in Williston.
- Engage in a master planning process, facilitated by an external partner and engaging the Vermont Tech community, that creates a sustainable and strategic roadmap for investment.
- Invest significantly in renovation to buildings that the College maintains.
- Carry forward a sustainable and predictable budget model for continued investment

Actions and Projection:

This information is provided in detail earlier under AREA OF FOCUS 1) *Enhancing the institution's financial stability with attention to achieving its enrollment goals, including for the M.S. in Software Engineering program, diversifying its revenue resources, and implementing its plans for "rightsizing" the institution.*

Non-Traditional Pathways/Modalities

While Vermont Tech serves students of all ages, the primary student cohort is still traditional-age high school graduates. The number of Vermont high school graduates has decreased by 25% over the past ten years and, given record-low birthrates, this trend is expected to continue indefinitely. The long-term outlook for other New England and the Northeastern states is similar. A vision for the future must encompass our enduring mission for Vermont. It must also consider those actions taken by public higher education systems that are succeeding in this environment. Those systems are strategically and rapidly focusing resources on new delivery platforms and flexibly delivered credentials that reach traditional-age and adult students.

Overall Project Goals:

- Supplement and expand on current offerings (low-residency, summer/winter, accelerated, decentralized delivery, etc.)
- Explore and implement new/additional academic offerings and student services
- Serve, stabilize and enhance enrollment in populations not currently served
- Explore modalities, programs and services we are currently not offering
- Provide more flexible pathways and "on-ramps" for current and potential student population and understand barriers to access and supports needed for successful enrollment/completion
- Provide better access and opportunity to Vermonters and beyond
- Align the delivery calendar with the ideal needs of the programs and students
- Prioritize opportunity around decentralized delivery (around the state of Vermont)

Actions:

The summer group convened for this charter continued its work looking at potential expansion of summer offerings. Specific initiatives underway include:

- Vermont Tech became dependent on online instruction as COVID-19 forced an abrupt end to face-to-face instruction during the Spring of 2020. Even though the College has returned to primarily face-to-face instruction, the experience of online instruction has created opportunities for improving access to Vermont Tech courses and programs.

- Short for "hybrid flexible", HyFlex learning is a variation of the online courses and programs: it includes in-person, synchronous online and asynchronous online options for every course. Vermont Tech is piloting this modality with the first year of the Mechanical Engineering Technology Associate in Engineering degree beginning in the Fall 2021. The School of Engineering and Computing continued the development and testing of the HyFlex project, including it as part of the optimization work being carried out at the VSC in preparation for unification to the Vermont State University.

- A priority of the new "Vermont State University" is expanding access to non-traditional students. An array of options is being explored including low-residency, fully on-line, hybrid/hyflex, and decentralized delivery locations as well as distance learning options with the other campuses of the "VSU". The Academic Operations Core team are exploring these options in earnest.

Projections:

The Academic Dean's Office will use the results of the student summer offerings survey to expand summer session offerings, at least 90% of which will be delivered online, in the Summer 2022.

The Mechanical Engineering Technology Department will continue delivering all of its first year Associate in Engineering courses in HyFlex format through the Spring 2023 to increase access and enrollment. In the Spring 2023, the Admissions Office will evaluate the outcomes of that initiative. If positive, in terms of access and enrollment, the initiative will continue and be expanded to other engineering technology programs.

Enhance Enrollment Pathways

Description:

The TAT Enhance Enrollment Pathways Team was charged with exploring ways to increase enrollment and service to Vermonters through better partnerships with the Community College of Vermont (CCV), other higher education institutions, and secondary Vermont Career and Technical Education Centers (including adult CTE programs).

Overall Project Goals:

- Consider and prioritize formal pathways in conjunction with Community College of Vermont and other VSC institutions – including but not limited to joint admissions and advising.
- In a financially sustainable fashion: expand access and programming around the state, establish articulation agreements with secondary technical and career centers and high schools and other VSCS and/or other higher education institutions.
- Enhance the overall revenue stream of the College by creating pathways without giving away core curriculum or jeopardizing the quality of academic offerings.
- Assist in increasing the number of high school students seeking post-secondary education.
- Prioritize data and research to help prioritize desired partnerships (including Vermont Department of Labor, VT Agency of Education, VT Association of Career and Technical Education Directors data) and consider barriers to accessing a post-secondary education.
- To research and understand emerging non-traditional credentialing offerings to be better informed about pathway options (prior learning, certification equivalencies, IRC's, etc.)

Actions and Projection:

The College is designing two dual enrollment programs with CTE's: An Associate in Science in Computer Information Technology degree with the Essex Career and Technical Center and an Associate in Applied Science in Automotive Technology degree with Southwestern Career and Technical Center in Bennington. Work continues on the design and then shared governance approval will follow.

Establishing a Culture of Assessment

Description:

The culture of assessment and data driven decision-making for Vermont Tech academic programs needs further expansion in order to incorporate data from assessment of student learning. Externally accredited programs have embedded assessment practices at the course and program level. Those programs that lack external accreditation have varying degrees of assessment performance with a limited culture and understanding of assessment. Lack of assessment of student learning data negatively impacts the continuous improvement process of academic programs.

Overall Project Goals:

- Develop a process to help create a culture of assessment and continuous improvement at Vermont Tech.
- Develop a sustainable process for annual assessment of student learning for all Vermont Tech academic offerings (programs and courses).
- Develop and implement a process to incorporate the insights gained by the assessment process in order to incorporate continuous quality improvement protocols as appropriate across ALL academic offerings.
- Explore additional program-specific accreditations.

Appraisal and Projections:

This is information is provided in detail earlier under **Area of Focus *2.***

Vermont Tech Planning and Transition to Vermont State University

Vermont Tech's TAT planning initiatives have been significantly impacted by the concurrent Chancellor's Office's proposal to merge Vermont Tech, Castleton University, and Northern Vermont University thus forming Vermont State University. As a result, one of the original VT Tech TAT charters has changed from program review to "creating a culture of assessment." A second, business process analysis has ended. Both were duplicative of system transformation planning.

VT Tech retains 4 TAT charter areas for continued review:

1. Physical infrastructure.
2. Nontraditional delivery
3. Enhanced enrollment pathways.
4. Establishing a culture of assessment and continuous improvement.

The alignment of the system-wide planning and Vermont Tech's institutional planning initiatives are illustrated in the following table:

Vermont Tech's TAT Project Alignment with System Transformation Alignment

Project	Goals	Alignment to System Transformation	Accountability
Analysis of all business and operational functions including pricing	1. To develop a culture and framework to ensure ongoing process improvement and review of each operational business area. 2. To develop tools to better understand the expense associated with each operational function of the college. 3. To analyze how our expense and revenue structure impacts students and tuition. 4. To better identify and understand how certain programs subsidize other programs. 5. To perform a comprehensive look at different pricing models (understanding there are multiple rates/pricing models already – and understanding different times of year or types of delivery might need to be adapted RE: price (example – fully online courses)). 6. To achieve a better understanding of the financial and non-tangible implications of the athletics programs. 7. Use in-depth financial data (cost-data) to target merger, consolidation, or investment/strengthen of operational functions.	**System-Level Deliverables:** 1. Development of analytical accounting tools to better understand the cost of institution's administrative centers. (I.E. the Cost-matrix). 2. Access to a more granular lens on revenue and expenses for all business areas to better align and understand ROI and student value. 3. A more thorough process and framework for assessing business/operational functions of the college. 4. *Create a pricing framework for the consolidated NCE program array.*	Student Experience Core Team/ Administrative Operations
		Vermont Tech-Level Deliverables: 1. Providing prior work to System-Level Transformation Teams. a. Instructional Cost b. Pricing frameworks	Dean of Administration
Comprehensive program review of academic programs	1. To develop a robust and sustainable academic program review system for the college that is objective, quantitative, relevant, and current, not driven by circumstances (COVID, accreditation visit, etc.) but is a	**System-Level Deliverables:** 1. *Consolidated Program Array and ongoing program review process (rPK work)*	Academic Operations Core Team
		Vermont Tech-Level Deliverables:	Academic Dean

	sustainable framework for academic decision-making. 2. The academic program review framework needs to be detailed and specific, including parameters, review triggers, predictable calendar, and appropriate archiving of documents.	1. Provide prior research and work to Transformation teams. 2. Focus institution-level efforts on Assessment of student learning outcomes	
Enhance Enrollment Pathways	1. Consider and prioritize formal pathways in conjunction with CCV and other VSC institutions – including but not limited to joint admissions and advising. 2. In a financially sustainable fashion: expand access and programming around the state, establish articulation agreements with career centers and high schools and other VSCS and/or other higher education institutions. 3. Enhance the overall revenue stream of the college by: creating pathways without giving away core curriculum or jeopardizing the quality of academic offerings. 4. Assist in increasing the number of high school students seeking post-secondary education. 5. To research and understand emerging non-traditional credentialing offerings to be better informed about pathway options (prior learning, certification equivalencies, IRC's, etc.).	**System-Level Deliverables:** TBD	Academic Operations Core Team
		Vermont Tech-Level Deliverables: 1. VSC general education taskforce work (in progress). Review collaboration with CCV – and academic oversight/course catalog review – needed. 2. As part of Board priorities, increase enrollment in existing on-campus introductory engineering technology course sections with students from three demographic groups – early college HS, working adults, transfer students. Deliver MEC 1000 level courses in a flexible format in Fall 2021. 3. Prioritize data and research to help prioritize desired partnerships (including VDOL, AOE and VACTED data) and consider barriers to accessing	Academic Dean/Dean of Administration

		a post-secondary education. 4. Develop a benchmark of the IRC's currently embedded by end of spring semester 2021. **5.** Initiate conversations with 1-2 CTEs/high schools we have current relationships with to establish win/win opportunities. (interview guidance counselors, gather data and better understanding of barriers, look to small & not well-resourced HS's, leverage locations where our current telepresence infrastructure is – some are in the high schools) 6. Choose 1-2 programs to pilot. 7. Sponsor joint professional development opportunities between VTC and CTE faculty. 8. Name specific effort to increase # of articulation agreements.	
Explore, implement, and prioritize new non-traditional delivery learning modalities and student services	1. Supplement and expand on current offerings (low-residency, summer/winter, accelerated, etc.) 2. Explore and implement new/additional academic offerings and student services (align student services with new academic vision) 3. Serve, stabilize, and enhance enrollment in populations not currently served 4. Look at modalities, programs, and services we are currently not offering	**System-Level Deliverable:** 1. Explore feasibility by doing a **thorough** market study and consider Gen-Z trends (market study will help us target the two programs for full planning). 2. In alignment with market research: conversation with current and	Academic Operations Core Team

	5. Provide more flexible pathways and "on-ramps" for current and potential student population and understand barriers to access and supports needed for successful enrollment/completion (think parents, veterans, non-traditional students that face varying challenges/barriers) 6. Provide better access and opportunity to Vermonters and beyond (cost savings/improve affordability) 7. Align the delivery calendar with the ideal needs of the programs and students 8. Prioritize opportunity around decentralized delivery (around the state of Vermont) 9. Align with other transformation work underway, including Agriculture and Food Systems Education Committee: https://www.vtc.edu/transforming-vermont-technical-college/	prospective students about student demand and interest. (See above about identifying non-traditional populations/barriers – and in alignment with VSCS Board initiatives, objective to formalize DE&I work here) 3. Put together a committee of faculty to look at technology strategy/development strategy (including specific objectives around Canvas/Aviso outlined in Board priorities document). In addition, discussion of OER in relation to affordability VSCS strategic action priorities). Engage with staff and administration about how student life and student services aligns with the academic vision. ***4. Develop a comprehensive academic calendar that incorporates student expectations, program needs, and delivery mode dimensions.***	
		Vermont Tech-Level Deliverables: 1. Inventory of internal non-traditional delivery experiences - internal learning and sharing. Audit and inventory	Academic Dean

		admissions data by looking at a) transfer data and b) inquiries and the program level data. *(Share learnings with AO Transformation teams)* 2. Have an initial conversation with *all* programs about ideas of potential, future modality (calendar, etc.). 3. Target 2 full initiatives for full planning of non-traditional delivery and calendar offering. Fall 2022 4. Review of summer programs: all department chairs to work with Erica to establish a summer schedule that strategically prioritizes (using data) courses truly needed and ensures consistent student learning outcomes. Summer schedule should be promoted in early Spring.	
Transformation and investment in physical infrastructure	1. Consolidate classrooms, labs, offices in RC to enable the sale of assets. 2. Consolidate offices, classrooms and labs in WIL to regain space for possible expansion and/or new programs. 3. Where appropriate, initiate work-from-home options as a permanent solution for staff to reduce commuting time and reduce footprint. 4. Sell buildings in RC and identify future/needed footprint in Williston.	**System-Level Deliverables:** 1. Provide VTC outputs and deliverables to System-Level teams creating a Master Plan, including deferred maintenance and thoughts on employment policies and program/resource alignment. 2. Execute Master Plan ***and align with***	Administrative Operations Core Team

	5. Engage in a master planning process, facilitated by an external partner and engaging the VTC Community, that creates a sustainable and strategic roadmap for investment. Scope includes ALL campuses and sites. 6. Invest significantly in renovation to buildings that we maintain. 7. Carry forward a sustainable and predictable budget model for continued investment.	***Strategic Financial Plan***.	
		Vermont Tech-Level Deliverables: 1. Develop an updated work from home policy 2. Conduct an assessment of office and meeting space needs of Admissions, Academic Dean's office, CEWD, IT, Bookstore, marketing - considering the new WFH policy. 3. Communicate, implement identified moves. 4. Complete White & Burke assessment of market and viability of properties for sale or lease. 5. Engage JL Davis for sale of appropriate properties. 6. Obtain BOT authorization for sale of 4 of the 5 identified properties. 7. Financial analysis (see budget section). 8. Conduct comprehensive Master Planning Process (that seeks to strategically align with academic vision planning).	Dean of Administration

AREA OF FOCUS: *5) Reviewing foundational policies and procedures to ensure the efficacy of operations and making these policies easily available to members of the campus community*

Description:

Vermont Tech has continuously committed to creating policies consistent with the mission of the College. Policy development and implementation has been a continuous and evolutionary process. In the Fall of 2020, the President's office, with the support of the marketing department updated and organized all policies and procedures on the website by category to ease the search process and accessibility for the college community. The categories include: Academic Affairs, Personnel, Student Affairs, Business/Financial, and General.

Vermont Tech leadership and their accompanying departments began reviewing all policies and procedures in July of 2021 per VTC policy T708 (policy on policies). The initial round of updates to the policies on the website were due by each policy owner on September 1, 2021. The second round of updates were due on October 1, 2021. On November 1, 2021 the President's Executive Committee reviewed all policies with recommended changes. The majority were approved and a few were considered pending for additional clarification/details. By November 16, 2021 all updates to our policies were posted on the website and our policy and procedure review process was complete.

Actions:

The President's Office sent each policy owner lists of their policies and procedures for review on July 19, 2021 with the deadline to return their updates by September 1, 2021. Reminders of this process were sent by the President's Office on August 20, 2021 and September 1, 2021. The President's Executive Assistant managed the updates and review process. As the policies and procedures were reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee and the President, they were sent to the marketing department to be posted on the website. In November 2021 the President's Office notified the college community that our policy and procedure review process was complete. As part of that notification a video explaining the process and how to find the policies was shared and posted on the website.

Projections:

Per policy T708, the policy and procedure review process will continue semi-annually, with new policies or procedures added throughout the year as necessary. The current policy owners responsible for this process are: The Dean of Academic Affairs; Director of Human Resources; Dean of Student Affairs; Dean of Administration; and the President.

AREA OF FOCUS: *6) Vermont Technical College is asked to submit a report by January 15, 2022 for consideration in Spring 2022 that gives emphasis to the institution's success in offering its current courses and academic programs via distance education as evidence that "the institution has a demonstrable record of success in implementing the results of its planning."*

Description:

The College's plans and implementation of distance education during 2019 and 2020 were driven by the COVD pandemic; they were not, at that time, a long-term strategic initiative. As such, the College has substantially returned to in-person instruction wherever possible and

within the health and safety guidelines provided by the State of Vermont for individual faculty and students.

To guide this return, a number of announcements were made. On June 14, 2021, the college announced, “Vermont Tech plans for returning fully to campuses this fall with staff transitioning back to working on campus August 2, 2021.” And, on June 17, 2021, President Moulton notified all faculty and staff that “Vermont Tech is preparing our campuses to be in-person and returning to a much more typical college experience for our students, faculty and staff for the Academic Year 2021-2022. Staff need to transition back to in-person work with full in-person operations by Monday, August 2, 2021.”

On August 9, 2021, the President further advised returning students that, “The VSC board of trustees voted to require COVID-19 vaccinations for all students. Students, please make sure you submit your vaccine information before the start of classes on August 2.”

Actions:

This return to in-person instruction is evidenced by the following data:

For the Fall of 2020, of 579 class meetings, 386 were some type of remote instruction; 66.67% of all class meetings on all campuses were remote. (This count includes Nursing, Dental Hygiene, Respiratory Therapy, and Radiology Science clinicals and Professional Pilot flight courses, which were all in-person.) Average enrollment in this semester was 10.92 students per class section.

For the Fall of 2021, of 567 class meetings, 112 were some type of remote instruction; 19.75% of all class meetings on all campuses were remote. Average enrollment in this semester was 10.93 students per class section.

It is clear that with distance education decreasing from approximately 67% to 20% from Fall 2020 to Fall 2021, that the College is implementing its return to in-person instructional. It may also be anecdotally noted that some students with health concerns may have enrolled in online sections of courses where offered, thereby slowing the return to in-person classes.

While the success of the temporary COVID distanced education effort is still under review, we can report retention rates comparable from 2019/2020 and 2020/2021:

- 49.34% of students entering in 2020-2021 (headcount 452) returned for 2021-2022.
- 49.69% of students entering in 2019-2020 (headcount 648) who returned in 2020-2021.

This difference in retention appears to be statistically insignificant.

Projections:

A full return to in-person instruction is ongoing and the expectation is for a continued return to near pre-COVID instructional delivery over the next several semesters. Some faculty with health and safety concerns for themselves or their family members have continued with distance education classes. Recent COVID variants and the possibilities of future variants, along with progress in vaccinations, may influence the speed with which these faculty return to in-person instruction.

VERMONT TECH

Vermont Tech External Accreditation

Revision: November 4, 2021

The italicized information below is from the Foreword of 2021-22 Course Catalog.

Engineering Technology Programs

The following programs are accredited by the Engineering Technology Accreditation Commission of ABET, http://www.abet.org: Architectural & Building Engineering Technology; Architectural Engineering Technology; Civil & Environmental Engineering Technology; Computer Engineering Technology; Electrical Engineering Technology; Electromechanical Engineering Technology; Manufacturing Engineering Technology; Mechanical Engineering Technology.

Date of Next Comprehensive Review: 2026-2027

Automotive Technology

The Automotive Technology program is accredited by the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF) (ASE), 101 Blue Seal Dr, SE, Suite 101, Leesburg, VA 20175.

Accreditation Expiration: April 2021

Dental Hygiene

The Dental Hygiene associate degree program is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation, 211 East Chicago Ave, Chicago, IL 60611-2678, (312) 440-4653.

Next Accreditation Visit: 2026

Nursing

The Practical Nursing (system-wide, distance education), Associate Degree in Nursing (system-wide, distance education), and Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN, distance education) programs are accredited by the National League for Nursing Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation (NLN CNEA) located at 2600 Virginia Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20032, 202-909-2526

Accreditation Expiration: February 28, 2026

Next on-site program evaluation visit: Fall 2025

Paramedicine

The Paramedicine program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP), 9355-113th St. N, #7709, Seminole, FL 33775, (727) 210-2350. http://www.caahep.org

Accreditation Expiration: July 31, 2023

Respiratory Therapy

The Respiratory Therapy program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care, 1248 Harwood Rd, Bedford, TX 76021-4244, 817-283-2835.

Next Accreditation Review: March 2029

Veterinary Technology

The Veterinary Technology program is accredited as a program for educating veterinary technicians by the American Veterinary Medical Association, 1931 North Meacham Rd, Suite 100, Schaumburg, IL 60173.

Next Evaluation: 2023