VERMONT TECH

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MEMORADUM

TO: NECHE Visiting Team

FROM: Patricia Moulton, President

DATE: April 6, 2022

SUBJECT: Update from January progress report.

This serves as an update in advance of the Focus Visit on April 11 regarding activity in the 5 areas of concern since we filed the Progress Report January 14, 2022. Progress has been made in all focus areas. Additional information is provided regarding the 6th review area: our application for General Approval to offer remote education in compliance with the US Department of Education's updated definition.

Please note, the numbering has attempted to follow the numbering of our January report. If a number is missing, there have been no additional updates in that area of focus or sub area of focus.

The five areas identified by the Commission include:

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

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.*

Financial performance: Financial performance in FY22 continues to trend far better than budgeted. As of end of the second quarter of FY2022 (December 31, 2021), revenue was $3,184,00 more than projected. Expenses are trending steeper than budgeted due to fuel costs and greater than anticipated personnel expenses. This is due in part, to an anticipated Title III grant that did not materialize.

1

However, we *needed* to hire an advising position and an institutional research position previously intended to be paid from the Title III grant. These hires are critical to retention and assessment. We also had to scale up in nursing with additional faculty and one staff position. However, the overall projected year end deficit as of the end of December is -$2.06million as compared to a budgeted deficit of -$3,962,000. We believe this trend of better results than budgeted will continue through the balance of the fiscal year leaving us with a better outcome than budgeted. We can cover any anticipated deficit for FY2022 with carry over surplus funds from FY2021.

This performance is due in part to increased residential room revenues and better than projected enrollment primarily due to nursing and allied health. Residential Hall revenue is up due to greater uptake by our students and our rental agreements with Vermont Law School and the State of Vermont Department of Mental Health for traveling nurses.

I am also including a summary of financial performance of Vermont Tech over the last 5 years. This includes the federal funding we received from COVID related aid to higher education. We will upload FY22 financial data to the Canvas course for the first two quarters. The third quarter has just ended and financial data is not available yet.

VTC
Unrestricted Fund 051

	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21
REVENUES					
Tuition & Fees	23,595,498	23,929,934	24,459,953	25,739,429	22,933,249
State Appropriation	5,849,869	6,402,326	6,402,039	7,129,423	7,135,020
Sales & Services	1,223,647	1,180,810	1,343,203	1,013,905	518,493
Room & Board	3,872,618	4,022,339	4,279,371	3,709,283	1,073,360
Gifts	365,449	135,515	347,596	379,983	339,659
Other Revenue	619,510	527,685	391,066	332,938	1,119,323
TOTAL REVENUES	35,526,590	36,198,609	37,223,229	38,304,959	33,119,103
EXPENSES					
Employee Salaries & Benefits	22,418,248	22,465,536	22,838,639	22,351,781	20,885,252
Supplies & Other Services	7,504,896	7,327,465	7,681,451	7,017,284	5,752,104
Scholarships & Fellowships	1,190,411	1,627,708	2,022,414	2,138,247	1,351,410
Utilities	1,132,338	1,333,884	1,675,737	1,645,475	1,236,044
Interest Expense	0	0	0	0	2,474
Transfers	2,333,222	3,531,845	2,969,779	2,707,365	1,415,815
TOTAL EXPENSES	34,579,114	36,286,439	37,188,021	35,860,152	30,643,100
NET REVENUE	947,476	(87,831)	35,209	2,444,807	2,476,003
Non-recurring Items					
Return of OPEB Trust Funds	272,834	10,529	0	0	0
Unrestricted Fund Balance	**1,220,310**	**(77,301)**	**35,209**	**2,444,807**	**2,476,003**
Less Federal CRF/HEERF	-	-	-	(1,631,189)	(3,957,000)
	1,220,310	(77,301)	35,209	813,618	**(1,480,997)**
Add Back					
Investment in Capital					
(054 dedicated projects)	-	587,069	240,000	400,000	1,814,651
	1,220,309.52	432,467	310,417	1,213,618	333,654

1) Eliminate unprofitable investments and right sizing:
On February 11, 2022, Vermont Tech received $638,851.07 as proceeds from the sale of the "upper building" of the Enterprise Center the college owns off campus on Route 66 in Randolph. We have a purchase and sale for the "lower building" pending with the Green Mountain Economic Development Corporation for approximately $300,000. The buyer is finalizing their financing to proceed with a closing.

The College has a purchase and sales agreement with Norwich Farm Foundation for the sale of the Norwich Farms property at 701 Turnpike Road with a closing scheduled for on or before May of 2022.

Efforts to sell three additional properties are moving forward. We are in discussion with a possible lessor of the Allen House. "Right sizing" all of the campuses of the Vermont State Colleges System (VSCS) except Community College of Vermont with a 25% reduction in overall square footage is an expectation of the system's transformation to be achieved within the next 5 years. Vermont Tech is on its way with the sales of the residential house at Norwich Farms, the sale of the upper building and pending sale of the lower building of the "Enterprise Center", the P&S Agreement on the Norwich Farms property and other properties approved for sale.

In addition, the College is moving forward with a plan to sell the 85-head milking herd at the Randolph Center farm by early May. We have distributed a Request for Proposals for the purchase of the cows, leasing of crop and hay lands we own to area farms and possible lease of a portion of our barn facilities, if needed. In addition, we have submitted substantial funding requests to State and Federal grant sources for the renovation of the Randolph Center Farm for our new Center of Agriculture and Food Entrepreneurship. Applications have been submitted to the US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, the Vermont Working Lands Enterprise Board, there is funding pending in a bill currently advancing in the Vermont Legislature, H. 703, page 62.
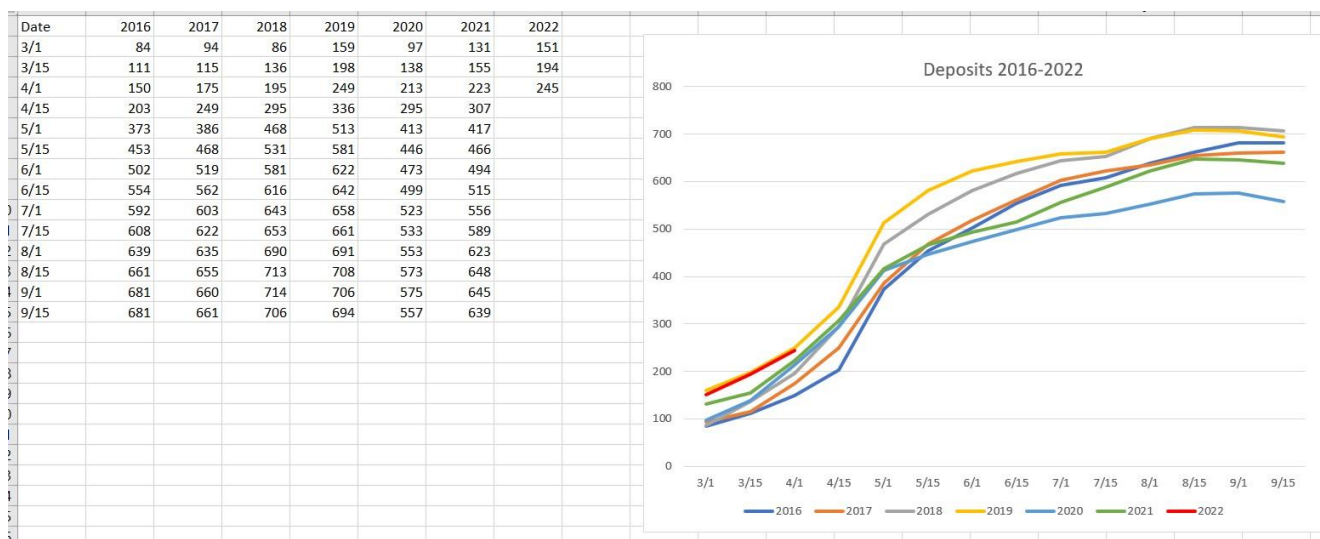
2) Diversified revenue:
The Vermont State Colleges System has requested a base increase for the second year in a row. This year Governor Scott included a $5 million-dollar base increase in his budget request which has not occurred in several years.

The System is also seeking $12.5 million dollars of future base budget increases to be appropriated now while the state has ARPA funding and available general funds due to prior years American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and Corona Relief Funding (CRF). These increases are in line with the recommendations of the Legislative Select Committee appointed by the Legislature in 2020 with a final report to the legislature in January of 2021. That report recommended increases in base appropriation to the VSCS as well as additional capital appropriation. If approved, funds would be allocated over the next few years assuming the system meets legislatively mandated goals of reducing $25 million in our structural budget imbalance over the next 5 years.

3) Enrollment:
As of this writing, deposits for the Fall 2022 semester are up 10% over the same period last year. While melt is anticipated, we are confident this will result in increased enrollment for Fall 2022 over Fall 2021. Current deposit data suggests we will have a year more similar to fall of 2019 which was one of our best years before COVID hit.

Date	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
3/1	84	94	86	159	97	131	151
3/15	111	115	136	198	138	155	194
4/1	150	175	195	249	213	223	245
4/15	203	249	295	336	295	307	
5/1	373	386	468	513	413	417	
5/15	453	468	531	581	446	466	
6/1	502	519	581	622	473	494	
6/15	554	562	616	642	499	515	
7/1	592	603	643	658	523	556	
7/15	608	622	653	661	533	589	
8/1	639	635	690	691	553	623	
8/15	661	655	713	708	573	648	
9/1	681	660	714	706	575	645	
9/15	681	661	706	694	557	639	

Deposits 2016-2022

In addition, Vermont Tech ranked at the top of the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce's second Return on Investment (ROI) Study. Not only did we maintain our rank as #1 of all Colleges and Universities in Vermont for ROI, we stepped up to #1 after 30 years and #2 after 40 years behind only Middlebury College. In addition, we ranked #7 best ROI amongst public colleges and universities in the United States! Our on-line RN to BSN program recently ranked #5 out of 500 on-line BSN programs in the United States! Lastly, our 2021 graduates again reached a 99% placement rate despite the challenges of COVID.

Vermont Tech continues its relationship with EAB for enrollment funnel enhancements. The VTC contract is being cancelled but will be subsumed by a VT State University contract with EAB which is anticipated to be more cost effective than the three separate contracts with EAB VT Tech, Castleton University and Northern Vermont University currently have.

Lastly, there are significant resources in H.703 to expand nursing education at the Vermont State Colleges including Vermont Tech. See pages 1, 94-101, 103, 108-114. This bill has advanced from the House to the Senate.

4) Master of Science in Software Engineering:
The College has suspended enrollment in the Masters program for the Fall of 2022. Professor Ouellette, a key faculty member in the Software Engineering program, has taken another position outside the college. This coupled with a likely retirement of Professor Damon, the College has suspended enrollment until adequate faculty can be hired to support the restructure of the program. This, coupled with a preexisting vacancy in the faculty of the department, has left the area with insufficient human power to carry out the necessary research, realignment and development necessary to assure the sustainability of the program. Therefore, and until the personnel landscape of the department is stabilized, the college has decided that suspending admissions is the responsible course of action. All students currently already in the program will be served until graduation.

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

Two faculty assessment leader positions were advertised internally and the individuals hired into them in the fall of 2021 have assumed leadership of this initiative, with the support of the Academic Dean. An Assessment Team of faculty and staff continues to serve as advisory and support to these leaders. The assessment leaders have conducted WEAVE training for department chairs and program directors as starting phase for the deployment of this platform to all faculty. This stratified approach follows a train- the-trainer model, in order to better support those faculty less experienced in assessment practices, and maximize the human resources available on-campus.

An Academic Assessment Day has been scheduled for Tuesday, May 17 after classes have ended and faculty are still under contract before the summer break. An agenda has been developed to include our own faculty who are proficient at assessment due to their external accreditations, introduction and tutelage on WEAVE, our data repository software and time in the afternoon for teams to work on program assessment.

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

An offer was made to an Institutional Data Analyst however, family matters prevented their acceptance of the offer. We have since reposted the position as a hybrid position with the successful hire expected to be on campus one day a month after an orientation period when they will be here more often. We have three very strong candidates and a final second interview with these candidates, the Search Committee and the President is scheduled for Friday, April 8 after which a decision will be made and an offer extended to the successful candidate.

In addition, the Vermont Tech Executive Team has compiled a dashboard of metrics for the new data analyst to focus on when they start and after identifying databases.

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

Transformation Advisory Taskforce (TAT) work has been further combined with the Vermont State Colleges Systems (VSCS) transformation to a single university. The new "Vermont State University"

(Vermont State) will emerge from the unification of Vermont Technical College (Vermont Tech), Castleton University (CU) and Northern Vermont University (NVU).

The TAT work on non-traditional pathways/new modalities and enhancing enrollment and creating pathways from career and technical centers to Vermont Tech are amongst the "pillars" for the new Vermont State. That work is the focus of the Academic Affairs and Student Experience Core and Sub- teams planning for the new Vermont State. Duplicating this work for Vermont Tech is unwarranted given the pending unification. Further, the same folks formerly working on Vermont Tech TAT subgroups in these areas are working on transformation planning Core and Sub-teams for Vermont State.

Therefore, Vermont Tech's TAT work is focused on the two remaining TAT areas most relevant given our unification which include 1) creating a culture of continuous improvement and assessment and 2) financial stability and right sizing. These are continued needs of Vermont Tech regardless of unification. Status reports for each of the discontinued TAT groups are attached (appendices A – D) at the end of this report and are posted on the TAT portion of our web site.

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."*

Vermont Tech has returned to regular face to face delivery of classes and labs with students back in the residence halls. We are still offering a number of classes remotely to accommodate certain faculty with COVID concerns and/or to offer remote offerings to enable non-traditional students to access courses. We offered 14 courses through a "HyFlex" option.

Vermont Tech filed a request for general approval from NECHE to offer distance education. This is due in part to changes defining "distance or remote" education which captures hybrid delivery we do now as well as a mix of distance learning through our "telepresence" system which is now defined as "remote delivery."

As stated in the application materials, Vermont Tech is not intending to offer fully online programs, as the hallmark of our programs is hands-on, applied learning which, by its nature, necessitates in-person interactions for laboratories, clinicals and studios. Therefore, most of the proposed remote delivery options will continue to be hybrid in nature, by way of telepresence, HyFlex or similar "face-to-face+" modalities.

The College has applied for "limited approval" from NECHE due to the change in the definition* of "distance education" which encompasses current delivery practices. We do not foresee, in the near future, offering any additional programs at the 50% or higher level via distance education. We will continue to use technologies to "deliver instruction that separates the student from the instructor" and uses "the internet, one and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices" for a variety of programs but not more than 50% of the instruction. The balance is face to face.

*NECHE Distance Education:
> Commission defines distance education as education that uses one or more of the following technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor(s) and to support regular and substantive interaction between students and the instructor(s), either synchronously or asynchronously:
> a) the internet;
> b) one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices;
> c) audio conference;
> d) other media used in a course in conjunction with any of the above technologies.

APPENDIX A

VERMONT TECH

**PROJECT MANAGEMENT
DOCUMENTATION**

**TRANSITION ADVISORY
TASKFORCE**

PROJECT UPDATE REPORT

Project Name: Non-traditional pathways – remote delivery	**Date:** March 23, 2022 **Author:** John Kidder

1. Project Update
Reporting Period (From Date/To Date): March 2021 – March 2022
Original Scope or Purpose of Initiative: *Increase enrollment in first-year engineering and computing courses by providing remote options for all lectures and computer labs. We adopted a strategy to deliver to classroom and remote students simultaneously with the goal of not disrupting the on-campus classroom experience but also providing a quality equitable experience to remote students.*
Work Completed This Period: 1. School of E&C coordinator worked with IT to identify rooms and hardware needs (April – May 2021) 2. Installed and tested hardware set-ups (May - Aug 2021) 3. Participated in VSC faculty retreat and offered training sessions for Faculty (Aug 2021) 4. Offered 14 classes in "hyflex" format in Fall 2022 courses 5. Continued in spring 2022 with most E&C courses offered with remote options.
Evidence of Work Completed or in Progress: 1. VSC Academic Retreat Flyer with hyflex modality session 2. Promotional flyer for "hyflex offerings 3. September 2021 School of E&C Faculty Mtg minute – hyflex update 4. F2F+ Fellows 2022 description and letter
Overall Assessment – (What is going well): We exceeded the goal of offering remote options for just first year engineering and computing courses in Fall 2022 and many departments adopted this delivery for second year and other courses. Some departments (mechanical and manufacturing) offer all program courses with remote options. The classroom technology is not ideal but continuous improvement (through use and feedback to IT) is on-going.
Work to Be Completed in Next Period (Date): We have shifted from using "hyflex" and the term "F2F+" has been adopted by the VSC Transformation. On-going work will occur within the Teaching and Learning Innovation F2F+ project which is part of the Teaching and Learning Sub team under the Academic Operations part of the VSU Transformation.

VERMONT TECH

PROJECT UPDATE REPORT

Project Name: Non-traditional pathways – summer session	**Date:** March 18, 2022 **Author:** Maureen Hebert – Associate Dean of Continuing Education and Workforce Development

1. Project Update

Reporting Period (From Date/To Date): March 2021 – March 2022

Original Scope or Purpose of Initiative:
To increase access, affordability and offerings over the summer session to support students' needs and interests at VTC. Our team included Erica Dana, Jeff Higgins, Mary Katherine Juskiewicz, Shelly Russ, Jessica Van Deren and Maureen Hebert

Recommendations
We discussed whether or not we had to make recommendations to the larger group as it was unclear if our charge was to implement or inform the TAT group.
We decided to make the recommendations to get consensus from the larger group.
  1. We will conduct the student survey in the fall and spring. Data from the survey helped inform planning for summer 2022
  2. We would like to recommend that programs review their electives and determine if they can offer one or two in the summer of 2022 that would be most relevant and needed by students.
  3. Reexamine summer per credit rate – we should be aligned with our peer institutions and given that our overhead in the summer is lower this should not impact revenue. Recommendation sent to Dean of Administration.
  4. We recommended expanding our marketing reach to student from other colleges
  5. Our team will defer to the larger transformation team for work regarding summer of 2023, as we will be working towards the VSU concept at that point.

Work Completed This Period:
  • *We performed a SWOT analysis at our initial meeting*
  • *Went through an environmental scanning process*
  • *Developed KPIs – to measure our success*
  • *Worked with EAB to gather additional research on summer trends nationally*
  • *Reviewed cost and sent recommendation to Dean of Administration for approval*
  • *Looked at housing costs for summer and set reduced rate*
  • *Created and distributed student survey twice to assess needs*
  • *Built 2022 session with this information*

Overall Assessment – (What is going well):
We were not able to get approval to reduce tuition to be closer to our peer institutions.
We discussed that our per credit rate, despite being discounted, is much higher than our peer institutions, essentially pricing us out of the market.

Castleton is $350 per credit
NVU is $370 per credit in person and $350 online
CCV is $280 per credit
Champlain is $318 per credit
UVM is $478 per credit in state and $1204 out of state
VTC is $513 per credit normally $613 but we offer a $100 discount in the summer only

We received 67 responses to the survey – cost and not having courses students needed/ wanted were the biggest concerns

The summer has been a revenue generator and can grow with continued support and assessment.

Work to Be Completed in Next Period (Date):
1. We will assess results/ performance from summer 2022
2. We will defer this project to the transformation team for 2023/2024 as we will be moving towards the VSU at that point
3. We will survey students again in the fall 2022
4. We need to connect summer session to marketing efforts to bring in students beyond the VSC
5. We need to review cost as we become VSU

Other important information:
EAB
We reviewed the top key observations from EAB about summer trends nationally and compared to our work:
1.   **Online summer education programs demonstrate strong enrollment and potential for further growth. We have seen growth over the last four years**
2.   **General education courses are the most popular online summer session offerings. We assessed this need in our survey and found we can add these types classes, which we have. However, we compete with CCV on price in this area.**
3.   **The best target audience for institutions looking to grow online summer session enrollment is currently enrolled undergraduates. Our courses are online this summer and market to our students**
4.   **Financial incentives for both academic departments and faculty encourage engagement in the online summer session. We recommended that departments review their programmatic electives to determine if they can offer one or two in the summer for student who cannot fit electives in their schedule.**

VERMONT TECH

PROJECT UPDATE REPORT

Project Name: Enhanced Enrollment Pathways – Blue Team	**Date:** March 17, 2022 **Author:** Stephannie Peters

1. Project Update

Reporting Period (From Date/To Date): March 2021 – March 2022

Original Scope or Purpose of Initiative:
>Initial Charge: *-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.*
>*-Enhance the overall revenue stream of the college by: creating pathways without giving away core curriculum or jeopardizing the quality of academic offerings.*

Work Completed This Period:
1. CTE Data collection: All CTE programs in each center; current IRCs; current relevant proficiencies
2. VTC Data collection: Enrollment of CTE students; current articulation agreements with CTE centers/high schools; align VTC programs with CTE programs
3. Identified needs, strengths and barriers of CTE/VTC partnerships, and envisioned process of implementing successful dual enrollment pathways.
4. Identified target 2 pilot programs and CTE Centers (Auto @ SW Tech & CIS @ Center for Technology Essex), met with & gained approval from VTC and CTE faculty in programs,
5. Created "Enhanced Dual Enrollment" goals including VTC faculty/staff going to CTE center, and bringing CTE students to VTC campus, supporting identification as "VTC student" with swag etc., clear & supported pathway to admissions and enrollment

Overall Assessment – (What is going well):
It was very productive to collect information, create ideas for "enhanced" dual enrollment/pathways, and to establish VTC & CTE partners. It was evident VTC could do more to create CTE partnerships and pathways.
The challenges included changes in faculty/staff mid-project, current demands on faculty, and uncertainty of current changes in progress.

Work to Be Completed in Next Period (Date):
1. VTC's Secondary Education Initiatives /VAST program will continue with commitment to partner with CTE Centers, and the Blue Team members will support these efforts

VERMONT TECH

PROJECT UPDATE REPORT

Project Name: **Enhanced Enrollment Pathways – Green Team**	Author/Date: **Maureen Hebert – 3/18/22**

1. Project Update

Reporting Period (From Date/To Date): 3/21 – 3/22 Team members – Ana Gaillat, Karry Booska, Rose Distel and Maureen Hebert
Work Completed This Period: Survey of faculty to determine current state and interest. Survey students about micro-credential interest.
Work to Be Completed in Next Period (Date): Move this work into program assessment/design of the transformation group
What's Going Well: We have survey results and implemented the skills build micro credential site. We have also been working with the legislature and VSAC to develop a fund to cover costs for testing and licensure if this occurs after graduation and financial aid is not available.
What's Not Going Well: The survey indicated that there is not a lot of interest in IRC's or awareness of, and no capacity with departments due to competing work. The indicated concern about cost and tracking. We lost two members over the summer.
KPIs (key performance indicators): Faculty input is needed to develop KPI's – and to see the value in adding credentials. see below
Resources Needed (data, funding, other): unknown
Plan: Faculty Survey was sent out 3/26/21 - https://cewd.formstack.com/forms/credentialsurvey2021 - Ana will set this again in April 2021 to the departments that did not respond – only a few more were received. We were unable to send again in the summer, since faculty were not on campus or working on other projects. Plan: We reviewed results of survey   We need more input from faculty to get an accurate assessment of the current state. We only received 10 responses and were missing certain programs. We also received conflicting responses from faculty in the same department. We realize that some professional development may be needed for faculty who are new to IRC's and that within some departments this may not be relevant at all. We also discussed digital badging to help student learn "soft skills" and utilize as part of their learning portfolio. Recognizing that these third party verifiable, competency-based badges could give a student a competitive advantage when looking for job opportunities, but could also help with advancement. We survey students in the fall and implemented the skills build site soon after.

APL
We also discussed the need to explore assessment of prior learning. We recognize we need a process and system in place as well as training as our programs are a little different than CCV's process

Recommendations for the programmatic review group:
- Of the respondents ask for two faculty to join an IRC team
- Conduct SWOT analysis with this larger group
- Provide research around IRCs and Credentials for the team –EAB
- Develop KPI's and
- Develop an implementation plan – 1-3 projects that include new credentials

Project Changes: we lost a team member

Other Information: The team assessed that this topic should really be embedded in the programmatic/assessment conversation, as this doesn't really seem to be a common practice across departments or of interest for a variety of issues. It really is essential for faculty involvement in planning and implementation, as it needs to be integrated into the fabric of the degree programs.

2. Project Schedule – Not sure at this point, given competing work.

Faculty Survey – 14 respondents Student Survey – 13 respondents