

PROPOSED UNIFICATION LYNDON STATE & JOHNSON STATE

If approved, the unification of **Johnson State College** and **Lyndon State College** will create:

- expanded opportunities for students, staff, and faculty,
- a combined pool of resources focused on students and learning, and
- two vibrant campuses providing access to high-quality college education for Vermonters for generations to come.

What does unification mean?

- Two administrations become one, with one budget and shared resources.
- Lyndon and Johnson maintain two active and vibrant campuses with their own cultures, facilities, student activities, cultural events, varsity sports, and mascots.
- 1 + 1 = Way more than 2: expanded learning opportunities, a larger and more diverse faculty, more research opportunities, shared resources, increased graduation rates, and more course offerings.

What will the transition process look like?

- A unification advisory committee will include a wide range of perspectives from each campus.
- The committee will solicit input and advise the college presidents and the Chancellor on various aspects of unification through the transition year.
- Faculty and staff involvement will be critical to unification success.

Transition Process Outline:

Gathering Feedback

The Chancellor and LSC and JSC presidents will hold meetings at each campus to gather input and share information.

Preparing a Report

The Chancellor's Office is preparing a document outlining the issues involved with unification, from financial to legal.

Two College Meetings

Leadership from Johnson and Lyndon are meeting regularly to discuss unification.

Unification Advisory Committee Meets

This Committee, with representatives from JSC and LSC, will solicit input and advise on unification.

Information Sharing

The Chancellor will make regular updates while he prepares his report.

Board Decision

The Board will consider the unification proposal at its annual retreat on September 29 in Fairlee, Vermont.

Will Lyndon and Johnson stay Lyndon and Johnson?

- Yes, and then some!
- Each campus will have its NCAA Division III athletics teams and its own mascot.
- Each will compete in the North Atlantic Conference—even against each other!
- The new college will share one mission AND each campus will maintain its own culture and identity.
- Alumni and marketing directors at each campus will maintain that campus's vital connections. Alumni want to remain connected to the college from which they graduated.

Why is the VSC proposing unification now?

- The VSC is taking this proactive step to position Lyndon and Johnson for a strong future at a time when all public colleges face the same, significant budget challenges: declining high school populations, increased competition, and little government support.
- Administrative costs such as compliance with federal regulations, student support services, and many other tasks are more efficiently delivered when there is a critical mass of students.
- The future of Vermont depends on more students receiving high-quality, highly relevant education. The unification will help the VSC educate even more Vermonters.
- With a change in administration at Lyndon and a challenging budget year for both schools, the timing is right to combine the presidential position and resources.
- A shared presidency is not possible with two, separate NEASC accreditations. To achieve maximum savings and to optimize the benefits of a strong alliance between Johnson and Lyndon, a single accreditation is necessary.

What will the leadership look like?

- The presidents at both colleges will remain until July 1, 2017.
- A Unification Advisory Committee, with representatives from each campus and chaired by former VSC Chancellor Tim Donovan, will solicit input and advise the college presidents and the chancellor before the Board vote on unification. If necessary, the committee will continue its work through the transition year.
- On July 1, 2017, Dr. Elaine Collins will assume the presidency of the unified college.

If unification is approved, the benefits are big:

- Unification will preserve access, combine the best resources of two institutions into one, and allow resources to be focused on students and learning.
- Access to all events and facilities at both campuses and one student activity fee.
- Major at one school and minor at another.
- Access to more faculty, courses, majors and minors, and resources (career services, research and internship opportunities, facilities).

Lyndon and Johnson are both critical educational, cultural, and economic drivers in their regions.

- Both the Lyndon and Johnson campuses will remain vital, student-centered community centers that contribute to their local economies.
- Two strong campuses will help Vermont increase college degree attainment to meet the needs of the future economy.
- JSC and LSC are each critical points of regional access to higher education. Fifty percent of students attending Johnson and Lyndon commute daily to campus. Without these campuses, students would be unlikely to go to college.

“Our priority is always to provide our students with **the best possible college education at two vibrant campuses**. The potential to do so by possibly expanding opportunities for students, faculty, and staff in a larger college community is worth the Board’s serious consideration.”

Martha O’Connor, Chair, VSC Board of Trustees

Why would I send a student to a VSC college now while things are in such flux?

- We are building strength at the colleges by consolidating administrative functions and budgets and increasing opportunities for students.
- During this year of unification planning, students at both colleges will continue their education as they would have without it. Once the unification is underway, students will have access to expanded educational opportunities, facilities, cultural events, and other resources.
- The headwinds the VSC faces are no different than other institutions of public higher education (declining high school population, little state support, high health insurance costs, etc.). This proactive and strategic move to consolidate administrative functions across these two colleges and our system is a sign of confidence in our future.

How much will the VSC save through unification?

- We expect to realize savings through shared, top-level administrative staff, including a shared presidency.
- As the unification is planned over the next year, specific budget targets, which also would include strategic investments, will become clearer.

Will there be layoffs as a result of the unification?

- Budget targets will be established by the transition team and the Chancellor’s office.
- Any staffing changes or reductions in staff that might occur would proceed with deliberate sensitivity, fairness, and full respect to contractual obligations.

- In the coming academic year, we will take advantage of administrative changes already underway to achieve savings for both colleges.

Why not unify all of the VSC colleges?

- LSC and JSC are neighbors in the northern tier of the state. Their proximity makes resource-sharing more feasible.
- LSC and JSC missions are similar and would be enhanced by this alignment.
- Vermont Technical College and the Community College of Vermont are building student opportunities through their own strategic alliance. Due to the wide difference in mission between those schools, continued work to better align student opportunities is more advantageous for students than combining those two colleges.
- All five colleges in the Vermont State College system are engaged in new strategic collaborations to increase student opportunities, create clear academic pathways between institutions, and share administrative costs (IT, legal, accounting, HR, online classes, and others.)
- The five VSC institutions are unique, with separate accreditations and identities. Unifications must only take place if they enhance student opportunities and the academic mission and if they help build a stronger financial picture.
- Our strategy to increase collaboration within our system through combined, back-office functions and resource sharing will yield many benefits to our students and to the VSC’s financial sustainability.