

Vermont State Colleges System Board of Trustees Approves Unification of Johnson and Lyndon State Colleges into a Single Institution with Two Unique Campuses

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Tricia Coates
(802) 793-1417

Thursday, September 29, 2016

FAIRLEE, VT -- Today the Vermont State Colleges System Board of Trustees voted unanimously to unify Johnson and Lyndon State Colleges into a single accredited college with two distinctive campuses, following preliminary approval at its July 22, 2016 meeting. The Board's decision to create a larger, stronger institution is intended to expand opportunities for students, strengthen institutional finances, and ensure continued access to high-quality, post-secondary education in the northern region of Vermont.

The unified college is scheduled to formally take effect on July 1, 2018 under the leadership of Dr. Elaine Collins, the current president of Johnson State College. A consolidated executive leadership team under Dr. Collins, with strong representation from both campuses, will be in place to lead the colleges in a transition year on July 1, 2017 and will begin the visioning and preparation process in the coming weeks. The timeline for unification reflects the need for inclusive and transparent planning, with input from both campus communities, and adequate lead time for necessary regulatory approvals and implementation steps.

When unification is fully implemented it is expected to save approximately \$2 million annually. In addition, unification is anticipated to produce increased revenue of \$2 million annually through enrollment growth beyond what would otherwise be expected for combined dollar value of budgetary savings and increased revenue is approximately \$4 million annually. Projected one-time implementation costs are pegged at \$2 million, including significant expenditures for marketing and information technology improvements.

In his presentation to the Board, VSCS Chancellor Jeb Spaulding said, "Unification will create new academic and experiential opportunities for students, a bigger and more diverse faculty environment, advantages for recruiting new students and a significantly strengthened financial foundation. Johnson and Lyndon State Colleges have provided quality college education to thousands of Vermonters for many decades. They are pivotal institutions in their regions and they are beloved by their alumni, faculty, staff and current students. Unification is our recognition of that love and our commitment to maintain two vibrant and viable campuses for the coming decades."

Martha O'Connor, VSCS Board President, stated "The Board has chosen to put the two colleges into the strongest position possible to address the significant challenges facing small, tuition dependent colleges. The Chancellor's analysis and explanation of the financial, academic, and community benefits of unification is substantive and convincing. Unification will make a stronger college with new opportunities for students and a promising future for both campuses."

Dr. Collins, who assumed the presidency of JSC in July 2015, called it "an enormous privilege to envision leading the proposed unification of Lyndon and Johnson State Colleges through this critical stage of development," adding, "I look forward to planning with all stakeholders to build on the achievements of each institution and create a stronger entity that will serve public higher education in VT for years to come."

Lyndon Interim President Nolan Atkins added, "I am most excited about the expanded educational opportunities for the students of Lyndon and Johnson. The depth of expertise in our departments more than doubles with the unification, providing our students with greater experiential opportunities and increased variety of higher-level courses. We will be greater than the sum of our parts while maintaining what makes us each unique."

Details about academic programming, marketing and branding, student services and campus activities in the unified college will be determined through the involvement of the Lyndon and Johnson faculty, staff and students in coordination with the unified administration.

The Unification Advisory Committee will continue its work of taking input and advising on the key issues that will need to be addressed to make unification successful. The UAC is planning two campus-wide sessions at each college in October. These sessions will ask community members to envision the student experience at the unified college.

In their resolution, the Board of Trustees requested that the Chancellor, with advice from Dr. Collin's unified leadership team and the Unification Advisory Committee, should make a recommendation on a name for the new entity for the Board's consideration at or before its December 1st meeting.

For more information:

[Chancellor's Report and Recommendations on the Unification of Johnson State College and Lyndon State College](#)

[Board Resolution on the Unification of Lyndon State College and Johnson State College](#)

[Unification Advisory Committee](#)