

AGENCY OF EDUCATION

Barre, Vermont

TEAM: Legal

ACTION ITEM: Will the State Board of Education approve Prescott College as the designated entity pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 175, to act as permanent repository for Green Mountain College student academic records?

SECRETARY'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the State Board of Education approve Prescott College as the designated entity pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 175, to act as permanent repository for Green Mountain College student academic records.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 16 V.S.A. § 175, State Board Rule 2250

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

State statute requires a postsecondary institution proposing to discontinue its course of instruction to take several steps with regard to student academic records. The institution must inform the State Board, prepare the academic record of each former and current student in a form satisfactory to the State Board, and deliver the records to the person designated by the Board. The Board has promulgated rules consistent with statute.

The statute and rules do not state any criteria that the State Board should consider when designating a person to act as permanent repository for a closing institution's student records. The statute states that students and former students "shall be entitled to copies of their records" after paying a "reasonable" fee. 16 V.S.A. § 175(c).

Green Mountain College will discontinue operations effective after the Spring 2019 semester. The College has entered into teach-out agreements with a total of 9 institutions including Vermont and out-of-state institutions, for the benefit of its current students who wish to continue pursuing the various degrees currently offered by GMC. The most comprehensive of these teach-out agreements is with Prescott College (located in Prescott, Arizona).

Prescott College and Green Mountain College have signed an agreement that provides for Prescott College to serve as custodian of record for Green Mountain College student education records. The agreement between Prescott and Green Mountain College also provides that Prescott College will hire certain GMC faculty, offer some of GMC's online courses, establish a Green Mountain Center at Prescott College, and print "Green Mountain Center" or similar designation on diplomas of former GMC students who continue to a Prescott College degree.

The New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) has approved the teach-out agreement between Green Mountain College and Prescott College.

The majority of GMC's current and former student academic records are house electronically. Student transcripts have been maintained in only electronic format for many years. Some older transcripts are maintained in paper format.

The Agency of Education does not have the staff or space to act as an appropriate custodian of student academic records. The Agency is not authorized by law to charge a fee to a student who requests his or her student record, if the record were to be housed at the Agency.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS: None.

EDUCATION IMPLICATIONS: Protection of student right to access academic transcripts.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS: None.

STAFF AVAILABLE: Emily Simmons, General Counsel