

**VCCS Six-Year Plan
2016-2022 Plan**

Institutional Mission

The mission statement for Virginia's community colleges is:

We give everyone the opportunity to learn and develop the right skills so lives and communities are strengthened.

The statement was adopted by the State Board for Community Colleges in November 2009. No changes to the mission are anticipated over the next three biennia.

VCCS Six-Year Plan Strategies

Creating a Culture of Completion and Addressing Virginia's Hiring Challenge

This document provides an overview of the major strategies included in the VCCS Plan. Funding to support these initiatives will be pursued from multiple sources including state, federal, gifts, and grants and through reallocation of existing resources.

Priority 1: Triple Community College Degree, Diploma and Certificate Completion by 2021: (a) Create Structured Pathways to Success, (b) Implement Stackable Credentials, (c) Improve Student Readiness and Onboarding, (d) Increase Change Management Capacity among Campus Leaders, and (e) Invest in Outcomes-Based Funding.

Post-secondary credential attainment is the priority for higher education in Virginia. In addition to Executive Order Twenty-Three which calls for increased attainment of STEM-H credentials and SCHEV's strategic objective of achieving a 60.5% degree attainment (associates degree or higher) for individuals ages 25-64 by 2030, the VCCS State Board for Community Colleges has adopted a bold strategic goal of tripling credentials earned by 2021. To meet this goal, VCCS will identify and scale best practices for student success in programs that lead to credentials with workplace value across the Commonwealth.

Students who complete a degree will gain skills that make them more employable, higher paid, and stronger contributors to the workforce and community. A person who obtains a two-year degree can net an additional \$500,000 (\$28,750 additional in state taxes per student) in a lifetime. First generation students can double their previous income with a degree. While lower levels of education have been linked to increased levels of crime, poverty, unemployment, and uninsured healthcare, higher education attainment is positively correlated with higher levels of volunteering, voting, donating blood and civic engagement.

To increase student success, with a particular emphasis on students in underserved populations, the VCCS will implement the following strategies (*Priority 1 total funding of \$3.25million in FY 2017 and \$10.2 million in FY 2018*)

- **Create Structured Pathways to Success** that clearly map program pathways, keep students on track, and avoid overspending financial aid funds and state resources on courses that don't count. Many new community college students do not know what they want to major in, but they are forced to select a program of study in order to be eligible for financial aid. Without a clear plan for completion, they take unnecessary courses that exhaust their financial aid eligibility and extend their time to completion. Recent research analyses (Community College Research Center, MDRC's study of CUNY/ASAP, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Completion by Design) indicate that colleges that develop structured program pathways with limited elective options and that provide intensive support services have significantly increased student retention and completion outcomes. (*\$250,000 in FY 2017 and \$500,000 in FY 2018*)

VCCS Structured Pathways to Success strategies will include the following:

- **Meta-Majors:** By grouping similar program majors into a smaller number of meta-majors (such as health sciences, STEM, business technologies, arts & humanities, and public safety), colleges will create more efficient schedules that provide students with foundational courses while helping them explore careers and program majors. VCCS colleges will analyze program requirements across several similar majors to create class schedules that guide and optimize students' enrollment. Upon admission, a student will be guided through assessments to identify a broad career field of interest and will select a meta-major upon enrollment. After completing 15 hours in the meta-major, students will be required to select a specific program major and degree level.
- **Redesigned Math Pathways:** VCCS wants to better align math requirements with the needs of programs of study rather than defaulting students in to college algebra (which is not required for most careers). Math pathways will be aligned with meta-majors. Examples include calculus for STEM, technical math for applied technologies, statistics for allied health and social sciences, statistics and brief calculus for business, and quantitative math for liberal arts pathways. VCCS will convene math and program faculty from Virginia community colleges and four-year universities to review and revise these pathways.
- **Co-requisite Developmental Math:** VCCS's developmental education redesign has already proven that more students are placing college ready and completing college-level English and math in one year than were doing so before the redesign. The developmental English redesign allows students who place near college-ready to co-enroll in college English and a supplemental developmental course; as a result, 70% more students are completing college English in their first year. VCCS will implement a similar co-requisite developmental math course for students who place near college-ready in math to support their acceleration into college math.
- **Develop Policies and Practices that Promote Credential Stacking and Completion in Support of Virginia's Credential Attainment Goal** – VCCS will leverage faculty and administrator expertise to develop policies and practices that promote efficient credential attainment by removing barriers to completion and stacking curriculum, embedding credentials in coursework, and articulating credit for industry certifications earned. Consideration will be given to implications for accreditation. Recognized third party credentials that help standardize the curriculum across the Commonwealth will be embedded in occupational and technical tracks to create **Stackable Credentials**. (*\$100,000 reallocation of existing resources in each year*)

- **Implement Enterprise Student Support System Solution-** Community colleges students' onboarding processes are often confusing for underserved and first-generation college students, especially in colleges with student-to-advisor ratios of 1500 to 1. As a result, 48% of students who submit applications do not complete the enrollment process. Additionally, 40% of students who do enroll drop out during the first semester, and 60% who complete one semester fail to return in subsequent semesters. Due to funding limitations, community colleges cannot add enough personnel to improve the student onboarding and retention processes.

Enterprise technology solutions can provide customized, just-in-time information to students to streamline admissions and registration processes while freeing up frontline staff to provide support to underserved, at-risk students. Students who prefer self-service options will not have to come to campus, stand in long lines, or run around campus from office to office to complete their registrations. By keeping students on track and providing advisors with updated information about these students, colleges can increase enrollment yields and improve retention and progression. The VCCS has started to provide these types of solutions with a consolidated financial aid/student accounts help desk implemented on July 1, 2015. (*\$3.0 million in FY 2017 and \$3.5 million in FY 2018*)

- **Identify Additional Measures of College Readiness**, such as completion of the Advanced Studies diploma or SOL scores. VCCS placement testing policy requires all degree-seeking students to take the Virginia Placement Test, even those who graduate in the top of their high school class. Research from Community College Research Center indicates that other measures can better predict a student's success in college. VCCS plans to conduct research and develop policies to support multiple measures for placement. In partnership with Virginia's Department of Education, VCCS will develop and implement technology tools to support the seamless downloading of high school transcript data to support these placement decisions. In addition, VCCS will improve data sharing with VDOE to better align student pathways for career technical majors, explore the option of providing the Virginia Placement Test to rising high school juniors in the Standard Diploma track, and partner with school divisions to remediate students who are not college-ready. (*\$250,000 reallocation of existing funds in each year*)
- **Scale Proved Student Success Strategies System-Wide through a Year-Long, Cohort-Based Professional Development Student Success Leadership Institute** designed to support comprehensive institutional change. To build the foundation for achieving the Complete 2021 completion goal, a culture shift needs to take place on each campus. We cannot expect dramatic changes in student success outcomes if we continue to do business as usual. To prepare campus administrators and faculty leaders for the change process, the VCCS will provide professional development

focused on increasing data-informed decision-making strategies and removing unintended student success barriers. A team from each college will learn from national experts, evaluate their individual college data, examine current policies and practices on their campus that might be barriers for student success, and develop an action plan for implementing change strategies to support increased student retention and completion. (*\$200,000 reallocation of existing funds in FY 2017*)

- **Incentivize Outcomes-Based Funding** with a new allocation in FY 2018. Many states have moved to **Outcomes-Based Funding Formulas to Increase Accountability for State Funding**. With community college completion as the number one priority, the VCCS has created a funding formula that incentivizes college completion by rewarding colleges for achieving momentum point measures that lead to achievement of degrees, diplomas, and certificates. VCCS has engaged in an extensive 18-month effort to develop the model, which will be implemented in FY 2017 with a reallocation of \$37 million from the existing E&G funding. Without increasing the E&G funding, some colleges whose performance improves during the implementation year may lose money if they do not improve as much as other colleges. New funding will provide motivation to achieve the full impact of outcomes-based funding and reward colleges that have achieved the following student success outcomes used in the funding formula:
 - Completion of developmental education courses
 - Completion of gateway math and English courses with a C or better
 - Retention of students who return the next semester and subsequent semesters
 - Progression of students who earn 12 or 24 college level credits with a GPA 2.0
 - Completion of a degree with additional points for underserved populations
 - Student transfer to a four year institution after completing at least 16 credits

The additional funding would be distributed to the colleges through the outcomes-based funding formula and dedicated to support student success programs. (*\$6.2 million in FY 2018*)

Priority 2: Addressing Virginia's Hiring Challenge

In response to a directive in item 213 #1c of the 2015 Appropriation Act, Chancellor Glenn DuBois led a series of more than 20 town hall meetings across the Commonwealth in which more than 1,500 Virginia business and other community leaders identified outcomes based solutions to expand the number of workforce training credentials and certifications to a level needed to meet the demands of Virginia's workforce. Based on evidence from the Chancellor's town hall tour, the analysis of economists, surveys of business, and research conducted by JLARC, it is clear that the Commonwealth's businesses face a significant challenge in hiring skilled workers, particularly for occupations that require more than a high school diploma and

less than a bachelor's degree. (*Priority 2 total funding \$16.4 million in FY 2017 and \$23.6 million in FY 2018*)

To address this persistent hiring challenge, Virginia's Community Colleges seek to:

Expand Capacity in Pathways to Industry Certifications and Licenses that Bridge the Skills Gap – First, but by no means the only, concern identified by business and community leaders is a persistent **skills gap** experienced by business in filling middle-skill occupations – particularly those occupations that require more training and education than a high school diploma but less than an associate's degree. These skills are most frequently captured and signaled by the possession of an industry certification or license and most efficiently attained through noncredit workforce training, which currently receives a very modest amount of state investment. With direction and support from the business community, Virginia's Community Colleges will pursue a funding formula that, after an initial investment to initiate and expand needed short-term training programs, invests only when students of Virginia's Community Colleges successfully complete training and go on to earn an in-demand or high-demand industry certification or license, thereby creating a pay for performance model of funding the short-term industry certifications and licenses most sought by Virginia's employers of middle-skill workers. (*\$10 million in FY 2017 and \$15.0 million in FY 2018, which is expected to result in the creation of 10,500 in-demand and high-demand credentials producing an estimated five-year, direct return on investment to the Commonwealth of \$50M to \$70M based on increased personal income tax revenue.*)

- **Expand Need-Based Financial Aid for Noncredit Instruction Leading to In-Demand and High-Demand Industry Certifications and Licenses** – The same Chancellor-led town hall tour and engagement of more than 1,500 business and other community leaders that was precipitated by a directive in item 213 #1c of the 2015 Appropriation Act also identified a strong need for additional need-based financial aid for noncredit instruction leading to in-demand and high-demand credentials, thereby addressing what may be termed the **affordability gap**. Building on the \$1,075,000 investment made by the General Assembly and Governor – at the request of SCHEV – in the starting in FY 2016, the expansion will bring what is now a pilot at six colleges to the full system of 23 community colleges and provide much needed access to training for low- and modest-income Virginians who seek the skills needed to gain access to middle-class wages thereby enhancing Virginia's income tax withholdings, the primary source of revenue in the Commonwealth. (*\$2.4 million in FY 2017 and \$3.6 million in FY 2018, supporting as many as 4,500 Virginians with financial need, while heightening the likelihood of maximizing the Commonwealth's return on investment note above*)
- **Address the Interest Gap** – There is a significant gap between good-paying careers with job openings today and Virginians who are aware of and pursuing those opportunities. Targeted outreach and research-based communications efforts

must be made to close this “Interest Gap” and connect individuals with the short-term training programs that will enable them to secure the middle class jobs available often within their own community. (*\$1.0 million in FY 2017 and \$2.0 million in FY 2018, producing a consumer-driven campaign to attract more people to train for in-demand and high-demand careers.*)

- **Provide Business with a Ready-to-Work Workforce** – In recent years the voice from business and industry has become louder that there is not only a shortage of technically skilled workers, but also a deficit of workers with the right **soft skills** or **employability skills** that makes even a technically competent candidate ready-to-work. Responding to increased concerns expressed by business leaders from across the Commonwealth, Virginia’s Community Colleges are undertaking an initiative to (1) Identify sustainable strategies to promote a system-wide focus on and approach to addressing employability skills with students; (2) Identify the most effective and efficient models to teach, assess, and credential employability skills that could be reasonably implemented system-wide; and (3) Propose an outlined implementation plan to include a timeline and activities. (*\$250,000 reallocation of existing funds in FY 2017*)
- **Improve Industry Certification and License Tracking to Meet Virginia’s Credential Attainment Goal** – Develop and implement sustainable strategies – inclusive of policy, technology, and data sharing agreements – to track industry certification and license completions of Virginia’s Community College students thereby setting the stage for further refining policy and practice that promotes efficient credential completion for in-demand and high-demand occupations to meet Virginia’s credential attainment goal. (*\$300,000 reallocation of existing funds in each year*)
- **Respond to Virginia Business & Industry Training and Education Needs --** Leverage workforce partnerships and labor market analytics to predict employment needs across the Commonwealth and strategically implement degree, diploma, certificate, and certification programs to prepare individuals for middle-skill jobs that meet short- and long-term workforce and economic needs, in areas such as CyberSecurity, Computer & Information Systems Technology, Mechatronics, Healthcare, Engineering Technologies, Construction Technologies, Protective Services, and Transportation Technologies.

Priority 3: Ensure College Affordability and Transfer Success

With rising tuition and book costs, community college students often lack the financial resources to enroll full-time and achieve their educational goals. Strategies that can help reduce college costs and help students manage resources more effectively include development of technology tools that facilitate credit for prior learning; implementation of “default” course enrollment

technology tools; expansion of Open Education Resources, and development of “Aid like a Paycheck” financial aid models. *[Priority 3 total funding of \$2.0 million in FY 2017]*

- **Create a Veteran’s Portal** to provide veterans and military personnel with the ability to upload transcripts and identify **credit-for-prior-learning** options within VCCS. This technology will help recruit more veterans to Virginia’s community colleges while accelerating their pathway into the workforce. In addition to creating a Veteran’s Portal, VCCS will develop policies and guidelines for the awarding of credit for prior learning for students who have completed workforce industry-recognized credentials. *(\$2,000,000 in FY 2017)*
- **Create Program of Study Course Enrollment Tools** to ensure that students are not paying for unnecessary credits and to meet the U.S. Department of Education’s financial aid requirements for programs of study. The Department of Education does not allow federal financial aid to be used for courses outside of a student’s program of study; colleges that award financial aid for these courses are subject to audit penalties. VCCS proposes to create “default” course registration protocols in the student registration system so that students cannot enroll in courses outside of their program of study without an advisor’s approval. Doing so will provide efficiencies while saving money for colleges and students. *(\$200,000 reallocation of existing funds in FY 2017)*
- **Expand Open Education Resources** across all VCCS colleges to save textbook costs and develop cost effective ways of maintaining the materials. Tidewater Community College’s “Z Degree” is proven to save students money and increase course retention and program completion. *(\$200,000 reallocation of existing funds in FY 2017)*
- **Increase State Aid.** More than 41% of VCCS students received financial aid in 2013-14. State aid is especially important for students who fall into low or middle-income ranges and do not qualify for full federal aid. Recent data show almost \$102 million of unmet need exists for middle income students enrolling in the VCCS. Additionally, 79% of VCCS students classified as middle income have some level of unmet financial need.
- **Develop “Aid like a Paycheck” Financial Aid Strategies** to distribute smaller amounts of aid in periodic increments instead all at the beginning of the semester to help students progress academically and better manage their money. MDRC research studies show that “Aid like a Paycheck” results in higher rates of persistence, credit accumulation, and credential and degree attainment.
- **Ensure Transferability of VCCS Courses.** VCCS students in Virginia need to know that their credits will count when they transfer, and they should not have to

pay for the same credits twice. VCCS will partner with SCHEV to conduct a study to understand what happens to transfer credit and **ensure that courses designed for transfer do transfer for course credit**. To improve course transfer success, VCCS will also partner with the transfer universities who accept the majority of VCCS transfer students to identify common courses that transfer for course credit to each of the senior institutions.

Because the majority of students (71%) transfer before completing the associate degree, and many never complete a baccalaureate degree, VCCS will partner with senior institutions to implement "**Reverse Transfer**" technology tools and policies. According to National Student Clearinghouse, tens of thousands of Virginians have some college but no degree. Reverse transfer and degree audit technology tools will enable the transfer of university credit back to the community college for the awarding of an associate degree for students who transferred before completing the degree. (*\$150,000 reallocation of existing funding in each year*)

Priority 4: Expand Institutional and Learning Analytics to Support Data-Informed Decision Making

With limited resources, VCCS needs to develop the capacity to identify and support students in the “murky middle,” those who have the potential for success but who meet identified risk factors for dropping out. Georgia State University and other colleges and universities have demonstrated significant increases in student completion with predictive analytic strategies that support development of structured, data-driven interventions such as course redesign, supplemental instruction, and learning communities.

Expand VCCS’s capacity to use and access data to describe and predict student entry, progression and completion through enhancing its current institutional **predictive analytics** capabilities. This system will work with Wizard, the SAILS early alert system, and Blackboard Learn data to measure and analyze student progression and outcomes. VCCS will also develop customized **dashboards and reports** to measure and analyze college performance toward VCCS accountability metrics and the state attainment goal and provide access for administrators and faculty to key indicators of student success. (*Priority 4 - \$2.0 million in FY 2017 and \$300,000 in FY 2018*)

Priority 5: Increase Faculty and Staff Salaries

This plan builds in modest salary increases of 2 percent in FY 2017 and 3 percent in FY 2018 to recognize the value and importance of faculty and staff in meeting the Complete 2021 strategic goal.

Priority 6: Increase Educational Attainment in Rural Virginia for Economic Prosperity

Studies show that high school students who have had work experience prior to entering college are more successful in their postsecondary education and training. By exposing students to work-based learning, including soft skills development, coupled with the coaching goal of establishing credential plans, students will be more likely to know what credentials are required and to pursue them. The Rural Virginia Horseshoe Initiative is a joint program with the community colleges' foundations and the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education aims to (1) double the percent students in rural Virginia who earn a postsecondary credential and (2) cut in half the percent of rural Virginians who fail to earn a high school diploma by providing full-time career coaches in rural high schools and providing a \$1,000 scholarships for use at a community college as an incentive for citizens who did not finish high school to obtain a GED. The full time coaches will expand career and postsecondary education planning services to earlier grades, engage with parents and facilitate student engagement in work-based learning. *(Priority 6 - \$1.0 million each year)*

Priority 7: Improve Efficiency and Effectiveness of Administrative Services to Focus Resources on Mission-Critical Programs

The VCCS has conducted a benchmarking study of administrative processes system-wide, which resulted in a list of initiatives that could **improve business processes and operations**. A more detailed evaluation identified the following initiatives to improve accountability and leverage opportunities in support of the VCCS strategic plan:

- Fully implement Strategic Sourcing to improve procurement process efficiency, leverage buying power with improved coordination, and provide expertise across system
- Implement Shared Services to deliver administrative and support services more effectively and perhaps at a lower cost. A preliminary roadmap has been developed with the schedule and estimated resources needed to roll out the shared services over a four to six year period. The initial investment in systems and process improvements would yield an ongoing opportunity to re-invest existing resources in mission critical and strategic operations and initiatives. The VCCS is evaluating potential funding mechanisms for the initial investment. *(Priority 7 - \$8.6 million with \$4 million reallocation of existing funds in FY 2017 and \$4.4 million in FY 2018)*

**Virginia's Community Colleges
2016-2022 Plan**

Financial Aid Plan

This item addresses the TJ21 requirement to provide “plans for providing financial aid to help mitigate the impact of tuition and fee increases on low-income and middle-income students and their families, including the projected mix of grants and loans.”

In 2013-2014, VCCS students completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) numbered 220,129. Of these, the VCCS enrolled 97,312 students who fell into either low (74,315) or middle (22,997) income ranges. Acquiring resources to cover the cost of educational expenses for middle income families and their children is becoming more challenging. Recent data from the VCCS show almost \$102 million of unmet need exists for middle income students enrolling in the community colleges and 79% of VCCS students classified as middle income have some level of unmet financial need. To complicate the situation, changes in federal financial aid policy to combat financial aid fraud have made it even more difficult to provide more assistance for middle income families.

To offset the rising costs of enrolling in and obtaining a college credential, the VCCS is pursuing the following activities and strategies:

- College packaging paradigms have been revised to increase state awards made to middle income students, particularly those who are not eligible for the federal Pell Grant. Tuition set-aside programs have also been repurposed to better accommodate this population.
- The colleges' foundations and the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education are expanding efforts to raise funds to support non-need based aid for middle income students.
- The VCCS is expanding and refocusing the functionality of the Virginia Wizard's financial aid literacy and loan and default management capacity. Training is provided to colleges to assist in developing campus processes that require students to complete extensive financial literacy modules including but not limited to saving for college, managing educational grants and loans, loan default management, and educational budget development.

- Tidewater Community College operates a shared service that processes financial aid verification and awarding transactions for multiple colleges. This implementation has both expedited the financial aid process for students and freed up front-line staff at the colleges to assist those students with the greatest need.
- VCCS has entered into a contract with Blackboard (Bb) Student Services to provide 24/7/365 call/chat/email center support to answer financial aid and student account questions from students. This initiative will provide support to students which should result in an increase in the number of students completing the FAFSA and payment processes. It will also provide faster answers to questions, faster resolution of student issues, increased availability of resources, and will free up staff at the colleges to work more strategically with students.
- Mountain Empire Community College will pilot test ‘Aid Like a Paycheck’ this upcoming year, which is a promising program that distributes financial aid every other week to help students progress academically and better manage their money. The program relies on existing financial aid dollars, primarily Pell Grants and State Aid, but seeks to use them more effectively in order to produce higher rates of persistence, credit accumulation, and credential and degree attainment. It does so by ensuring that aid is distributed to students while they maintain their enrollment, thereby reducing the likelihood that students who leave college before the end of term would be required to pay it back. The goals of the program are to help students achieve a good balance between time in work and school, and think about school as a job where regular attendance and meaningful effort are rewarded. (*MDRC Policy Brief, September 2013*)
- Staff at the VCCS system office continue to provide training and professional development for financial aid staff to expand their knowledge of local, state, and federal scholarship, grant, and other non-need based resources for middle income students.
- The Chancellor’s Open Educational Resources (OER) initiative is driving down the cost of textbooks for all students.

The number of VCCS students receiving aid (grant or loan) increased from 88,810 in 2009-10 to 110,220 students in 2013-14 (an increase of nearly 25%). Additionally, while slightly more than one-third (35%) of VCCS students received aid (grant or loan) in 2009-10, more than two-fifths (41%) received aid in 2013-14, as reported in annual financial aid files submitted to SCHEV. Of the VCCS students receiving aid (grant or loan) over the five-year period from 2009-10 through 2013-14, 67% of students received grants only, 11% of students received loans only, and 20% of students received both grants and loans.

Trends during this five-year period show a slight decrease in the percent of students receiving grants only and a corresponding slight increase in the percent of students receiving both grants and loans. While it is difficult to project the future mix of grants and loans, future data on grant and loan recipients may be comparable to the five-year history shared here. However, several factors, each of whose relative impact cannot be predicted, are in play:

- **Federal Aid (Pell Grants)**: A recent study of the impact of new Pell grant restrictions on three community colleges in the South showed decreases in enrollment tied to changes in federal aid regulations – changes that had immediate implementation with no phase-in period. In June 2012, the lifetime maximum Pell eligibility was reduced to 12 semesters of full-time enrollment. Also, under a new Pell restriction, the maximum income for students to receive an automatic-zero Expected Family Contribution was reduced from \$32,000 to \$23,000, thereby excluding many students from receiving a maximum Pell award. The change in federal Ability-to-Benefit regulations also impacted access to financial aid for a small number of individuals. Even the short-lived access to summer term Pell grants, which was initiated in 2009 impacted students' access to college when discontinued. (*The Impact of the New Pell Grant Restrictions on Community Colleges: A Three-State Study of Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi*, Dr. Stephen Katsinas, University of Alabama Education Policy Center)
- **State Aid**: While state aid to VCCS students has increased since 2010-11, the annual percent increase in total state aid funds has declined from 20% from 2010-11 to 2011-12 to under 6% from 2012-13 to 2013-14. From 2013-14 to 2014-15, state aid remained stagnant. From 2014-15 to 2015-16, it increased by only 3.1%. Trends suggest that growth in this source of aid, which is often used to supplement federal aid, may be flat in the future.

**Virginia's Community Colleges
2016-2022 Plan**

Evaluation of Previous Six-Year Plan

Substantial progress has been made on the current VCCS Six-Year Plan. Budget actions of the Virginia General Assembly in the 2015 session have provided for compensation adjustments for employees and partial restoration of previously enacted general fund cuts, which will greatly assist in implementing many of the strategies contained in the previous six-year plan.

The Plan consists of strategies that support the VCCS strategic plan, *Achieve 2015*, and the objectives of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011. Many of the strategies were identified and were implemented as part of the Reengineering efforts that concluded in December 2014. Additional state and federal funds supported many of the initiatives and a number were funded within existing budgets. Additionally, several of the initiatives were funded through the U.S. Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant (TAACCT), which was awarded in September 2011.

Specific updates to the strategies in the previous Six Year plan are:

Promote Dual Enrollment. VCCS colleges and school divisions have worked collaboratively to create and implement on-ramps for Virginia high school students. Now all Virginia high school students have the opportunity to complete an associate degree or general education certificate at the same time that they earn their high school diploma. Nearly 28,000 high school students were enrolled in dual enrollment courses in spring 2015 compared to 23,000 in spring 2011.

Leverage Developmental Education Redesign. The redesign of developmental education has resulted in increased student success. The number of students enrolled in developmental education courses has decreased, the number of students completing developmental education requirements within one year has increased, and the number of students completing the college-level gatekeeper course has also increased.

Encourage College Readiness. The collaboration between the VCCS and K-12 continues to seek methods to promote college readiness. New college readiness measures using ACT scores were implemented at the VCCS during fall 2014. Currently, the VCCS is conducting a study to evaluate using other measures of college readiness, such as high school diploma type, SOL test scores, and high school student course taking patterns, for appropriate placement of students.

Implement Rural Horseshoe Initiative to increase education attainment and economic development opportunities. A pilot of the Rural Virginia Horseshoe has launched at 7 rural community colleges, where 10 full-time coaches have been hired and trained, and more than 3,000 students have been provided with one-on-one services. The program has secured nearly \$4 million in grants and gifts to date.

Additional resources to enhanced student support services and improve student success.

The 2015 General Assembly provided an additional \$1,200,000 in additional financial aid support for credit instruction for students; affordability is a particular concern for underserved and first-generation college students and this funding will provide additional support to make community college more affordable.

In addition, the VCCS Early Alert System -- Student Assistance and Intervention for Learning Success (SAILS) - is being fully implemented across the 23 VCCS colleges. More than 101,000 “flags” or “kudos” were submitted by faculty during the spring 2015 semester in support of student success in courses.

Enhance the Virginia Education Wizard. The Wizard redesign work has begun and is scheduled to be completed in September 2015. In addition to expanding resources for veterans, the redesigned tool will use gamification to help students align their financial expectations with their career choices.

Support student success and completion through hiring additional student services staff. The State Board approved tuition increases in FY 2015 and FY 2016 to provide additional resources for student support programs. Colleges are required to submit student success plans for using those funds. As a component of their plans for the past two years, many of the VCCS colleges were able to expand their student support services by hiring additional student success coaches and other counselors.

Increase number of awards in high-demand STEM-H programs. Curriculum redesign work has begun to better align health programs (nursing) across the VCCS. The VCCS will begin developing and implementing “structured pathways” in STEM-H and other academic program areas during the 2015-16 academic year.

The 2015 General Assembly provided funding for STEM-focused capital projects to advance one previously authorized capital project, provide planning for another project, and equipment for two projects under construction.

Explore Veteran Friendly Programs. Every VCCS college has developed a plan to provide enhanced services to military veterans. Additionally, based on focus group meetings with veterans, the VCCS is expanding the information in the Wizard to better serve their needs.

Legislation enacted by the 2015 General Assembly will ensure that actual skill sets and military transcripts are evaluated for academic credit transferability, and accelerate the relationship and partnership already underway between Virginia’s community colleges and the military community. The VCCS received a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration which provided financial support so that skills could be mapped to specific degree or certificate programs in high-demand areas and a decision could be made to determine the type of credit to be awarded for those skills.

Develop and leverage technology solutions to improve student success. The Open Education Resources (OER) work has expanded from courses to the development of the Z-Degree – an entire degree program with no-textbook costs for students. A grant from the Hewlett Foundation will allow these Z-degrees to be available at all VCCS colleges. The VCCS is developing a repository of OER course materials to be used by colleges to lower the cost of educational materials for students.

Increase student engagement and learning through the incorporation of new technologies in teaching and learning. During the New Horizons Teaching and Learning Conference this year, a new track for certifying faculty in strategies for teaching and learning with technology was added.

Expand distance learning shared services model offered by Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC). The distance learning shared services model continues to expand and provide educational opportunities for students regardless of the student’s domicile or the educational expertise of the local college faculty.

Complete implementation of business intelligence system. Quinn, the VCCS decision support system, has been implemented at all VCCS colleges. Faculty, staff and administrators are currently using the four modules (student, budget and finance, financial aid and human resources) to identify trends and inform decision making across their institutions.

Implement incentive program for colleges to increase the number of skilled workers obtaining credentials for high demand non-degree jobs. Through modest resources made available by the Workforce Investment Act, a pilot program was launched in January 2015 that will incent 500 high demand credentials attained through non-credit instruction across a set of six pilot community college sites. In addition, the 2015 General Assembly for the first time approved \$1,075,000 in funding for students to pursue non-credit instruction leading to industry-based credentials and certifications.

Provide training programs for advanced manufacturing in the Commonwealth. Planning continues for the Thomas Nelson Community College Advanced Integrated Manufacturing program, which has received financial support from both the Virginia General Assembly and the TAACCT grant. The curriculum, which will focus on project-based learning and rotational internships using state-of-of-the-art equipment, has been approved by the State Board. The AIMs program is supported by 200 manufacturers in the Thomas Nelson service region and is expected to be a national model for advanced manufacturing training that could be replicated at other Virginia community colleges.

Increase number of students served by adult career coaches. Adult Career coaches served approximately 2,800 students in FY2013, increasing to 7,100 students in FY2014. Year to date numbers for FY2015 show an increase of 1,600 students over FY2014. Funding to support adult career coaches has been included in recent, successful grant applications. However, these funds will not be sufficient to support the full network of the coaches across all colleges.

Increase the number of Virginians with workforce credentials by expanding the use of Career Readiness Certificates and monitor results. For FY2014, college presidents were asked to set goals for CRC attainment and employer engagement with the CRC. While the colleges fell slightly short of the goal of 11,000 CRCs earned, they surpassed their goal of 247 employers engaged, achieving some level of commitment to the CRC by 434 businesses across Virginia.

Build administrative efficiencies by implementing shared services across the system. The VCCS recently conducted a benchmarking study of the administrative processes across the system. VCCS staffing levels and transaction costs in these areas were benchmarked against those at other institutions of higher education and other organizations. A number of potential initiatives to improve business processes and operations within the VCCS were identified through the study.

The VCCS has been evaluating these potential initiatives to determine which could provide the most benefit. Three major initiatives are currently underway: Portfolio Management, Strategic Sourcing, and Shared Services. The consultant assisting with the analysis has prepared recommendations for moving ahead with shared services in finance, human resources, and technology. VCCS leadership is currently evaluating the recommendations.

In addition to the continuance of the financial aid back-office processing center, the VCCS implemented a 24/7/365 call center to support student financial aid and student accounts offices. This shared service will provide gained system efficiencies through better alignment of VCCS policies and college practices. Staff can be repurposed to better support student success by providing more intensive student outreach and campus based services.

Also, two shared services for Information Security and Information Management have been established and several administrative processes for Paul D. Camp Community College are now being performed by Thomas Nelson Community College.

**Virginia's Community Colleges
2016-2022 Plan**

Capital Outlay

The VCCS 2016-22 Six Capital Plan responds to the extensive capital outlay needs of Virginia's community colleges, and fully supports the institution's mission and strategic plan.

The top priority projects range from the construction of new buildings supporting science technology engineering, math and advanced manufacturing/workforce development to the replacement of circa 1970 era buildings which have exceeded useful life expectancy.

The capital projects would have a significantly positive impact on strategies and funding of the six-year plan, but will have a limited impact on student tuition and fees. Each capital project supports the VCCS mission and strategic objectives.

A listing of capital projects representing support of the six-year academic plan follows. The listing does not reflect project priorities, as projects were prioritized in the 2016-22 six year capital outlay budget submission to DPB, June 15, 2015.

2016-18 Capital Outlay (Select Project Listing)

Construct Science and Engineering Building (CN6), Chesapeake Campus, Tidewater

Construction of a 76,000 square-foot Science and Engineering academic building on the Chesapeake Campus of Tidewater Community College to support instruction in the sciences and engineering disciplines. This project will respond to current and future enrollment demands by providing contemporary science laboratories, preparation rooms, and offices for Chemistry, Biology, Natural Sciences, Geology, and Physics curricula. In addition, the project will provide much-needed space for the campus' Engineering and Engineering Technologies curricula.

Replacement of existing facilities at Thomas Nelson, Germanna and Southwest Virginia Community Colleges

Replacement of the existing 1960/70's era buildings at several community college campuses. Represents the need to replace facilities originally designed to be constructed quickly to establish initial community college campuses.

The needs for 21st century instructional delivery requires extensive renovations to our oldest building stock at costs exceeding that to construct newer more flexible learning spaces. The construction of replacement facilities, and the demolition of outdated structures, supports re-design for new instructional modalities, implementation of student success initiatives, and supports greater on-campus utilization of instructional spaces.

Renovation of existing academic facilities at Central Virginia, Virginia Highlands, Blue Ridge, Patrick Henry, Virginia Western, Paul D. Camp, Wytheville, Rappahannock and Danville Community Colleges

Where facility replacements is not warranted, improvements, reconfigurations and upgrades to existing facilities are necessary to respond to instruction and academic support needs of 21st century students

Construct Extended Learning Support Building, Manassas Campus, Northern Virginia

Construction of an Extended Learning Support Building on the Manassas Campus of Northern Virginia Community College. The building will consist of Extended Learning Institute (ELI) Infrastructure spaces and offices, including large server rooms, along with prior learning assessment centers. The building will also support the sharing of unique course offerings among community colleges. This innovative program was launched between Northern Virginia Community College and participating community colleges to offer NVCC's unique course offerings to colleges' system-wide. The program has expanded to allow all participating colleges to serve as host institutions for their unique offerings as well.

Renovate and Expand Rooker for Advanced Manufacturing and Credentialing Center, New River

Renovation of the existing Rooker Hall and construction of a 53,000 GSF addition to support the Advanced Manufacturing and Credentialing Center at New River Community College. The expanded facility will provide integrated and focused education, training and credentialing for advanced manufacturing instruction and workforce development.

The Center will provide space supporting automotive technology, instrumentation and control automation, machining technology, electrical-electronics technologies, CADD, and simulation technologies. The lab spaces will support both credit instruction and non-credit workforce development programs.

Construct Advanced Integrated Manufacturing (AIM) Center, Thomas Nelson

Construction of a new 65,000 square foot Advanced Integrated Manufacturing (AIM) Center at Thomas Nelson Community College. The AIM center would be funded in partnership with the localities within the Thomas Nelson Community College service area. The state general fund commitment would not exceed 50% of the total project cost.

The AIM Center would house multiple labs, classrooms, gathering areas, offices, and storage spaces. This facility will have labs and teaching areas for the following courses: Composites, Additive Manufacturing, Metals/Computerized Machining, Electronics, and

Measurements. A large common lab for students to integrate all the things from all technologies above into cap-stone projects.

Meeting the Governor's stated goal for projects supporting advanced manufacturing and economic development, the AIM Center is envisioned to be a catalyst to propel the region and the state to the forefront of modern global manufacturing through innovative curriculum and workforce development practices.

**Virginia's Community Colleges
2016-2022 Plan**

Restructuring

The Higher Education Restructuring Act has provided significant benefits to Virginia's institutions of higher education and provides the leverage to secure the Commonwealth's place as one of the more innovative higher education systems in the nation. The Virginia Community College System currently has Level II Delegation of Authority for information technology and capital outlay. As permitted in the Appropriation Act, VCCS will pursue authorization for delegated authority in the third function area - Purchasing.

Moving forward, the Commonwealth should explore additional areas to further enhance Restructuring and ensuring Virginia's ability to compete in the global economy. Two potential areas that may be considered are:

Additional Delegated Authority in Human Resources Management

The Department of Human Resources Management (DHRM) provides senior level review of human resources officers throughout the commonwealth with regard to the application and enforcement of personnel policies. Currently, all state agencies are given certain authorities and DHRM routinely audits them to ensure that such actions have been taken consistent with policy and practice. Additional efficiencies could be achieved by allowing institutions of higher education expanded delegated authority for certain additional classified personnel actions, subject to the review and audit of DHRM. Additional authority could be delegated based on an institution's size, structure, volume, and internal capabilities. Particularly, granting the authority to make justifiable exceptions to compensation limits in the area of new hires, in-band adjustments, promotions, and reward and recognition would streamline processes to recruit and retain the best talent possible. Institutions would continue to document and justify all exceptions and report all exceptions to DHRM annually. Such practices would continue to be subjected to DHRM's review or audit periodically or on an ad hoc basis, at the prerogative of DHRM.

Institutions of higher education are uniquely positioned to execute this change of practice because institutions currently performs all of these practices on a daily basis for its faculty personnel. Also, most institutions have human resources staff of senior, capable, and experienced professionals. Delegated additional authority to the institutions would allow DHRM to reassign internal staff to other pressing requirements other than to provide an unneeded additional level of oversight for large and capable organizations.

Additional Delegated Authority in Financial Administration

The VCCS is considering providing some financial processes through shared services. Some of the additional financial operational authority included in House Bill 1895 in the 2015 Session may provide flexibility to further improve the efficiency of the services.