

**STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA
COUNCIL MEETING
March 21, 2023**

DRAFT MINUTES

Mr. Ampy called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in Room 340 in Kyle Hall at Radford University, 701 Tyler Avenue, Radford, Virginia.

Council members present: Ken Ampy, Walter Curt, Jason El Khoubi, Victoria Harker, Cheryl Oldham, Jennie O'Holleran, Alvin Schexnider and Katharine Webb. Thaddeus Holloman joined virtually.

Council members absent: Mirza Baig, John Broderick, William Harvey and Jeffery Smith.

Staff members present: Tom Allison, Peter Blake, Grace Covello Khattar, Joe DeFilippo, Alan Edwards, Sandra Freeman, Kirstin Pantazis, Paula Robinson, Emily Salmon, Laura Osberger, Bob Spieldenner and Kristin Whelan.

Notable Guests: Special Assistant to the Secretary of Education, Jason Powell and Ramona Taylor from the Office of the Attorney General.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Schexnider motioned to approve the minutes from the January 10, 2023, Council meeting, which were seconded by Ms. Webb. The minutes were approved unanimously.

REMARKS FROM BRET DANILOWICZ, PRESIDENT OF RADFORD UNIVERSITY

Dr. Bret Danilowicz, the eighth president of the Radford University, highlighted activities on the Radford University campus in the following three areas – what is new at Radford how Radford is distinctive and what is on the horizon for the university.

In terms of what's new, Radford University merged with Jefferson College to form Radford University Carilion (RUC). The programs at RUC are offered in collaboration with Carilion Hospital. Radford also partners closely with Virginia Tech. The next new initiative Dr. Danilowicz introduced to Council is a competency-based education (CBE) program. The Chachra IMPACT Lab houses the only competency-based education program at a four-year public institution in Virginia. CBE is an online, asynchronous, open calendar delivery of certificates and credentials aimed at working adults. Radford is looking to grow these programs into full degree programs.

Dr. Danilowicz next described several things that make Radford distinctive. Radford is creating a virtual teaching academy to fully certify the 8,000 current provisionally certified teachers in the Commonwealth. The teaching academy meets the Virginia Department of Education certification requirements and acts as a pipeline to master's-level education programs.

Radford has centralized student support services. The Highlander Success Center is a one-stop-shop for student services. Academic, career and first-year experience programs are all in one office, under one director. Outreach from the Highlander Success Center starts before a student arrives on campus and continues once the student is an alumnus. Radford also has created a one-stop-shop for military students, the Military Resource Center.

Dr. Danilowicz said that Radford aims to go beyond critical thinking to learn how to tackle “wicked” unsolvable problems, such as homelessness and domestic violence. Twenty-two courses are offered to help students understand and work through “wicked” problems. Radford also is building a repository of teaching materials aimed at teaching wicked problems.

Any undergraduate student at Radford can conduct research every year. Last year 3,600 research opportunities existed for an undergraduate class of 6,000. The opportunities are open to students in any discipline.

In closing, Dr. Danilowicz highlighted the new things on the horizon at Radford. The Artis Center for Adaptive Innovation building is due to open sometime between fall 2024-December 2025. The new building will house the Visual and Performing Arts and courses from Health and Human Sciences. It is a deliberate effort to create collaboration across disciplines. Radford also is working on economic development within surrounding communities via The Hub, a one-stop-shop for economic development in the town. Currently, a university and city partnership is working on expanding the New River Water Trail.

CONVERSATION WITH STUDENTS: CRITICAL ISSUES IMPACTING STUDENTS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Tom Allison introduced the following students from the Student Advisory Committee who joined Council for the discussion: Vick Chrepta, Richard Bland College; Owen Williams, William & Mary; Jaylin Drewry, Norfolk State University; and C’erra Rhodes, Radford University.

Mr. Ampy asked the students if mental health is still as large a concern on campus as it was when the Chair joined SCHEV in 2016. According to the students and because of COVID 19, mental health struggles of students on campus have gotten worse. G.P.A. and other measures don’t always point to the problem. Students may appear okay but not be. When asked if the support on campus has improved, the students stated that COVID19 forced institutions to improve.

Mr. Curt asked whether students coming from high school felt that they were prepared for the rigor of college work. The students said it is more of a problem of students’ expectations. The students also stressed that the level of preparedness for college depends on the student’s school system.

Students also expressed concerns about diversity, equity and inclusion issues on campus; they said that feeling like they belong on their campuses is a critical concern for them.

REPORT FROM THE AGENCY DIRECTOR

General Assembly session: The 2023 General Assembly session concluded on February 25, having completed most of its business. Left unfinished are amendments to the existing biennial budget, which the 2022 General Assembly approved. SCHEV staff reviewed and provided comments to the Secretary of Education on 55 bills, met with and provided information to legislators and legislative staff and gave presentations and testimony to committees and subcommittees.

Outstanding Faculty Awards: In partnership with Dominion, SCHEV presented the annual awards to 12 faculty members. Recipients reflected the diversity and excellence of our public and private institutions. Special thanks to Chair Ken Ampy and Vice Chair Katie Webb for presenting the commendations to the recipients, and to Secretary Guidera for delivering remarks.

Meeting with public college and university presidents: On February 27, SCHEV hosted the regular meeting of the General Professional Advisory Committee (GPAC). The agenda included the following items: follow-up discussion with Secretaries Guidera and Cummings from the Council of Presidents' recent meeting with Governor Youngkin; discussion of SCHEV Council's ad hoc workgroup on enrollment; and informational items on the internship program data-governance workgroup and the 2023 Virginia Outstanding Faculty Awards. Council member Katie Webb attended the meeting.

Op-Six/Tech Talent Investment Program (TTIP) meeting: In preparation for an Op-Six meeting (Secretary of Education, Secretary of Finance, Director of the Department of Planning and Budget, Staff Directors of the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee and the House Appropriations Committee, and SCHEV Director), the relevant staff of those entities met in early March. Topics included the six-year-planning process, the distribution of designated funds in the Appropriation Act, and a review of the number of degrees conferred under TTIP. The full Op-Six will meet later in the spring.

Six-year-planning process: In February, the Secretary of Finance issued a request for proposals to review the six-year-planning process, which commences on May 1. Council staff participated in the review of the proposals. Staff provided an update on the process at the March Council meeting.

Qualified Education Loan Ombudsman report. In January, the Office of the Qualified Education Loan Ombudsman (which is established within SCHEV and administered by Scott Kemp) submitted its fifth annual [report](#). Since its 2018 inception, the office has served almost 600 education loan borrowers regarding a variety of challenges. The report details these challenges, as well as staff's outreach efforts focused on promoting the Qualified Education Loan Borrower Education Course (virginiastudentloanhelp.org) and the collaborative work with other states to secure relief for borrowers. In addition, the report provides a list of federal policy recommendations to address issues experienced by Virginia borrowers. With the many challenges facing Virginia borrowers in 2023, such as the restart of payments after three years, the implementation of new rules related to repayment plans and loan forgiveness programs and the continuing uncertainty about the federal debt cancellation initiative, the work of the office will continue to be an essential tool to help borrowers navigate their unique situations.

Mental health workforce pilot grants: Since January, candidates for licensure as clinical social workers or professional counselors who are hired via two-year grants awarded through the Higher Education Mental Health Workforce Pilot program have begun work at four awarded institutions – Christopher Newport, James Madison, Longwood and Radford. At the two remaining awarded institutions – George Mason and Virginia Tech – recruitment and hiring of candidates was ongoing as of early March.

Initiative to enroll and graduate more low-income students: The 2022 General Assembly approved funding to increase the number of students who are eligible for the federal Pell grant to enroll and graduate. The initiative provides \$250,000 toward a contract with a consultant to work with institutions that have below-average enrollments of Pell-eligible students, as well as \$25 million for public institutions to develop initiatives to increase enrollment and retention of these students. The consultant, HCM Strategists, has completed its survey of the institutions to identify programs and initiatives that improve enrollment and retention of Pell-eligible students. It also has completed three focus groups of low-income students who graduated from high school but did not go on to higher education. Meanwhile, public institutions are developing and submitting proposals to access the \$25 million in FY 2024 that is designated for improving enrollment or retention of Pell-eligible students. Staff will announce decisions on the proposals by the end of April.

Data hub: The 2022 budget charged SCHEV to convene a workgroup to consist of representatives from the College of William and Mary, Christopher Newport University, Old Dominion University, Norfolk State University and Jefferson labs for the purpose of assessing the need and to develop a plan for a “Data Science Innovation Hub” in Hampton Roads and Tidewater. The budget item included funds to support engaging a consultant to assist with the workgroup charge. The workgroup was created in summer 2022 and met throughout the fall to define terms, review institutional and regional resources, assess regional economic development needs and provide feedback on an RFP for a consultant’s report. In December, SCHEV released an RFP for a consultant to conduct an objective in-depth analysis of the potential for such a hub. Consultants’ responses to the RFP were received and evaluated in February by a review panel consisting of SCHEV and institutional staff, and a contract is due to be established by March 10.

Virginia Talent + Opportunity Partnership: In February, the Innovative Internship Fund and Program, also known as V-TOP (Virginia Talent + Opportunity Partnership) awarded regional-collaboration grants of \$250,000 each to Northern Virginia Community College (GO Virginia Region 7) and James Madison University (GO Virginia Region 8). These awards will help the grantees connect employers to students to enhance high-quality credit-bearing internships and other work-based learning opportunities in their region, contributing to the statewide effort to retain talent in Virginia. V-TOP has funded eight regional grants since May 2021 and intends to award the ninth and final region (GO Virginia Region 3) before 2024.

Academic workgroup on work-based learning data governance: Since January 17, a workgroup assembled by the Council of Presidents (COP) of staff from institutions, SCHEV and the Virginia Office of Education Economics (VOEE) has met bimonthly to work toward common definitions of data and to discuss governance of information (i.e.,

collection, analysis and reporting) about students and courses involved in internships and other work-based learning (WBL) opportunities. The workgroup seeks to define the standards and language for WBL and to establish baseline data using existing reports that institutions submit to SCHEV. The group intends to develop recommendations for creating data standards for WBL by June 30. The external evaluator contracted by SCHEV will then use these recommendations to establish a comprehensive evaluation plan by December 15.

Virginia Business Magazine recognition: Congratulations to Council Chair Ken Ampy on being a recipient of the Virginia Black Business Leaders Award. Virginia Business Magazine said, "Growing up in rural Dinwiddie County, Ampy saw firsthand the power of community. After studying computer science at Old Dominion University, he built a career as a programmer analyst and developer for Dominion Virginia Power and Capital One Financial Corp. before launching staffing and consulting firm Astyra Corp. in 1997 in Richmond." Other recipients include former Council Chair Gil Bland and Tidewater Community College President Marcia Conston.

New staff: We welcome Emily Muniz, Curtis Sharpe and Bob Spieldenner. Emily is the associate for transfer and talent pathways. She came to SCHEV from Central Virginia Community College. Curtis is the user support and security specialist. He most recently worked at the Virginia Information Technology Agency. Bob is a senior associate for communications and outreach. He has experience at the Virginia Department of Transportation, the Virginia Department of Emergency Management and Virginia Tech. Also, we are pleased to be hosting an intern this semester. Ben Wojcicki is a student in the history department at Virginia Commonwealth University and is working under the leadership of the Virginia Talent + Opportunity Partnership.

Staff news: In January, we hosted our first staff meeting of the year, which led to focused staff discussions to help refine agency priorities for the year. We are developing a more detailed set of actions around three topics: professional development, communication and employee experience. Also, during the General Assembly session, we held regular 30-minute virtual meetings called "Flash Fridays." We used the time to share updates on legislation of interest, hear thoughts from staff about General Assembly decisions and committee activities and forecast budget implications.

Out and about: Most of my "travels" have been back and forth to the General Assembly building and the Governor's office. I participated in Governor Youngkin's meeting with the public-institution presidents and led a meeting of relevant agency staff in discussing how SCHEV will align its work and initiatives with the Secretariat's objectives and key results. I also spoke at an orientation session for new members of the board of the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education.

Mr. Curt brought up using college campuses for summer internship housing. The students and the Council discussed the issue. Jaylin Drewry mentioned a project he is working on that can match interns with housing. Mr. Drewry mentioned that Old Dominion University created a consortium with employers to assist students with housing during summer internships. Mr. Ampy suggested that SCHEV contact ODU to learn about their internship housing program.

DISCUSSION OF 2023 GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION AND NEW SCHEV DUTIES

Dr. Covello Khattar shared a summary of the General Assembly session. She highlighted the following higher education related legislation:

HB2272 – provides reduced tuition rate to certain students at Norfolk State University and Virginia State University.

SB1280 – course credit earned through internships required at public institutions.

SB1422 workforce credential grant increased to \$4,000.

Mr. Blake highlighted the following legislation that assigns new responsibilities to SCHEV:

HB1738 – an update to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act requires that boards provide virtual access for public comment.

HB2195 – creates the Department of Workforce and Advancement and consolidates the Commonwealth workforce and development policies and programs. This bill also requires a yearly report on the Innovative Internships program.

SCHEV may be required to pick up additional tasks based on the outcome of the budget negotiations.

DISCUSSION OF PRIORITY INITIATIVES FOR THE PATHWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY PLAN

Ms. Salmon sought input from Council members on the proposed initiatives for the Pathways to Opportunity Plan. After providing a brief history of the work and describing the new input from the Governor and Secretary of Education, Ms. Salmon asked for Council's input. She stated that the goal is to connect the Governor's objectives with Pathways to Opportunity.

Ms. Salmon reviewed the (numbered) potential priority initiatives suggested by staff to prompt Council's discussion of the priorities and connected them to the Governor's priorities (in bold.)

Prepare students for the increasing demands of the knowledge economy

1. In cooperation with the Virginia Office of Education Economics (VOEE) and institutions of higher education, develop: (a) criteria to define "urgent labor market needs" and associated academic programs; and (b) recommendations for incentives to promote those programs.
2. Produce an annual (or biennial) report on postsecondary education outcomes.
3. Reform administrative processes governing private institutions of higher education subject to regulation, with foci on simplification, cost reduction and student outcomes.

4. Increase student, employer and higher education institution use of resources (for example, learning modules) related to student internship and work-based learning preparedness.
5. Implement the recommendations of workgroups on data governance of internships and work-based learning and on student and business eligibility for matching funds.
6. Invest in college and university career services programs; more accurately account for migration of graduates and based on that data, develop a strategic communications campaign to bring those graduates back to the state to work; change policies to facilitate more enrollment from other states.

Maintain affordability and reduce the cost of higher education

7. Consider a follow-up survey of graduates to assess career paths and relevance of their educational experiences.

Build the college and career pipeline in partnership with K-12

8. Survey high school students to find out whether they intend to go to college and if not, why not.
9. Institute a process of curricular review by faculty groups to establish systemwide course equivalencies to support pathway maps to the baccalaureate for transfer students; the goal of the pathway maps shall be to assist students in achieving optimal efficiencies in the time and cost of completing a degree program.
10. Re-establish SCHEV student-level data collection on applications, admissions and enrollment.
11. Undertake a marketing campaign to promote educational opportunities to students who might not think that postsecondary education is an option, highlighting both traditional and alternative postsecondary pathways, including apprenticeships and high-quality certificate and workforce credential programs.
12. Increase the number of high school seniors who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and enroll in a postsecondary institution within 16 months of high school graduation through strategic planning and partnerships.

Promote a vibrant campus life

13. Facilitate meetings, initiatives, collaborations and other activities that involve the Virginia Department of Education and public and private schools of education.
14. To enhance free speech and inquiry, facilitate involvement of institutions in the Constructive Dialogue Institute; the effort would be designed to promote improvements on measures such as affective polarization, intellectual humility and other markers of a climate that is supportive of free expression.
15. Pilot select, evidence-based mental health initiatives aimed at meeting students' need for services, as well as expanding the pipeline of mental health care professionals working in Virginia.
16. Work with higher education partners to implement recommendations from the Governor's upcoming Mental Health Forum, prior listening sessions and state-produced reports on the topic.

Among the suggested initiatives and comments, the Council members suggested the following:

- Improve communication and marketing so that the messaging is more consistent and coordinated. (Harker)
- Intentional transparency in labor market data by institutions and by program beyond the SCHEV annual report. The intent is to drive accountability through transparency. (Oldham)
- Where do SCHEV and the Governor's stated objectives diverge? Is there something either have missed? (Curt)
- The Virginia Office of Education Economics needs to use up-to-date data and survey business for a more accurate picture of the labor needs. (Curt)
- How do we assess where business predict the needs of the future? In addition to local business, we need to look at the national work being done on labor market impacts of A.I., among other technologies. (El Khoubi)
- Employer community is not great at figuring out skills and competencies when looking for employees. Look at how the state of Kentucky does this work as an example of a state doing a better job of working with employers to gather data. (Oldham)
- While SCHEV and the Governor are in alignment, we need to have an enrollment initiative. Commitment to figure of how to better align the business community and institutes of higher education. (Webb)
- Speaking specifically to the staff initiatives, Council suggested that numbers 4,5 and 6 could be combined. Number 13 needs a goal or a purpose and 8, 9, 10 and 11 could also be combined. (Webb)
- Narrow down the list to determine our goal and work back from that to help SCHEV prioritize. (O'Holleran)
- Address mental health as a significant issue. (Holloman)
- List needs to be combined so that it more manageable. (Holloman)

REPORT FROM THE ENROLLMENT AD HOC WORKGROUP

Mr. Blake, with assistance from staff, Mr. Curt and Ms. Webb, developed policy considerations to address the expected enrollment drop in the future. Mr. Blake described the tension between cost, access and quality when addressing higher education policy.

Mr. Blake described the enrollment through various charts. Over the last several years, some institutions have grown and others have experienced enrollment contractions.

The next 15 years will see a decline in the number of high school graduates, which will contribute to lower higher education enrollment. The non-enrollment rate for degree-granting programs has also increased in the last five years. In 2022, 25% of high school graduates chose not to enroll in college. Many of the policies and strategies currently in place assume that there would be continued enrollment increases.

Mr. Curt stated that we need to address the competition between Virginia students. He said that the concern is that a handful of institutions are causing the enrollment to drop at other institutions. He said would like to gather information from high school students to find out how they are making their post-secondary decisions. Ms. Oldham asked about students who choose to leave the state for college and how much information we have on those students.

Mr. Ampy asked President Danilowicz to comment on enrollment decreases. Dr. Danilowicz urged Council to look beyond the traditional freshman student profile and embrace adult learners and credential seekers when looking at enrollment numbers and growth potential.

Ms. Salmon reviewed factors that high school students use when deciding where to go to college and noted that students consider a mix of facts and feelings in their decision-making process.

Council discussed some of the following policy considerations identified by the workgroup:

- Right-size institutions to align with their current and projected enrollment.
- Consider additional, relevant program offerings that reduce time-to-degree, are in-demand or for which demand is growing.
- Re-evaluate policies on institutional growth and size.
- Target-fund selected institutions so that they can lower tuition.
- Establish an enrollment monitoring unit.
- Authorize selected institutions to enroll more out-of-state students.
- Authorize institutions to charge out-of-state students less than 100% of cost.
- Lower tuition/increase financial aid.
- Expand outreach to non-traditional audiences.
- Develop full-scale college marketing campaign.
- Survey high school students regarding their plans after graduation and, if they don't intend to pursue continuing education, ask why.

Council members stressed that Council needs to establish goals that will guide the policy decisions.

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEES

Report from Academic Affairs Committee

The actions items voted on by the committee and moved to the full Council where they were unanimously approved include the following:

Recommend the approval on the following:

1. AA of Fine Arts in Music, Northern Virginia Community College. Ms. Harker seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.
2. Master of Education, University of Virginia's College at Wise. Ms. Webb seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.
3. Doctoral of Education program at James Madison University. The committee agreed to continue a full review continuing the approval process with a recommendation that JMU provide further labor market data. The committee asks that staff bring it back for approval at a later meeting.
4. Approval of organizational change at Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Population Health. Required SCHEV's approval before moving on to the accreditation process. Committee approved and moved motions forward for full Council approval. The four resolutions were considered en bloc, seconded by Ms. Harker and approved unanimously.

The committee reviewed program announcements from public institutions. The 17 announcements are provided in the agenda book, 7 undergraduate programs and 10 graduate programs.

Ms. Freeman shared a presentation on the private postsecondary school closure process.

Report from the Resources & Planning Committee

Ms. Harker highlighted the following from the Resources and Planning committee:

The committee received an update on higher education funding from the 2023 General Assembly. This was not a major update as the General Assembly has yet to release the 2023 budget. SCHEV staff will provide an update when the budget is released.

The committee reviewed the New Economy Workforce Credential Grant Program (WCG) FY22 annual report. The grants are offered by the community colleges and the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center to fund noncredit workforce training that leads to credentials that are in high demand.

Mr. Allison reviewed the six-year plan schedule and noted that the Secretary's office issued an RFP to bring in outside consultation to enhance the six-year plan process.

Dr. Edwards shared the major projects impacting the Resources and Planning committee for FY2023. He discussed the routine projects including budget and policy recommendations, institutional performance standards, enrollment estimates and degree projections. Other anticipated projects of discussion were related to financial aid Pell initiative, domicile guidelines, simplifying financial aid and federal FAFSA simplification.

RECEIPT OF ITEMS DELEGATED TO STAFF

Mr. Blake confirmed no new items were delegated to staff.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Ampy announced that he assigned Mr. Broderick and Dr. Schexnider to speak with other Council members to determine leadership interest for FY 2024. Mr. Broderick and Dr. Schexnider will contact each Council member then put forth names for consideration for Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary.

RECEIPT OF PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m. with a motion by Dr. Schexnider and seconded by Ms. Harker.

Ken Ampy
Council Chair

Kristin Whelan
SCHEV Staff