

**STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA  
RESOURCES AND PLANNING COMMITTEE  
March 20, 2023**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

Ms. Harker called the meeting to order at 2:07 in Kyle Hall Room 248 at Radford University. Committee members present: Victoria Harker, Katharine Webb, Walter Curt and Jennie O'Holleran. Thaddeus Holloman attended virtually. Mr. Curt was absent for a portion of the meeting during which he participated in the meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee before returning.

The following Committee member was absent: John Broderick

Staff members present: Tom Allison, Lee Andes, Peter Blake, Alan Edwards, Grace Covello Khattar, Emily Salmon and Bob Spieldenner

Others present: Ramona Taylor (Office of the Attorney General) and Jason Powell (Office of the Secretary of Education)

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

On a motion by Ms. Webb, seconded by Ms. O' Holleran, the minutes from the January 10, 2023, Resources and Planning Committee meeting were approved unanimously.

**DISCUSSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING FROM THE 2023 GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

The committee discussed an update from Dr. Edwards on the status of the state budget following the 2023 General Assembly session. He reminded that the legislature adopted only a "skinny budget" during the regular "short session," and that Governor Youngkin had not yet indicated whether he would call for a Special Session. He noted media reports that the chairs of the legislative money committees might be meeting as soon as the following day, and that the Finance Secretariat's revenue report for February showed that state revenues for that month came in above projections.

**DISCUSSION OF THE FY 2022 NEW ECONOMY WORKFORCE CREDENTIAL GRANT ANNUAL REPORT**

The committee discussed FY 2022 information provided by Mr. Allison regarding the New Economy Workforce Credential Grant (WCG) program. He reminded that the program deploys a pay-for-performance methodology whereby grants are offered to students by community colleges and the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center to fund noncredit workforce training that leads to an industry-based credential in a high-

demand field. (The Virginia Community College System has rebranded the program as “Fast Forward.”)

The program’s annual report indicates that WCG completion rates and credentialing rates remained relatively stable in FY 2022. Since inception of the program, for-credit enrollment declined by 4%. Ms. Harker inquired about this decline, asking whether the 4% drop was a result of an increase in noncredit programming. Mr. Allison responded that noncredit programming is not taking a larger slice of the pie of for-credit students.

Mr. Holloman pointed to the small number of individuals in computer science related programs. Mr. Allison noted that CompTIA A+ is a facet of the technology field overall. Ms. Webb inquired about the efforts of the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulations (DPOR) to eliminate some certification and/or licensure requirements and whether such efforts have been explored for any of the nursing fields. Mr. Allison promised to look further into the workforce credential program for nursing related fields and the licensure requirements of DPOR.

In response to information from the annual report about labor-market supply and demand, and about WCG-participant demographics, Ms. Harker inquired about the enrollment make-up of other states that offer similar programs. Mr. Allison noted that other states do not yet make public student-level records or data.

Ms. O’Holleran noted the Commonwealth’s target of a 70% rate of overall educational attainment, of which 10% is targeted to come from non-degree certificates and other credentials of value and inquired about any WCG-related progress in advancing beyond the prior 7% rate. Mr. Allison walked through the methodology and limitations of how enrollment is calculated.

Mr. Allison mentioned relevant budget amendments that had been proposed during the legislative session. He also mentioned staff modeling of various scenarios regarding FY 2024 end-of-year WCG balances, given possible reimbursement-cap issues for some credential tracks (e.g., Commercial Driver’s License). He promised to provide, following final decisions on amendments to the FY 2023 and FY 2024 budgets, additional information on the modeling scenarios for the FY 2024 end-of-year balances and the reimbursement-cap issue.

Ms. Harker instructed staff to include on the agenda of the committee’s May meeting a WCG update relative to any decisions on pertinent amendments to the state budget.

## **DISCUSSION SIX-YEAR PLAN PROCESS**

The committee was reminded of the statutory process by which public institutions develop and submit for state review six-year operating plans, which occurs in odd-numbered years and will be beginning soon. Concurrently and relatedly, the institutions also develop their degree-award projections and enrollment projections, which Council reviews and approves or disapproves.

The SCHEV director is one of six designated state reviewers, deemed collectively as the Op-Six group, of institutions' draft plans, and SCHEV staff are staff to the Op-Six group. Institutions develop their plans using two templates, an Excel workbook and a narrative document, developed by Op-Six and provided by SCHEV. Following institutions' submission of their draft plans, Op-Six reviews them, meets individually with leaders from each institution to discuss them and then provides written feedback – general and institution-specific – on them. Institutions then consider this feedback, make decisions regarding revisions to their plans and secure approval from their governing boards of the final versions of their plans, which are then posted on the SCHEV website.

Mr. Allison advised that in February the Secretaries of Education and of Finance (both members of Op-Six) had issued an emergency RFP seeking a consultant to assist with the 2023 six-year-plan process. He noted that SCHEV staff had developed draft templates for the plans, as required in statute, and that staff anticipated that these templates would serve as the starting point for the consultant.

Ms. Harker asked what additional information institutions would be required to include in their six-year plans. Mr. Allison pointed to enhancement of the enrollment management and workforce projections.

Speaking on behalf of the Education Secretariat, Mr. Powell noted that the proposal-review team was still working to award the contract, and that the consultancy would be a partnership between the Secretaries' offices, SCHEV, the Virginia Office of Education Economics (VOEE) and the consultant. He said that one task for the consultant will be to create a common use of enrollment forecasts across all institutions.

Mr. Holloman inquired about the nature of the consultancy relative to data collection. Mr. Powell indicated that the goal of the RFP is to enhance the process rather than replace or significantly overhaul it. Ms. Webb inquired about the use of the consultancy and its results or policy recommendations for the 2024 legislative session. Mr. Allison advised that, while the goal of the RFP's Phase II is to inform and contribute to policy recommendations for 2024, final decisions regarding such matters would be determined by the scope of work negotiated with the selected consultant. Ms. O'Holleran noted that she perceived a strong emphasis on enrollment matters, and she asked whether degree completion would still be a focus of the six-year plans. Mr. Powell indicated that completion would remain a priority.

## **DISCUSSION OF MAJOR PROJECTS IMPACTING RESOURCES AND PLANNING IN 2023**

Members discussed information provided by Dr. Edwards regarding projects that will come before the committee in 2023 for review, if not action. The major project will be the development and approval of budget and policy recommendations for the 2024 legislative session. Another major project will be action on the enrollment projections and degree estimates submitted by the public institutions.

Mr. Holloman inquired about and offered suggestions regarding the Pell initiative, which was noted as one of several financial-aid-related projects in the coming year. Mr. Andes

responded and promised to report to the committee on the initiative and related matters at future meetings.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Mr. Harker motioned to adjourn the meeting at 3:12, seconded by Ms. Webb and approved by the committee.

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Victoria Harker  
Committee Chair

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Grace Covello Khattar  
SCHEV Staff