

**STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA  
COUNCIL MEETING  
MARCH 19, 2024**

**MINUTES**

Mr. Ampy called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. in room 1201 of Merten Hall at George Mason University.

Council members present: Ken Ampy, Walter Curt, Victoria Harker, Jason El Koubi, Delceno Miles, Cheryl Oldham, John Jumper, Jennie O'Holleran and Douglas Straley.

Council members absent: John Broderick, Scott Fleming, William Harvey and Thaddeus Holloman.

Staff members present: Tom Allison, Lee Andes, Joe DeFilippo, Alan Edwards, Jodi Fisler, Grace Khattar, Anne Lowe, Tod Massa, Kirstin Pantazis, Paula Robinson, Emily Salmon, Juanita Sherman and Yan Zheng.

Members of the Student Advisory Committee present: Elijah Dale, James Madison University; Janare Davis, Norfolk State University; Alexander Edrid, Virginia Tech; Destinee Jackson, Norfolk State; Gifty Kwofie, Radford University; Neil Palumbo, George Mason University; Alexandra Reynolds, Reynolds Community College; Abigail Ridpath, Radford; Lane Robertson, Virginia Tech; Ashley Weldy, Central Virginia Community College; Owen Williams, William & Mary; and Paul Wyche, George Mason.

Notable guests: Nicholas Kent, Deputy Secretary of Education; and David Drummey, Senior Assistant Attorney General.

Mr. Ampy thanked the administrators, faculty, staff and students of George Mason University for their hospitality and recapped the events of the prior evening.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

On a motion by Mr. Ampy, seconded by Ms. Miles, the Minutes of the January 29, 2024, Search Committee meeting were approved unanimously. Action on the Minutes of the January 9, 2024, Council meeting was deferred until the May meeting.

**REMARKS FROM GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT, GREGORY WASHINGTON**

Mr. Ampy introduced President Gregory Washington, who spoke from a presentation entitled, "Creating the Next Great University."

Dr. Washington shared that in the last year, George Mason University has enjoyed its most successful year in history and experienced its greatest rise in national rankings. GMU has the largest enrollment of Virginia's public four-year institutions and is top ranked for innovation and social mobility. Dr. Washington shared the Mason fact pack from the 2023 six-year-planning process.

He highlighted the diversity of GMU and pointed out that it looks different than the Virginia population currently but very much like how the state population will look in the future. GMU enrollment growth has been consistent and managed by design. The incoming class of 2023 was the most academically gifted and the most diverse in the university's history.

Seventy-three percent of GMU graduates reside in Virginia. Twenty-nine percent of out-of-state GMU graduates stay in Virginia after graduation. Dr. Washington discussed how GMU is funded and how the funds are allocated. He noted that GMU's cost of attendance has risen only \$400 since 2018. Expenditures per student are growing at a rate lower than inflation, and the number of employees per student FTE has decreased. Salaries however are below market, and GMU must invest in raising these salaries.

Dr. Washington concluded by asking for support from Council and the Commonwealth. Going forward, GMU needs advocacy and data from SCHEV. It also needs SCHEV's expertise, engagement and its operational, leadership and financial resources.

Dr. Washington took questions from the Council members, including questions about admission and yield rates and about staff salaries.

Ms. Harker asked how GMU manages to keep so many students in the state after graduation. He mentioned internships, partnerships with business, location and a committed faculty and staff.

Ms. Miles requested the one point that Council should take away from the discussion. Dr. Washington suggested that the state needs to develop a standard for funding institutions where resources follow the student, not the institution.

Ms. O'Holleran asked about the small achievement gaps in the diverse student body. Dr. Washington said GMU knows what it takes for a student to be successful – the mechanisms just need to be put in place. In response to a question from General Jumper, Dr. Washington described the pre-college programs at GMU.

Mr. Ampy thanked Dr. Washington and congratulated him on the GMU graduation rates and post-graduation retention rates.

## **CONVERSATION WITH STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE: CRITICAL ISSUES IMPACTING STUDENTS**

Mr. Allison introduced 12 members and officers of the Student Advisory Committee. The students reported on the four SAC subcommittees - campus safety; mental health; college affordability; and diversity, equity and inclusion.

### **Campus Safety subcommittee**

Committee Chair, Destinee Jackson, described some of the recent incidents on campuses across the state. She highlighted the crime rates in Norfolk as a particular concern. The subcommittee met with Delegate Torian in January to discuss HB713, which addresses several of the committee's concerns. She highlighted some campus-safety student initiatives including advocating for parking closer to student residences

and student-run campus patrols. Ms. Jackson also pointed out the connections between mental health and campus safety.

#### Mental Health subcommittee

Presenting on behalf of the subcommittee, Ashley Weldy highlighted national data that show a steady decline in students' reported mental health. The subcommittee's work highlighted several resources currently available to students, including Level Up; SCHEV's mental-health workforce pilot program; and the Youngkin administration's Right Help, Right Now program. SAC members also discussed barriers to accessing mental health resources including stigma, limited resources and lack of marketing of available resources. The SAC recommended an analysis of all resources to determine which are working and to identify gaps in care.

#### College Affordability subcommittee

Owen Williams shared the subcommittee's recommendations for college affordability. They called for a program that would provide emergency funding to students regardless of their financial-aid eligibility. They also recommended that FAFSA changes be communicated regularly in-person and virtually. The students suggested that the state's current assistance programs are insufficient. They observed that state aid program's residency requirements negatively impact enrolled and potential out-of-state students. The subcommittee also suggested grants for travel to education-related conferences.

#### DEI subcommittee

Paul Wyche explained that proper DEI is not a set of guidelines that provide an unfair advantage; rather, it provides equal access to opportunities. On behalf of the subcommittee, he highlighted the importance of representation among faculty and staff, and he observed that students intend to protect DEI policies already in place.

SAC representatives responded to questions from Council.

Mr. Curt asked whether any SAC members were STEM majors; some responded affirmatively. He also questioned why the SAC did not explore academic achievement.

Ms. Miles asked whether the Committee had engaged with public safety officials in their campus safety discussions. She suggested that outside partnerships can provide best practices and funding resources. Ms. Miles also asked about partnerships for the other priorities the students mentioned.

General Jumper asked about getting around the barriers created by the controversies surrounding DEI and observed that after graduation students will work with many different people in their careers.

Mr. El Koubi asked whether DEI is a controversial issue among college-aged people.

### **REPORT FROM THE INTERIM AGENCY DIRECTOR**

For expediency, Dr. Edwards refrained from talking over the items in his written report. Rather, he directed members to a handout in their folders regarding the Virginia 250 Commission and its celebrations of the American Revolution and the country's 250<sup>th</sup>

birthday in 2026. The agency supports the Education Secretariat's efforts to promote Virginia250 and its connections to Council's priority initiative of civic engagement.

Dr. Edwards also updated Council on efforts to procure a survey of high school seniors regarding their plans after graduation. He reported that research units at Old Dominion University had been contracted and that workplan should yield results in time for Council's July meeting.

## **DISCUSSION OF 2024 GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND NEW SCHEV DUTIES**

Dr. Khattar provided an update on the legislative session, including a hand-out listing the higher-education bills passed by the 2024 General Assembly. She stressed that the list, as well as the bills and budget amendments listed in the new-duties hand-out, would not be final until the Governor had acted on each piece of legislation. Dr. Khattar noted that the hand-outs were posted on the SCHEV website, and from them she highlighted:

### Higher-education-related legislation:

HB713 – campus safety and emergency preparedness.

HB1365 – release of student transcripts.

SB506 – public institutions employing legal counsel.

### SCHEV-related legislation:

HB566 – requiring a former CEO of a Virginia HBCU on SCHEV Council.

HB580/SB411 – task force on transparency in publicly-funded animal testing facilities.

HB827 – survey on food insecurity on campus report.

HB1083 – report on the administration of the Virginia Longitudinal Data System and the Virginia Workforce Data Trust.

SB21/HB509 – policies for establishing eligibility for disability accommodations.

## **DISCUSSION OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 30: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EDUCATION**

Ms. Salmon provided an overview of *Executive Order 30*, which Governor Youngkin issued in January to focus attention on the use of artificial intelligence in education. She advised that SCHEV is assigned roles in the order and that the agency was beginning discussions with stakeholders regarding learning and working with AI tools.

She advised that *EO 30* lays out guidelines for safe use of AI. It assigns responsibilities to SCHEV and the Department of Education, such as creating: advisory resources; processes for approving AI use in educational settings; and toolkits for governing boards, families and instructors.

Staff has begun consulting experts in AI and contemplating a SCHEV-coordinated task force to include AI leaders in policy, industry and education. Ms. Salmon asked Council members for advice on relevant individuals and organizations to contact.

Ms. Oldham urged caution against regulating ourselves out of a useful tool. She advised that the state should help stakeholders learn to use AI constructively. She offered to provide contacts and suggested that staff look to larger tech companies for guidance.

General Jumper advised avoidance of giving in to the commoditization of experts. He urged maintaining a focus on students.

Ms. Salmon said that staff would provide updates at future meetings.

### **UPDATE ON A COUNCIL PRIORITY INITIATIVE: CIVIC EDUCATION IN VIRGINIA**

Dr. Fisler introduced Dr. Chapman Rackaway, Professor and Chair of Political Science at Radford University, who discussed the Civic Incomes Project.

Dr. Rackaway said he developed the project to address the varying levels of civic knowledge and skills that students possess upon entering the university setting. The assessment seeks to answer with what skill level a student enters college and how to better align programs with skill levels. The results empower educators to create more intentional programming, inform curriculum development and track student skill level.

Students take an assessment in their UNIV 101 seminar class to determine their civics knowledge and skill set; they take a follow up survey at the end of their sophomore year; and finally another follow up survey at graduation. These assessments and follow ups provide a measurable assessment of student learning and can be used to craft curriculum and other civic activities on campus. Dr. Rackaway stated that these assessments could be adopted for other skills in math, writing and critical thinking.

After his presentation, Dr. Rackaway answered questions from Council.

Mr. Curt asked whether the goal is to create student activists. Dr. Rackaway stressed that the purpose is to teach students how to be citizens and is not partisan.

General Jumper asked how such efforts can be beneficial to the preparation of students before they enter higher education. He suggested expansion to include high school and middle school civics educators.

Ms. Oldham asked whether the assessment is more about engagement or prior knowledge. Dr. Rackaway said the assessment is about both and directed members to his [website](#) for further information.

In response to questions from Ms. Miles on whether the project is collaborative and has partnerships, Dr. Rackaway replied that, while the assessment is only at Radford, other civic-engagement groups including many community members will benefit.

### **UPDATE ON THE ROLLOUT OF THE NEW FAFSA**

Mr. Andes updated Council members on the US Department of Education's rollout of the new FAFSA, noting that it had been very challenging for students and those who work in student aid.

Waitlists, blackout times and other glitches have prevented many students from completing the FAFSA. Even in March, some are still struggling with completing it. The

release of Student Aid Information (SAI) to institutions continues to be delayed and has resulted in delayed award grants and is greatly reducing students' decision timelines. Hope exists for improvement next year, but this year portends that fewer students will complete the form, which will impact enrollment. In Virginia, FAFSA completions in early March were 23.5% fewer than the past year. Both fortunately and unfortunately, Virginia's decline in completions, while high, was the smallest in the country.

Members inquired whether the FAFSA-completion decline is a result of policy changes. Mr. Andes believes it results more from technology and communication issues.

## **REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEES**

### *Report from the Academic Affairs Committee*

Ms. Oldham suggested that Council vote on the Committee's seven program proposals as one action. Members asked Dr. Defilippo about the approval process and timeline, then considered the following resolutions as a block:

**BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia grants approval to James Madison University to initiate a Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science (B.A./B.S.) degree program in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CIP code: 51.0201), effective fall 2024.**

**BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia grants approval to James Madison University to initiate a Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science (B.A./B.S.) degree program in Media Arts and Design (CIP code: 09.9999), effective fall 2024.**

**BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia grants approval to Old Dominion University to initiate a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree program in Data Science (CIP code: 30.7001), effective fall 2024.**

**BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia grants approval to Virginia Commonwealth University to initiate a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree program in Computer Science (CIP: 11.0701), effective fall 2024.**

**BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia grants approval to Virginia Commonwealth University to initiate a Master of Science degree program in Data Science (CIP Code: 30.7001), effective fall 2024.**

**BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia grants approval to Virginia State University to initiate a Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) degree program in Business Administration (CIP code: 52.0201), effective fall 2024.**

**BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia grants approval to Virginia State University to initiate a Master of Science (M.S.) degree program in Data Analytics (CIP code: 30.7101), effective fall 2024.**

On a motion from Ms. Oldham and seconded by Ms. Miles, the seven resolutions were approved unanimously as a block.

Ms. Oldham reported that the Committee also heard from Dr. DeFilippo and institutional representatives on eight proposed education-licensure degree programs in shortage areas, which were presented in support of the goals of the statewide strategic plan for higher education and Governor Youngkin’s higher education objectives and key results. This initiative will expand public institutions’ capacity to produce licensed education professionals via direct pathways.

The Academic Affairs Committee presented the following resolution for consideration:

**BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia grants approval to the four institutions listed below to implement the specified degree programs in education licensure shortage areas, effective fall 2024, except the UVA MEd in Reading Education, which will be initiated effective summer 2024.**

Institution	Degree	Program Name	CIP
GMU	Bachelor of Science in Education (BSEd)	Secondary Education	13.1205
GMU	Master of Education (MEd)	Inclusive Early Childhood Education	13.1210
GMU	Master of Education (MEd)	Literacy Education	13.1315
NSU	Bachelor of Science (BS)	Middle Education	13.1203
NSU	Master of Arts (MA)	Counseling Education	13.1101
ODU	Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT)	Elementary Education	13.1202
ODU	Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT)	Secondary Education	13.1205
UVA	Master of Education (MEd)	Reading Education	13.1315

The resolution was approved unanimously on a motion by Mr. Ampy and a second by Ms. Miles.

Ms. Oldham reported that the Committee reviewed 12 announcements for degree programs that public institutions intend to propose for Council consideration and action within the next year. Program announcements are a feature of the program-approval policy intended to alert the Committee (and the other public institutions) of potential, new degree programs in advance and to afford opportunity to make information requests and/or to pose questions, the answers to which can be incorporated into the final proposals. The intent also is to provide opportunity for the institutions to comment on issues of duplication or opportunities for collaboration. The 12 announcements fell into two major categories – health and data science; and data analytics. Dr. DeFilippo said he expected such fields to remain popular.

Ms. Oldham reported that the Committee also heard from Ms. Kathleen Kincheloe on the work of the Academic Affairs section’s Private Postsecondary Education (PPE) unit, which coordinates the certification-to-operate process. The PPE unit regulates the Virginia operations of more than 270 postsecondary entities, the majority of which require annual recertification. PPE is self-supporting; it operates from the non-general fund dollars that it generates through certification and recertification fees.

Ms. Oldham reported that the Committee concluded its meeting with an update from Dr. Smith on Transfer Virginia. The Commonwealth's percentage of students who complete the baccalaureate after starting at a two-year institution is the fifth highest in the nation. The Transfer VA initiative anticipates continued increase in the success of transfer students.

*Report from the Resources and Planning Committee*

Ms. O'Holleran reported that the Committee discussed three items and received updates on two others.

She said the first discussion topic was proposed funding for higher education from the 2024 legislative session. Dr. Khattar and Dr. Zheng reviewed the proposals in the Governor's introduced budget and the General Assembly's conference report. The presentation covered four categories: (i) systemwide higher education funding; (ii) institution-specific initiatives; (iii) SCHEV-specific budget items; and (iv) new or revised language that impacts SCHEV or higher education.

She said the Committee discussed several budget items, including the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Program (VMSDEP), campus safety and financial aid. A reconvene session of the legislature is scheduled for April 17, and staff will report back on the approved state budget at the next appropriate Council meeting.

Ms. O'Holleran reported the second discussion item was how Council's budget and policy recommendations aligned with the introduced budget and the conference budget. Twelve of the 15 items in Council's recommendations appeared in the budget process during the 2024 session.

The Committee's third discussion item had been the annual report of the New Economy Workforce Credential Grant (WCG) program, which SCHEV administers. Staff had summarized key findings from the report including data on enrollment, completion, and certifications and costs; FY 2023 enrollments in the WCG were the highest ever.

Ms. O'Holleran reported the R&P Committee's first update item focused on major projects impacting the Committee in 2024, including certification of public institutions' satisfaction of the full-cost requirement for out-of-state students, budget and policy recommendations and other projects.

She reported that the Committee's final item had been an update on projects related to members' requests to staff, including proposed changes to the process for the institutional performance standards as well as enrollment projections and estimates. Staff also had provided updates on ongoing projects such as a survey of high school seniors, financial aid reform and incentives for transfer students. Ms. O'Holleran indicated that, based on members' counsel to staff on steps they would like to see next, staff would develop items for future Committee agendas.

Gen. Jumper suggested that Council find a mechanism to advocate for its priorities, specifically campus security. Ms. Harker agreed and voiced support for leaning on the types of funding available historically. Mr. El Koubi suggested that Council explore connections between students' financial strains and mental health. Gen. Jumper



suggested receiving advice from the Education Secretariat. Mr. Curt suggested submitting op-eds to newspapers.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

At approximately 12:20 p.m., Mr. Ampy motioned for Council to enter closed session by moving that, pursuant to *Virginia Code* § 2.2-3711 (A)(1) and § 2.2-3711 (A)(8), the State Council for Higher Education of Virginia convene a closed meeting for the purposes of the discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; and for consultation with legal counsel regarding legal matters in connection with the first matters. After a unanimous roll-call vote, members convened in a closed session.

Upon reconvening in the public meeting at 12:40 p.m., Mr. Ampy stated the following:

“We convened today in a Closed Meeting pursuant to a recorded vote on the motion above and in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act*, Title 2.2-3711 of the *Code of Virginia*, which requires Council to certify that, to the best of each member's knowledge: (i) only public business matters lawfully exempt from open meeting requirements under this chapter; and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered. Any member who believes there was a departure from these requirements shall so state prior to the vote, indicating the substance of the departure that, in his or her judgment, has taken place. The statement of the departure will be recorded in the Minutes.”

A unanimous roll call vote certified the close session's adherence to the statute and the motion; no member voiced a statement of departure to record.

### **RECEIPT OF ITEMS DESIGNATED TO STAFF**

Dr. Edwards pointed members to the routine items in the materials for which Council had delegated approval authority to staff. (A review of these items is appended to these Minutes.)

### **OLD BUSINESS**

No old business was voiced.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Ampy announced his formation of a Nominating Committee, consisting of Ms. Harker and Mr. Holloman, to develop and present a slate of nominees to serve as Council officers in 2024-25. The nominees will be presented at Council's May meeting.

### **RECEIPT OF PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment had been requested, and none was provided spontaneously.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Mr. Ampy adjourned the meeting at 12:20 p.m.

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Ken Ampy  
Council Chair

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SCHEV Staff

Items Delegated to Director/Staff [January-March 2024]

Pursuant to the *Code of Virginia*, § 23.1-203 and Council’s “Policies and Procedures for Program Approval and Changes,” the following items approved/not approved as delegated to staff:

**Academic Program Actions**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Degree/Program/CIP</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
Brightpoint Community College	<b>Facilitated Staff Approval:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Associate of Applied Science degree program (AAS) in Radiologic Technology (51.0911)</li></ul>	Fall 2024
George Mason University	<b>Graduate Certificate Programs Approved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Human Capital and Human Resource Management (52.1001)</li><li>• Responsible Artificial Intelligence (30.3101)</li></ul>	Fall 2024
J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College	<b>Facilitated Staff Approval:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Associate of Applied Science degree program (AAS) in Surgical Technology (51.0909)</li></ul>	Fall 2024
Radford University	<b>Graduate Certificate Program Approved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clinical Research (51.0719)</li></ul>	Fall 2024
The College of William and Mary in Virginia	<b>Facilitated Staff Approval:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Master of Legal Studies (MLS) degree program in Law (22.9999)</li></ul>	Fall 2024

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Degree/Program/CIP</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
University of Virginia	<b>Graduate Certificate Program Approved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Education (13.1315)</li> </ul>	Summer 2024
Virginia Commonwealth University	<b>Graduate Certificate Programs Approved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Welfare (44.0702)</li> <li>• Sustainability, Health, and Healthcare (51.2211)</li> </ul>	Fall 2024
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	<b>Graduate Certificate Program Approved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural and Applied Economics (01.0103)</li> </ul>	Spring 2024

Pursuant to the *Code of Virginia*, § 23.1-203 and Council’s “Policies and Procedures for Program Approval and Changes,” the following items approved and reported:

#### **Programs Discontinued**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Degree/Program/CIP</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
James Madison University	<b>Program Discontinuance Approved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor of Science (BS) degree program in Community Health Education (51.1504) [Council Approval Date: 07/18/1977]</li> </ul>	Summer 2024
Radford University	<b>Program Discontinuances Approved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree program in Occupational Therapy Assistant (51.0803) [Council Approval Date: 07/01/2019]</li> <li>• Associate of Science (AS) degree program in Physical Therapy Assistant (51.0806) [Council Approval Date: 07/01/2019]</li> </ul>	Summer 2024
The College of William and Mary in Virginia	<b>Program Discontinuance Approved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree program in German (16.0501) [Council Approval Date: BCHE]</li> </ul>	Spring 2024

Pursuant to the *Code of Virginia*, § 23.1-203 and Council’s “Policies and Procedures for Internal and Off-Campus Organizational Changes,” the following items approved as delegated to staff:

**Internal and Off-Campus Organizational Changes**

Institution	Change/Site	Effective Date
Radford University	Rename the Department of Accounting, Finance, and Business Law to the <b>Department of Accounting, Finance, and Information Systems</b> . Radford indicates that the renaming will “provide a more accurate description of the department’s overall academic focus and program offerings.”	March 15, 2024
Radford University	<u>Correction</u> : Rename the School of Nursing to the <b>College of Nursing</b> . Radford indicates that the rename will “ensure the unit utilizes the same nomenclature as the other independent academic units at the university.”	January 15, 2024

Pursuant to the *Code of Virginia*, § 23.1-213 to 23.1-230 and 8VAC-40-31-90 of the *Virginia Administrative Code*, the following item approved as delegated to staff:

**Postsecondary, Non-Degree Institutions Certified to Operate in the Commonwealth of Virginia**

Institution	Location	Effective Date
Phlebotomy Training Specialists	Alexandria, VA	December 21, 2023