

**Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center
Board of Trustees
Minutes
December 11, 2008**

Board Members/Designees Present: Senator Phillip Puckett, Delegate Bill Carrico, Billy Cannaday (UVA), Nancy Cooley (ODU), Kevin Crutchfield, Rodd Hall (VT), Dan LaVista (SCHEV), Sean McMurray, Terry Mullins, David Prior (UVA Wise), Rosalind Reichard (Emory & Henry), Chris Robinson, Ellen Taylor (Radford), David Wilkin (VHCC).

Board Members/Designees Absent: Senator William Wampler, Delegate Joe Johnson, Delegate Terry Kilgore, Delegate Dave Nutter, Susie Ellis, Marcia Gilliam (Virginia Community College System), Rex McCarty, Michael Puglisi (VI), Lorraine Turner.

Others Present: Rachel Fowlkes, Joyce Brooks, Gerald Blankenship, Connie Estep, Christine Fields, Kathy Hietala, George Hiller, Jacob King, Barry Logan, Penny McCallum, Jeremy Mitchell, Mary Quillen, Eddie Sproles, Kim Stewart, Sonia Vanhook, Jeff Webb, Courtney Whitt, Janet Williams, Alicia Young, Doug Viers, Todd Hansen, Dustin Nelson.

Call to Order

Senator Puckett welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for the June 5, 2008 meeting were approved as written; motion by Terry Mullins, seconded by Sean McMurray.

Capital Project Report

Todd Hansen, Construction Manager, J. A. Fielden, updated the Board on the capital project. Mr. Hansen reported that, despite inclement weather over the past few months, the expansion project is on schedule. He said that, although they had fallen behind on a few items, they were able to adjust the schedule to compensate for lost time. The project is on budget, and there are no cost overruns to date. There have been some change

orders with respect to technology equipment and installation that will make it more easily accessible to technicians, and those have just been approved. Mr. Hansen said that the slab is currently scheduled to be poured on December 22; the structural steel is ready to be set and will probably be going into place the first week of January; block work on the building's exterior should be finished by December 23. He estimated that the project is approximately 2-3 weeks ahead of schedule, and should be complete by the end of May.

Dr. Wilkin asked if there is a timetable for the clean energy research and development center, and Dr. Fowlkes responded that the search for an architect will be conducted in the spring, and a bid for construction issued in late spring or early summer, in hopes of getting the project underway when the weather breaks in late spring of 2010.

Energy Savings Contract

Eddie Sproles, Facility Manager, reported on the Energy Savings Contract, or ESCO, the Center has entered into with Trane and Company. Mr. Sproles explained that this performance contract will give the Center the ability to upgrade facilities and equipment and, thereby, reduce operating costs, all without any capital investment at the outset; the contract cost is paid by the future energy savings. Trane, an energy savings contractor, will evaluate the facility, make recommendations and implement changes designed to produce significant monetary savings, the amount of which will be determined by Trane and guaranteed by the contract. The resulting savings will be used to repay the low-interest loan.

Mr. Sproles listed three important reasons for entering into a performance contract:

- Energy conservation;
- Needed facility equipment upgrades; and
- Compliance with the Governor's Executive Order 48.

Upgrades made throughout the facility include: Heating, ventilation, air conditioning, variable speeds on massive motors that draw high current, a cooling tower bypass, and shutoff valves on HVAC units (about 75 of which are located above the ceiling throughout the facility); the Johnson Control System was upgraded to facilitate diagnosis of equipment problems; thereby saving downtime. Duct work in the Grand Hall and throughout the facility was reworked to improve air quality in the building.

A massive energy savings is expected to be realized from the replacement of two huge 50hp motors that ran alternately 24 hours each day, 365 days each year, at the full rpm of over 50 amps, with variable speed drives which can be set at variable hertz to slow the motors down as needed. Rather than running at full capacity 24/365, it runs at half capacity or not all, depending on the need for heating or cooling.

The cooling tower bypass will also produce significant savings. Mr. Sproles said that the cooling tower also ran constantly prior to the upgrades, with a 50hp motor cutting on and off continually. Now on variable speed drives, it is no longer even needed during the winter months. Additionally, with the bypass, the heat from the cooling tower is returned to the facility and regenerated as needed.

With the Johnson Control Systems upgrade, motors that previously ran at 60Hz now run at 28.5Hz at the most on variable-speed drives—barely over half of the previous speed.

Air ducts in the Grand Hall and several larger rooms in the building have been redesigned. Previously, they brought in 100% fresh air from the outside. Mr. Sproles said that was a massive energy killer during the wintertime, since the boilers had to heat the outside air up to the desired temperature. With the addition of COP sensors and the reworked duct work, more air is circulated, the air quality is better, boilers run less and use less gas, creating a significant energy savings.

Major savings will also be realized from lighting upgrades. Lighting has been retrofitted for T8 fluorescents. Mr. Sproles said that the old, large T12 fluorescent tubes used in the past drew 18-20 amps per light fixture, compared to the T8s at 7-8 amps per fixture. The smaller lights provide better illumination, as well as another major energy savings. Compact fluorescents replaced 600- and 350-watt lights in each of the fixtures in the Grand Hall. Redesigned lighting now gives Center staff the ability to dim the lights in any section of the Grand Hall. Theatrical lights are now fully automated, whereas, in the past they had to be manually adjusted. This upgrade resulted in a savings in labor and energy, as well as reducing the possibility of injuries.

Water conservation measures have also been implemented, including the installation of low-flow fixtures.

Mr. Sproles said an overall estimated savings of 873,533 kilowatts—or \$49,298—annually is guaranteed. If the Center follows Trane’s advice and does not realize the guaranteed savings, Trane pays the Center. Annual savings under the performance contract will be used over a 15-year period to repay the loan for upgrades to the facility. He added that the Center should actually realize a greater savings than that calculated for the purposes of the contract, as energy costs have continued to rise since it was entered into.

Financial Report

Christine Fields, Budget Director, gave the Financial Report. Due to the current state of the economy, the Center was required to submit potential plans reducing its budget by 5%, 10% and 15%. Without being certain which plan would have to be implemented, the Center’s Management Team planned for the 15% cut with 3 major goals in mind:

1. Maintaining the facility in its current condition, or improving it, as the first impression of customers is critical.
2. Maintaining cutting-edge technology, another factor that keeps customers coming back.
3. Maintaining current staffing levels and avoiding implementing layoffs.

The Center did receive a 10% budget cut. Ms. Fields presented the reduced budget, highlighting the following:

Revenue Budget:

- 10% cut in the General Fund in the amount of \$215,499.
- Total revenues under the revised budget are \$2.7 million for the year.
- No changes to Non-General Funds.

Operating Budget – Personal Services

- 13% reduction in Administrative Support Personal Services, due to the R&D Director position that has not yet been filled and, therefore, will require only about 6 months’ salary instead of a full 12 months.
- Additional savings in Administrative Support Personal Services have been realized as a result of the retirements of the Directors of the COA and WALL programs.

- An 8% reduction in Operations was created by keeping the Marketing position as a wage position rather than making it fulltime classified.
 - The Center's Database Manager is a shared position with Southwest Virginia Education and Training Network, a 10% reduction in expenditures.
 - Because of some turnover and vacancies, a savings of 3% occurred in the Facility Management personnel budget.
- Total reduction in personnel budget of 9.5%.*

Operating Budget – Other Than Personal Services (OTPS)

Contractual Services:

- Travel related expenses were reduced by 27%.
- Miscellaneous Contractual Services was increased to hire UVA's search firm division to assist with the development of the position description and search for the new R&D Director.
- Professional Development was reduced by 28%.
- Marketing was reduced by 44%.

Total reduction for Contractual Services was only 4%.

Supplies & Equipment:

- Office Supplies was reduced by 21%.
- Computer Equipment & Supplies was reduced by 18%.

Total reduction in Supplies & Equipment was 8.5%.

Program Support:

- Program Support was reduced by 20%.

Other/Miscellaneous:

- 5% contingency was retained in case the State should require an additional budget reduction before the end of the year.

Total Reduction for OTPS was 6%.

Total Reduction for the entire Operating Budget was 8%.

Conference Services Report

Joyce Brooks, Director of Operations, presented the Conference Services Report, highlights of which included:

- 142 organizations held 598 events at the Center during the first half of the fiscal year.
- Total events for the year declined compared to the same period last year, partly attributable to a number of training events held by the

Gates Corporation last year that were not necessary in this fiscal year. The biggest reason for the decline, based on customer feedback, was the downturn in the economy and subsequent budget cuts among both corporate and non-profit organizations.

- Although the number of events decreased, there was an increase in the number of conference attendees. Over 33,000 people came to the Center as the result of a conference, event or meeting. This number excludes students of our partner institutions, College for Older Adults, and WALL.
- A comparison of the type of entities who book events revealed a significant shift from corporate to non-profit organizations. The decrease in corporate clients is noteworthy, since they pay a higher fee than do non-profits.
- The Center recognized early in the year that a decline in conference revenue could occur due to the economic downturn, and began planning ways to offset a potential revenue loss, such as hosting its own events that would generate income from booth revenue and ticket sales.
- The first such event was the Hunting and Fishing Expo held in September, which was a huge success, bringing in over \$11,000 in revenues. As a result, instead of a \$2,800 revenue shortfall when compared with the same period last year, the Center realized a gain of \$9,054 for the same period this year, with total YTD revenues of \$115,261.
- Upcoming events included: E & H Educational Forum, a repeat event; the Shriners Potentate Ball and Firemen's Association Convention, both first-time events for the Center; several new Center events, including the Indoor Yard Sale, Girls' Night Out, and Bridal Affaire, a joint effort of the Center and Media General.

Senator Puckett commented on the many favorable comments he had heard regarding the Hunting and Fishing Expo.

Executive Director's Report

Before presenting the Executive Director's report, Dr. Fowlkes acknowledged those board members who were joining the meeting by teleconference: Billy Cannaday, who is the new Dean of Continuing and Professional Studies at UVA, Lorraine Turner, and Nancy Cooley.

Dr. Fowlkes highlighted some of the year's accomplishments, reminding the board that they were achieved with the Center's relatively small budget of \$2.6 million:

Internal Activity:

- Ground was broken and construction is under way for the addition of a wing on the east side of the building.
- Performance evaluations for all Center staff were conducted in the fall. Dr. Fowlkes commended the staff's outstanding performance, notable especially because it is such a small staff for a facility the Center's size. There are 24 fulltime and 13 wage or parttime employees. The facility is open regularly 6 days a week from 7:30 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. In addition, it is open on Sundays for large events such as Garden Faire, Mistletoe Market, the Hunting and Fishing Expo, and special conferences. Because the staff is already stretched to the limit to accomplish everything the Center does, it is crucial to at least retain present staffing levels--one of the 3 priorities considered in revising the Center's budget.
- Considerable time was spent working on budget revisions and determining how to achieve the Center's goals more effectively and efficiently.
- Successful implementation of the Energy Savings Contract (ESCO) under the leadership of Eddie Sproles, with a minimum of disruption in the building, from which the Center is expected to reap tremendous rewards going forward.
- The Center continues to serve the business and industries in this region as a location for conferences, meetings, and multi-day events, as evidenced by the Conference Services data, and is vital to their economic stability and professional development.

External Activity:

- European Union conference brought to Wytheville by Congressman Boucher and TEDS' Joe Ellis.
- Meetings with Cultural Heritage Commission to build a new facility on this campus for the arts and artisans.
- Energy R&D project is on track; \$8 million in capital construction invested by Tobacco Commission. The Center is working with UVA's search firm to develop a position description for Director of the R&D Center, and has held meetings with staff and faculty at Virginia Tech as well as UVA to discuss potential research they might conduct at the new R&D Center to complement coal and natural gas reclamation and conservation. Selection of an architectural firm and acquisition

from VHCC of property on the west side of the building will take place after the first of the year.

Dr. Fowlkes detailed several ways in which the Higher Education Center supports the community:

- A letter in the board packets from William King Regional Arts Center informs the Center that Mistletoe Market raised slightly under \$95,000 this year. A 10-year event held annually at the HEC since it opened, this information emphasizes its importance in keeping profit and non-profit organizations strong and viable for the local economy.
- The third annual STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) day for 6th grade girls was held at the Center on December 2. Dr. Fowlkes explained that this event came about because Cheryl Carrico, an engineer at General Dynamics in Marion, came to the Center seeking assistance with priming the educational pipeline in an effort to meet her company's need for more engineers. As a result, the STEM workshops were developed collaboratively with the Center's college and university partners and area business and industry leaders. An army of over 150 volunteer presenters and assistants from business and industry--Eastman Chemical, Alpha Natural Resources, Thompson & Litton, Range Resources, Highlands Pathology, Spectrum Design, General Dynamics, TEDS, CGI, Northrop Grumman--education: Radford University, UVA School of Engineering, Virginia Tech School of Engineering and Cooperative Extension, Emory & Henry, and Washington County Schools--and Higher Education Center staff and College for Older Adults volunteers converged on a snowy December day to conduct hands-on workshops in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math for nearly 600 6th grade girls from Smyth and Washington counties and the City of Bristol. Unfortunately, due to the snow, Russell County schools were closed, preventing over 100 students from participating as planned.
- The Center's inaugural Hunting & Fishing Expo, a 2-day event, was an overwhelming success. Held on Saturday and Sunday, September 20-21, not only did it produce new revenues for the HEC, but also brought a new event to the community, allowed the Center to partner with other state agencies, and introduced new visitors to the Center. An unexpected visitor was Governor Kaine, who happened to be in the area for another event. Many families attended the event, where admission was free for children under the age of 12 and only \$2 for

adults. Free educational classes were also available, including fly tying, concealed weapon, and hunter education.

Dr. Fowlkes recognized the Center's anchor tenants, the 10 colleges that offer courses and degree programs. Especially in this time of economic distress, where people are losing their jobs, retraining is a critical issue, and the presence of the partners is even more essential. Dr. Fowlkes said that, although recent reports indicate that the federal government's job retraining program has not accomplished what it was intended to do, the Center's has been successful because it participates in a continuous dialogue with area business and industries to identify their personnel needs, and to develop programs through its partners to meet and strengthen those needs, such as undergraduate engineering and nurse anesthesia. Dr. Fowlkes expressed profound gratitude to the college and university partners for their team spirit and tireless efforts to assist in these endeavors.

The Center's contract with World Classics Catering expires on June 30, 2009, and the Center will be issuing an RFP for World Classics and others to submit quotes for a new contract. Dr. Fowlkes invited feedback from those present regarding their experiences, positive or negative, with World Classics as the Center proceeds with the contract negotiation process.

Board Discussion

Board members discussed the vitality of the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center, particularly as it relates to the larger work of higher education in Virginia:

Dan LaVista, Executive Director of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, noted that the vitality of the SVHEC is readily apparent after everything the board had just heard, he remarked about Tom Friedman's book, *The World is Flat*, which drew attention to what is happening in education, both in Virginia and across the nation: Issues of local competition; the deficiencies of the American system as it relates to rising powers such as India and China; challenges to education pertaining to progress in science, technology, engineering, and math; and degree production, or educational attainment. Dr. LaVista said that recent statistics have shown that America is currently 10th in the world in terms of the percentage of people 18-24 with some postsecondary certification; 10 years ago, it led the world. In order to maintain or, preferably, improve that

position, more must be done, beginning with students in K-12 as well as college. The role of higher education centers becomes even more important in such a serious economy, as more and more employers downsize and contract their payroll, and retraining becomes even more vital. Dr. LaVista said that the way in which higher education centers reach out to their public and are such skilled advocates for change in terms of some of the regional disparities that are typical of the more rural areas of the state should be celebrated; that the way the SVHEC promotes higher education opportunity is laudable. He commended the efforts conducted by higher education centers in the area of international business and education, and the importance of those efforts in terms of economic development impact and improved trade relations in areas as diverse as mining equipment, forest products, and cultural exchange. Dr. LaVista noted the cooperative work of Virginia higher education centers in carving out specific initiatives relevant to their respective regions of the state. In closing, Dr. LaVista spoke about SCHEV's efforts to address the concept of educational attainment through: 1) Better alignment of K-12 curriculums with the expectations of institutions of higher learning so that students are better prepared as they come forward; 2) Compiling and sharing data about the strength and weakness pattern of students by K-12 and higher education in order to better facilitate students' success; and 3) Career coaching both by SCHEV and the community college as a means of reaching out to students from families where going to college is not a family tradition to better prepare them for 4-year institutions. This reaching out, which is also an essential function of the HEC, is vital to the educational attainment concept because it a) promotes readiness in terms of academic preparation; b) imparts knowledge of how to pay for college; and c) builds confidence. Dr. LaVista said that a report to come out in January will summarize a year's worth of work by SCHEV on college affordability. Although SCHEV has no control over tuition setting policies of public institutions—a privilege retained by the boards of visitors—the report does set forth some good ideas for presidents, chancellors, and boards of visitors to consider in terms of setting tuition. Addressing the legislators present, Dr. LaVista stated that higher education has made demonstrable contributions to addressing the budget reduction needs of the state in the current year, and that he is hopeful that those contributions will be taken into consideration in the 2010 reduction. He said that higher education, be it community colleges, 4-year institutions, or higher education centers, is the most vital resource of the state and vital to the recovery of the state. In conclusion, Dr. LaVista said that he believes the

work of higher education centers is most vital, not only to the local expansion of higher education availability, but also on a national level in promoting the state's interest in educational attainment and international educational leadership.

Rodd Hall, Associate Vice President of Research, Virginia Tech, gave a brief overview of his job and how it impacts the local community. Mr. Hall said that research and economic development are intertwined, as evidenced by the current expansion at the SVHEC. He gave an example of how this impacts the southwest Virginia community, saying that he had that same day attended the Virginia Coal and Energy Research board meeting, where the major topic of discussion was a Request for Proposals that has been issued by the Department of Energy. For \$440 million, the RFP will be for a 10-year program for clean coal power initiatives, and is specifically directed to "carbon capture and sequestration." Mr. Hall said that Virginia Tech has been working in the capture and sequestration of carbon dioxide and reinjection of carbon dioxide into coal mines for about a decade. He said significant contributions will be needed from a local resource, and acknowledged that Dominion Resources, whose facility in Virginia City was built to be clean coal capable will partner with Virginia Tech to respond to that RFP. If successful, the money (\$350 million) would be spent entirely in southwest Virginia over a 10-year period. Virginia Tech feels very good about the possibility of success with the proposal, which would be the biggest they have ever submitted, representing 30% of all proposals they submitted in the previous year. In closing, Mr. Hall said that the research engine of Virginia Tech stretches throughout the state, and they are looking forward to a tremendous partnership with this opportunity.

Rosalind Reichard, President, Emory and Henry, spoke about the affordability issue, a subject that concerns all institutions of higher education. Dr. Reichard believes that stronger partnerships are extremely important, and that community colleges are going to play an important role. She voiced stronger state support for community colleges and for partnerships between the community colleges, 4-year institutions and graduate universities. She commended SCHEV's efforts in bringing those groups together.

Terry Mullins, Citizen Member, said that he has been on the board for a little over a year, and continues to be amazed by the variety of

programming and services provided by the Higher Education Center for the people of southwest Virginia.

Sean McMurray, Citizen Member, who is Chief Executive Officer of Johnston Memorial Hospital, said that JMH enjoys its relationship with the HEC and all its academic partners, and welcomes anything that promotes the development of health care personnel. He said that JMH is currently constructing a replacement facility that will allow it to grow to meet the future demands of health care in the community. Located between Exits 19 and 22, it will be a LEED Certified building, with some amenities not available at the current facility, such as all private rooms. The emergency department will be expanded and many of the clinical areas will be “right-sized” for the way health care is delivered today. Mr. McMurray said he believes the new facility will lead to higher retention rates of physicians and other health care professionals, and will be a positive asset for the community.

Delegate Bill Carrico said this is his 8th year on the board, and that he has always been impressed by the Center and its staff. Delegate Carrico said that the General Assembly is going to be facing some tough issues due to the current economic crisis, but hopes that budget cuts to education can be held to a minimum in light of its importance in the growth of the economy. Statistics show that 85% of jobs will be technology-based by the year 2010, emphasizing the importance of education, and he hopes that by the time the board meets again, the economic situation will have improved and the outlook will be more positive.

David Prior, Chancellor, the University of Virginia’s College at Wise, praised the Higher Education Center as a magnet for ideas, bringing together intellectual horsepower throughout the region and beyond—a vital role each of the partners also serves individually--and deserving of strong support in the legislature. Chancellor Prior talked about two important cornerstones that make up UVA-Wise’s philosophy as a public liberal arts college--affordability and workforce development. He said that, although the college does a lot of complex things, its mission is simple: student success and service to community and region. Addressing the issue of affordability, the Chancellor said that UVA-Wise will continue its course as it has for a number of years. Recognized again this year by *US News and World Report*, UVA Wise ranked #1 in the nation of all public and private liberal arts colleges (255 are ranked) for the lowest debt load

for its graduates—just under \$9,000. UVa-Wise feels very strongly about continuing that course because of what that means to families in this region. In terms of technology and workforce development, Chancellor Prior was proud to say that as a result of the partnership between the College, the General Assembly and SCHEV the first software engineer will graduate from UVa-Wise this spring. That student already has a handful of job offers, including one from Northrop Grumman. He plans to stay in Southwest Virginia and add to its intellectual horsepower. In addition to the first graduate, there are now about 40 students in the major, which is just in its third year. Chancellor Prior expressed gratitude for all the support throughout the region and the authorization from SCHEV to add software engineering to the curriculum. With articulation agreements in place with SWCC, VHCC, and MECC, an announcement will soon be made of a rigorous two-year program of pre-software engineering at the three community colleges that will articulate perfectly with UVa-Wise's program. As a result of this collaborative effort, the Chancellor said the entire region will have access to the only bachelor's degree in software engineering in the Commonwealth of Virginia. In conclusion, Chancellor Prior said that UVa-Wise is very happy to be a partner of the Higher Education Center, and will be for a long time.

Dan LaVista praised the cooperative spirit and shared his concern about affordability that other speakers had articulated. He said that a recent report by a California Center on Public Policy and Higher Education titled, *The Iron Triangle*, found that college presidents are challenged by rising costs for energy, campus security, and upgrades in information technology. These costs are often passed along to students through increases in tuition and fees. He said the affordability issue is about how to come together with some kind of reasonable sense of responsibility with family contributions and with states being a reliable funding partner in determining a reasonable cost for students.

SCHEV's recent board of visitors' orientation illustrated some of the advantages, both personal and public, to having an educated population. With the legislature's assistance, it is his hope that the rising population of students will get the help they need to attend college. Dr. LaVista said that this increase is coming largely from families in lower income groups where affordability is incredibly crucial. He said for institutions it's not just about meeting rising costs and making do with resources they have, but to do it with students that don't have any money. He said it's really important

for legislators to know that it's not just about driving that degree number, but doing it with students who really need financial help.

Senator Phillip Puckett thanked Dr. LaVista for his input. He said that he wanted to echo what he has witnessed, because it hasn't been easy to get to where we are today. Senator Puckett said the community college presidents have worked closely with Chancellor Prior and his team at UVA-Wise to collaborate on the software engineering program. There were a lot of unanswered questions as the process began, but the fact that the parties were willing to sit down and communicate with each other made it a win-win for the three community colleges involved and UVA-Wise, as well as an outstanding corporate citizen, Northrop Grumman. Everyone came to the table for a great opportunity, worked through the issues and problems, and reached a successful agreement. Senator Puckett said that good things will come from this type of cooperation, and he praised everyone involved for the innovative approach, saying that the students in the program are those who will benefit from it. In closing, he said that Northrop Grumman has already stepped up and said that if the colleges get the students through the program, their company has a place for them.

Kevin Crutchfield, Citizen Member, speaking from a business perspective as President of Alpha Natural Resources, said that within the next 5-7 years roughly 40%--about 90,000 people directly and indirectly--of the nation's coal miners will be eligible for some type of retirement. He explained that because of the cyclical nature of the coal business over the last 20 years, the industry basically skipped a generation of new employees. As a result, there is a tremendous amount of work ahead to recruit and train young, bright, talented people for job in the coal business—people who understand technology, business accounting, math, IT engineering, etc. Mr. Crutchfield said that Alpha is trying to hire young folks to help them from a resource perspective with the challenge of incorporating millennials into the organization. Alpha is partnering with some of the institutions represented in the meeting to provide scholarships for students, because they find that it is easy to keep people who work for the company, but more difficult to recruit in their business from outside the area, which means that Alpha is focused pretty locally. He said that is a great challenge for them. Mr. Crutchfield said he doesn't understand how Rachel and the team at the Higher Ed Center do so much with so little. He said that every time he visits, he continues to be blown away with the scale and scope of the facility. In closing, he said that the Higher Education Center and its

partner educational institutions are huge assets to this area, and to be commended for all they do.

David Wilkin, President, Virginia Highlands Community College, said that a lot of exciting things are happening at VHCC, in large measure because of all the cooperation and support it receives from those in attendance. Dr. Wilkin noted several articulation transfer programs with Virginia Tech, UVA-Wise, Radford, ODU, and others. In addition, President Reichard signed a statewide articulation agreement with Chancellor DuBois for the community college system. Dr. Wilkin said that the community college is excited about the new energy research and development center, and is, in concert with that, developing an energy technician program to train students to install and maintain that kind of equipment. He said that the Tobacco Commission provides enormous resources to the college; Johnston Memorial Hospital helps so much with clinical experiences and financial support; and Alpha Natural Resources is an enormous supporter of the community colleges. Dr. Wilkin noted that the college appreciates working with Kyle Roblee and also with Mike Quillen, who is a member of the State Community College Foundation Board. In closing, Dr. Wilkin said he believes that those in southwest Virginia have learned that by working together, we get things done.

Ellen Taylor, Director of Academic Outreach, Radford University, told the board members about Justin Shelton, a graduate of Southwest Virginia Community College and employee of Northrop Grumman who entered Radford's IT 2+2 cohort program this fall. Ms. Taylor said the cohort actually is originating from the New College Institute in Martinsville, and has students at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research, SWCC, and UVA-Wise's Southwest Virginia Technology Development Center in Lebanon. She said that 11 of the students in the 24-student cohort are in the southwest region, and are being supported through the Higher Education Center in terms of coordinating support and logistics. Ms. Taylor said that Mr. Shelton applied for Radford's Business and International Education Grant which the university received thanks to a lot of help from George Hiller, the Center's Director of International Business and Education. Radford's competitive grant offers 10 students the opportunity to study abroad for two summers, the first summer to be language study and the second summer to do an internship partnering with a local partner. Ms. Taylor said that Justin Shelton applied for and was awarded \$6,000. Mr.

Shelton's employer is making this opportunity possible by allowing him to have a month off two summers in a row.

Christopher Robinson, Citizen Member, expanded on Senator Puckett's remarks about the hunting & fishing show, saying that he believes there are two benefits: 1) the obvious revenue stream; and 2) bringing an awareness of what goes on at the Higher Education Center to a lot of first-time visitors. As valuable marketing tools, Mr. Robinson advised looking at those aspects of generating revenue and exposing the Center to a lot more people who otherwise would not be here. He said he had once heard someone define luck as preparation and opportunity coming together, and with respect to the new energy center, he likened the Center to being a real engine in the future for some of the things that are happening with energy. He said that Thomas Friedman's new book, *Hot, Flat and Crowded*, talks a lot about energy and how this country uses it. Coal is obviously going to be a big part of that, and how we use it in a clean way will make it a good energy source going into the future. Mr. Robinson said that the Higher Ed Center's energy research will be a big driver in the future for what happens here. From his perspective in international sales with Bristol Compressors, the diversity of his company's business helped keep the wheels rolling this year. He said that with new home construction down, sales of air conditioners are also down. The domestic market has really taken a dive, so Bristol Compressors has seen a big downturn in its domestic market. Fortunately, the company has been able to do well in the international market. Mr. Robinson explained that when oil went to \$150 a barrel, the people who had the money were in the Middle East, so Bristol Compressors was able to go there and generate some good business, which kept the factory going in the fourth quarter. Mr. Robinson said in conclusion that we need to make more people aware locally of the importance of a global economy, and how we can function profitably in a market that has a diverse customer base both internationally and domestically. He commended George Hiller's efforts with regard to international business education.

Billy Cannaday, UVA, expressed his appreciation at being able to join the meeting by teleconference, and said that he plans to be at the June meeting in person.

Nancy Cooley, ODU, referred the board to Old Dominion University's report in the board packets. She reminded everyone that ODU has now begun offering doctoral programs, and has students at the Center in the

Leadership Program. She said the university plans to recruit for the Occupational and Technical Studies doctorate, and a new Doctorate of Nursing Practice in Spring 2009. Dr. Cooley said ODU has had good success with its programs in health and human services at the bachelor's and master's levels, and looks forward to expanding into this new level. She said that, although some of their enrollments have declined at the Center, she believes that may be attributable to students who are now able to take video stream and online courses from their homes. She was pleased to report that 24 students graduated in 2008 from ODU programs offered at the Higher Education Center, and said that a couple of those students are featured in ODU's board report. She encouraged the board members to read about the students' successes and accomplishments.

Executive Auditorium Upgrades

Jeff Webb, the Center's Chief Information Officer, gave a PowerPoint presentation and demonstration of the recent upgrades to the Tiered Executive Auditorium. He introduced IT Department employees Doug Viers, Jeremy Mitchell, and Barry Logan, who worked in concert to engineer and develop the Surround Sound theater system, along with other staff that made some of the other upgrades possible. Mr. Webb's demonstration highlighted the following upgrades:

- HD NEC NP4001 projection system capable up to 1080i resolution;
- StewartFilm FireHawk G3 Silver Screen, engineered for use in HD applications;
- JBL AV1 Audio/Video Processor and 7.1 channel Preamp;
- JBL Professional grade speaker components and subwoofers;
- Extron Integrated control panel;
- Sony S1 Blu-Ray player for HD video and audio;
- HDTV programming;
- Acoustic sound panels to enhance audio quality;
- New paint to enhance video quality;
- New chairs for more comfortable seating;

Mr. Webb was proud to say that the Center's IT staff is skilled in the use of all the equipment, and completed all of the installations. He said that they did have some assistance from a professional company in designing the actual sound system, but had done a lot of the installation themselves. Mr. Webb also highlighted some events that have been held in the upgraded auditorium so far:

- VHCC Arts Array Films
- Food City Video Dept (Manager meetings and movie screenings)
- COA Planet Earth Series
- Classes, Meetings, and Events

He invited suggestions for other ways that it can be utilized, saying that the Center definitely wants to get its money's worth out of it, and is always excited to be able to bring all these technologies to this region. Mr. Webb said that the Center would like to purchase a RUNCO 3-chip full 1080p DLP projector to provide even better quality video. Right now, this equipment is too expensive for the Center's budget.

After a few personal comments, Dr. Wilkin made a motion that the meeting be adjourned, and Mr. Crutchfield seconded the motion.

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned.