



**Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center  
Board of Trustees  
Minutes  
December 11, 2014**

**Board Members/Designees Present:** Senator Bill Carrico, Kevin Crutchfield, Christine Fields (VHCC), Lisa Hall (ODU, via telephone conference), Donna Henry (UVA-Wise), Saul Hernandez, Delegate Terry Kilgore, Penny Kyle (Radford), Delegate Will Morefield, David Olive (Ex-Officio), Ruby Rogers, Tim Sands (Virginia Tech), Jake Schrum (Emory & Henry). **New Citizen Board Members Present:** Steve Cochran, with HHHunt Corporation; Christine Kinser, Superintendent of Tazewell County Schools.

**Board Members/Designees Absent:** Peter Blake (SCHEV), Billy Cannaday (UVA), Marcia Gilliam (Virginia Community College System), Matt O'Quinn, Lindy White, Delegate Joseph Yost.

**Others Present:** Richard Alvarez, Gerald Blankenship, Joyce Brooks, Ralph Byers, Duffy Carmack, Jane Carter, Kristy Collins, Courtney Conner, Connie Estep, Rachel Fowlkes, Elizabeth Griffin (via telephone conference), Natalie Hart, Debbie Hensley, Kathy Hietala, Brenda Justus, Penny McCallum, Danny Peek, Keith Perrigan, Ed Rogers, Deborah Sproles, Kim Stewart, Adam Tolbert, Wayne Tripp, Sonia Vanhook, Josh Williams, Alicia Young.

**Call to Order**

Chairman Kevin Crutchfield welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. A quorum was present.

**Approval of Minutes**

The Chairman called for approval of the Minutes for the June 12, 2014, meeting. **They were unanimously approved upon motion by Jake Schrum, seconded by Delegate Kilgore.**

**Executive Director's Report**

Dr. Rachel Fowlkes, Executive Director, reported the following notable matters:

### **Executive Agreement:**

- Directed the Board's attention to the recently completed Executive Agreement that must be developed every four years with the Governor's Office, setting forth the outcomes that must be achieved by the Center during each gubernatorial term. Five outcomes were negotiated with the Governor's Office for the Higher Education Center relating to: 1) programs offered at the Center; 2) number of people using the facility; 3) graduates of Center programs; 4) workforce training; and 5) the R&D program.

### **3 "Firsts" for the Center:**

- The House Appropriations and Finance Committees held part of their pre-Session retreat at the Higher Education Center. The Center, in partnership with UVA-Wise, had the opportunity to meet individually with legislators in the afternoon, and hosted a reception and dinner for the committees at the HEC that evening. Fowlkes expressed appreciation to Delegate Kilgore for his assistance in facilitating the event.
- The Secretary of Education, Anne Holton, along with the Director and three board members of SCHEV, flew in to spend the afternoon and learn more about the Center model, academic partnerships, corporate and governmental clientele, and accomplishments across the region with graduates, jobs and workforce training. She directed the Board's attention to the *Workforce Development Proposal*, contained in their board folders, to create a statewide initiative to identify the most critical job needs across the Commonwealth and develop a job-specific degree model for off-campus delivery. Key to the proposal would be the infusion of State funds into academic institutions' budgets for the implementation of critically needed off-campus programs.
- The attendance at today's meeting by Dr. Timothy Sands, President of Virginia Tech, is the first by a President of that institution.

### **Tobacco Scholarship Changes:**

- Reported that the Tobacco Commission's recent modification of its eligibility requirements for scholarship qualification eliminates the stipulation that an applicant be a tobacco quota holder or qualified relative. This major change will afford access to Tobacco Scholarship funds to legal residents of the US, living in one of the approved Virginia localities, who are enrolled in a bachelor's degree program at an accredited 4-year college or university. Also significant, the Commission implemented a work incentive award whereby scholarship recipients who graduate and remain in the Tobacco Region to work



may qualify for an annual cash incentive payment. Fowlkes hailed these changes as wonderful news for the Center and its academic partners, and conveyed gratitude to Delegate Kilgore, Senator Carrico, and other members of the Tobacco Commission.

**Retirement Announcement:**

- Announced that she plans to retire on June 30, 2015.

**Selection of New Executive Director**

Chairman Crutchfield explained that with coordinating support from UVA's Department of Human Resources, an official position description will be developed, a Search Committee will be formed, and the appropriate steps followed to select a new Executive Director. Crutchfield said that he had talked with Elizabeth Griffin, the Center's representative in the AG's Office, and Griffin has recommended that the board identify two of its members to serve on the Search Committee. The Chairman opened the floor for nominations.

President Kyle nominated Kevin Crutchfield to serve on the Search Committee; Delegate Kilgore seconded the nomination.

Chris Fields nominated Marcia Gilliam, who serves on both the Center and Foundation boards.

The Chairman called for a vote on the nomination of Kevin Crutchfield to serve on the Search Committee. **Upon motion by Chris Fields, seconded by President Kyle, the nomination of Kevin Crutchfield passed by acclamation.**

The Chairman called for a vote on the nomination of Marcia Gilliam. **Upon motion by Chris Fields, seconded by Senator Carrico, the nomination of Marcia Gilliam was unanimously approved.**

In view of Gilliam's absence, Chancellor Henry inquired as to her willingness to serve. Dr. Fowlkes noted that she had spoken with Gilliam the day before the meeting, and that Gilliam had confirmed her willingness to serve if elected.

**Financial Reports**

Duffy Carmack, Chief Financial Officer, gave the Financial Reports. Most notably, he said that state agencies have been requested to formulate plans

for a potential budget reduction of 5%. Although the actual budget reduction will not be known until the General Assembly meets in January, the Center is anticipating the full 5% cut, which amounts to approximately \$103,000.

Mr. Carmack also highlighted the following additional items included in the budget report:

- Center's Approved FY2015 Total Revenues: \$3,538,585.
- Breakdown of Non-General Fund Revenues, totaling \$692,605.
- Center has maintained conservative expenditures, in anticipation of State cuts, with Total Operating Expenses to Date of \$1,217,891.
- Numerous projects are planned, but must be delayed until the General Assembly acts and final funding can be determined.

Mr. Carmack called the Board's attention to the Grant Balances reports for both the Center and the Foundation. The majority of grant funds are through the Tobacco Commission, and the report also reflects grant balances pertaining to the R&D program.

As a result of Marcia Gilliam's absence, Mr. Carmack also presented the Higher Education Center Foundation report. Recent Foundation action includes the addition of two new Board members:

- Richard Settle
- Pat Calleb

The complete financial reports are available in each member's Board folder.

### **Clean Energy R&D Projects**

Ed Rogers, Director, updated the Board on matters relating to R&D projects:

Mr. Rogers explained to the Board how, primarily with TIC grant funds, the HEC Foundation invests in early-stage technology companies from outside Virginia as an incentive for them to locate in the Tobacco Regions—not just in Washington County, but throughout the Regions. These aspects distinguish the Foundation from other groups seeking funding from the Tobacco Commission.

Since his last report, the HEC Foundation has received Tobacco Commission R&D grants for two new investments:



- *Simmons Equipment Company* – Manufacturer of mining equipment located in Tazewell County, it is the first project that is indigenous to the region.
- *Optafuel* (Phase III) – Located in Wise County, with approximately 50 employees currently; with one of the highest concentrations of PhDs anywhere in the region working for them, many of their employees and interns are from UVa-Wise.

Two new projects have also been approved since his last report in June:

- *Radical Combustion Technologies* – Makes an insert for improving the combustion of natural gas in the large compression engines that push natural gas through the interstate pipelines.
- *Electric Force Motors* – A new type of motor.

Two more in the pipeline:

- *WireTough Cylinders* – An application for a Phase II Tobacco Commission R&D grant is in process; WireTough makes compressed natural gas fuel cylinders. Recently received a \$2 million grant from U.S. Department of Energy to take their technology and use it for high-pressure hydrogen storage; seeking additional funding to help build out that product.
- A small investment in a company that makes a SMART packaging for preventing the abuse of prescription drugs.

### **Virginia Tech Programs through the Higher Education Center**

Virginia Tech programs at the Center were highlighted by the following presenters, who made a number of key points:

**Danny Peek**, District Director for the Southwest District, Virginia Cooperative Extension

- Explained that the SW District covers 21 counties, from Alleghany to Lee, and is comprised of 49 Agents, 21 Unit Administrative Assistants, eight 4-H Program Assistants, and 13 Family Nutrition Program Assistants.
- Provided an extensive list of VCU meetings held at the HEC, including the Mid-Atlantic Garden Faire, a four-day event coordinated and hosted by the Washington County Master Gardeners that attracts 6,000-7,000 visitors.
- Said the HEC is an ideal site for the VCE District Office, being somewhat centrally located, with ample parking, a multitude of meeting spaces,

and a wealth of available technology. Its partnership with the HEC is critical to VCE's success and what the Agents are able to do and the impacts they are able to make in the SW District.

**Penny McCallum**, Director, Virginia Tech Southwest Center

- Said that Virginia Tech has had a partnership with the HEC for more than 20 years.
- VT programs at the Center are delivered by multiple methods. For instance, in the Educational Leadership program, professors come to the Center to teach and deliver courses in person; the Engineering program is delivered by videoconferencing, with Abingdon Site staff proctoring exams.
- When Ms. McCallum began working for Virginia Tech in 2005, she was directed by her supervisor, John Dooley, to choose a signature program to focus on in SW VA. Having retired early as a public school administrator who had worked with disadvantaged children, she chose K-12 Education. She said it is with the programs closest to her heart—those focused on children and teaching teachers to be better in what they do—that she has realized the greatest success.
- Reported that the VT SW Center has held 44 events at the Center and in the school systems thus far in 2014, and had 168 breakout sessions serving 2,900+ people since the beginning of the 2014 school year.
- Praised her Assistant, Brenda Justus, the IT Staff at the Center, and Rachel Fowlkes for her leadership.

**Dr. Wayne Tripp**, Fellow in the Center for Organizational and Technological Advancement at Virginia Tech; retired school superintendent; adjunct instructor at the HEC

- Dr. Tripp's association with the HEC began when he served as Program Area Leader for Educational Leadership in the School of Education at VT. The Ed Leadership program works with working educational professionals. It is conducted on a part-time basis, delivering coursework that balances academic theory with practitioner-based practice; M.A., Ed.S. and Ed.D. degrees are offered; degree programs are delivered in cohort-based models whereby approximately 15± students are recruited and enter the program as a group, taking the same classes together throughout their course of study.
- Classes composed predominantly of active administrators are conducted primarily on Monday and Tuesday evenings at the HEC. The VT program philosophy is that the in-person interaction is critically valuable to students, particularly doctoral students, because as they



develop the topic, as they are doing the research, they need ongoing and frequent interaction with their advisor. Dr. Tripp said that while it can be done with Skype, or Polycom, or by a variety of other means, there is nothing quite like doing it face-to-face, and that is why most of their work is delivered on that basis. He said that, in fact, most of their students prefer it that way.

- Graduates leave the program with the vital skills needed to be instructional leaders and the stewards of Virginia's children, to lead ethically, to initiate school reform, to investigate issues in new policy, communicate with diverse constituencies, and to improve the learning and actual well-being of students throughout this Commonwealth.
- Many alumni go on to be superintendents, principals and central office administrators; some go on to be professors and researchers. From the two cohorts that VT offers in Abingdon, 4 graduates are now superintendents, 4 are assistant superintendents, 1 is a university professor, and numerous others are school administrators.
- Commended the cooperation and support their program receives at the HEC, attributing it to Dr. Fowlkes' role modeling and leadership, to Ms. McCallum's hard work, and the genuine care and commitment exhibited by those at the Center for its students, community and region.
- Citing his experience at a graduate recognition ceremony hosted by the Center annually for graduates and their families, he encouraged Board members who had not had the opportunity to attend to come and listen as graduates speak about how the Center and its programs have profoundly changed their lives.

**Dr. Keith Perrigan**, Superintendent, Norton City Schools; Graduate of HEC programs

- Dr. Perrigan received his master's degree through Radford University at the HEC, and his doctoral degree through Virginia Tech at the Center.
- Currently in his first year as Superintendent of Norton City Schools, Dr. Perrigan had served for the last 19 years as an educator in Washington County. The first 6 years of his career were spent teaching emotionally disturbed students at Abingdon High School, where he also served as an assistant football coach and a head girls' softball coach. For 4 years, he was an assistant principal at John Battle and Abingdon High Schools, and for the past 9 years, he was the principal at Patrick Henry High School where, he noted, for the three consecutive years before he

left, the school was recognized as one of the top high schools in the United States.

- Provided background information offering insight into what the Higher Ed Center has meant to him personally, and its impact on the community that it serves. In 1999, he said, he was a fulltime teacher, coaching two sports, teaching Sunday School, and coaching his daughter's tee-ball team when he learned about the opportunity to attend Radford University for a master's degree in Educational Leadership. Participating in the program at the Higher Ed Center enabled him to continue teaching, coaching and other community activities while earning his master's degree. Likewise, when Virginia Tech brought the first cohort for the doctoral program to the Center, Perrigan was again able to work, serve his community, church, and family as he obtained his doctoral degree.
- Other opportunities also became possible because he was able to further his education at the Higher Ed Center. Perrigan served on the Board of Directors and as President of the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals, as well as on a Gubernatorial Task Force on K-12 Education.
- He expressed his gratitude for the many benefits and opportunities the Higher Education Center has afforded him.

**Jane Carter**, Chemistry & Earth Science Teacher, Norton City Schools

- Speaking as both attendee and presenter, Ms. Carter attested to the tremendous impact that the Higher Ed Center and Virginia Tech's Outreach programs have made in the areas of professional development for teachers and Virginia's STEM program in the southwest region. Professional development events held at the Center have benefited teachers on the regional, state and national levels. The three-day STEM event for teachers held at the Center each summer has provided professional development for science teachers in the region, eliminating the necessity of traveling as far away as Roanoke or Richmond.
- Two years ago, Ms. Carter said her students had an experiment chosen for the International Space Station (ISS), and the class was offered the opportunity to have a downlink with the ISS. As it turned out, the date of the downlink coincided with the annual STEM workshops held at the Higher Education Center for 700 sixth-grade girls. The Center's IT Department was able to coordinate the downlink so that the students



could watch and engage in live interaction with the astronauts onboard the ISS, which was tremendously exciting for everyone!

**Dr. Kristy Collins**, Program Manager, Education & Outreach, VA Bioinformatics Institute & Kids' Tech University at VT

- A research faculty member at Virginia Tech, Dr. Collins is also a Program Specialist for K-12 programs. One of the programs that she has worked with and developed is Kids' Tech University. Kids' Tech is for 9-12 year-old children, anywhere between 3rd and 7th grades, and their parents, to come to the Virginia Tech campus and have interactive sessions with well-known scientists. Kids' Tech U has blossomed over the last 6 years to include 5 other satellite locations: Ft. Belvoir, serving military youth; Virginia State University; The Works, a science museum in Ohio; Bowling Green State University in Ohio; and the VT Southwest Center. For the last three years, the VT Southwest Center has hosted a session in the fall and a session in the spring. Each session is open to 100 children; the cost is \$100 each. Buchanan County sponsors a couple of the spots in order to be able to have the students come here, and private donations also help make it possible to host the program at the Higher Ed Center.
- Dr. Collins expressed her appreciation to Penny McCallum and Brenda Justus, remarking how helpful it is to get to know and work with people like them, who really know what they are doing. She said they have their hands on the heartbeat in this region and do an amazing job.

### **Closing Remarks**

Chairman Crutchfield asked the Board members to note on the agenda the next meeting date, Thursday, June 11, 2015.

**The Chairman declared the meeting adjourned.**