



Minutes
Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center
Board of Trustees Meeting
August 25, 2022

Call to Order

Chairman Todd Pillion called the meeting to order and requested of those participating in the meeting via Zoom that they mute their lines unless speaking. Introductions were held. A quorum was present.

Board Members/Designees Present:

Steve Ahn, Secretary – in person
Delegate Jason Ballard – in person
Esther Bolling – via Zoom
Bret Danilowicz (Radford) – in person
Matt Frederick (Emory & Henry) – in person
Donna Henry (UVA Wise) – in person
Adam Hutchison (VHCC) – in person
Scott Kemp (SCHEV) – in person
Lennie Gail Mitcham – in person
David Olive (Bluefield) (Ex-Officio) – in person
Delegate Israel O’Quinn – in person
Susan Parish (VCU) – in person
Keith Perrigan, Vice Chair – in person
Senator Todd Pillion, Chair – in person
Karen Shelton – in person
Susan Short (Virginia Tech) – in person
Sophie Chafin Vance – in person

Board Members/Designees Absent:

Senator Travis Hackworth
Brian Hemphill (ODU)
Hannah Ingram
Delegate Will Morefield
Delegate Sam Rasoul
Donna Stanley (VCCS)

Others Present in Person or via Zoom:

Tim Channell (Radford)
Angela Cvetkovski (ODU)
Debbie Hensley (SWVHEC)
Marcy Hernick (Appalachian College of Pharmacy)
Eli Hietala (SWVHEC)
Hannah Hietala (SWVHEC)
Kathy Hietala (SWVHEC)
Bailey King (E&H Student)
John Mason (HirEd Alumnus)
David Matlock (SWVHEC)
Susan Mayhew (Appalachian College of Pharmacy)
Jason McGlothlin (Appalachian College of Pharmacy)
Andrea Newton (HirEd Alumna)
Sandy Ratliff (former Board Member)
Alicia Smeltzer (SWVHEC)
Courtney Stringer (UVA Wise)
Ramona Taylor (OAG)
Adam Tolbert (SWVHEC)
Sonia Vanhook (SWVHEC)
Alicia Young (SWVHEC)

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Pillion called for approval of the minutes for the December 9, 2021 meeting. **Upon motion by Susan Short, seconded by Scott Kemp, the December 9, 2021 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.**

Acknowledgment of Outgoing Board Members

The following board members whose terms had ended were acknowledged for their service and extended appreciation by the Chair on behalf of the board:

- Delegate Chris Hurst
- Delegate Mark Keam
- Delegate Terry Kilgore
- Maria Colobro
- Joshua Ely
- Sandy Ratliff

Welcome New Board Members

The following new board members were introduced and welcomed to the board:

- Delegate Jason Ballard
- Delegate Will Morefield
- Delegate Israel O'Quinn
- President Bret Danilowicz (Radford University)
- Esther Bolling
- Karen Shelton
- Sophie Chafin Vance
- Keith Perrigan (Reappointment)

Nominating Committee Report

Lennie Gail Mitcham delivered the report of the Nominating Committee, submitting the following nominees for board officers for the 2022-2024 term:

- Chair: Senator Todd Pillion
- Vice Chair: Keith Perrigan
- Secretary: Steve Ahn

Ms. Mitcham moved adoption of the recommended slate of officers. Chairman Pillion requested a motion to elect the proposed slate; **upon such motion by Chancellor Donna Henry, seconded by Susan Parish and unanimously approved by the board, the proposed slate of officers was confirmed.**

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director David Matlock reported to the board on a number of topics, including the following:

Construction Update

- Window replacement project to replace every window across the front of the building: Bids were received during the summer; a contractor was selected in August; materials have been ordered; window replacement is expected to begin in late September or early October. Although the project will probably not be completed by the time of the December board meeting, it is anticipated to be finished before the weather becomes extremely cold. Cost of the project: Approximately \$725,000.
- For the benefit of new board members, Mr. Matlock noted several other projects that had been completed during the past 60 months:

- New cooling tower: \$70,000
- New roof: \$600,000
- New addition to the building: \$2.4 million
- HVAC system update: \$3.1 million
- New carpeting, fresh paint, replacement of ceiling tiles
- Total investment by the state of about \$7.2 million

Mr. Matlock expressed appreciation to the HirEd team members who worked on those projects, assuring the board that the facility is ready to serve the Commonwealth for many years to come.

Activity Update

Commending the work of all of the Center's academic partners' team members who are onsite at the Center, Mr. Matlock shared with the board that the Center had welcomed 10 new students into VCU's Nurse Anesthesia program the previous day; the addition of this cohort of 10 new students joins a cohort of second-year students and a cohort of third-year students, resulting in a total of close to 30 VCU Nurse Anesthesia students currently in rotation at the Center. Another VCU program at the Center, Clinical Lab Sciences, shared its lab with the Appalachian College of Pharmacy during the summer for student orientation, a prime example of how the Center lends itself to collaboration.

During his report and PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Matlock touched on a number of other activities, including:

- The Governor's visit with K-5 STEM Academy graduates in June.
- New term of the College for Older Adults program to start in September.
- The Center has positions open for a Program Administrator [Alicia Young will be retiring] and a Grant Writer.
- A couple of the Center's academic partners are advertising and may have some new people to introduce by the December meeting.
- Discussions with multiple potential partners regarding a prospective lab school are in progress, with the goal of ensuring that southwest Virginia students are served and not left out, as well as to demonstrate effective collaboration among several disparate academic partners working together for the good of the region.

Financial Report

For the benefit of new board members, Mr. Matlock explained that the Higher Ed Center differs from other state agencies in that it is not funded for 12

months by the state. If it relied only on its approximately \$2.5 million in General Funds, he said the Center would have to close its doors in early March each year because it would be out of money. The Center generates Non-General Fund income of approximately \$700,000 a year, resulting in annual income of approximately \$3.2-\$3.3 million, with a positive cash flow. Currently, that carryforward stands at about \$2 million; however, Mr. Matlock stated that the Center is preparing to make some big investments to benefit the students and citizens of southwest Virginia. One such investment, which he said the board would hear more about during the current meeting, is a virtual cadaver lab.

With respect to the Center's financial state, Mr. Matlock noted that the trustees had been provided with that report in their packets, but he could assure them that the Center is operating efficiently and effectively, hitting all budget targets, exceeding revenue, with expenses well under control.

He informed the board that the Center just recently underwent an APA audit, the outcome of which was very good, with no significant findings. An exit interview is planned, and he does expect that there will be some minor matters to be addressed with regard to policy, but nothing major. He attributed the clean audit to the management of the Center's Senior Finance Director, Debbie Hensley.

Virginia Rural Information Technology Apprenticeship Program

Providing an update on the new Information Technology Apprenticeship program, Mr. Matlock reported that there are currently ten or eleven apprentices who have been approved. He reminded the trustees that they had met a couple of the apprentices at the December 2021 board meeting. The program began taking applications in October 2021, so it has not yet been in operation for 12 months. Mr. Matlock sought the board's assistance in getting the word out about the program, which covers 17 counties and five municipalities, with \$4 million in available funds to invest. The program is designed for small IT companies of 100 employees or fewer, whose business is primarily or only IT. He noted that the Center's Alicia Young is providing all the leadership on this program. Several apprentices are now working in the area, and the Center has produced a short video, featuring an appearance by Senator Pillion, to market the program. Trustees viewed the video for the apprenticeship program. At the conclusion of the video, Mr. Matlock introduced Bailey King, a senior student at Emory and Henry College,

to speak to the trustees about her involvement with the apprenticeship program.

Ms. King shared that she is a senior at Emory and Henry College, double majoring in business administration and civic innovation. She said she is interning/employed by the Smyth County Chamber of Commerce, where she works under the supervision of Sarah Gillespie, Chamber Director. In the pursuit of her civic innovation degree, Ms. King is required to complete a senior project, which is where the apprenticeship program comes into play. She said she will be partnering with Mr. Matlock, working on marketing that program throughout the current semester and the next semester, before wrapping up her senior year and stepping out into the world. Ms. King proudly stated that she is a southwest Virginia native, born and raised in Marion, Virginia, whose family has been in the region for as long as she knows. She is gratified to work in and give back to the community, and excited to see the potential that southwest Virginia has. In closing, she thanked the board.

Mr. Matlock said that Ms. King will be working with the Center, primarily initially with some Chamber events and going out and helping to get the word out to the 17 counties about the apprenticeship program. The Center is fiscal agent for the program, which includes funds for both southside and southwest Virginia. Mr. Matlock concluded by saying that he would welcome the assistance of trustees in spreading the word about the program, as well.

HirEd Alumni Presentations

Noting that King University has a Family Nurse Practitioner program at the Center, Mr. Matlock explained that nursing students can obtain an RN degree at Virginia Highlands Community College, then go from RN to BSN, Nurse Practitioner or Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia, at the Higher Education Center. With that in mind, he had invited one of the recent King graduates, Andrea Newton, and introduced her to talk about her educational experience.

Andrea Newton

Ms. Newton declared it a pleasure to share her journey with the trustees and said that she is very proud to have completed her entire education in Washington County. A lifelong resident of Abingdon, Washington County, she currently lives near Emory. Ms. Newton attended Washington County schools, graduating from Abingdon High School. Unsure what she wanted to do, she chose to enroll at Highlands Community College, where she

obtained a two-year degree in legal assisting. She elicited laughter from the trustees when she related that although she had a desire to be a nurse, she didn't like blood, and when she saw the video about that program, she said it ruled her out. She worked as a legal assistant for Watson and Buddington for many years, then took care of grandparents with dementia, and had children. After having her children, her desire to be a nurse resurfaced, and she expressed those feelings to her husband, who told her she had lost her mind. Concurring that she might have, nonetheless she said that was her passion and what she wanted to do, so she talked with David Matlock, who connected her with everyone she would need to help her, i.e., advisement, financial, etc., and she enrolled in the nursing program at Virginia Highlands. She finished her RN at Highlands, went on to King at Bristol in the night program because it was doable with her work schedule, obtained her BSN, all the while continuing to gain great experience, and has now been employed at Ballad for 10 years, currently hired as a nurse practitioner for Dr. Pierre Istfan at CVA Heart Institute. At the eventual urging of her co-workers, she decided to go back to nurse practitioner school. She applied to King's program at the Higher Ed Center, and just recently graduated. Ms. Newton expressed her excitement that the program is offered at the Center. She conveyed her gratitude to the board for what the Center's existence does to support people in the community by allowing people who live and work here to be able to continue to support themselves financially while also pursuing their dreams and achieving their goals. She said the Center's existence means that the region's children don't have to leave the area to attain a great education, have a rewarding career and a wonderful quality of life.

Mr. Matlock noted that King's Nurse Practitioner program is a residential program, and had graduated 22 students the previous week, with another residential group of 24 starting class on the current date. He said King has a number of different models, with two additional cohorts going on—one of which is totally online, and another, hybrid model, with the content for both originating from the Center.

Mr. Matlock went on to talk about a skills gap analysis the Center conducted a few years ago that determined there was a great need in the region for a Master's of Counseling for school counselors. He went to Senator Chafin and asked the Senator to champion the cause before the Tobacco Commission. Although he did, they did not get the recommendation of the Commission. However, they sought the support of Delegate O'Quinn, Senator Pillion and

several others, and it was subsequently brought to the floor, where it ultimately passed on a 13-12 vote. The Radford University program is currently on its second cohort at the Center, and Mr. Matlock had invited a beneficiary who is a recent graduate of that program to speak to the board. He introduced John Mason.

John Mason

Commenting jokingly that he normally talks with children in the elementary level all day, Mr. Mason told the board it is an honor to speak with them. He shared that he is from Washington County and resides in Bristol, where he graduated from John Battle High School. After high school, he attended Virginia Highlands Community College, obtaining an associate's degree and a desire to be a school counselor. He enrolled at Milligan College and went on to receive a bachelor's of psychology, subsequently working in schools through different human services agencies for the next 12 years. Throughout those years, he continued to want to return to school for a master's, but for various reasons had not—until 2019. At that time, Amanda Baldwin-Estep, Radford University's representative at the Higher Education Center and a friend whom he had known previously through work, messaged him about a cohort forming at the Center, and he attended the information session. There he spoke with another prospective student whom he had worked with previously and they decided to pursue their degrees together. Being accepted into the program was an achievement in itself, he said, but then the realization hit that he would have to pay for it, and he wondered how it would be possible. As luck would have it, he received an email about Tobacco grant funds, which fortuitously cut his cost to just a little more than half. Left with no reason not to do it, he began the program in January of 2020, and things were going great. The professor came down from Radford on Monday nights, which in itself he said was a wonderful experience—being able to drive 20 minutes from home and meet face-to-face with your instructor rather than online or on the weekend and experience the critical social interaction with your classmates, all were vitally important aspects of the program. And then, he said, COVID happened, and his world was rocked as was everyone's, and he was laid off from his job at Highlands Community Services. Though he worried about how he would support his family, he found that there was a silver lining in the midst of the difficult situation, because it motivated him to work harder in the program. COVID also meant that the program had to continue online temporarily, but Mr. Mason commended the staff of the Higher Ed Center and Radford for facilitating that process for the students. The cohort was able to meet in person again

that fall and, with a year left before graduating, Mr. Mason began applying for some positions and was hired as a school counselor by Washington County Schools to work at Valley Institute a year before he finished the program. Expressing appreciation to everyone involved in his journey, he thanked the board for making it possible for individuals such as himself to do these kinds of amazing things.

Mr. Matlock pointed out that not only had Mr. Mason gotten a job as a counselor at Valley Institute, but he is also the head soccer coach. He noted that Mr. Mason's story is another example of "starting here and going far"—Virginia Highlands, the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center and its academic partners!

HirEd Academic Partner Spotlight: Appalachian College of Pharmacy

Mr. Matlock expressed enthusiasm about the Center's new partnership with the Appalachian College of Pharmacy. Although there have not yet been any press releases, he said there is a signed MOU, some student orientations and some faculty trainings have taken place, and the Center is so excited to welcome its newest partner, the Appalachian College of Pharmacy! He introduced Susan Mayhew, Dean, to share some information about the College with board members. Dean Mayhew delivered a comprehensive report, accompanied with PowerPoint slides, which included the following interesting information:

- It is Virginia's only accelerated Doctor of Pharmacy degree program. Most traditional pharmacy schools are 4-year programs post-prerequisites, and ACP completes that in less than 3 years (about 33 months or 8 terms).
- Approximately 72 prerequisites are required; students who finish the doctorate degree program have over 150 credit hours.
- Located in Buchanan County, VA, with students from all over the nation and internationally, as well. Almost 70% are from the Appalachian Regional Commission area, which is part of the school's mission.
- The highest percentage of students come from Virginia; second highest, Kentucky; this year, the third highest is North Carolina, but has varied (Florida, Maryland, and other states).
- ACP's mission is to provide academic, scientific and professional education, to address the health-related needs of rural and underserved communities, particularly those in the Appalachia region, through education, service and scholarly work.

- The school's philosophy is to cultivate a learning community committed to education, community outreach, and the professional development of its pharmacy students.

Dean Mayhew gave an overview of the curriculum, which is important and relevant to the Center because ACP hopes to offer the second-year curriculum at the Higher Ed Center to a cohort of students. And the second-year curriculum comprises pharmacotherapy courses, which she said is "where the rubber meets the road," when the students take all the foundational knowledge they have gained and turn it into clinical application through a variety of courses—everything from infectious disease to oncology, endocrinology, cardiology, etc. (the didactic curriculum). The experiential curriculum is the hands-on piece—the clinical rotation aspect of the program—and while she said that actually begins during the first and second years in pharmacy school, it truly culminates in the third year and comprises almost the entire third year of the curriculum. Notably, many of the rotation sites are located in Abingdon, Bristol, Kingsport, and Johnson City, and the college already has faculty members who are based here in the region, facilitating the transition to expand ACP's footprint into southwest Virginia, specifically Abingdon.

Understanding that most people do not realize all the specialty areas that pharmacists can function in and specialize in and may even have board certifications in, she shared some of those areas: infectious disease, psych, cardiology.

Earning potential starts at around \$130,000 annually for newly graduated students going to work in the region.

ACP collaborates with and is proud to be the sister institution to the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine, the largest producer of primary care physicians in the nation.

Dean Mayhew said the college is excited about transitioning to the Higher Ed Center, noting that Mr. Matlock had been absolutely fantastic to work with, and is very efficient in everything he does with ACP.

She disclosed that the college plans to start off with a moderate number of students at the Center and hopes to bring in a cohort not to exceed 20

initially. This will allow the opportunity to ensure they are executing the program well.

With respect to a timeline, she said the college is not in full control of that, since there is an accreditation process to work through with the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education, ACP's programmatic accrediting agency. A site visit from them is set for October 11 at the Higher Ed Center with David and his staff, as well as a number of ACP staff. If all goes well and there are no impediments with the accreditation process, Department of Education, or otherwise, a Fall 2023 start is planned for the first cohort of students.

A summer camp and some faculty committee meetings have already been conducted at the Center, and a faculty retreat to orient them to the site is being planned.

Dean Mayhew thanked the trustees on behalf of all of the Appalachian College of Pharmacy, for allowing it the opportunity to partner with the Higher Ed Center. She said they are thrilled to become part of the Center!

Mr. Matlock asked the Dean to discuss why it is exciting to be able to conduct the pharmacy program in a setting with other medical and health-related programs, such as VCU's Nurse Anesthesia and Clinical Lab Sciences programs, and King's Nurse Practitioner program. Noting that those who are in academic institutions understand about accreditation and the standard of interprofessional education, Dean Mayhew explained that having a multitude of health professions in the same building at the same time is a valuable asset in that process; having that opportunity for interprofessional education is really significant for ACP, and this partnership with the Center will lend itself well to that.

Mr. Matlock thanked Dean Mayhew for the informative report and said that the Center is looking forward to the accreditation visit on October 11. He asked Dean Mayhew to introduce the ACP colleagues who accompanied her to the board meeting. The Dean was pleased to introduce Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, Dr. Marcy Hernick, and Director of Student Services, Jason McGlothlin, as her right-hand folks who are always there when needed.

Naming Policy

Executive Director Matlock explained that, over the history of the Center, some things—such as rooms in the building—had been named; some were voted on, some were not. Moving forward, the Center would like to outline and define that process and has composed a draft policy to that effect. Ramona Taylor, the Center’s representative in the Office of the Attorney General, has reviewed the draft and made some edits. That draft is included in the current meeting packets for informational purposes only currently. Mr. Matlock said he hopes to meet with the Executive Committee in the fall and then have the policy as an action item to vote on at the December meeting.

Before concluding, Mr. Matlock invited Ms. Taylor to speak to the board to bring the trustees up to speed again on a virtual meeting policy, which the Executive Committee would be bringing before the board to vote on in December.

Ms. Taylor explained, for the benefit of new board members and those who had not been involved in the COVID—post-COVID or pre-COVID—experience with meetings, why there is an electronic meeting policy. Based on FOIA, she said, it is considered a meeting when at least three members of the body are present; a body cannot conduct public business unless there is a quorum, which often is a majority. During the COVID era, there were many issues because there was a state of emergency, there was uncertainty about transmission of COVID, a lot of facilities were being shut down or access was being limited. During this period of the state of emergency, an issue arose with the law requiring a quorum in order to conduct public business. Consequently, during that state of emergency, there were protocols for all-virtual meetings. When the state of emergency lifted, the benefit of the all-virtual meeting evaporated, except for those serving as advisory board members. With respect to the Center, another issue that arose during that time was the fact that many board members do not live in close proximity to the Center, the site of its meetings.

Ms. Taylor said there has been a recent change in the law as to how boards must conduct their meetings that went into effect on August 1. This policy is an update to incorporate the law change that was effective on August 1 which allows you to have virtual meetings. Ms. Taylor provided a thorough explanation of the changes, instructing board members to reach out to Mr. Matlock or to her if they had questions prior to voting on the policy.

Ms. Taylor also mentioned that by the next board meeting, she would prepare a mini training on FOIA for those who might be new to the process.

Mr. Matlock explained that the policy had been received just prior to the current meeting, and that Adam Tolbert would be emailing it to board members.

Before concluding his report, Mr. Matlock commented that he constantly has opportunities to stand before people and talk about a great place doing great things because of great people. He asked all direct employees of the Higher Education Center present to stand and be recognized. Likewise, he requested academic partner team members to stand and be recognized. In closing, he reminded the Board that the Center is a great place doing great things because of those great people.

HR/Administration Report

Adam Tolbert, Senior Director of Administration, delivered the HR/Administration report.

Service Recognition Awards

The Center had set out in 2019 to recognize employees' service milestones annually at the June board meetings, but that plan had been disrupted by COVID. As a result, Mr. Tolbert said the Center has some catching up to do going back to 2019, with some employees already approaching another milestone. He explained that service recognition includes all periods of salaried service with any state agency or branch of the government of the Commonwealth of Virginia. It does not include wage or hourly employment service. Many employees will be part-time before they become full-time, but part-time service is not included with the service recognition policy. Mr. Tolbert said he was pleased to present service milestones, assisted by his colleague Alicia Smeltzer, for one year, three years, five years and then in increments of five years after that, to current full-time Center employees with state service at one or more agencies (such as himself, whose first few years had been with UVA-Wise, and the last several at the Higher Education Center). Mr. Matlock invited Chairman Pillion to come forward to shake recipients' hands, and awards were presented to the following individuals:

- Sonia Vanhook – 20 years
- Deborah Hensley – 15 years
- Alicia Smeltzer – 5 years
- Austin Dierks – 5 years

- Hannah Hietala – 5 years
- Patsy Rhoten – 5 years
- David Hietala (better known as Eli) – 3 years
- David Matlock – 30 years
- Adam Tolbert – 15 years
- Alicia Young – 15 years
- Nicolas Osborne – 1 year

Retirement Recognition

Mr. Tolbert said that as had been previously noted, Alicia Young would be retiring effective on September 1, 2022, with about 15 years and 5 months service. He presented Ms. Young with a nice plaque commemorating her service retirement and expressed appreciation for her service and contributions to the Center. Senator Pillion thanked Ms. Young for all she had done.

Mr. Matlock said he wanted to brag about Alicia just for a moment. Reminding the trustee's that the Center has a Foundation, he explained that as part of Ms. Young's job she served as the Vice President of Finance and Assistant Treasurer of the Foundation. In the most recent past, she was managing over \$22 million of grants for the Tobacco Commission. The Foundation managed a lot of workforce development grants, and at its peak Alicia was the chief fiscal agent for that \$22 million. In addition, she helped give birth to the Rural IT Apprenticeship program. Alicia is a lifelong resident of the region, originally from Russell County. Mr. Matlock wished Ms. Young the best in retirement and invited her back to visit or volunteer often.

Thanking him, Ms. Young noted that although she had only worked for the Higher Education Center since 2007, she had worked on the premises for another entity since 1999. She said it has afforded her many opportunities, some of which fell under "other job duties as assigned," including coaching LEGO Robotics, touring landfills in Tazewell County for an R&D grant, teaching and taking COA classes, among other things. Adding that it has helped her grow, not only with her job, but personally as well, she said she has enjoyed every bit of it! She expressed her appreciation to the board.

Chairman's Appointments to the Executive Committee

Pursuant to Article IV, Section A of the board's bylaws, Chairman Pillion announced the appointment of the following members to the Executive Committee:

- Donna Henry, Education Member
- Adam Hutchison, Education Member

Public Comments

No public comments were received.

Closing Remarks

In his closing comments, Chairman Pillion noted the loss of Delegate Joe Johnson, who was tremendously instrumental in the creation of the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center and was always its ardent supporter and passionate advocate. In fact, Senator Pillion pointed out, Delegate Johnson had attended the last in-person board meeting. He remarked that Joe and his wife (who predeceased him by a short time) will be tremendously missed in southwest Virginia, especially at the Center, but that his contributions would be his legacy; the building itself *will* be his legacy—one of his many legacies, in fact.

Trustees were requested to hold **Thursday, December 8th** for the next scheduled full board meeting.

A motion to adjourn was requested. **Delegate Israel O'Quinn made the motion; the motion was seconded by Donna Henry, and the meeting was duly adjourned.**