



## **Minutes**

### **Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center**

### **Board of Trustees Meeting**

### **June 13, 2024**

#### **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.

The roll was called by Vice Chair Keith Perrigan. A quorum was present in person.

#### **Board Members/Designees Present:**

Olivia Bailey – in person  
Delegate Jason Ballard – in person  
Delegate Betsy Carr – via Zoom  
April Crabtree – in person  
Bret Danilowicz (Radford) – in person  
Lou Fincher (E&H) – in person  
Senator Travis Hackworth – in person  
Donna Henry (UVA Wise) – in person  
Adam Hutchison (VHCC) – in person  
Scott Kemp (SCHEV) – in person  
Sarah Jane Kirkland (ODU) – in person  
Allison Mays (VT) – in person  
Rachel Miller (UVA) – in person  
Keith Perrigan, Vice Chair - in person  
Senator Todd Pillion, Chair – in person  
Paula Song (VCU) – in person  
Donna Stanley (VCCS) – in person

#### **Board Members/Designees Absent:**

Steve Ahn, Secretary	Delegate Briana Sewell
Esther Bolling	Karen Shelton
David Olive (Bluefield) (Ex-Officio)	Sophie Chafin Vance
Delegate Sam Rasoul	

**Others Present in Person or via Zoom:**

Sharon Bolling (UVA Wise)  
Theresa Burriss (E&H)  
Hannah Hietala (SWVHEC)  
Kathy Hietala (SWVHEC)  
Adam Kane (OAG)  
David Matlock (SWVHEC)

Jenny Nichols (GO Virginia)  
Joy Rumley Govertsen (SWVHEC)  
Adam Tolbert (SWVHEC)  
Sonia Vanhook (SWVHEC)  
Shanda Warren (Carroll County Public  
Schools)

**Approval of Minutes**

Lacking a quorum present in person at the December 14, 2023, meeting, minutes of both the June 8 and December 14 meetings needed approval.

Minutes of the June 8, 2023, meeting were unanimously approved upon motion by **Chancellor Donna Henry**, seconded by **Scott Kemp**.

Minutes of the December 14, 2023, meeting were unanimously approved upon motion by **Senator Travis Hackworth**, seconded by **Delegate Betsy Carr**.

**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 Will Morefield
- Delegate Israel O'Quinn

**Welcome New Board Members**

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

- Delegate Betsy Carr (via Zoom)
- Delegate Brian Sewell (not present)

**Executive Director's Report**

Prior to delivering his report, Mr. Matlock introduced a surprise guest, Shanda Warren, with Carroll County Public Schools, who spoke briefly to the board about *FIRST* LEGO League and its positive impact on participants. Ms. Warren praised the Higher Ed Center facility, staff and LEGO volunteers for the manner in which the tournament is set up and conducted. A Carroll County team advanced to state competition, were state champions, and qualified for national and international competition in Los Angeles. Ms.

Warren shared that the Center had sponsored the team and provided financial support for travel expenses. Mr. Matlock remarked that Carroll County had received the only engineering excellence award in the international competition.

Executive Director David Matlock's report included the following important matters:

- Conference Services Department: Having been asked recently by Senator Pillion whether the Center had recovered from the pandemic, Mr. Matlock was pleased to report that it had. He pointed out that there had been over 760 event reservations and 3,600 individual bookings for the year already, and the Center had welcomed nearly 58,000 visitors, generating approximately \$276,000 in revenue thus far.
- Education Department: Mr. Matlock noted that 1,235 middle school students were served through the Center's educational outreach programs in the spring alone, a number that closely corresponds to data from the fall, resulting in a collective total of approximately 2,500 students served.
- Academic Partner Reports: Expressing praise for the Center's academic partners, Mr. Matlock referred Trustees to their board packets for reports highlighting the work they are accomplishing at the Center and in the region.
- Financial Report & FY25 Budget: The proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2025 was presented and discussed. Chairman Pillion noted that the Board needed to vote on the proposed budget. Thereupon, **Senator Hackworth** made a motion, seconded by **Chancellor Henry**, and by unanimous vote of the Board, the proposed FY25 budget was approved.
- Regional Simulation Lab Update: The regional simulation lab project has netted approximately \$1.8 million in grants currently, is moving forward quickly, and if all goes well, will be fully operational early spring semester 2025.

In closing, Mr. Matlock expressed appreciation to the Center team.

### **HR/Administration Report**

Dr. Adam Tolbert, Senior Director of Administration, then reported on the following matters:

- State Service Recognition Awards
  - Kathy Hietala – 20 Years
  - Sherry Buskill – 15 Years
  - Sisa Damore – 10 Years

- Gaby Turner – 10 Years
- Sean Webb – 10 Years
- Nicolas Osborne – 3 Years
- Resolution Establishing Security Department: Dr. Tolbert reviewed the resolution authorizing the establishment of a campus security department and the employment of campus security personnel that had been provided to the board in draft form for consideration prior to the meeting, hereinbelow set forth in full:

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CAMPUS SECURITY DEPARTMENT AND THE EMPLOYMENT OF CAMPUS SECURITY PERSONNEL**

WHEREAS, the safety and security of students, faculty, staff, and visitors at the Center is of the utmost importance;

WHEREAS, the 2024 Session of the General Assembly of Virginia passed legislation (SB613 & HB690) authorizing the governing boards of certain educational institutions to establish and maintain a campus security department and to employ campus security personnel therein;

WHEREAS, the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center is an eligible educational institution under such legislation that was passed and signed by the Governor;

WHEREAS, the Board possesses the authority under Virginia Code § 23.1-818 and § 23.1-3100.1 (as they will become effective on July 1, 2024) to establish and maintain a campus security department and to employ campus security personnel therein;

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center hereby approves the establishment and maintaining of a campus security department and the employment of campus security personnel therein effective July 1, 2024;

RESOLVED FURTHER, that the Executive Director is authorized to employ such campus security personnel as necessary and proper for the operation of the campus security department;

RESOLVED FURTHER, that such campus security department and personnel shall be under the supervision of the Executive Director and/or his duly authorized staff designee(s),

RESOLVED FURTHER, that the Executive Director and or his duly authorized staff designee(s) are authorized to establish such policies and procedures as necessary for the sound, efficient, and effective operation of the campus security department and its personnel.

Following presentation and discussion, Delegate Jason Ballard made a motion to adopt the Resolution Authorizing the Establishment of a Campus Security Department and the Employment of Campus Security as presented; Delegate Carr provided a second, and adoption of the resolution was unanimously approved.

- Personnel Update:
  - New Hires  
William Aaron Teaters, *Education Support Assistant*
  - Departures/Changes  
Sarah Blevins, *Education Support Assistant*  
Kelli Peck, *Education Support Assistant*  
Ernest Sutherland, *Trades/Utilities Worker*

## **HirEd Academic Partners Spotlight**

### **UVA Wise**

Jenny Nichols, GO Virginia Region 1 Program Director, delivered an informative report and update about UVA Wise activities at the Center offices, including plans in the works to offer professional development and workforce training throughout the region. She introduced Sharon Bolling, new Academic and Professional Program Development Manager for UVA Wise at the Center.

Ms. Nichols reported that GO Virginia has been actively engaging with localities and nonprofits to strengthen its project pipeline. Within the last 9 months, an increase in applications and raised awareness of GO Virginia's valuable opportunities has been observed. Ms. Nichols noted that the progress and growth are exciting for the program and the region as a whole.

She referred Trustees to their board packets for a more comprehensive report highlighting several recent initiatives, including the Southwest Virginia Economic Forum, Rally Southwest Virginia, Opportunity Appalachia, and various activities at the Oxbow Center in St. Paul, demonstrating the dedication and hard work invested by the UVA Wise team to aid economic development and foster regional collaboration.

In closing, Ms. Nichols expressed gratitude to the board for supporting UVA Wise' presence at the Higher Education Center, reiterating their team's commitment to support and contribute to economic development initiatives for the region.

### **SW VA Healthcare Excellence Academy Laboratory School (HEALS) Update**

Dr. Lou Fincher, Senior Vice President, and Dean of the School of Health Sciences, Emory & Henry College, provided an update on the new lab school, in the absence of Dante Lee, Executive Director, who was unable to attend. Dr. Fincher's update included the following highlights:

- HEALS grant received approval in April for the operational expense of \$3.85 million plus \$1 million in start-up funds.
- Shortly after being approved, and then with the approval of a new budget, some new guidelines were put in place which required Emory & Henry as a private institution, or any of the community colleges that were approved, to partner with a fiscal agent that is a 4-year public institution. Dr. Fincher announced that Emory & Henry has partnered with Old Dominion University as fiscal agent for the HEALS program. Explaining that Old Dominion had to submit an application to be the fiscal agent, Dr. Fincher said the application was submitted to meet the previous day's deadline, would be reviewed by the Board of Education the following Thursday, and is expected to be approved.
- The program had a soft opening with a cohort of 48 students in the spring semester. A new class of 49 students has already been accepted, pending approval and getting the funds, as previously mentioned, so there will be just shy of 100 students in the combined cohorts for next academic year.
- The Higher Education Center serves as one of the instructional sites and provides office space for the Executive Director and Assistant Director.
- Classes are set to begin on August 13, with HEALS students from Washington County and the City of Bristol attending at the Higher Education Center and students from Smyth and Wythe counties attending at the Emory & Henry Health Sciences campus in Marion.
- In closing, Dr. Fincher expressed excitement about the program affording a great opportunity to provide students with an experience to explore health care careers. She conveyed appreciation for the partnership and site location at the Center.

Senator Pillion said that he had carried the HEALS bill through the General Assembly, was a budget conferee, and was somewhat surprised that Emory & Henry chose ODU to be the fiscal agent rather than a four-year institution in the region. Dr. Fincher said that she was not closely involved in that decision, but maintained that Emory & Henry was somewhat guided by the Secretary of Ed. She went on to explain that Emory & Henry had just

partnered with Old Dominion on a teach-out for a nursing program, and she thought that had led to some ongoing conversations. Although conversations were originally held with UVA Wise when the layout of the HEALS program first began and was expected to expand into Wise County, that did not happen in the initial submission. Dr. Fincher said she would hope to continue to expand the program into that area as it grows, since the primary purpose is about serving southwest Virginia. Senator Pillion concurred, stating that he would be remiss for that reason if he did not ask why UVA Wise was not chosen as the fiscal agent, so that money would be returned to southwest Virginia rather than to Tidewater. He thanked Dr. Fincher for the input.

### **Nominating Committee Report**

Olivia Bailey delivered the report of the Nominating Committee, comprised of Ms. Bailey, Adam Hutchison and Jason Ballard, submitting the following nominees for board officers for the 2024-2026 term:

- Chair: **Senator Travis Hackworth**
- Vice Chair: **Senator Todd Pillion**
- Secretary: **Steve Ahn**

Olivia Bailey made a motion that the recommended slate of officers be approved. **Upon the motion by Ms. Bailey, seconded by Bret Danilowicz and unanimously approved by the board, election of the proposed slate of officers was confirmed.**

Chairman Pillion congratulated the officers elected, noting that they would serve the 2024-2026 term.

### **Chairman's Appointments to the Executive Committee**

Chairman Pillion deferred to Chair-Elect Hackworth for the appointment of members to the Center's Executive Committee. Pursuant to Article IV, Section A of the board's bylaws, Chair-Elect Hackworth 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.

## **Other Business**

In other business, Chairman Pillion said he understood there was a motion from the Executive Committee to amend the employment agreement of the Executive Director. He called upon Adam Hutchison to give that motion. Dr. Hutchison stated that the board's employment agreement with Mr. Matlock is currently due to expire on January 24, 2025, and that Mr. Matlock had expressed a desire to the members of the Executive Committee for an extension of his employment agreement. Dr. Hutchison said it is the consensus of the committee members that the extension should be granted. **He moved that the board's Executive Director Employment Agreement with Mr. Matlock be extended to expire January 31st of 2026, and that the Chairman be authorized to work with Mr. Matlock and the Office of the Attorney General to prepare and execute any documents to effectuate said extension.**

Chairman Pillion stated that the board had heard the motion. He asked if there was any discussion about the motion. There was none.

Chairman Pillion commented that the board is certainly thrilled that David has agreed to stay on a while longer. He said that although the board jokes about the "great" things happening at the Center, in all seriousness it does take a great leader to make those things happen, and the board is excited that Mr. Matlock is going to continue for a few more years to make those things continue to be great. Mr. Matlock thanked Chairman Pillion.

Reiterating that there was a motion, Chairman Pillion called for a second. **Delegate Jason Ballard, among others, seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by the board.**

## **Closing Remarks**

Before the Chair's closing remarks, Mr. Matlock announced that LOVE t-shirts were being gifted to all the board members with a request to take them on their travels around the world, wear them for a photo, and send the photos back to the Center for its "Where is the LOVE?" social media campaign inspired by the Center's LOVE sign on the front lawn.

In his closing remarks, Chairman Pillion reminded the trustees to hold **Thursday, December 12<sup>th</sup>** for the next scheduled full board meeting.



A motion to adjourn was requested. **Adam Hutchison made the motion; the motion was seconded by Delegate Betsy Carr, and the meeting was duly adjourned.**

A complete recording of the meeting may be accessed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AO9D2RCoHco>