

**Virginia Western Community College**  
**Local Advisory Board**  
**Special Called Session #273**  
**January 9, 2019 at 3:30 p.m.**  
**Briefing on College Budget and Enrollment**

Members Present:                    John Francis, Roanoke City  
    Dr. Karen Hiltz, Franklin County  
    Joshua Johnson, Roanoke City – Chair  
    Dr. Forest Jones, Salem City  
    Joyce Kessinger, Botetourt County – Vice Chair  
    Granger Macfarlane, Roanoke City  
    Jim McAden, Roanoke County

Members (Remote)                 Dr. Sam English, Roanoke County  
    Mark Lawrence, Roanoke City  
    Dr. Ken Nicely, Roanoke County  
    Dr. Marie Paretti, Craig County

Staff Present:                        Dr. Robert Sandel, College President and Board Secretary  
    Lisa Ridpath, Vice President of Financial and Administrative Services  
    Jennifer Pittman, Associate Vice President of Human Resources  
    Amy Balzer, Assistant to College President and Recorder

Meeting called to order at 3:35pm by Dr. Sandel.

**I.        College Budget Update**

- Over the past three years, the VCCS and Virginia Western have been experiencing declines in enrollment. This is also more prevalent in SWVA regions.
  - Data shows that the adult learner population is experiencing the largest decline.
  - 15% decrease in total enrollment over past three years, equating to roughly -1700 students.
  - Economy fluctuations have direct impact on enrollment, as estimated 80% of student population is part-time.
- Budget restructuring and many cost savings strategies implemented to avoid negative impacts on personnel as much as possible.
  - Best practices are being researched/reviewed, and increased compressed programming offerings.
  - College-wide personnel restructuring and customer service training encouraged.
- The college performed program reviews to ensure all offerings are viable. Consulted with faculty in every program to review their respective data to ensure awareness in enrollment trends and expenses, so corrective action may be taken if needed.

- Discussion around the high demand for healthcare programs and the need for some type of differential tuition due to costs associated with running these programs.
- Two college-wide town hall meeting took place in April 2018 and October 2018, to share updates on the budget and concerns about possible layoffs.
  - Open communication and transparency have helped improve morale.
- Many cost saving strategies have also been implemented such as reducing the cost of campus-wide copiers and telephone expenses, creating efficiencies in the schedule to reduce the number of adjuncts, utilizing virtual machines which is less expensive than PCs and laptops, and negotiating better rates for software maintenance, to name a few.
- Savings have also been generated through position turnover, vacancies, retirements, and when necessary enhanced retirement options and/or severance. Over the past three years, VWCC has employed the following position restructuring strategies:
  - Enhanced retirements – a supplement to normal retirement in recognition of the position being eliminated after retirement.
  - Position elimination upon attrition – intentional action following a voluntary separation or transfer, some employees accepted positions with the Shared Services Center.
  - Continued vacancies – all vacancies were assessed for immediate need and/or the potential for restructuring
  - Non-renewal of restricted positions – positions utilized on a year-by-year basis were assessed; three (3) Associate Instructor positions were not renewed at the end of the 2017-18 academic year based on enrollment trends.
  - All of these strategies have been employed to avoid layoffs; however, we are now in a position that it is likely that layoffs will be necessary.
    - Last year 1 Faculty position was laid off due to program closure.
  - We deeply regret that these measures are necessary, but we have been working with our colleagues at the System Office to obtain the required approval for reduction actions that may be needed this year. We have received approval of our plan, which includes impact to both faculty and classified staff. In some cases, enhanced retirement may be an option if a more senior staff member volunteers in lieu of less senior staff; however, that remains uncertain until all notifications have been provided.
  - As part of our planning, the leadership team wanted to incorporate a longer notice period than is required in policy so impacted employees will have additional time to consider their options.

- Notifications will be initiated in the coming days and weeks, so our goal is to ensure the Local Board is aware of the planning and decision process surrounding these difficult decisions.
  - Discussion on the importance of realizing the efforts and initiatives undertaken by leadership and college-wide; the college is working to increase enrollment and retain/graduate current students.
  - Chair Johnson noted the importance of the Board presenting a unified and supportive front, so requested talking points for board members to review as a follow up to this meeting.
- These decisions are never pleasant or easy, but are necessary to ensure the long-term sustainability of the college.
- Additionally, we shared at the September 2018 Local Board meeting, a decision has been made to slow down the Parking Garage project to further evaluate enrollment trends and the college’s strategy of increasing online class delivery.
- These are just some of the strategies we have taken to ensure the long-term stability and viability of the college.
  - Opportunity to transform College with innovative and creative programming, conservative operations, relevant curriculum and increased online program offerings.

## **II. General Assembly Budget Amendment Update:**

- VWCC is submitting a budget amendment to the General Assembly for funding consideration related to acquiring the three associate degree programs currently offered by Jefferson College due to their merger with Radford University.
  - Virginia Western is working closely with Radford on acquiring these programs to ensure a smooth transition for the students.
- The three (3) associate degree programs include:
  - Physical Therapy Assistant (PTA) – Local Board and SCHEV have already approved
  - Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA)
  - Surgical Technology (ST)
- The VCCS is charged in the Code of Virginia with the “responsibility for coordinating workforce training at the postsecondary through the associate degree level.” VWCC is

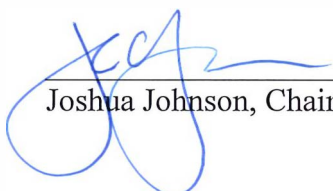
the only public higher education institution in Roanoke that is authorized to award associates degrees.

- VWCC currently offers a number of strong Allied Health programs that fulfill much of the industry's healthcare occupation needs in the Roanoke Valley.
- Our affordable tuition can make these programs more accessible to students, thus providing more opportunity to support the workforce needs of our region. VWCC's tuition is about one-fifth (20%) of JCHS.
- Healthcare programs are expensive to operate with low student-to-faculty ratios (accreditation requirement) and high-cost equipment, which is the purpose of the budget amendment.
  - Discussion returned to the need for consideration of differential tuition for high cost programs. To this date, this has not been something that the VCCS has approved.
- VWCC requested ongoing GF support of \$213,636 to support the hiring of program faculty which is a requirement before the accrediting agency will consider the institution for accreditation and a site visit.
- Additionally, VWCC requests one-time GF support of \$134,000 to fund accreditation fees and necessary equipment to demonstrate commitment to the accrediting agencies.
- Without GF support, VWCC would not be able to acquire and sustain these programs.
  - A suggestion was made for consideration of inquiring on the availability of the Governor's Discretionary Fund for possible healthcare program supplement.

Board members shared full support, and appreciation of the candid and honest discussion.

Dr. Sandel thanked everyone for attending this important meeting and announced that in consideration of full attendance of this meeting and the content shared, the full Board Meeting next week is waived. The meeting packets will be sent via email as usual. Approval of action items will be collected electronically, and then presented for formal affirmation at the March 21, 2019 full Board meeting. He invited all to attend the Local Board Finance Committee Meeting that immediately follow.

Meeting adjourned at 4:35pm

  
Joshua Johnson, Chair

3/21/19  
Date

  
Amy Balzer, Recorder

3/21/19  
Date