

the magazine of the virginia western community college educational foundation

IMPACT

WINTER 2025

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From the cover

Virginia Western President Dr. Robert H. Sandel is featured with Chanell Johnson, a recipient of the Roanoke City Community College Access Program (CCAP) scholarship. Johnson and other CCAP students discuss the program's impact. **Page 17**

Impact magazine is published annually by the Virginia Western Community College Educational Foundation Inc. for donors, alumni and friends of Virginia Western Community College. Content provided by the Educational Foundation staff. Principal photography by Natalee Waters. Design by Gretchen Tipps. Graphics by Mohammed El Mehdi Bouchebra.

The mission

OF THE VIRGINIA WESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION:

To drive a thriving culture of innovative support and philanthropy that enables Virginia Western to dramatically transform individual lives, strengthen communities and advance economic development.

About the Educational Foundation

The Virginia Western Community College Educational Foundation Inc. is an independent, nonprofit 501(c)(3) founded in 1980 and dedicated to assisting students in and out of the classroom as they balance their educational goals and real-life demands.





VISION.

This issue of **IMPACT** celebrates what happens when vision comes to fruition.

Virginia Western's Educational Foundation has a unique and meaningful relationship with true visionaries who understand the power of education to make possible incredible strides in personal achievement, social mobility and regional economic development.

Dr. Robert H. Sandel is such a visionary. His leadership and unparalleled impact on your community college and our region has been an inspiration to all who believe in the power and gift of opportunity. We celebrate his career, we wish him a joyful retirement in June 2025, and we hope you will join us in honoring his legacy by supporting the incredible initiatives he has made possible.

By working closely with so many of you who see the value in our students and the communities we call home, Dr. Sandel and the Educational Foundation are privileged to experience firsthand the real-world transformational results of servant leadership, the triumphs of thoughtful and dedicated investment in scholarship programs, the potential-infused energy of legacy giving and the joy of lifelong connections.

We are honored to share these very special dreams and stories with you. We thank you for having made them realities.

On behalf of the Educational Foundation Board of Directors, I invite you to continue to inspire us with your vision. We can't wait to see what comes next.

Sincerely yours,

Deborah L. Petrine

Chair and CEO, Commonwealth Care of Roanoke

Chair, Virginia Western Community College Educational Foundation

2024 BOARD of DIRECTORS

The Virginia Western Community College Educational Foundation is grateful for the service of its Board of Directors.

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THE VIRGINIA WESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION



2023-24

By The Numbers

THE VIRGINIA WESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION STRIVES TO MAKE COLLEGE POSSIBLE FOR STUDENTS FROM ACROSS THE ROANOKE VALLEY. OUR DONORS HELP US STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITY, BUILD OUR REGION'S ECONOMY AND FILL EMPLOYMENT GAPS.

MORE THAN

\$1.9 MILLION

AWARDED IN TUITION ASSISTANCE AND PROGRAM SUPPORT

1,144
STUDENTS SUPPORTED BY
SCHOLARSHIPS
AND PROGRAM
SUPPORT

\$34 MILLION
FOUNDATION ASSETS
UNDER MANAGEMENT

163
ENDOWED
AND ANNUAL FUNDS

MANAGED

51
PROGRAM SUPPORT
AND GRANT FUNDS



159

STUDENTS SERVED BY
VIRGINIA WESTERN RAPIDS
RESPONSE STUDENT
EMERGENCY FUND



GRATITUDE FOR GROWTH

As faculty and staff prepared for the fall semester, I opened our biannual College In-Service in August with the news that I would retire at the conclusion of the 2024-25 academic year. It is a gift to be finishing my time as Virginia Western's president when the College benefits from such a great deal of momentum. Virginia Western is well-positioned to continue the growth we've worked so hard to achieve.

We have emerged from the pandemic with a continued trendline of increasing enrollment, and we celebrate the Educational Foundation's position of strength to serve the region's students now and in the future. Our academic reputation is solid, as the recent SACSCOC decennial review reaffirmed the College's accreditation for the coming decade.

I shared in August that my greatest satisfaction has involved being part of this faculty and staff, serving our students, and working with the College's Local Advisory Board and Educational Foundation Board. Those elements have formed years full of memories to hold in regard with gratitude.

When Jane and I came to Roanoke in 2001, we found a community we are still pleased to call home. From the start, the Roanoke region has responded whenever I have sought ideas and support to make our students' lives richer and more successful. In turn, our alumni have contributed to the region's successful shifts amid a changing economic landscape.

A recent report from the Lightcast data analytics firm found that Virginia Western added \$329.1 million in annual income to the Roanoke Valley economy. The study found that Virginia Western's impact supported 4,405 jobs, which

translates to one out of every 46 jobs in the Roanoke Valley.

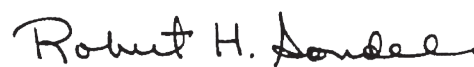
While the larger sphere of higher education anticipates an "enrollment cliff" with a demographic decline in high school graduates, our unique niche means that we continue to enroll students across a wide range of ages and backgrounds.

A third of our students are over age 24, and we continue to find ways to meet our students' needs with wraparound services. Adult learners are particularly served through awarding of Credit for Prior Learning, which honors life and work experience that is equivalent to college-level learning and makes degree completion more time- and cost-effective.

As I conclude my time as Virginia Western's president, I'm reassured each day that the investments made in the College over the past 24 years will continue to reap dividends for our students in the years ahead. We are a welcoming campus with first-class facilities. Our excellent faculty and staff embrace our mission: to provide quality educational opportunities that empower students for success and strengthen communities.

Jane and I are grateful for all the well-wishes we have already received as we embark on this new phase of life. We plan to stay in Roanoke and continue to uphold the mission of Virginia Western Community College, this community we serve and treasure. Thank you for joining us in supporting that work.

Sincerely,



Dr. Robert H. Sandel

President, Virginia Western Community College

VALUE-ADDED RELATIONSHIPS

Educational Foundation Philanthropy Director Amanda Mansfield sat down with Virginia Western President **Robert H. “Bobby” Sandel** shortly after he announced last summer that he would retire in 2025 after 24 years of service to the College. Their conversation touched on his philosophy regarding philanthropy, his perspective on how to build a holistic look at serving the community and his advice for the future.

Amanda: You've always said to me that you believe that no student should ever be denied an education due to financial constraints. Would you say that's at the heart of your belief in philanthropy?

Bobby: Well, my philosophy on philanthropy is that it's a necessity. It defines how you bring value-added service for the College, for the students and the community that you represent.

Virginia Western is the No. 1 educational entity in the region that most students and adults go to after high school. As a community college, we know many individuals need financial assistance beyond federal Pell funding, and our demographics show us that more and more students come to the College with different levels of income. Despite the fact our tuition is very reasonable, having an Educational Foundation working with the community college can go a long way. Our students need our help to fill the gap to make college possible for them.

Amanda: How did you begin to communicate

your vision when you arrived at Virginia Western?

Bobby: When I came to Virginia Western, the first thing I felt we had to do was to listen to business and industry and develop relationships. Twenty-four

years ago, Virginia Western didn't necessarily have the reputation that it could have. There were a lot of perceptions — mostly misperceptions — about what Virginia Western was doing, and what it could do. We needed to correct that, and to help people understand that the community college is the community.

I wanted to meet and learn from folks who could make a difference, people who wanted to hire our graduates. First, we had to find out what programs and subject matters of expertise were needed. Second, we had to make sure that this college had those areas of expertise and programs in place. And third, we had to enroll talent in those programs to be able to build a workforce with the skills and abilities needed to meet those specifications.

We wanted companies using our workforce initiatives to get more and more out of our training

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Community is at the heart of Dr. Robert Sandel's career. Here, he celebrates the new semester with faculty and staff at the College In-Service in August 2024. Accompanied by his wife, Jane, Dr. Sandel announced that he would retire in June 2025.



... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

programs. When I first got here, there was not a lot of information out there and not a lot of follow-through by Virginia Western to initiate training programs. People didn't realize our training programs could be anytime, anywhere, any place — that we would work out a training schedule and customize training programs to meet their criteria, using their terminology, to meet their needs. And that really went over very, very well.

Amanda: How did you inspire the community to get even more involved?

Bobby: When you respond successfully to industry, industry partners will respond back to you in kind. One of the best ways to build a culture of philanthropy is to start with those who know firsthand who you are, and how hard you will work to make our corner of the world the best it can be. These are the partners that will stand first in line to give back to Virginia Western, because we've been of service to them. This is what creating value-added relationships is all about.

I also wanted to invite leaders to get involved in our cause. I was honored to be consistently serving on regional boards of directors, getting

involved in leadership positions, meeting and working with other leaders and building value-added relationships. It has a ripple effect. Other leaders start preaching about what you're talking about, and then still others absorb that message. Praise and advocacy are always better if they come from somebody else, rather than from me. I'm supposed to say those things, I'm the president. Our friends can make our case better than I can. That's what you hope for.

Amanda: You've been at the heart of pioneering transformation and opportunity here at Virginia Western. Can you talk about that?

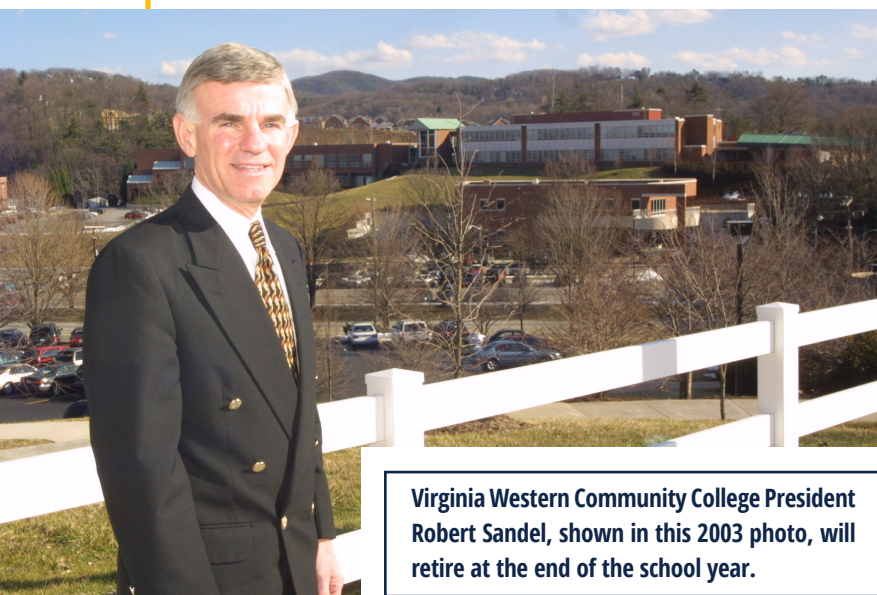
Bobby: So as a next step to adding value, and beyond direct support of particular industries, we wanted to lift the entire community and make a real change in higher education opportunity.

Back in the early 2000s, high school students were not graduating when they needed to graduate, and our city schools especially had a high non-graduation rate. We gathered a team of leaders to start talking about what the College and Foundation could do to address some of these issues. And, you know, all I did was fuel the fire. These leaders came up with the vision to offer some type of scholarship program that could fill the gap of financial need for students. And this was the birth of CCAP (Virginia Western's Community College Access Program).

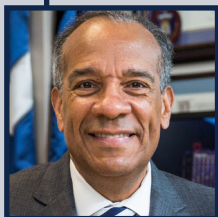
Amanda: More than 15 years later, CCAP has really taken off with donors. Why do you think that's so?

Bobby: The beauty of the CCAP philanthropy model was the fact that we planned to match equally what the localities would give. That's really

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Virginia Western Community College President Robert Sandel, shown in this 2003 photo, will retire at the end of the school year.



Bobby has been tremendously successful in the many ways he has led and guided Virginia Western to truly remarkable heights in its academic and certificate programs, the caring support it provides students and the tremendous growth of the Foundation.

– DR. NATHANIEL L. BISHOP

Community Ambassador, Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine

President Sandel has been steadfast in his support of the Foundation's efforts. He is a tireless advocate for students, accessibility for all and providing the support and innovative programs needed to meet faculty and staff needs. He has indeed been a transformative leader of Virginia Western, and his legacy will last at the College, in students' lives, in the region and in the Commonwealth.



– DEBORAH L. PETRINE

Chair, Commonwealth Care of Roanoke Board

Chair, Virginia Western Educational Foundation Board of Directors



The RAMP accelerator would not be in existence without Bobby Sandel. At a critical time in RAMP's early development, it needed a financial sponsor to become operational. Bobby Sandel and Virginia Western stepped up to fill that need and today the RAMP accelerator thrives. Bobby is a visionary, and without him this region's economy would not be where it is today.

– W. HEYWOOD FRALIN

Chairman, Retirement Unlimited Inc.

Virginia Western Educational Foundation Board of Directors

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unprecedented. You don't find many foundations who ask for money, and also promise to match whatever is given. We found out quickly that everyone involved felt strongly that they did not want to disappoint students who wanted to go to the next step.

When we went to see Forest Jones, who was Salem city manager at the time, to pilot the idea, Forest didn't blink. He said, "That is one of the most wonderful ideas I've ever heard. I'll make sure that we can make this happen, and I really appreciate the fact that the Foundation is putting up their part."

We went to Roanoke City schools next, and Rita Bishop was the superintendent at that time. And of course, she bought right into this. I always use her quote, one that has always stuck with me. She said, "Bobby, I have so many parents. And they'll say there is no hope. There is hope now for my children to go to college." There was, and there is, hope.

And then we began to see large numbers of students across our service area who started wanting CCAP. I think it surprised everyone, the number of students who were coming to Western. CCAP became the catalyst that got graduation rates going back up. It's hard to believe it's been 16 years.

Amanda: So much has changed — there has been so much growth over the years. Can you speak to that?

Bobby: That's what I mean by the impact of focusing on value-added service, support and philanthropy. It transforms. The Educational Foundation has really, really grown — not only has CCAP exponentially grown from that beginning, but the Foundation now manages 153 other scholarships, and they've built a student

emergency fund to help students facing critical life issues stay in school. What's more, they're making real headway to achieving a permanent unrestricted endowment to support all of these ideas and more into the future.

These are game-changers, things that would have been impossible to imagine at the start. All because we demonstrated we were here to grow and serve our community, and then asked for support to make that happen.

Amanda: You've frequently said, "It's all about relationships." What has been the most gratifying part for you personally about building those value-added relationships?

Bobby: People's perceptions have changed. I went to a function the other day, and I had a key business leader come up to me, offered me his card and said, "I want to be a part of what y'all are about." I didn't go to him. He came to me.

Or someone will call me and say, "I want to help somebody." Believe me, individuals are just as important as the big companies. They will reach out to you or me, or anyone in the Foundation because they feel that it's easy to talk to any of us, because we are all here working toward the same goal — making college possible.

Amanda: What do you see as next for the Educational Foundation and all of these relationships?

Bobby: When you can harness opportunities that can come from a community, a foundation and a college working together as one, anything can happen.

Leadership matters. The leadership of the Foundation is a big part of that. It's having the right people on the board who can think outside of the box and who challenge not just the College, but challenge the president to make this place the best it can be. ■



Because Dr. Sandel understood what education is supposed to be, for students' betterment, he inspired me and my family to create the Hall Associates Career Center and be involved in the College in many different ways. As always, he likes to say, 'We change people's lives.'

– EDWIN C. HALL

Chair, Hall Associates; Past-President, Virginia Western Community College Educational Foundation Board of Directors

His unwavering commitment to expanding programs and investing in cutting-edge learning facilities will leave an indelible mark on the region, establishing a legacy that will enrich the lives of students and the community for generations.

– DR. DAVID DORÉ

Chancellor, Virginia Community College System



Dr. Sandel, your deeds speak for you far better than anything I can say. You have devoted yourself unselfishly to a host of causes. Your activities have been so extensive it would almost seem one lifetime could not encompass them all. Yet you have found the time and the energy to serve, to work and to lead.

– FOREST G. JONES

Retired City Manager, City of Salem



Bobby has a larger-than-life personality that makes you want to join him in championing whatever he is working on. What makes him so unique is that while he is a dynamic, curious and engaging communicator, his ability to follow through and effectively address economic development challenges truly sets him apart.

– TODD PUTNEY

Chairman, Rockingham Insurance Group
Chair, Virginia Western Community College Local Advisory Board



NEW HORIZONS AWARD

Virginia Western's Community College Access Program (CCAP) was selected as winner of the 2024 Excellence in Education: Removing Barriers Award by the Virginia Community Colleges System. Virginia Western Community College and Educational Foundation staff who work on CCAP received the award at the April 2024 New Horizons Conference for community college educators and leaders. The conference theme was "Education Transformed: Classroom Prepared; Workplace Ready." ■



Dr. David Doré (from left), chancellor of the Virginia Community College System; Allison Dooley; Carolyn Payne; Sharnice Mayo; Frank Tyree; Wanda DiMarco; Anna Goltz; Carole Tarrant; Amanda Mansfield; and Craig Herndon, senior vice chancellor for administration, finance and technology.

NEW HELP FOR FINANCIAL AID

The Roanoke region saw its first-ever communitywide event featuring financial aid experts in January 2024, thanks to an initiative launched by the Virginia Western Educational Foundation and the Roanoke Higher Education Center (RHEC).

Representatives from Hollins University, Ferrum College, Radford University, Roanoke College, Virginia Tech and Virginia Western Community

College gathered at RHEC for the "FAFSA Fire" event. The free workshop was intended to give students and their families an overview of the financial aid process and the newly redesigned FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).

Completing the FAFSA is a requirement to apply for Virginia Western's CCAP scholarship. ■

For information on the 2025 FAFSA Fire event, email ccap@virginiawestern.edu.



VIRGINIA WESTERN'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM

2023-24

CCAP
COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM
VIRGINIA WESTERN

By The Numbers

FOUNDED IN 2008, CCAP IS ONE OF THE COMMONWEALTH'S FIRST "FREE COLLEGE" PROGRAMS AND NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED FOR ITS UNIQUE PRIVATE-PUBLIC FUNDING MODEL. IT WAS DESIGNED TO MAKE COLLEGE POSSIBLE AT VIRGINIA WESTERN FOR ROANOKE VALLEY STUDENTS FROM ALL BACKGROUNDS, AND TO ADDRESS THE STUDENT DEBT CRISIS.

SINCE CCAP'S INCEPTION

\$11.8 MILLION

HAS BEEN PROVIDED IN TUITION ASSISTANCE

THAT INVESTMENT HAS HELPED
ALLEVIATE DEBT FOR

4,496

STUDENTS

CCAP STUDENTS HAVE VOLUNTEERED

37,000

HOURS OF COMMUNITY
SERVICE

OF ALL RECENT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES ENROLLED AT
VIRGINIA WESTERN

39% PARTICIPATE IN CCAP

69% INTEND TO TRANSFER TO A FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION

AVERAGE FROM 2019-23

ABOUT CCAP

- ✓ CCAP provides up to two years of tuition for high school graduates who meet program requirements, as funding allows. Students may also have the opportunity to receive tuition support for workforce credentials.
- ✓ The program is made possible thanks to a series of public/private partnerships drawing on support from individuals, businesses, foundations, local governments, community groups, alumni and friends.
- ✓ CCAP serves the entire Virginia Western Community College service region, including the counties of Botetourt, Craig, Franklin and Roanoke and the cities of Roanoke and Salem.
- ✓ Participants are required to volunteer four hours of community service each semester.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: [VIRINIAWESTERN.EDU/CCAP](https://www.viriniawestern.edu/ccap)

CCAP ANNUAL AND ENDOWED DONORS

(July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024)

President's Circle - Visionary

\$600,000 +

The Estate of John A. and Iris P. Bostian

President's Circle - Advocate

\$150,000 - \$299,999

County of Roanoke

President's Circle - Catalyst

\$100,000 - \$149,999

Anonymous

Estate of Margaret H. Clear

Franklin County
City of Roanoke

Leadership Society

\$50,000 - \$99,999

City of Salem

Virginia Tobacco
Region Revitalization
Commission

Charter Society

\$25,000 - \$49,999

Botetourt County

Scott A. Graeff

Richard & Caroline T.
Gwathmey Memorial
Trust, Bank of America,
N.A., Trustee

Community Partners

\$15,000 - \$24,999

Craig County

Dean's Society

\$5,000 - \$14,999

ARKAY

Berglund Automotive
Group

Botetourt County Public
Schools Education
Foundation

Optical Cable Corporation

P1 Technologies Inc.

Pinnacle Financial Partners

J. Samuel Taylor

Suzanne W. Thorniley

Virginia529

Scholar Society

\$1,500 - \$4,999

Adams Construction Co.

AECOM

Charlotte Hines

Forest and Betty Jones

Dr. Forest I. Jones

McAden Charitable Trust

Omma Management LLC

Mary and Douglas Waters, in
honor of Dr. Robert Sandel

Champions

\$750 - \$1,499

Avis Construction Company Inc.

Gregory D. Cundiff

Rockydale Quarries Corporation

Friends

\$250 - \$749

Larry and Janice Davidson

Wanda and Paul DiMarco

William Gaither

Joan K. Petrus, in memory of
James Arend

Mr. & Mrs. Todd A. Putney, in
memory of John R. Francis Jr.

Lisa Ridpath

Gregory Shelton

Contributors

\$1 - \$249

Anonymous (3)

Philip W. Barbour

Shannon Brooks

Dick and Sandi Clemmer

Sheila B. Delp

Patti Dickerson, in memory of
Robert Hamilton Sandel, Jr.

Nathan Dornblaser

Gary R. Duerk

Mr. & Mrs. Roy Dwyer, in
honor of our daughter,
Kaitlyn Dwyer

Joyce M. Foster

Karenna Glover

Anna Goltz

Wali Khalifah

Missy Rakes, in memory of
John R. Francis Jr.

Shana Roche

James Sargent

Sandra Snead, in memory of
John R. Francis Jr.

Kay and Wayne Strickland, in
memory of John R. Francis
Jr.

Carole Tarrant

Rudy Van Thiel

Barry and Kathy Webb



MAKING AN IMPACT



Why did you choose Virginia Western Community College?



"Because I didn't know if I would like college, so I applied to CCAP to try it out."

Reilly Hill / Maintenance Technology and Welding & Metal Processing CSC



"Because it has CCAP, is close to home and my friends attend here."

Laura Que Dang / Physical Therapy Assistant Program



What difference did a CCAP scholarship make in your life?



"It has let me save money toward my four-year degree so I can graduate debt-free."

Micah Keyser-Rothgery / A.S. Business Administration



"It's a big difference being able to go to college and not be in debt."

Charles Preston / Entrepreneurship Plus CSC



"With CCAP, I can attend college and use my fullest potential without having financial worries."

Chanell Johnson / Liberal Arts - Fine Arts

SUPPORT PROPELS AN INTERNATIONAL CAREER

BY KARENNA GLOVER

Panama, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, and China — these are just some of the destinations Marla Moock, 25, has visited in the first nine months as a sales application engineer for port solutions at TMEIC. The Roanoke-based corporation specializes in electrical and automation systems for industrial plants.

Reflecting on her travels and the rapid opportunities presented in her role at TMEIC, Moock is overwhelmed with gratitude as she considers the journey that brought her to where she is today.

Moock grew up in southeast Roanoke and graduated from Patrick Henry High School in 2017. Coming from humble beginnings, with no one in her family having attended college, she knew the expense of higher education would be a challenge.

Nonetheless, she was eager to explore the opportunities available to her.

She applied to Virginia Western Community College and was accepted into the Community College Access Program (CCAP), which covered her tuition. She also received two Educational Foundation scholarships, the American Sign Language Endowed Scholarship in memory of Laura Knight Schowe and the Educational Foundation Textbook Scholarship.

When she was introduced to the College's Mechatronics Program and met one of the professors, she knew she had found her place at Virginia Western.

"I fell in love with that program," Moock recalled. "I felt like I really found my niche and was able to accomplish a lot of things I never dreamed I'd have the chance to do."

From the 3D printers to the equipment in the fabrication lab (FabLab), Moock was thrilled to gain real engineering knowledge and skills while working on projects that fueled her creativity. "Virginia

To have come from a humble start, I never saw myself traveling the world and going places like I am.

— **MARLA MOOCK**

Virginia Western Community College graduate

Western really gets it right — giving you hands-on experiences and teaching you to work," she said.

During her time at Virginia Western, Moock balanced several roles: She worked as a FabLab technician, served as a robotics mentor for Virginia Western's summer camp, was an assistant at the Science Museum of Western Virginia, and completed an engineering internship at Associated Asphalt.

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I wanted to see her do well and meet her goals. I knew she could be successful before she knew she could be successful.

— **AMY WHITE** Virginia Western Dean of STEM and Workforce Solutions

... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

She joined several clubs and found opportunities to collaborate with peers from other campus organizations to meet shared goals. For example, she and another student started the FabLab Club, and they partnered with the Horticulture Club to use the 3D printers to create planter pots, which were sold as a fundraiser for both clubs.

"I found I really loved working on projects outside of classes, and I always had the support of the faculty," she said. "It was exciting and encouraging, and an experience I don't think would be as easy to find at a four-year school."

Dr. David Berry, head of the Mechatronics Program and one of Moock's professors, took notice of her passion for learning. "Marla was completely immersed in projects, so much so that it was difficult for me to stay current," he said. "I remember her hauling project materials into the lab every day. She was so energized that she made everyone around her want to go the extra mile."

After graduating in 2019 with an Associate of Applied Science degree in Mechatronics, which prepares students to directly enter the workforce, Moock wanted to continue her education at a four-year school. But that plan was disrupted when the school she'd set her sights on didn't accept many of the credits she earned in the applied science degree program. That's when she turned to Amy White, dean of Virginia Western's School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics as well as Workforce Solutions.

White had mentored Moock since she arrived at the College, observing her dedication to her academics and her proactive approach to projects. "I wanted to see her do well and meet her goals,"

White said. "I knew she could be successful before she knew she could be successful."

Moock's drive and willingness to seek help enabled her to navigate her changing plans post-graduation. She worked for Associated Asphalt, where she began working while a student, for three years after receiving her AAS degree in Mechatronics. Meanwhile, with White's guidance, she re-enrolled at Virginia Western to complete coursework that would transfer to a four-year school.

She graduated two years later with an Associate of Science, which is a transfer degree accepted by Virginia four-year schools. "That experience is a real testament to her character and her resilience," White said. "She didn't let herself be defeated, and that spirit continues to make her immensely successful."

Moock then transferred to Sweet Briar College, where she majored in Engineering and minored in Environmental Science, graduating in 2023. Shortly after, she took a job at TMEIC, where she writes proposals for shipping ports needing new equipment for shipping cranes. TMEIC has valued her AAS in mechatronics, as it complements her BS in Engineering, she said.

Moock is full of appreciation for the investment TMEIC makes in their employees and the opportunities she has had to grow her career, including extensive international travel.

"To have come from a humble start, I never saw myself traveling the world and going places like I am," she said. "I look back on the last seven years, beginning at Virginia Western, and realize that if any one piece of the puzzle had shifted, it could have turned out so differently. But I got here because of the incredible support and encouragement from others along the way." ■

WEAVER EXEMPLIFIES PERSISTENCE AND COMMITMENT TO SERVICE THROUGH DENTAL CAREER

The Virginia Western Community College Educational Foundation named Yolonda L. Weaver, DDS, ('94) as recipient of the College's 2024 Distinguished Alumni Award.

Dr. Weaver's journey at Virginia Western began in 1992, when she embarked on her path in dental hygiene. At the time she applied to the program, Weaver was a dental assistant in her hometown of Winchester. She loved the dental profession and working with patients, and wanted to return home after graduation to serve her community. Upon graduation with an Associate of Applied Science in Dental Hygiene in 1994, Weaver fulfilled her goal and returned to Winchester, where she practiced dental hygiene for five years.

While continuing to work as a registered dental hygienist, Weaver completed her prerequisite coursework and earned her bachelor's degree from Radford University in 1999. Her thirst for knowledge led her to the University of Tennessee's Health Science Center School of Dentistry in Memphis, Tenn., where she earned her Doctor of Dental Surgery degree in 2003.

"Yolonda came into the program as a first-

generation college student and an individual eager to expand her knowledge base, improve her skills and provide the best treatment possible to the individuals in her care," recalled Martha H. Sullivan, now dean of Virginia Western's School of Health Professions but then a member of the Dental Hygiene faculty. "She was outstanding in the classroom, and has become a consummate professional and a role model for all."



DR. YOLONDA WEAVER

In 2005, after marrying and relocating to Northern Virginia, Weaver began working as an associate dentist in Reston before seizing the opportunity to acquire Fairfax Dental Center in 2008. Since then, her practice has flourished and she has been named "Top Dentist" by Washingtonian, Virginia Living and Northern Virginia magazines for the past 14 years.

Throughout her career, Weaver has volunteered at local dental clinics and programs, including Give Kids a Smile Day and Missions of Mercy. Her dedication to serving the underserved and improving access to dental care exemplifies her commitment to the well-being of her community. ■

RADIOGRAPHY CELEBRATES HALF-CENTURY OF GRADUATES

BY ERICA MYATT

Virginia Western Community College's Radiography Program celebrated 50 years of graduates at a reunion program, "Decades of Excellence," in May 2024.

Attendees from those five decades reminisced over displays from the College and program archives with past pinning ceremony programs, newspaper clippings and framed photos. Radiography Program Head Susan Nolley led tours to show alumni who remembered Anderson Hall what the program's classroom and laboratory space looks like in the Fralin Center for Science and Health Professions.

A common thread among speakers and attendees was praise for the bedrock of the program, its succession of directors: John Lamanca from 1971-1976; the late Rita David from 1976-1994; Shirl Lamanca from 1994-2012; Mary Loritsch from 2012-2015; and Nolley, from 2016 to the present.

"I have come back to honor John and his work in establishing this program, and Ms. David, who has since passed on. They were great role models," said Don Lowe, a member of the first graduating class, that of 1974. Lowe went on to a long career in radiography and education in Southwest Virginia, culminating in his role as director of the Southwest Virginia Community College Radiography Program

Virginia Western Radiography Program Head Susan Nolley (left) and retired Program Director Shirl Lamanca both addressed the gathering.





As a member of the class of 2024, Zach Cregger was in the program's 50th graduating class.

from 2001 to 2016.

Radiography has "been an exemplary program since the time I've been here," Dr. Robert Sandel, president of Virginia Western, told the reunion attendees. "I'm proud of everyone here, and I'm proud of these faculty members. A program is only good if it's got good faculty members. Faculty are the key," he said.

Alumni also heard words of encouragement from Nolley, Shirl Lamanca, and a written message from Loritsch.

"The time you spent learning and perfecting your craft cannot be reduced to a mere certification or credential. Although that is necessary to work, your education and experience have afforded you the opportunity to make a vital difference to your patients' lives and your own," Nolley told the alumni. "Take pride in your profession and pass it along. We have come a long way, and it is not time to coast. We must continue to push forward for our patients' health and well-being. As

we understand more and more about radiation dose and its short- and long-term effects, having a qualified, well-trained radiographer is vital."

Shirl Lamanca spoke "with reverence" of John Lamanca and Rita David. "We have lived through an unparalleled and amazing fifty years. And I was here 38 of those years. Fifty years in which our profession has experienced nothing short of unprecedented technological advancements," she said. "These technological advancements have changed the practice of medicine. They've saved lives, increased access to health care, and improved the quality of lives for our patients and for us."

Nolley gave special words to the class of 2024: the 50th graduating class, who have joined the ranks of hundreds of Radiography Program alumni. "You are just beginning. Look around the room," she exhorted them. "See the legacy that they have left and created. What will you do with your opportunity? How will you make a difference? How will you change the imaging world?"

One of those new alumni, Zach Cregger, said his experience in the program was "overwhelming with joy." He was beginning cross-training to enter the MRI field. "My time in radiography school taught me to see beyond the surface and find clarity in every challenge," Cregger said. ■

Displays of photos and memorabilia showed the program's history.



DIGITIZED COLLEGE CATALOGS EXPAND EDUCATIONAL ACCESS FOR ALUMNI

The passage of time can cause a digital divide and an educational barrier, especially for students trying to transfer their pre-2015 credits from Virginia Western on to other institutions.

When applying for transfer credit at other schools, students need to provide the course descriptions from the annual College catalogs for evaluation. Recent Virginia Western graduates can find their course descriptions online, but alums who graduated before 2015 have often asked Brown Library to search the archives and provide digital scans of the needed pages.

"The library was getting maybe 10 calls a month from alums needing access to the archives and help finding old paper course catalogs for anything prior to 2015," said Dale Dulaney, Open Educational Resources and Collections librarian.

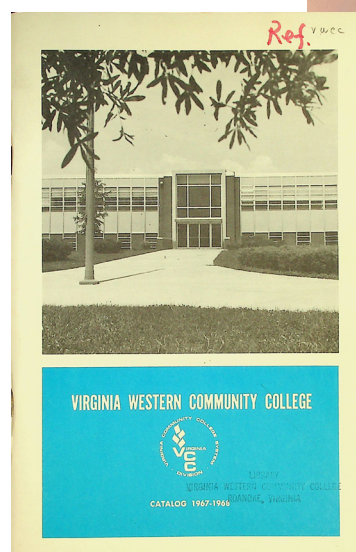
The situation also helped put a spotlight on an unlikely slice of Virginia Western history, thanks to the patient work of Clair Spencer, library assistant, scanning paper records. Brown Library, which manages the College archive, recently completed the project of digitizing 47 print catalogs that date back to the late 1960s. In all, 7,876 scanned pages are now available on the library website to complement the more recent, born-digital catalogs.

"As we went along, I began to see that these mundane catalogs contained quite a bit of College history as well. Many of the covers, especially from the early years, were printed in glorious colors," Dulaney said. "It looks like many of our graphic design and photography students were inspired by Andy Warhol and psychedelia."

Catalogs list programs that have come and gone, such as Radio and Television Production Technology and the Stenographic program. Photographs of students, faculty, and the campus are contained throughout most catalogs. In the first catalogs from 1967 through 1970, the college acknowledges an ongoing challenge with the disclaimer, "Until further development of the campus, parking will be a problem."

The College archive is a non-circulating collection of items from the College's founding until now. Dulaney and the team at Brown Library continue to collect, organize and preserve objects that tell the story of Virginia Western.

"My favorite thing in the archive right now is a class ring,



JOIN YOUR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION TODAY!

Don't think you know the faces of our alumni? Think again! Virginia Western touches nearly every household in the Roanoke region, in one way or another. You may be surprised that more than 15,000 members share your alumni pin. We want to hear your story and hope you'll contribute to shaping your Alumni Association.

To catch up on what's new, subscribe to the alumni e-newsletter and check out the benefits of joining your Virginia Western Alumni Association.

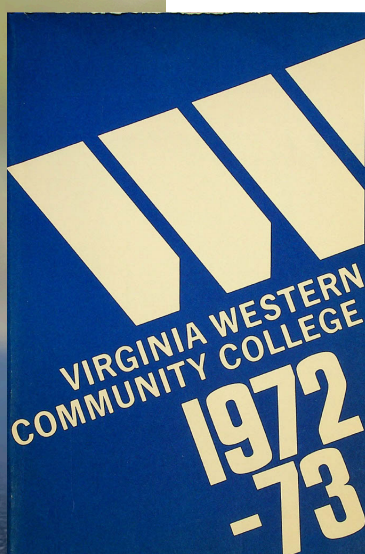
Visit viriniawestern.edu/alumni; contact Amanda Mansfield, Philanthropy Director, at amansfield@viriniawestern.edu or call (540) 857-6962.

because rings were only made for the first few years," he said. "We don't even know exactly what year it's from. We think it's very rare. We also have a nurse's cap given to the alum during her graduation ceremony. That's from one of the first

cohort years."

Brown Library staff are always on the lookout for other worthy objects or records that help to tell the story of Virginia Western. If something is of particular interest, Dulaney will set a "watch alert" on eBay to receive notice in case suitable items become available.

"We're especially hoping someone has pennants to donate to the archives, but I'm also watching for shirts or clothing with logos, maybe jackets. We also need more of the pins given out during graduation pinning ceremonies through different eras. Those would really take our collection to the next level." ■



If you have items

relating to Virginia Western and would like to donate them, email library@viriniawestern.edu or call (540) 857-7303.

GRADUATION

More than 400 graduates attended Virginia Western's 58th commencement, held May 10, 2024, at the Berglund Center in Roanoke. For the 2023-2024 annual year, Virginia Western welcomed 1,035 people to its growing alumni network. These students earned a total of 1,298 degrees and certificates.

Briana Wood, a 2024 graduate, gave the student welcome speech, encouraging listeners to "look at what you enjoy doing in your spare time, and find a way to turn your interests into a career."

Virginia Sen. Chris Head provided the keynote address, emphasizing the importance of personal communication. "You are about to be graduates of a community college. Live with an emphasis on that first word, every bit as much as the second," Head said.

During the ceremony, Virginia Western awarded a posthumous honorary degree to John Francis Jr., who served on the Local Advisory Board from 2018, including as chair beginning in 2022, until his passing in February 2024. His wife of 47 years, Rosemary, accepted the degree. ■







FRALIN FUTURES SCHOLAR FINDS HER NICHE

Briana Wood received career advice from Virginia Western that helped change her educational trajectory.

BY KARENNA GLOVER

As a little girl, Briana Wood grew up playing on a family member's farm. It's where she learned to drive 4-wheelers, motorcycles, and eventually topless Jeeps and other cars. This exposure helped her develop a love for cars — not just riding them but understanding the engineering behind them.

Briana attended Northside High School, where she spent most of her time as a varsity cheerleader and working part-time jobs. When it came time to decide what was next for her after graduation in 2015, Wood was torn between the two paths it seemed all the women in her family followed — teaching or nursing.

She started studying nursing at Dabney S. Lancaster Community College (now Mountain Gateway Community College), but after struggling with passing the first semester, she dropped out

of the program and then enrolled in registered nursing at Virginia Western Community College. Just four weeks into the fall semester of 2017, Wood fell into a tough financial situation and needed to start working full time. Balancing her nursing classes and work was too much, so Briana withdrew from Virginia Western.

"Honestly, it was a blessing in disguise," Wood said. "I got into nursing thinking it was what I was supposed to do as a female and as a way to get a degree and start making better money. But I knew nursing just wasn't for me."

For the next five years, Wood continued working as a hostess and waitress at several local restaurants, until the pandemic hit. Work slowed for Wood, and she found herself contemplating what was next. "I really thought about what I'm passionate about and could I turn that passion into a career," she recalled.

... CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

I had to put aside the stigma I put on myself. I had always viewed automotive as a guy's sport, but I realized even if I'm a girl I can go against the odds and become successful because I'm passionate about it.

— BRIANA WOOD

Virginia Western Community College graduate

... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

In January 2022, Wood met with staff at Virginia Western's Hall Associates Career Center and explained her passion for automotives and her desire to work in engineering for a GT racing team or an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) company like Audi or BMW. She was introduced to Dr. David Berry, Program Head of Mechatronics at Virginia Western, who suggested she enroll in the program's Design Engineering Technology specialization. The program brings together electronic, mechanical and computer engineering, developing machines and devices that can sense their environment, process information and act on it for applications like automotive and aerospace

systems, robotics and much more.

"It was after meeting Dr. Berry that it all made sense," Wood said. "I had to put aside the stigma I put on myself. I had always viewed automotive as a guy's sport, but I realized even if I'm a girl I can go against the odds and become successful because I'm passionate about it."

Women have always been underrepresented in programs like Mechatronics, but those who enroll excel and quickly become frontrunners, according to Berry, noting that Wood was no exception.

"Dynamic is the best word I can think of for Briana. From the beginning, I've been blown away by how much she collaborated with the team and really embraced getting her hands dirty. From the first day, it was clear she was going to be successful no matter where she was going," Berry said. "She doesn't let anything stop her."

Briana Wood and Dr. David Berry work on a Universal Robots collaborative robot, which can be programmed to respond to part position on a conveyor belt.



ABOUT THE FRALIN FUTURES STEM-H SCHOLARSHIP

- Established in 2019 thanks to generous support from the Horace G. Fralin Charitable Trust
- Focuses on the “finish line” for students — their last two semesters before graduating
- Supports the cost of tuition and a matching monetary stipend
- Includes success coach support, cohort activities and mentorship opportunities

SCHOLARSHIP OUTCOMES

134

scholarship recipients since 2019

97%

graduate on time (100 percent in past three years)

85%

transferred six months after graduating ~ *

92%

were employed in their program of study six months after graduation ~ ^

~ Data based on survey results; if a recipient did not respond, they were excluded from the percentage.

* Percentage of those who graduated on time with a transfer degree (Associate of Arts or Associate of Science)

^ Percentage of those who graduated on time with a technical degree (Associate of Applied Science or Certificate)

During her time at Virginia Western, Wood was active with the Appalachian Engineers club; had an internship at Mack Truck; interned with Rhenus Automotive in Industrial Engineering; and interned as a technician at an automotive shop, Driven Automotive. She was also a Fralin Futures Scholar, which covered the last two semesters of her Virginia Western tuition and offered her additional career prep programming. In addition to not having to work to cover her college expenses, Wood said she found the workshops for Fralin Scholars incredibly valuable.

“One of my favorites was when we did the CliftonStrengths Assessment,” she said. “I see the assessment results on LinkedIn profiles of many racing team leaders, so understanding what it means will definitely help as I start to apply for jobs.”

Wood was the student welcome speaker at the 2024 Commencement, where she shared about her trials and tribulations in the beginning of her college career. She ended the speech with the success of finally discovering the career path for which she’d been longing.

This fall she enrolled in Old Dominion University’s Mechanical Engineering Technology online program, where she will earn her bachelor’s degree. From there, she hopes to land a job with a racing team in Charlotte, N.C., or wherever her passion leads her.

“Growing up around automobiles was really the catalyst to my future,” she said. “It’s very niche, but it’s what I love.” ■

WORKSHOPS HELP PREPARE SCHOLARS FOR NAVIGATING FUTURE EMPLOYMENT

BY KARENNA GLOVER

Imagine you're at work, hunger strikes and you decide to pop some popcorn in the breakroom microwave. While you're there, a coworker leans over and says, "You know making popcorn here is against work policy." You're wondering if the coworker's warning was just a joke, as the microwave beeps signaling cook time has ended.

Later that afternoon, you're called into the boss's office and asked why you broke HR policy and made popcorn, which the policy states is a fire hazard and can be a nuisance to others.

This scenario was one of many Virginia Western Community College students in the Fralin Futures program had to play out as part of a workshop on navigating workplace challenges. The workshop, facilitated by John Mortenson and Becky Saeger, instructional designers at Carilion Clinic's Talent Development center, was a first-time event for the Fralin Futures program, and was part of a new

focus this year on not just helping students land jobs, but helping them successfully transition into the workforce.

In addition to the popcorn policy scenario, the workshop allowed students to understand some situations they may face at their jobs and collaboratively discuss how they would handle these challenges, like balancing being a team player while advocating for yourself, and what to



The goal is for students to leave with a bank of scenarios that they've role-played covering tricky situations they may eventually need to navigate.

SCHUYLER van MONTFRANS
Fralin Futures Success Coach

do if a coworker makes a mistake.

"Instead of telling them how they should react, we put them in situations and let them do the work," said Mortenson. "They were engaged, had great discussion and feedback. They are a very sharp group."

Involving local employers, like Carilion Clinic, in the Fralin Futures program has long been a

VIRGINIA WESTERN | FRALIN FUTURES

priority, and one that the program's success coach, Schuyler van Montfrans, hopes to expand.

Initially the program's focus was on providing resources to ensure students were graduating, based on data that had shown that often students would get close to finishing their degree but could get derailed by financial strains or other stressors. As the program evolved, the focus shifted to helping students get a job with support around resume writing and interview practice and getting professional headshots they can use on LinkedIn for networking.

But new in this fifth year of the program is the focus on navigating the first year on the job, exploring topics such as cultivating relationships with coworkers and supervisors; owning and learning from your mistakes; being coachable and accountable; and providing critical feedback to a coworker.

"We received feedback from employers that there's a gap between students landing a job, but struggling with the transition and challenges that come with the first year on the job," van Montfrans said. "The goal is for students to leave with a bank of scenarios that they've role-played covering tricky situations they may eventually need to navigate."

In addition to the workshops and workforce preparation, Fralin Futures offers scholarship funding to STEM-H students for the final two semesters prior to graduation. In 2023-24, just over \$224,000 was awarded to 30 students. Since the program was started in 2019, 135 students have participated, and more than \$1 million in scholarships has been awarded.

Daniel Juilfs was one of the 2023-24 Fralin Futures Scholars. He went back to school at 34. But even with the work experience he's had, he found great value in the workplace prep programming. "The things I was originally taught more than 10 years ago about preparing a resume and networking, the best practices have really changed, so having the mock interviews with local employers was very worthwhile and valuable to me."

Juilfs enrolled in the Information Systems Technology Program to become a software developer. He received funding for this pathway through the G3 program, and put in the work to maintain a 4.0 GPA and take advantage of every opportunity available to him.

Being a Fralin Futures Scholar has provided him an abundance of resources, connection to on-campus support, and a feeling of belonging, Juilfs said.

"Schuyler brought us breakfast for finals, checks in on us regularly, and just goes out of his way to make sure everything is functioning like a well-oiled machine," he said. "His involvement has made my VWCC experience better, and I value the scholarship on a deeper level because of the investment he makes in each of us."

Juilfs, who graduated in May 2024, said he may work for a few years and then pursue a bachelor's degree.

The funding provided by the scholarship allows Fralin Futures students, like Juilfs, to not have to work during their final two semesters, allowing them to focus on their academics and their next step. ■

LAUNCHING PAD FOR CAREERS

Fralin Futures helps scholar begin cancer research while a student

BY KARENNA GLOVER

Since she was a little girl, Hannah Puskar wanted to study science and work in the medical field. When she was in seventh grade, her cellular biology class turned her toward the field of oncology. But when COVID hit her sophomore year, her path took an unexpected jog.

A first-generation college student, Puskar had always seen herself on a clear path from high school to a four-year college and then on to medical school. But as she was preparing to graduate from Glenvar High School in 2022, she felt overwhelmed by the idea of navigating a large campus, and even the application process was daunting.

She applied for the CCAP scholarship at Virginia Western and when she received it, she decided Virginia Western would be a “launching pad” for her career in oncology.

Eligible for Fralin Futures through her STEM-related studies, Puskar said the relationships she’s built with like-minded student scholars have really contributed to her academic success. “Fralin Futures has given me the space to feel connected and flourish with other determined and motivated students,” she said.

Additionally, the opportunities the program provided have opened doors and validated her interest in

oncology. Through Fralin Futures, Puskar learned about the Blue Ridge Partnership for Health Science Careers (BRPHS), a regional partnership to fill the STEM-related career pipeline. In the fall of 2023, she became a student ambassador for the BRPHS. Through that opportunity, she learned about an internship at the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute (FBRI) at Virginia Tech Carilion. Leveraging the career prep resources provided through the Fralin Futures program, she applied, interviewed and was accepted as Virginia Western’s first student intern at FBRI.

Working alongside graduate students, post-doctoral students and PhD candidates 20 hours a week, Puskar’s lab work focused on the circadian clock and its relationship to cancer therapies.

“Being in the lab has allowed me a chance to work in cancer research, and supported my goal to just learn as much as I can about the disease and field I want to work in,” she said.

Puskar graduated from Virginia Western in May 2024, but will continue her work at FBRI as she pursues a microbiology degree from Virginia Tech. “Being a Fralin scholar connected me with opportunities I would never have been able to get on my own, and experiences I would not have had if I had gone to Virginia Tech directly out of high school.” ■

Fralin Futures success coach Schuyler van Montfrans works with Hannah Puskar.



NEW EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS AND PROGRAM FUNDS

Established July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024

- Bent Mountain Center Annual Scholarship
- Margaret and Benton Clear Endowed STEM/STEM-H Scholarship
- Margaret and Benton Clear Endowed Fund for VWCC CCAP
- Brooke Ferguson Memorial Scholarship
- Cornerstone Building Brands Annual Scholarship
- Joseph Alexander Bostian Memorial Fund for CCAP
- Laurens Sartoris Commonwealth Legacy Scholarship for Nursing Students
- Linda French Cecil Memorial Endowed Scholarship
- Michael Smith Commonwealth Legacy Scholarship
- Richard & Caroline T. Gwathmey Memorial Trust
- STEM Day Program Fund
- Student Success Funds
- Virginia Restaurant Lodging and Travel Association Foundation Scholarship
- Virginia Western Bee Campus Fund

HOW TO ESTABLISH A SCHOLARSHIP

Scholarship funds provide support for tuition, books and other related expenses for qualifying Virginia Western students. The Educational Foundation administers two basic types of scholarships:

Annual scholarships

You may fund a named scholarship on an annual basis that awards the entire amount during the year in which you give it.

Endowed scholarships

You may fund a named scholarship that will continue to help students in perpetuity and leave a lasting legacy for your family or organization. An endowed scholarship may be funded over a maximum of five years.

To learn more

contact Philanthropy Director Amanda Mansfield at **(540) 857-6962** or **amansfield@viriniawestern.edu**.

To donate

to an established scholarship or program fund, go online to **viriniawestern.edu/foundation**.



SCHOLARSHIPS

On April 24, 2024, the Educational Foundation held its annual Awards Ceremony and Reception in Whitman Theater. Foundation donors and more than 170 student scholarship recipients were recognized at the event, which included the premiere of a short film, "Work and School: Finding the Delicate Balance." Directed by Angel David Verde, the film features the stories of five Virginia Western scholarship recipients as they navigate academics, family life and a job. It is viewable at viriniawestern.edu/foundation.

Scan to watch "Work and School: Finding the Delicate Balance"





NEW MARKER SHEDS LIGHT ON COLLEGE'S ROLE IN HISTORY

In a meaningful event highlighting the rich history of education in Roanoke, the City of Roanoke, in collaboration with Virginia Western Community College, unveiled a historical marker on Jan. 22 commemorating the institution's pivotal role in the establishment of the Virginia Community College System.

Former Mayor Nelson Harris applied for the historical marker through the Virginia Department

of Historic Resources. Virginia Western Community College, inaugurated in 1966, holds the distinction of being the first among an eventual 23 VCCS schools, charting a course that has impacted the lives of thousands of Virginia students.

Harris shared the history of how the VCCS grew out of business leaders' effort to oppose Massive Resistance to desegregation and improve access to public education in Virginia. "I think all of our

desire, collectively, is that this marker and what is happening today is a step forward in making that history known and telling that amazing story that Virginia accomplished back in the late '50s and through the mid-1960s," Harris said at the ceremony. ■



The new historical marker after its unveiling Jan. 22, 2024, pictured with (from left): Roanoke Vice Mayor Joe Cobb; Dr. Robert Sandel, president of Virginia Western Community College; Tucker Lemon, vice chair, Virginia Board of Historic Resources; and Dr. Nelson Harris, former Roanoke mayor and Virginia Western faculty member who spearheaded the marker effort.

SACSCOC REAFFIRMS VIRGINIA WESTERN'S ACCREDITATION

Virginia Western Community College's accreditation has been successfully reaffirmed by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) with no additional reporting required after a comprehensive decennial review.

"We are delighted to learn the results of SACSCOC's reaffirmation process, made possible by extensive time and energy that our faculty, staff and administrators have contributed," said Dr. Robert Sandel, Virginia Western's president.

Accreditation by SACSCOC signifies that an institution has a mission appropriate to higher

education; has resources, programs, and services sufficient to accomplish and sustain that mission; and maintains clearly specified educational objectives that are consistent with its mission and appropriate to the degrees it offers, and that indicate whether it is successful in achieving its stated objectives.

As part of the reaffirmation process, each institution must also develop a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) focused on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student successes. Virginia Western's QEP is "Stand Out. Move Forward," which focuses on preparing students for professional success. ■



VIRGINIA WESTERN WELCOMES NEW NURSING DIRECTOR

This summer, Virginia Western welcomed Dr. Kelley Pennell as the College's new nursing director in the Associate of Applied Science (prelicensure-RN) Nursing Program.

Pennell has been a registered nurse for over 20 years, an advanced practice nurse for 15 years and is board certified as a clinical nurse specialist in adult health. She holds a DNP in Executive Leadership Concentration from the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio; MSN-Adult Holistic Nursing Clinical Nurse Specialist from the University of Texas at Austin; and BS in

Business Administration from the University of Phoenix, Santa Clara, Calif.

"I am excited to be a part of the Virginia Western Nursing Program and reap the rewards of the partnership between myself, the administration, nursing faculty, and students," Pennell said. "Virginia Western already has a stellar nursing program, and I hope together we can elevate it even higher."

Prior to joining Virginia Western on June 25, Pennell served as director and faculty member of the RN-BSN Program at Galveston College in Galveston, Texas. ■



VIRGINIA WESTERN CHEF COMPETES AT CULINARY OLYMPICS IN GERMANY

Chef Ted Polfelt, a faculty member in the Al Pollard Culinary Arts Program at Virginia Western, competed in the IKA Culinary Olympics in Stuttgart, Germany, in February 2024. As part of the American Culinary Federation's team for the four-year cycle leading up to the 2024 Culinary Olympics, Polfelt previously competed in the Villeroy & Boch Culinary World Cup in Luxembourg in 2022.

Virginia Western hosted Culinary Team USA in November 2023, as team members continued to fine-tune their techniques for the Olympics. Team members prepared a three-course meal for 110 dinner attendees on both days, mirroring the tight time requirements and rules that would govern the Olympics. In Roanoke, the dinner menu consisted of a seafood appetizer, entrée and dessert.

Approximately 1,800 participants from 67 nations were taking part in the Olympics, with

8,000 menus cooked and 100,000 visitors from around the world. As supporters to Chef Polfelt, Virginia Western sent Chef John Schopp, program head Chef James Zeisler, and a couple of students to observe, with funding assistance provided by the Al Pollard Foundation.

For those who couldn't travel to Germany, the Olympic team's event in Roanoke gave students a chance to learn elite culinary techniques. The practices are part of the effort to build up the next generation of chefs. "I'm grateful that our students have the chance to see the intensity of this experience and learn from what our team is doing," Chef Polfelt said before the rehearsal.

National teams received gold, silver, or bronze medals for each competition, Restaurant of Nations and Chef's Table. Team USA was awarded a silver medal in each competition. ■

Around 100,000 visitors from around the world attended the IKA Culinary Olympics in Stuttgart, Germany, where Chef Ted Polfelt competed as part of Team USA in February 2024.

Courtesy of the IKA/Culinary Olympics



VIRGINIA WESTERN FUELS ROANOKE VALLEY ECONOMY ON MANY LEVELS, NEW STUDY FINDS

Virginia Western Community College contributes over \$300 million annually to the regional economy, according to a new study.

The report from data analytics firm Lightcast found that Virginia Western added \$329.1 million in income to the Roanoke Valley economy in the year studied, fiscal year 2021-22.

Virginia Western's impact supported 4,405 jobs. For perspective, the activities of Virginia Western and its students support one out of every 46 jobs in the Roanoke Valley.

On a larger scale, for every dollar invested in Virginia Western in the year studied, people in Virginia will receive \$8.00 in return. Altogether, the social benefits of Virginia Western equal a present value of \$574.5 million. These benefits include \$390.9 million in added student income over a 40-year working career, \$138.4 million in added business income, \$32.9 million in added income from college activities, as well as \$12.2 million in savings related to reduced government spending for health, the justice system, and income assistance in Virginia, thanks to a more educated workforce. ■

STEM DAY RETURNS FOR SECOND YEAR

Virginia Western hosted the free STEM Day on Saturday, April 13, 2024, for elementary and middle school students. Faculty in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics teamed with community partners to provide free, hands-on activities and food. This outreach was open to all K-8 students in the college's service region.

Six floors of fun, with stations throughout Virginia Western's STEM Building and Fralin Center for Science and Health Professions, as well as outside, included activities such as Raspberry Pi's for gaming and coding; 3D printing; robots; dissections, DNA extractions, specimens and anatomical skeletons; animal models; rocks of Minecraft; slime; leaf and tree activities; Möbius strips and Fibonacci spirals; and more. ■



The second annual STEM Day invited K-8 students to take part in hands-on activities, such as these involving chemistry.

HEALTHCARE PROGRAMS ACHIEVE 100% PASS RATES ON BOARD EXAMS

Several of Virginia Western's Associate of Applied Science healthcare programs have celebrated 100% of cohorts passing licensure exams on the first attempt.

Students in the 2024 graduating cohort of the Surgical Technology Program achieved this milestone for the Certified Surgical Technologist (CST) Examination. This cohort were the first to attend Virginia Western from start to finish, after the program transferred from Radford University Carilion in 2022. This was the first time since the transfer for a 100% pass rate on the CST exam.

For the second year in a row, the Virginia Western Community College Dental Hygiene Program had a 100% pass rate on the CDCA/ADEX clinical board exam. The examination for the Commission on Dental Competency Assessments (CDCA)/American Board of Dental Examiners (ADEX) evaluates students' clinical skills and their knowledge and ability to provide safe and effective patient care. Students must pass this

clinical exam and a comprehensive national written exam to obtain licensure to practice as a Registered Dental Hygienist.

The Radiography class of 2024 also earned a 100% pass rate on the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) National Radiologic Technologist Board examination, which determines that these students have the knowledge and skills needed both to function as an entry-level radiologic technologist and to provide safe, effective patient care.

Meanwhile, the Nursing Program learned in 2024 that 100 percent of graduates sitting for the NCLEX-RN exam in 2023 passed on the first attempt, compared with a national associate degree average of 87.75%. Graduates must pass the National Council Licensure Examination to become registered nurses. The 2023 cohort was the first to take the Next Generation NCLEX (NGN), which aims to measure clinical judgment, with questions geared toward application of knowledge. ■

VIRGINIA WESTERN AWARDED NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION GRANT

Virginia Western Community College has received a \$343,209 Advanced Technological Education (ATE) grant from the National Science Foundation, the U.S. government's independent science agency. The three-year grant will fund the College's project, "Cross-Pollination Skillsets: Growing Mechatronics and Agricultural Collaborations for Producing Skilled Agricultural Technicians."

The Cross-Pollination Skillsets project targets a state government priority for developing business opportunities through controlled environmental agriculture (CEA), according to Dr. David Berry, assistant professor and Mechatronics Program Head.

As principal investigator, Berry will lead the new initiative with Dr. Mallory White, assistant professor of biology and Agriculture Program Head, who is serving as co-principal investigator. The concept of the grant is to train the next level of technicians needed in the state's agriculture workforce.

Virginia Western began preparing the grant proposal with support from Mentor-Connect, which provides mentoring and technical resources to help two-year college faculty write competitive grant proposals. Virginia Western was one of 24 community colleges nationwide selected to participate in Mentor-Connect's year of training and mentoring sessions to prepare the grant application. ■

VIRGINIA WESTERN GOES SOCIAL

Virginia Western engages with students, employers and the community through social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. This helps put a spotlight on accomplishments and student life, contributing to a cohesive community.



CCAP students visit James Madison University.

Find Virginia Western on:

Facebook



Instagram



Dr. Robert Sandel with the #IamWestern frame.



Students enjoy chemistry class with faculty member Lanette Upshaw.



Physical Therapist Assistant students on the first day of fall semester.



Student Ambassador Training was held in summer 2024.

INNOVATION GRANT HELPS LOWER LANGUAGE BARRIER IN DENTAL HYGIENE CLINIC

BY ALLISON TAYLOR

Students, faculty, and staff of Virginia Western's Dental Hygiene Clinic are all smiles thanks to an Innovation Grant that made it possible for the program to secure a translation service to better serve patients who speak languages other than English. The grant was awarded to the Dental Hygiene Program in June 2023, and students began using the translation service, Volatia Language Network, in spring 2024.

The Dental Hygiene Clinic on campus provides free preventive oral health services to the community, often providing access to care for underserved populations that may otherwise go without. The clinic is open weekly during the academic year, though hours can vary according to program schedules each semester. Currently, each student is required to treat a minimum of 37 patients; the graduating class of 2024 treated a total of 641 patients. The Dental Hygiene Program also has extended campus sites at Danville Community College and Laurel Ridge Community College, both of which operate their own dental clinics and have their own clinical instructors. Preventive services may include dental cleanings, X-rays, sealants and fluoride treatments.

"Dental care is expensive, and so a lot of people go without. We try to reduce that barrier and give more people access to care," said Colleen

McGowan, Dental Hygiene Clinic Coordinator. "We want people to come in because taking care of your oral health can help with your overall health. Even things like toothaches; let's say a child has a toothache. They miss school, a parent has to stay home, they get behind ... it's not just a toothache, it reaches into other parts of your life."

Factors such as cost or lack of insurance prohibit many people from seeking oral health services, which can lead to long-term health issues. According to the World Health Organization, there are links between a person's oral health and overall health. For example, periodontal disease, which affects the gums, has been associated with other health conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure. One of the risk factors for developing oral health conditions is lack of education about proper oral hygiene. Students and faculty at the Dental Hygiene Clinic encourage patients to ask questions and strive to minimize any anxiety a patient may be feeling. Patient education and comfort are top priorities, but this can become challenging when facing language barriers.

According to McGowan, in the past, students or faculty who were fluent in Spanish have helped students communicate with Spanish-speaking patients, but students and faculty were still limited in their ability to communicate with patients who spoke other languages. In addition to Spanish, the most common languages spoken in the Roanoke Valley are Nepali, Arabic, Dari,



We want people to come in because taking care of your oral health can help with your overall health. ... We really wanted to be able to talk and to build relationships with the patients.

— COLLEEN McGOWAN
Dental Hygiene Clinic Coordinator



Clinic Coordinator Colleen McGowan (left) works with second-year Dental Hygiene students Elena Sable (patient) and Kaitlyn Deeter.

Haitian Creole and Swahili.

"We couldn't even really get those patients in the door; we couldn't make an appointment," said McGowan, "so even that has been huge. In an academic setting, we really wanted to be able to talk and to build relationships with the patients."

The Dental Hygiene Department was awarded just over \$7,500 through the grant, most of which went toward translation minutes for calls on the Volatia app, and a small portion of the funds were used to purchase iPads, which allow students to contact translators via video call or phone call.

Innovation Grant funds are set aside by the Virginia Western Educational Foundation for the purpose of inspiring new and creative ideas that will enhance the educational experience of students. The ability to provide resources and opportunities to meet a need helps bring the ideas of faculty and staff to life. Innovation Grant opportunities are available annually each fall. During the 2023-2024 grant application period, the Dental Hygiene Department's idea to provide translation services to patients was the only student-led initiative. Students of the Dental Hygiene Program were inspired when they noticed translation services being used during an off-campus rotation at the Bradley Free Clinic

and pitched their idea to McGowan. With the help of Shelley Lyons, administrative officer for grants administration, students completed the competitive grant application process.

"They knew all along that this might be a project that they never saw themselves — meaning they couldn't participate in the translation services — but they knew it was a need for the program and for the College, so they wanted to push ahead and try to make it happen," said Lyons. "They saw a need because of their interactions out in the community, and they found their own solution."

Baraka Kasongo, founder and CEO of Volatia, met with the Educational Foundation and the Dental Hygiene Department to create a customized program. The company also provided the clinic with quick reference guides that list common dental phrases clinicians may need to use, as well as versions of forms for patients to read in several languages.

Kasongo is an alumnus of Virginia Western through the Regional Accelerator and Mentoring Program (RAMP), which was founded through a partnership with the City of Roanoke, the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council and Virginia

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I never thought I would be a businessman or entrepreneur. It was all in the need to help the community. I saw the opportunity to help and really make an impact, and now it's become my life's mission.

— **BARAKA KASONGO**
Founder and CEO of Volatia

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Western. Kasongo, whose family immigrated to the United States when he was an adolescent, was disappointed at the existing resources that were available regionally at the time for people facing language barriers. His family's difficulties navigating language barriers in infrastructures like healthcare systems and government agencies motivated him to find a solution to help others in similar situations.

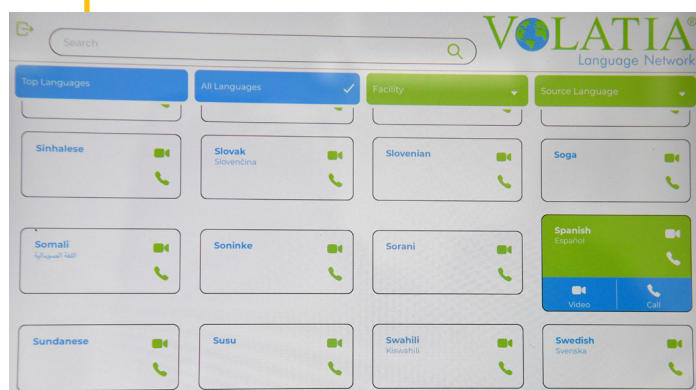
"I never thought I would be a businessman or entrepreneur. It was all in the need to help the community. I saw the opportunity to help and really make an impact, and now it's become my life's mission," Kasongo explained. "The most effective way for us to help individuals to contribute and participate in our society is to make sure that they're not limited by systemic barriers, and there's nothing more limiting than language. So, to the extent that it can bridge language barriers, we make it so people can begin to participate in their community at a meaningful level."

Volatia is headquartered in the City of Roanoke and serves major healthcare and emergency

response systems throughout the state, as well as local school systems. The company has been in business since 2003 and currently employs over 18,000 interpreters and translators in all 50 states and U.S. territories. Translators and interpreters are available year-round, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and the company also offers in-person services and a call-in line for clients with limited English proficiency. Volatia holds four security standards certifications and is compliant with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

On average, Dental Hygiene Clinic appointments typically last about three hours from start to finish, to allow time for patient education and for students to be supervised by licensed faculty members. Dental Hygiene students utilize the translation service throughout the appointment to introduce themselves to patients, explain what the appointment will involve, go over any paperwork, and periodically check in with the patients. Elena Sable, a student who is in her second year of the Dental Hygiene Program, explained that the translation services have not only made patients feel more comfortable, but they've put her at ease, too.

"With the language barrier, it can be uncomfortable for both the patient and the clinician, especially with wait times and in the student setting. Being able to talk to patients during those breaks really does help make the patient more comfortable," said Sable. "Also, a huge aspect of our practice is patient education — you can visually



show them how to properly brush and floss, but without the translator you're missing a lot of key elements."

Another second-year Dental Hygiene student, Kaitlyn Deeter, has also experienced the benefits of the translation services. She shared the story of a recent patient who seemed much more comfortable and immersed in the experience with the help of the translation app, and she explained that translators can also join in on the conversations, which seems to help some patients relax.

"It's not all just translating about dental services. I was able to ask my patient questions, and to connect with her and see her smile when we talk about personal things like family or her interests, things that you could talk about with any other patient. It makes the relationship more personal," said Deeter. "It almost makes you wish that you could learn every language. I definitely would want a service similar to this wherever I end up working."

Dental Hygiene Clinic students and faculty are optimistic that establishing this pilot program will not only help them overcome language barriers with patients, but also increase accessibility to oral health services and education for members of the community who do not primarily speak English. Not only will translation services benefit clinic patients, but being able to communicate effectively will also help the program's students prepare for their careers by expanding the diversity of their patient pool. By ensuring that no patient who visits the Dental Hygiene Clinic is limited by a language barrier, students and faculty are empowering all community members to seek the oral health services they may not receive elsewhere. ■

INNOVATION GRANTS

The Virginia Western Educational Foundation awarded these Innovation Grants for the 2024-25 academic year:

New Micro-Session Courses & Micro-Credentials

The purchase and utilization of Articulate 360 and Adobe Captivate course creation software will allow the College to implement the instructional design process for new customized micro-session training for corporate clients in a quicker and more efficient manner.

Recipient: Regina Cook, Administrative Officer for Training Solutions



MLT Boot Camp: Introducing the Field of Medical Laboratory Technology to Middle School Students

The goal of the MLT Boot Camp is to increase middle school students' awareness of the medical laboratory technology field as a viable healthcare career choice. Students will participate in a real-life exercise in the Virginia Western MLT Lab, working on a case study to find compatible blood for a trauma victim requiring a blood transfusion. In addition, the students will be exposed to exhibits that will highlight a variety of work specialties in the medical laboratory.

Recipient: Dr. Jeffrey S. Gillette, Program Head, Medical Lab Technology & Phlebotomy

ARBORETUM'S NEW GARDEN SHOWCASES NATIVE PLANTS

BY ALLISON TAYLOR

As the leaves change and winter approaches, the Community Arboretum continues to grow with the completion of the new Sunny Meadow Native Garden. This latest addition to the two-acre educational garden, located on the campus of Virginia Western Community College, will highlight species of plants that are native to Southwest Virginia and benefit local ecosystems.

"It's for people to see native plants growing in a garden space, and to see which plants perform well in our area," said Clark BeCraft, Horticulture Program Head. "That's what the Community Arboretum is all about. It's not only a place for beauty and for coming to see the gardens, but it's also to educate the public about gardening and finding the right plant for the right place."

Plans for the Sunny Meadow Native Garden began over a year ago, and the plant selection

Arboretum Council Chair Claire Privitera (from left), community volunteer Pam Robinson and Horticulture Technician Tonya Judd work on the new garden.





process involved countless hours of research to determine which species would not only thrive in the Arboretum but add to its beauty. Staff, students and volunteers came together in the spring 2024 semester to begin bringing the project to fruition.

The site of the Sunny Meadow Native Garden was previously part of the Conifer Garden. Since the Arboretum's establishment in 1993, some of the conifers had outgrown their spaces and needed to be thinned, which in turn freed up a sizable patch of space that gets plenty of sunlight.

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BEES HELP BIODIVERSITY

In another effort to support pollinators, Virginia Western Community College recently became an affiliate of the Bee Campus USA program, which works to protect and conserve native pollinator species. The Sunny Meadow Native Garden goes hand in hand with the Bee Campus mission of providing and enhancing pollinator habitats. Together, these projects will help increase the biodiversity of our region.

Are you interested

in helping support the local pollinator population but unsure where to start? Heather Butler, Science Program Head and facilitator of Virginia Western Community College's branch of the Bee Campus USA program, offers a simple solution: "Start with one plant. Look up one native plant that you think is interesting or beautiful; plant it, get used to taking care of it, then maybe add a few more. Start small, and just learn as you go."

Learn more at
viriniawestern.edu/bee-campus

It's not only a place for beauty and for coming to see the gardens, but it's also to educate the public about gardening and finding the right plant for the right place.

– **CLARK BeCRAFT**

Horticulture Program Head



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With help from students of the Horticulture Program, existing plants were transferred to other areas of the Arboretum and a pathway was moved to provide easier access to the new garden.

Local landscape architect Chris Lawrie volunteered his services to design and help install the Sunny Meadow Native Garden. It currently features 15 flowering perennials and six different types of grasses, which not only provide a beautiful backdrop to highlight the flowering plants, but also keep maintenance needs minimal by keeping the weeds down. Lawrie purposefully selected a variety of species with “nice bright colors of oranges and yellows, to hopefully grab some attention from people and pollinators,” he said. “By planting native species, you’re contributing to a healthy native ecosystem.”

Over the past several years, native plants have become increasingly popular as more people become educated about their many ecological benefits, and the garden was designed to be as pollinator friendly as possible. The Arboretum already contained a selection of native plants, but lacked a designated space to showcase native,

Learn more about natives

In addition to the in-person learning opportunities the Arboretum offers, there are plenty of online resources for those looking to expand their knowledge of native plant species. Arboretum staff and volunteers recommended websites such as plantvirginiannatives.org, nativeplantfinder.nwf.org and nrvc.org as good starting points. These databases make it easy to find the best plants for your specific location, as well as offer helpful information on plant care, hardiness zones, landscaping layouts and many other gardening tips.



non-cultivar species only. Cultivars are native plants that have been hybridized to have other characteristics; in contrast, native plants occur naturally without human introduction, according to the National Wildlife Federation. Native plants offer a more sustainable habitat for wildlife than non-native plant species and cultivars, and many native plants are also pollinator plants.

The Sunny Meadow Native Garden hosts many pollinator-friendly plant species such as Brown-Eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia triloba*), Green-Headed Coneflowers (*Rudbeckia laciniata*), and Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), to name just a few. The native plant species chosen for the garden are aesthetically pleasing and serve an

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Once native plants are established, “they take care of themselves,” said Arboretum Council Chair Claire Privitera.



**... CONTINUED FROM
PAGE 51**

important environmental function. Pollinators are not only vital to supporting our region’s diverse ecosystem, but they also directly impact global issues such as food security. According to the U.S. National Park Service, an estimated 90 percent of wild-flowering plants and 75 percent of food crops globally are dependent on successful pollination. However, 40 percent of invertebrate pollinators and 16.5 percent of vertebrate pollinators are facing extinction. Modern threats to their survival include invasive plant species, destruction of habitats, pesticide use and climate change.

Bees may be the first pollinators to come to most people’s minds, but many other wildlife species are also pollinators, including but not limited to: caterpillars, moths, wasps, butterflies, beetles, flies, birds and

bats. For one example of how pollinators help sustain wildlife populations, we can consider birds. Pollinator plants that host insects will become a source of larvae; those larvae will become caterpillars, which will be harvested by birds to become food for baby birds still in the fledgling stage, unable to leave their nests.

Many plants native to Southwest Virginia are known to be relatively low maintenance compared to non-native species, which makes them ideal for beginners and casual gardeners.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY ARBORETUM

A common misconception is that the Arboretum receives state funding to cover upkeep to the gardens. Actually, it's generosity from the community that keeps the Arboretum's programs — and plants — alive and growing.

One way to support the gardens is to join the **Friends of the Arboretum** program. Support levels begin at \$25 for an individual. Perks include a seasonal newsletter filled with horticulture insights and special members-only previews of the popular plant sales.

Fall pansy and perennial sale: late September

This sale is designed to keep area gardens colorful throughout the fall. Offerings include perennials and pansies (including the popular purple wave color) along with houseplants and vegetables.

Poinsettia sale: early December

In addition to poinsettias (which sell out quickly), the sale includes fresh-cut wreaths, centerpieces and swags.

Spring perennial plant sale: late March/early April

In addition to perennials, the sale includes succulents and tropical plants.

Spring bedding and vegetable plant sale: May

This is the biggest plant sale of the year, with offerings that include bedding and vegetable plants, herbs, hanging baskets and ferns.



Scan to learn more
about becoming an
Arboretum Friend

Or visit
viriniawestern.edu/FOTA

For example, many species are drought-resistant and require minimal fertilizing, watering and mowing.

Arboretum Council Chair and longtime volunteer Claire Privitera is familiar with the positive aspects of native plants and plans to add more to her yard in the future. "Once they're established, they take care of themselves. After that, they're

self-sufficient," she said.

Curious prospective gardeners and those who just appreciate spending time in nature are encouraged to come visit the Sunny Meadow Native Garden to see the native species for themselves and possibly get some ideas on how to incorporate native plants into their own landscaping plans. ■

CHANCELLOR'S AWARD RECOGNIZES ELLETT FAMILY

The Ellett family of Roanoke received the 18th Annual Chancellor's Award for Leadership in Philanthropy at a luncheon ceremony in Richmond on April 16, 2024.

They were nominated for the award by the Virginia Western Community College Educational Foundation.

Hosted by the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education, the event recognized more than two dozen individuals, families and organizations who received the 2024 Chancellor's Award. Dr. David Doré, chancellor of the Virginia Community College System, served as emcee, and the Honorable Maurice Jones was featured as the keynote speaker.

"Virginia's growth, prosperity and well-being depend on the success of our community college system and the success of our students," Jones said. "From childcare and housing assistance to reducing food insecurity, we must care and invest in the whole student for students and the Commonwealth to be successful."

Virginia Western President Dr. Robert H. Sandel praised the Ellett Family — Mr. Frank T. and Mrs. Lucy R. Ellett; Mr. Frank R. (Russ) and Mrs. Heather Ellett — for dedicating generations of service to the community, higher education and Virginia Western. "They have been a part of the College since its inception," Sandel said. "Their

commitment over generations to the welfare of our students and our Commonwealth has been exemplary."

Lucy's grandfather and Russ's great-grandfather was Col. J. Sinclair Brown, Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates in the 1930s and a stalwart advocate for education and fiscal growth. The College's Brown Library is named for him. Lucy's father, William S. Russell, was the first chair of Virginia Western's inaugural Local Advisory Board (1966-71). Today, Russ, president of Excel Truck Group, serves as the current vice chair of the Educational Foundation Board of Directors.

Russ and Heather have significantly supported both Virginia Western's Community College Access Program and the Virginia Western Forward Permanent Endowment Fund (unrestricted permanent endowment). The Elletts were additionally recognized by the Educational Foundation, receiving the annual Community Impact Award at a ceremony April 24, 2024. ■

The Ellett family received the Chancellor's Award for Leadership in Philanthropy on April 16, 2024, in Richmond. From left are Shelley Lyons, Virginia Western Community College Administrative Officer for Grants Administration; Marilyn Herbert-Ashton, Virginia Western Vice President of Institutional Advancement; VCCS Chancellor Dr. David Doré; Frank T. and Lucy R. Ellett; and Jane and Dr. Robert H. Sandel, Virginia Western Community College President.



ENDOWMENT INITIATIVE CAMPAIGN

(July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2024)

Visionary Circle

\$1,000,000 +

Heywood and Cynthia Fralin
Edwin C. Hall
Maury L. Strauss (dec.)

President's Circle Cum Laude

**\$500,000 -
\$999,999**

Frank Russell Ellett and
Heather Haddan Ellett
Metis Inc.
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Charitable Trust

Cornerstone Society

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\$499,999**

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Farrell Foundation
George W. Logan, in memory
of Dr. Charles W. Steger
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Community Foundation
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Larry and Janice Davidson,
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Davidson
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in memory of Robert
Hamilton Sandel Jr.

Blue and Gold Society

\$1 - \$999

Anonymous (3)
Anonymous, in memory of
Loretta A. Gray
Anonymous, in memory of
Robert Hamilton Sandel Jr.
Kathryn Beard, in memory
of Robert Hamilton
Sandel Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. W. Chan Bolling,
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Joel Collier
Regina Cook
Mary Ann Conrad, in
memory of Robert
Hamilton Sandel Jr.

Sheila Burnett Delp
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Dean Sprinkle, in memory
of Robert Hamilton Sandel
Jr.
Dr. Charles W. Steger (dec.)
and Mrs. Janet Steger
STEM and Workforce
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Robert Hamilton Sandel Jr.
Lesleigh Strauss, in honor of
Maury L. Strauss
Martha Sullivan
Mary and Douglas Waters,
in honor of Jim McAden
Mallory White, in memory
of Robert Hamilton Sandel
Jr.
Lee and Lainy Wilhelm,
in memory of Robert
Hamilton Sandel Jr.
Melissa Williams

\$1.2 MILLION GIFT MEMORIALIZIZES LOST SON

Joseph A. Bostian was a Virginia community college student more than four decades ago when he died tragically young in a Radford car accident. His parents, John and Iris Proffitt Bostian, sought to honor their only child by quietly leaving millions in their estate to fund student scholarships. Virginia Western and Danville community colleges were both beneficiaries of the Bostians' legacy gift in fall 2023.

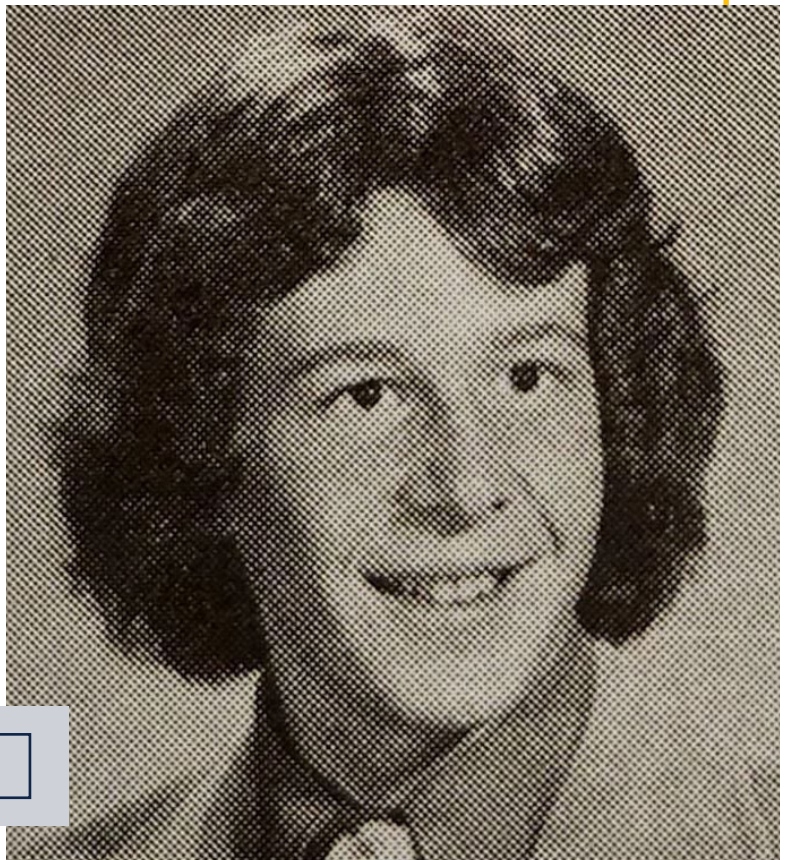
"John and Iris never talked about [their son's death] to anybody," their estate lawyer, Ted Troland, told The Roanoke Times. "The only time it came up was when they mentioned to Danville Community College that they planned to leave something to honor their son."

John Bostian was a senior engineer and longtime employee of Appalachian Power Co., and Iris was a homemaker. Joseph was attending Danville Community College at the time of his 1980 death and previously had studied heating and air conditioning at Virginia Western.

Upon receipt of the Bostians' \$1.2 million gift, the Virginia Western

Educational Foundation established the Joseph Alexander Bostian Memorial Fund for CCAP, its largest endowment to date supporting the Community College Access Program.

"We were genuinely touched and surprised by this gift," said Amanda Mansfield, the Educational Foundation's philanthropy director. "We are so grateful that the Bostians entrusted us to honor their son and pave the way for other students to have the opportunity to achieve their dreams of a college education." ■



Joseph A. Bostian



THE LEGACY SOCIETY

honors those who, through their generosity, have the foresight to make a planned gift that will have a lasting impact on the lives of Virginia Western students and our community.

Martha and William Adams (dec.)
 Anonymous (2)
 John A. and Iris P. Bostian (dec.)
 Ruby M. Brogan
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 Sigmund E. Davidson (dec.)
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Did you know that the Educational Foundation can easily accept your planned gift? From bequests to naming an insurance beneficiary, from charitable trusts and annuities to property, there are so many ways to share your lifetime of experience and educate the next generation.

Learn more at viriniawestern.edu/giving/planned-giving

2023-24 ANNUAL DONORS

(July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024)

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\$5,000 - \$14,999

Anonymous
AccessU
G. Franklin Flippin
Heywood and Cynthia Fralin
J. Spencer and Joy Frantz
Donor Advised Fund of
Community Foundation
Serving Western Virginia
The Sam and Marion Golden
Helping Hand Foundation
Inc.
Beverly and Leon Harris
William J. Lemon
Life Ring Foundation
Parker Family Charitable
Fund
Barbara Pietrowski and
Albert Roslyn (dec.)

Powell Charitable
Foundation
City of Roanoke
Thomas Rutherford
Foundation
Virginia529
Whitaker Fund

Scholar Society

\$1,500 - \$4,999

Anonymous
Thomas H. Adams
American Culinary
Federation, Southwestern
Virginia Chapter
Julia Archer and Children,
in memory of Dr. J.
Andrew Archer
Tom Borak, in honor of
Elvir Berbic
Abney S. Boxley III
Dotsy Clifton
Farrell Foundation
Tammy and Eric Finley
Follett
Taylor D. Griffin
Gary J. Harpold, M.D., in
memory of Dr. Donna
Harpold
Pamala A. Jones
Stan and Elise Lanford
Mary Sue Collins
Foundation
Randall R. Rhea, M.D.
Bobby and Jane Sandel
The Elizabeth and Harry
Sellers Annual Scholarship
Verge
Virginia Restaurant,
Lodging & Travel
Association Foundation
Virginia Tobacco
Region Revitalization
Commission
Anthony and Gerald Wade
Family Fund
Susan Wilson
Michael A. Wray

Champions

\$750 - \$1,499

Anonymous (2)
Mr. & Mrs. Bradley A. Archer,
in memory of Dr. J. Andrew
Archer
Grady and Lori Baker
Kenneth J. Belton
Bent Mountain Center
Blue Ridge Wildflower Society
Matilda and John Bradshaw
Mr. & Mrs. Monty D. Brown
W. Mark Burton
Mary Ann and George
Cartledge Jr.
Mary Ann Conrad
Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas C. Conte
Down Syndrome
Association of Roanoke
Bill and Diane Elliot Fund of
Community Foundation
Serving Western Virginia
Marianne Gandee
Dr. & Mrs. W. Andrew
Hackworth
William M. Hackworth
John and Ashley Harlow
Faith Janney, in memory of
Nicholas Janney
Carol Jarratt, in honor of
Melinda Woolridge
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen W.
Lemon
Shelley and Ken Lyons
The Newbern Foundation
Norfolk & Western/
Norfolk Southern African
American Heritage Group
Letitia Pleasants
Ply Gem - Cornerstone
Building Brands
Ken and Suzanne Randolph
Timothy Rowe, in memory
of Helen Canary Rowe
Bobby and Jane Sandel, in
memory of Jim Arend
Bobby and Jane Sandel, in
honor of Mary Ann Conrad

Mike and Sandy Shelton,
remembering our moms,
Patsy Spraker Dalton
and Virginia Shelton, on
Mother's Day

Shentel Foundation
J.K. and Donna Speas
The Spetzler Fund of
Community Foundation
Serving Western Virginia
Lesleigh Strauss, in honor
of Maury Lee Strauss &
Bobby Sandel

The Virginia Foundation
for Community College
Education & Anthem
Healthkeepers

Virginia Tech Corporate
Research Center Inc.

Neil and Teena Wilkin
The Barton J. and Jacqueline
B. Wilner Family Fund of
Community Foundation
Serving Western Virginia,
in honor of Bobby & Jane
Sandel

Bart and Lynn Wilner, in
memory of Dr. Daniel
Wilner

Mary Ann and David Wine

Friends

\$250 - \$749

Anonymous
Andrew and Amy Anguiano
Zip & Vince Basile
Jason and Amy Belcher
Blue Eagle Credit Union
Mr. & Mrs. W. Chan Bolling
Valerie Brown, in memory
of John R. Francis Jr.
Debra Callison, in memory
of John R. Francis Jr.
Catherine Carroll
Preston and Pamela Collins
The Joe Crawford Charitable
Gift Fund, in memory of
Donald G. Smith
Cromwell-Nolan Charitable
Fund

Larry and Janice Davidson
Mr. & Mrs. Christopher Desimone
Katherin A. Elam
Frank and Lucy Ellett
Jeanne Fishwick, in honor of
Hosting Roanoke Historic
Garden Tour
Carolyn Walke Gard and
Albert Gard, in memory of
Dr. John T. Walke
Bob and Maryellen
Goodlatte
Edwin C. Hall
Kathlyn Killian
Jan Kinsey, in honor of Larry
Teuscher
Shirl Duke Lamanca
Shirl Duke Lamanca, in
memory of Rita H. David
Shirl Duke Lamanca, in
memory of Hilton Holdren
Anna and Tom Lawson
Jim and Lucy Lee, in
memory of John Francis Jr.,
Roanoke's favorite banker
and community leader
with a priceless sense of
humor that will be missed.
Dr. & Mrs. Edmund M. Lesko
Elizabeth M. Long, Esq.
Edward and Diane Machado
Charitable Fund
Connie Stephens May
Scholarship Fund of
Community Foundation
Serving Western Virginia
Jean McClenney, in honor of
Mabeline Walker Williams
and John E. Williams, Sr.
Carolyn Payne
Dr. Cynthia Payne, in honor
of Dr. Elizabeth W. Payne
Dr. Elizabeth W. Payne
Joan K. Petrus, in memory of
James Arend
Lee Robison, in honor of
Hosting Historic Garden
Week Palooza

Timothy Rowe, in memory
of John R. Francis, Jr.
Sal's Italian Restaurant
James Sargent
Chad Sartini
Brian Sieveking
Edward M. and Melissa Y.
Smith, in memory of John
R. Francis Jr.
Edward M. and Melissa Y.
Smith
John and Patsy Starnes
Swen Thompson
VPT Inc.
Hudson-Williams Fund of
Community Foundation
Serving Western Virginia
Elizabeth Wilmer, in
memory of Brooke N.
Ferguson

Contributors \$1 - \$249

Anonymous (8)
Gary Adkins
Lee R. Allen
Dr. & Mrs. Michael Basile
Kathryn Beard, in memory
of Fred Aaron's father
Kathryn Beard, in memory
of Laura Overbay's
mother
Mike Birmingham
Lee Bond-Sevigny
Boones Mill Garden Club
Matilda and John
Bradshaw, in honor
of Lucy R. Ellett for a
Birthday Celebration
Tom and Irene Brock
C. Whitney and Ellen H.
Brown
Arletha Butler
Barbara Chenault, in
memory of John R.
Francis Jr.

Ellie Clark, in honor of Sara
Maddox
Susan Clark, in memory of
Robert Hamilton Sandel Jr.
Nancy B. Cook, in memory
of Grace Burton and Bill
Salyers
Connie Crites, in memory of
Richard Crites
Linda Curd
Russ and Stacey Danstrom
Danville Community
College, in memory of
Robert Hamilton Sandel Jr.
Danville Community College
Educational Foundation,
Inc., in memory of Robert
Hamilton Sandel Jr.
Xavier Duckett
Daniel Ehrich
David R. and Cheryl D. Ford
Samuel B. and Susan W.
Gardiner
Anna Golta
Anna Goltz, in honor of
David Dantzler
Edwin C. Hall, in memory of
John R. Francis Jr.
Heather Harris
Richard H. Harris Jr.
Penny Hodge, in memory of
John R. Francis Jr.
The Hotel Roanoke &
Conference Center
Pegram Johnson III
Rose Marie and Tom Jones,
in honor of Jane and
Bobby Sandel
Wali Khalifah
Kiwanis Club of Roanoke
Alton Knighton, in memory
of John R. Francis Jr.
Debbie LaRocca
Mary Jean and John Levin
Dr. Jack Lewis, in memory of
Robert Hamilton Sandel Jr.
LewisGale Medical Center

Anna and Al McLean, in
memory of John R. Francis
Jr.
The Modern Arts Club
Elsa Nadler
John G. Nance
Joan Nasta
Holly Nightingale, in
memory of Judith Lawless
Richard C. Pattisall
Virginia Powel
Patti and Penny Prevo
Rail Yard Dawgs
Lisa Ridpath, in memory of
John R. Francis Jr.
Lisa Ridpath, in memory of
Brooke N. Ferguson
Kathy C. Rinaca, in honor of
Carla Selvey
Salem Garden Club
Bobby and Jane Sandel, in
memory of John R. Francis
Jr.
Kathy Sink
Laura K. Skeen
Sugar Loaf Garden Club
Carole Tarrant
Carole Tarrant, in honor of
Elvir Berbic
TisBest Philanthropy
Town & Country Garden
Club-Roanoke
Mike and Ellen Urbanski, in
memory of John R. Francis
Jr.
Westchester Garden Club
Lee and Lainy Wilhelm, in
memory of John R. Francis
Jr.
Lee and Lainy Wilhelm, in
memory of Mike Pace
Deborah S. Williams,
in honor of Mabeline
Walker Williams & John E.
Williams Sr.
John and Betsy Williams, in
memory of Judith Lawless
Michael Hugh Williams

ENROLLMENT



8,441

of credit students enrolled

1,377

of workforce students enrolled



FULL TIME
(at least 24 credits
in an academic year)



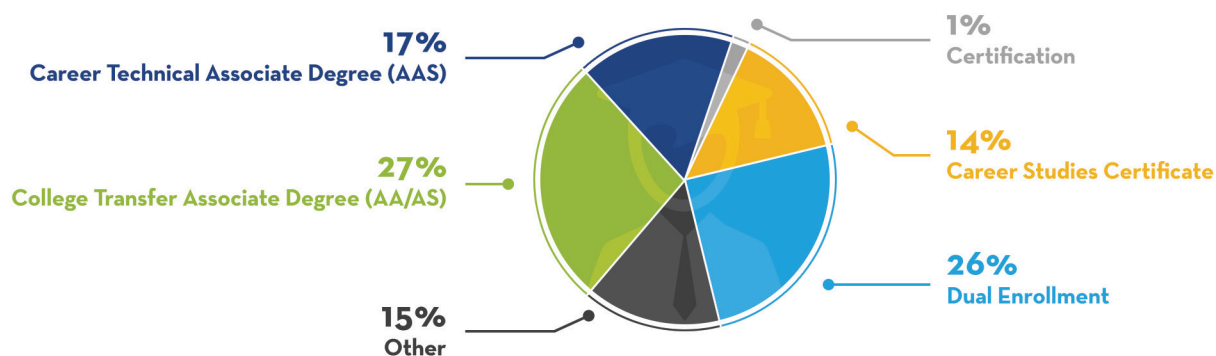
PART TIME

Reference:
Program-placed
credit students

CREDIT STUDENTS



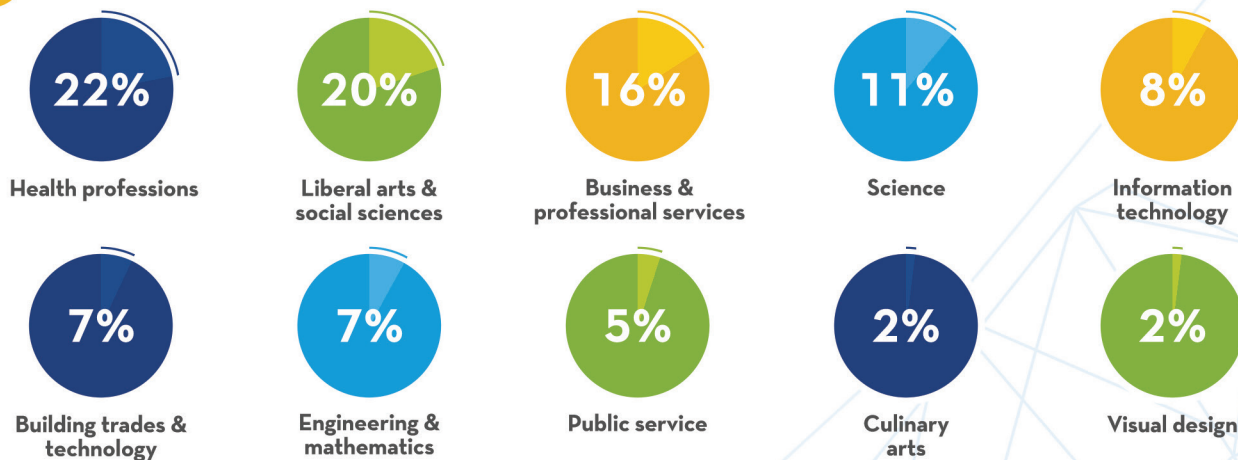
BY PROGRAM TYPE



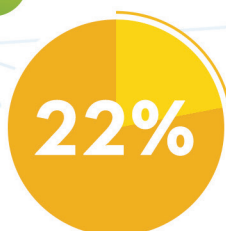
AREAS OF STUDY



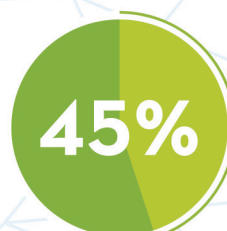
Reference: Program-placed credit students



REGIONAL IMPACT



% of recent high school
graduates in the Roanoke region
who enroll at Virginia Western



% of all college students
from the Roanoke region
who enroll at Virginia Western

Source : Based on VCCS College Readiness Reports for fall 2023. Percent of spring 2023 high school graduates in the Roanoke region who enrolled at Virginia Western for fall 2023.

Source: Based on VCCS Residency Reports for fall 2023. Of all individuals from the Roanoke region, regardless of age, who attended college in fall 2023, the percent who attended Virginia Western.

DEMOGRAPHICS



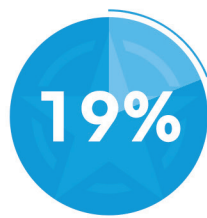
Reference: Program-placed credit students



% of students who receive financial aid



% of students over age 24



% of students who are first-generation college students

RACIAL BREAKDOWN



67% students who are white or did not specify race

14% students who are Black

9% students who are Hispanic/Latino

6% students of other ethnicity

4% students who are Asian

HEALTHCARE



CREDIT & WORKFORCE STUDENTS



1 out of 7

Number of students on healthcare track

OUTCOMES



OF AWARDS, BY TYPE: 2023-24

1,035

All degrees/certificates

826

Industry credentials

VALUE



% of Virginia Western graduates who accumulate no college debt prior to transferring to a four-year university

TOP TRANSFER INSTITUTIONS (% OF TRANSFERS)

28%

RADFORD UNIVERSITY

19%

VIRGINIA TECH.

15%

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

8%

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

7%

ROANOKE COLLEGE

Source: State Council for Higher Education, 2022-23

EMPLOYMENT



\$67,071

Average salary for Virginia Western health professions AAS graduates, one year after graduation (2021-22 graduates)

TOP EMPLOYERS OF GRADUATES WITH CAREER TECHNICAL ASSOCIATE DEGREES

HEALTHCARE



TRADES AND MANUFACTURING



BUSINESS



SOURCE: Virginia Employment Commission 2023

VIRGINIA WESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION INC.

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Year Ended December 31, 2023

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
SUPPORT AND REVENUE			
Contributions	\$63,702	\$3,247,028	\$3,310,730
In-kind contributions	442,769	2,147	444,916
Interest and dividend income	177,146	552,162	729,308
Net unrealized gain on investment securities	483,741	3,916,739	4,400,480
Net realized loss on sales of investment securities	(61,970)	(97,802)	(159,772)
Loss from doubtful pledges	-	(22,428)	(22,428)
Change in cash surrender value of life insurance	-	107	107
Rental revenue	-	-	-
Administrative fees	355,848	(355,848)	-
Net assets released from restrictions and reclassifications	2,115,318	(2,115,318)	-
Total support and revenues	3,576,554	5,126,787	8,703,341
FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES			
Scholarships, grants, and programs	2,107,735	-	2,107,735
Operating expenses	820,505	-	820,505
Promotion, fundraising, and marketing	149,635	-	149,635
Gill Building expenses	-	-	-
Total expenses	3,077,875	-	3,077,875
Change in net assets	498,679	5,126,787	5,625,466
NET ASSETS			
Beginning	2,876,122	22,736,305	25,612,427
Ending	\$3,374,801	\$27,863,092	\$31,237,893

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

December 31, 2023 and 2022

	2023	2022
ASSETS		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$335,301	\$612,408
Pledges and grants receivable – current	214,658	200,887
Accrued interest and dividends receivable	25,959	502
Prepaid expenses	36,158	30,578
Total current assets	612,076	844,375
PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT		
Furniture and fixtures	24,178	24,178
Software	65,607	65,607
	89,785	89,785
Accumulated depreciation	(89,785)	(89,785)
Net property and equipment	-	-
OTHER ASSETS		
Pledges and grants receivable – noncurrent, net of discount	158,081	318,944
Investment securities	30,491,827	24,543,063
Cash surrender value of life insurance	63,290	63,183
Total other assets	30,713,198	24,925,190
Total assets	\$31,325,274	\$25,769,565
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	87,381	157,138
Total current liabilities	\$87,381	\$157,138
NET ASSETS		
Without donor restrictions	3,374,801	2,876,122
With donor restrictions	27,863,092	22,736,305
Total net assets	31,237,893	25,612,427
Total liabilities and net assets	\$31,325,274	\$25,769,565

Note: As independently audited by Brown, Edwards and Company, LLP., June 2024



EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION STAFF



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VIRGINIA WESTERN

Educational Foundation Inc.
Fishburn Hall
3093 Colonial Avenue
Roanoke, VA 24015

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Virginia Western.



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