

# VIRGINIA WESTERN

## PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

December 4, 2024

Dear Colleagues,

As we look ahead to the Spring 2025 semester, I want to take a moment to highlight our upcoming in-service, a time for us to come together as a community to prepare for the work ahead. This period provides us with an important opportunity to reflect, collaborate, and set our intentions for the semester, ensuring we're ready to meet the needs of our students and continue our commitment to excellence.

This year's in-service has been designed with your feedback in mind. We've streamlined the schedule to give you more time to focus on preparing your courses, while still offering valuable professional development. There will be fewer structured sessions, but we're excited to bring in two excellent outside speakers.

We'll return on Thursday, January 2 with a campus-wide breakfast in Campus Commons followed by the General Session in Whitman. Here are the details of the two sessions featuring outside speakers:

**Thursday, January 2, 9:30 - 10:30 am**

**Caring for Our Students is the Key to Their Success**

Presented by Ken Sherwood, Vice President for Caring Campus at the Institute for Evidence-Based Change, this session will explore the vital role that student relationships play in their success. By shifting from a transactional to a relational approach, we can greatly improve student retention, persistence, and ultimately graduation. Ken will share actionable strategies that can help us enhance the student experience on our campus.

**Monday, January 6, 2 - 3 pm**

**Insights into the Future of Work and Higher Education**

Join Laura Ullrich, Senior Regional Economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, for an engaging session that will examine emerging trends in the labor market and how these trends are reshaping the future of higher education. It's a timely opportunity to understand the challenges and opportunities facing both our students and the broader workforce.

We'll finish up in-service on Friday, January 10 with our annual **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service** honoring Dr. King's legacy through community support and compassion. This day of service remains a cherished tradition at our college. This year we'll offer three volunteer opportunities: on-campus food drive, volunteering at the food bank, and an on-campus blood

Page 2  
Spring 2025 In-Service  
December 4, 2024

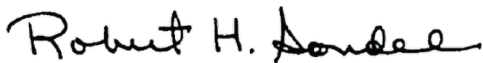
drive. I encourage you to take part in the opportunities to serve our community in honor of Dr. King's legacy of commitment to justice, equality, and service.

A complete agenda for in-service, including details about MLK Day of Service, is attached. I look forward to seeing all of you at these events and to the important work we will continue to do together in preparing for the Spring semester.

Lastly, since we've already experienced some weather-related closures this year, I strongly encourage you to sign up for [VW Alerts](#) to receive notifications related to inclement weather, campus emergencies, and other time-sensitive information. You can sign up by visiting the VW Mass Notification System page on our website.

This will be my final in-service before retiring at the end of this academic year. While the work ahead remains the same—supporting each other and our students—I look forward to celebrating this important milestone with you and reflecting on all we've achieved together over the years.

With gratitude and anticipation,



**Robert H. Sandel, Ed.D.**  
President