

VIRGINIA WESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Local Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
Meeting No. 297, May 15, 2025
STEM Building Room ST112, at 11:30am

Members Present: Valerie Brown, Roanoke City
Joyce Kessinger, Botetourt County
Dr. Ken Nicely, Roanoke County
Dr. Beth Quinn, Roanoke City -Vice Chair
Tim Rowe, Roanoke County
Chad Scott, Roanoke City

Members Absent: Lesley Carter, Franklin County
Penny Hodge, Roanoke County
Dwayne Huff, Craig County
Dr. Forest Jones, City of Salem
Todd Putney, Roanoke City - Chair

Faculty/Staff Present: Dr. Robert Sandel, College President/Board Secretary
Amy Balzer, Executive Assistant to the President
Bernadette Battle, Vice President of Student Affairs
Dr. Jolene Hamm, Associate Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness
Marilyn Herbert-Ashton, Vice President of Institutional Advancement
Hillary Holland, Hidden Gem
Jenifer Kurtz, Faculty Senate Chair
Pamela Keen, Hidden Gem
Jennifer Pittman, Assoc Vice President of Human Resources
Lisa Ridpath, Vice President of Financial and Administrative Services
Leah Savelyev, Admin and Professional Faculty Senate Chair
Jamie Snead, Director of Marketing and Strategic Communications
Bryan Walke, Staff Senate Chair
Dr. Elizabeth Wilmer, Vice President of Academic and Workforce Solutions
Kevin Witter, Director of Facilities, Planning and Development
Yassine Abdelkader, Student Spotlight

I. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Quinn called the meeting to order thanking everyone for their time. She welcomed David Garcia, Director of Budget and Financial Services and Erica Myatt noting she was the pen behind commencement ceremony script, an incredible undertaking. Dr. Quinn noted the meeting was Joyce Kessinger's last as she will complete her two four-year terms on June 30th. She thanked her for her participation and dedication to the college and board. This meeting was also Dr. Sandel's last as president. Dr. Quinn shared personal remarks of appreciation for making an incredible impact and well wishes. Dr. Sandel noted that it has always been about relationships and shared gratitude to the faculty and staff for making the college great.

Dr. Quinn then presented the March 20, 2025, meeting minutes for approval.

Mr. Rowe made the motion to approve the minutes for the March 20, 2025, meeting of the Local Advisory

Board. Ms. Kessinger seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments

III. REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dr Sandel shared the following update:

- The faculty and staff are what makes VWCC great! He has been honored to have been president of this wonderful institution.
- The commencement ceremony was simply great! The group that organized the ceremony did a wonderful job and it was an honor to be keynote speaker.
- Joyce Kessinger has been a great board member, serving as chair, vice chair and member of the Finance Committee. A true College friend! She will be missed.
 - Ms. Ridpath echoed Dr. Sandel's sentiments and comments, noting Joyce's terms of service saw through multiple college projects, building and improvements. She has been an invaluable member of the board, and her time is greatly appreciated.
- Introduced Gems Hillary Holland, Disability Counsel and ADA Coordinator, and Pamela Keen, Academic SIS Specialist. Both Hillary and Pam make unique and impactful contributions to the college and are valued staff members.

IV. COLLEGE REPORTS AND UPDATES

ACADEMIC AND WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

Dr. Wilmer shared the AWS update touching on points in the meeting packet:

- VWCC hosts a commencement not graduation. Commencement is the ceremonial completer of degrees or certificates. She thanked everyone for participating.
 - 550 Degrees and certificates were earned by the students that participated in Commencement.
- GED classes have started on campus and looking to expand programming for English Language Learners.
- VCCS is preparing DE communications to send out to high schools outlining DE costs for next year.
- FY25 Workforce Pipeline allocation has been received by the College, and Paramedic Program to start Fall 2026
- Reviewed Workforce enrollment trends and shared positive updates on the outlook for summer and fall semesters.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Ms. Battle introduced Yassine Abdelkader as the student spotlight. He is a Business Administration student planning to transfer to VT to pursue a degree in Finance. He is also a federal work-study for Disability Services. Stellar student who loves VWCC for its affordability and united community.

FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Ms. Ridpath noted the Finance Committee met on May 8, 2025, and fully vetted the local fund reports with an additional in-depth conversation regarding the current impacts on state funding and the college. She noted local funds totaling \$11.4 million and that revenues and expenses are tracking as expected. The Proposed FY26 budget is conservative based on level funding and stability. Many factors have a direct impact on the funding. This budget will be reassessed in the fall and adjusted as needed.

Dr. Quinn made the motion and second on behalf of the Finance Committee to recommend approval to the Local Advisory Board for the 2025 Local Fund Financial Report 7/1/2024 through 04/28/2025. With no further discussion or objections, the motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Quinn presented the motion and second on behalf of the Finance Committee to recommend approval to the Local Advisory Board for the Fiscal Year 2026 Proposed Budget from July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026. With no further discussion or objections, the motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Quinn commended Lisa and the team on the budget session and transparency. Encouraged all to attend if they have interest. Mr. Rowe added his appreciation for sharing their insight and looking ahead.

Ms. Ridpath encouraged everyone to review the capital projects summary in the meeting packet.

HUMAN RESOURCES

No Report

INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

Ms. Herbert-Ashton provided the Institutional Advancement Update touching on points in the meeting packet:

- As of March 31, 2024, the total liabilities and net assets of the Educational Foundation were \$36.9. The total investments at market are \$35.3 million. She noted the Foundation fiscal year has been adjusted to match the college's fiscal year.
- As of May 1, 2025, annual fundraising success is at \$4,418,493.80, exceeding the goal of \$3,172,250.
- A Legacy of Vision: A gala in honor of Dr. Robert Sandel on June 14, 2025, is nearly sold out.
- As of May 1, 202, 170 students have been awarded \$108,078.82. This is a record year for support due to new state funding.
- Shared chart on donations to Foundation by Fund Group. Dr. Quinn was impressed with the large amount of unrestricted funds.
- Marketing digital enrollment campaigns were reviewed. These are developed with cross campus collaboration. Radio spots will be running starting May 5, 2025, to reach adult listeners in Roanoke/Lynchburg area.
- Nursing Program under Ms. Herbert-Ashton's leadership received full ACEN accreditation for ten years with no restrictions/contingencies. ACEN noted that the report was the best they have seen.

Dr. Sandel commended Ms. Herbert-Ashton and her team for successfully growing the Foundation.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Dr. Hamm shared the following Institutional Effectiveness Update touching points in the meeting packet:

- Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) provides strategic leadership in institutional planning, accreditation, and data analytics. Through its initiatives OIE advances continuous improvement and ensures the College remains focused on student success, equity, and accountability.
- OIE core functions and initiatives were discussed with two notable mentions that Dr. Hamm was invited to present Canvas Automated Assessment to the State Board for Community Colleges in VA and College's Nursing program received full ACEN accreditation for 10 years with no contingencies.
- OIE led the integration of ADA compliance, federal equity guidelines, and Accelerate Opportunity (VCCS SP) in the VWCC Strategic Plan 2022.
- Launched new dashboards used regularly by academic leadership and instructional teams.
- Shared plans for moving forward including beginning preparations for the SACSCOC 5th year report.

VWCC's Strategic Plan 2022 is a living document with coordinated efforts throughout the college. Annual revisions and adaptations have been made with college-wide input. The priorities have four yearly targets, and the plan progress is audited annually on these targets. Most recently, because of the Executive Orders handed down by the Federal Government, the State Board for Community Colleges requested the VCCS remove all mention of diversity, equity and inclusion in their documents and signed the resolution from the federal government. Therefore, the community colleges must follow suit thus explaining the additional edits to the Strategic Plan. The Year 3 Annual Progress Report requires Board approval per SACSCOC. This progress report will also be included with the president's annual performance review materials.

- After a brief presentation of the red-lined version of the 3rd year updates/progress report and lengthy discussion on the required edits per VCCS guidance, Dr. Quinn voiced her concerns about proposed changes in the VWCC Strategic Plan in response to the March 20, 2025 Resolution of the State Board for Community Colleges to "Affirm our Values and Compliance with Recent Guidance on Discrimination and Merit-Based Opportunity." While she agreed wholeheartedly with the values put forth in the Resolution (sections beginning with "WHEREAS"), she argued that the subsequent resolution does not align with those values. Dr. Quinn acknowledged that in making the proposed changes the VWCC staff are trying their best to both protect our students against retaliation and follow VCCS edicts and has no criticism of them. However, she noted that she cannot, in good conscience, vote in support of the proposed changes in VWCC's strategic goals. (See Note 1 for additional background)

Dr. Nicely made the motion to approve Strategic Plan 2022 Year 3 Progress Report as presented, with caveat that the college is required to make the DEI edits per the State Board Resolution. Ms. Brown seconded the motion. Dr. Quinn was opposed to the approval and all others in favor, so the motion passed by the majority vote (5/1).

STUDENT AFFAIRS

Ms. Battle shared the Student Affairs Update touching on points in the meeting packet:

- Enrollment is trending positively with 2.6% over last year at this time. Summer indicators are looking promising as well.
- On site advisors assisted with enrollment at Craig County High School. Preparing to expand to other participating locality high schools.
- Ms. Allison Dooley was the recipient for the inaugural Chancellor's Award for Student Services Excellence. This is a new systemwide honor celebrating exceptional dedication to student success.
- First ever Commencement Countdown Ceremony was added to Commencement Day activities. This is a freshened way to accomplish student rehearsal with added fun of student-faculty mixer with refreshments, DJ, and photo walls. Dr. and Mrs. Sandel and Dr. Doré joined in the fun!
- Great Expectations Program students are making an impact on state policy through their advocacy efforts, which led directly to the passage of HB1777 in the VA Legislature. These students are set to visit the Governor's Mansion to attend the bill signing.
- VWCC has been awarded Silver Status as a Military Friendly School, one of seven VCCS colleges that have VERITAS federal funding.
- Shared the new Strategic Enrollment Plan: Connect & Commit (2025-2030).
- 2024-2025 is the first year VCCS colleges have state-allocated funds set aside for emergency grants to assist students in need.
- Shared recent and upcoming student enrichment and engagement activities planned by Natasha Lee.

V. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Dr. Quinn shared the 2025-2026 Local Board Calendar. She then requested formal affirmation of the Strategic Priorities Update and the 2025 Annual Evaluation Letter to the Chancellor. These documents will be included in Dr. Sandel's annual performance review with Dr. Doré in June.

Ms. Kessinger made the motion to approve the Strategic Priorities Update and the 2025 Annual Evaluation Letter to the Chancellor as provided. Ms. Brown seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Quinn then presented the nomination letter for Dr. Sandel to be considered for VCCS President Emeritus. This letter was submitted to the Chancellor by Mr. Putney on behalf of the Local Advisory Board and will be considered by the State Board for Community Colleges immediately after Dr. Sandel's retirement date. This letter requires formal affirmation by the Local Advisory Board.

Mr. Rowe presented the motion to approve the nomination letter for 2025 VCCS President Emeritus for Dr. Sandel as presented. Mr. Scott seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved.

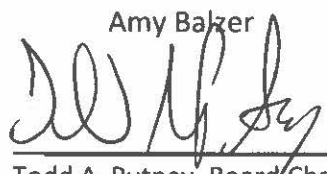
Dr. Quinn then recognized Dr. Sandel one last time and led a standing ovation in his honor.

With no further business, Dr. Quinn adjourned the meeting at 12:50pm

Minutes submitted by

Amy Balzer

Minutes Approved by


Todd A. Putney, Board Chair

9-18-25
Date

Notes:

1. As preface, Dr. Quinn spoke of her background researching and teaching in the area of law and inequality. She argued that the VCCS Resolution implies that our current practices to alleviate and combat racism in our institution are somehow wrong or illegal but that they are not. She pointed out that while the Supreme Court has recently clarified the use of race in admissions (Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President & Fellows of Harvard Coll., 600 U.S. 181, 2023; and moot for an open admissions institution such as VWCC), no new laws have been passed nor court decisions issued that would support the wholesale dismantling of anti-discrimination programs or strategic priorities that aim to alleviate racial disadvantage.

