

APPROVED

THE VIRGINIA APPRENTICESHIP COUNCIL MINUTES

The Virginia Apprenticeship Council met on Thursday, June 23, 2022

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dudley Harris, Chairman
Laura Duckworth, Vice-Chair
Christopher Cash
Dr. Angela Lawhorne
Dr. Jameo Pollock
Dr. Latitia McCane
Michael Mays
Gerald Simpson
Carrie Roth, VEC Commissioner
Gary G. Pan, Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT:

Patricia Morrison, Director
Kathleen Eddington, Assistant Director
Shannon Crooks, Grant Project Manager, Craft Grant
Sean McCusty, Craft Grant Narrator

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS:

Chairman Dudley Harris called the meeting to order at 10:00am and welcomed the council and new members.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Judy Hackler, Executive Director for the Virginia Assisted Living Association. Ms. Hackler stated the association is seeking partnerships between the assisted living communities and the Apprenticeship council and the Division of Registered Apprenticeship. Background information was provided about the opportunities in assisted living industry. The Virginia Assisted Living Association represents licensed assisted living communities across Virginia.

There are workforce opportunities that range from administration, secretarial, registered medication aides, dietary housekeeping. In the trade's maintenance lawn care, electricians. The community has a wealth of diversity of employment professionals within all the communities across Virginia. The Association would like to work together to get more apprenticeships opportunities throughout the Commonwealth with the assisted living communities

Before the pandemic there were workforce shortages across the state, especially in the rural areas. The COVID pandemic exacerbated those issues. The staff are burnt out and have been working 24/7. During the pandemic, doors did not close residents still needed care. Admissions have been reduced which reduces the available housing for their seniors and disabled citizens in the Commonwealth because of staff shortages.

The Association would appreciate any opportunity to work with the council, whether it be grants or other programs, or advertising.

Dan Seal, Great Eastern Resort Management, attended the council meeting for updates regarding the exemption from examination. Great Eastern applied for the exemption in October 2020; however, the exemption applications have been on hold until the council members reviewed the program.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Council member Gerald Simpson thanked the council for the opportunity serving as a member of the council. Mr. Simpson is moving on for new opportunities.

Council member Michael Mays, thanked the council for the opportunity serving as a member of the council. Mr. Mays has served on the council for twelve years and is now retiring and moving on to new things.

News: Virginia Business Women in Leadership Awards, received more than 300 nominations making it even more difficult to choose honorees from among a host of qualified executives. Ultimately, they selected 42 women leaders from large, midsize and small businesses and nonprofit organizations across Virginia to honor in 2022. Director Morrison nominated council member Dr. Latitia McCane for the prestigious award and she won. Congratulations Dr. McCane

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

March 2022 meeting minutes were approved through roll call.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

OLD BUSINESS:

Discussion of the exemption from examination process continued. The council will submit their questions and concerns to the division. Commissioner Pan and Director Morrison will meet with DPOR to discuss updates to pending exemption updates.

NEW BUSINESS:

David Leon, Director of Programs for the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS).

We serve anywhere 25,000 individuals with disabilities every year to help match them in their skills to employers around the state. DARS has a variety of services that can help those individuals be successful, not just in the short term, but long term.

New grant. This is a five year grant. Through the Rehabilitative Services Agency, which is part of the Federal Department of Education, we will have five years and \$9.3 million to work on helping more individuals with disabilities enter into STEM. Skilled trades, registered apprenticeships and state federal and local government. Work we will be doing with the Department of Labor and Industry.

Part of this grant, through the collaboration with the Division or Registered Apprenticeship team. We have a Rehabilitative counselor working at DOLI to help individuals with disabilities not only be successful in registered apprenticeships but from things I've heard today.

This grant is going to partner with groups like the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center to provide better accommodations around testing.

We will also have a quick response counselor separate from the person who's working directly at DOLI. The individual can go anywhere around the state to work one on one with a business and individual to get them in our system and provide the supports and accommodations needed to be successful.

Tamson Six, Ph.D. Researcher Consultant

I come to you from a very applied academic discipline, which is criminal justice. For over 25 years, I was a professor, led created a criminal justice program, and taught courses. I participated in credit for prior learning and building a higher learning program from the ground up through the Council for adult experience with education which is the credential to have, so to speak, all of this. One thing I think is essential and timely right now is that higher education is definitely at a point of inflection. Four-year institutions seek ways to meet the student, their customer, and the future worker learner where they are irrelevant. To be affordable and less rigid. So we will explore and use every opportunity we can to integrate with two- to four-year institutions. Mainly looking at professional studies and continuing education and to make those institutions what they're designed to be relevant and healthy and meet the community's Workforce development needs.

REPORTS:**Virginia Community College System (VCCS):**

Dr. Lawhorne reported the following:

The Spring semester enrollment update as of March 28, 2022, reflected 70,742 FTEs, 5.20% (3,877) lower, and a headcount of 131,426, 3.64% (4,960) lower than last year at this time.

With the mask mandates lifting and vaccination requirements removed, we hope to increase not only enrollment, but also our faculty. The VCCS lost many adjunct faculty during the pandemic.

G3, now Get a Skill, Get a Job, Get Ahead, has been significantly growing with over \$2 million having been awarded to FastForward students to cover the first 1/3 of their tuition, and over \$15 million awarded to academic students in FY22. We are expecting this demand to grow with the implementation of the Virginia Infrastructure Academy (VIA), a statewide initiative to train and employ the workforce in the areas of broadband, renewable energy, roads and bridges, skilled trades and more. We anticipate VIA will open doors for partnerships and apprenticeships statewide.

Our Coordinator for Apprenticeship & Work-Based Learning, Dr. Jason Williams, has also spent the last year collecting information and expanding resources for our 23 community colleges. The Apprenticeship & Work-Based Learning guide was created and disseminated, as were monthly information sessions with employers and partners offering WBL opportunities for our students. Jason has worked closely with VDOE and their new regional WBL Specialists to streamline efforts and serves on the committee creating the new Work-Based Learning Network, VAVoyager, a VDOE endeavor funded from VCCS WIOA dollars. This new network will provide WBL information and resources for K-12 and community college students, while providing employers a direct way to connect opportunities with students.

Division of Registered Apprenticeship (DOLA):

Director Morrison reported the following:

Greetings. I will open my report time to include an update from the Apprenticeship State Expansion grant from Shannon Crooks who has been promoted to Grant Project Manager.

Commonwealth Registered Apprenticeship Future Talent (CRAFT) Grant
Shannon Crooks, Grant Project Manager reported the following:

The Craft grant, the Commonwealth registered apprenticeship Future Talent grant. The grant goal is to expand registered apprenticeship in the Commonwealth. We started out with six target industries which are typically non-traditional industries for apprenticeship. Healthcare, IT, cyber security, manufacturing, agricultural industries, municipalities, state and local agencies. Grant priority is to increase diversity within apprenticeships increasing the amount of veterans, communities of color, youth and women. Also, persons from inside the justice system and persons with disabilities

The agency received this grant in 2019. First year, we worked out the details of the grant and then the pandemic hit. We applied and received for a grant extension for one year. We've served 52 apprentices and funded \$50,000 in incentive funds. The grant increased the amount per apprentice incentive. Original grant allowance was \$1000 per apprentice, it has increased to \$3000 per apprentice. The goal is to get more employers excited about applying for our reimbursements to this grant funding.

Other Grant Summaries:

I'd like to thank David Leon for providing information about the PATHWAYS grant. Additionally, I will share a success story from this first candidate to become a Registered Apprentice within this intentional, collaborative model:

Lisa Handke, DOLI/DARS Liaison met with Donna Carvana, Lead Generation Specialist from DOLI to discuss an open apprenticeship opportunity. The business was interested in widening their employee pool to those with differing abilities. Jeannine Marsh, DARS Quick Response Counselor, and Lisa Handke, continued to pursue the Optician Dispensing Apprenticeship by sending out an email requesting candidate identification for this opportunity in health care. Lynette Uzel-Debiasi, DARS VE replied with an appropriate candidate. Jeannine Marsh and Lisa Handke worked with his Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Kendra Johnson, to ensure that everything was understood and he was ready for next steps. Jeannine Marsh assisted the candidate prepare for the interview. The candidate was interviewed by a regional director for ForEyes and has received a contingent offer on results of background. He will begin working for \$14 per hour on a part time basis while he completes several previous obligations. When his apprenticeship paperwork is registered, he will move to \$18/hr. As he learns specific tasks, his pay will continue to increase over the two year term, and when he sits and passes his certification test, he will be making \$25/hr. The educational component is sponsored by the company, so he will have no expenses around education, and he may work at his own pace. The structure of the apprenticeship results in achievement of the new RSA matrix by supporting continued employment (2nd, 4th quarter), supporting increased wages in 2nd quarter, and both skills gains and credential achievement.

Professional Development

In May, a team of six of us attended the Eastern Seaboard Apprenticeship Conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Fourteen states participate and/or attend. Each year the agenda becomes more robust and diverse from an industry point of view and for capturing more talent from more communities.

In September, Virginia will host the annual conference for the National Association of State and Territorial Directors in Norfolk. Chairman Harris has already been assisting me and we are looking forward to our first in-person conference since 2019 in Helena, Montana.

Other Events

The Headquarter grant team submitted a proposal to the USDOL ETA Apprenticeship Building America grant however awards have not been announced.

Virginia is hosting the National Association of State and Territorial Directors annual conference in September, 2022 in Norfolk. Chairman Harris will be assisting in some partnership efforts to help make the conference go smoothly.

Yesterday, our Registered Apprenticeship Navigator, Sean McCusty and I made a presentation to the Access sub-committee to address legislation from the regular session involving Registered Apprenticeship. Commissioner Pan will elaborate on this issue.

Metrics:

The Division of Registered Apprenticeship relies on the National database for apprenticeship registrations - RAPIDS. The time period used is federal fiscal year. Metrics YTD from October 1, 2021 are as follows:

Active Apprentices: 11507
Completions issued: 816
Registered Employer/Sponsors: 2621
New Sponsors: 233

Looking forward, the Division is rolling out a soft launch Awareness Campaign this summer. Part of our targeted events will include promotion of the RA model with the Northern Virginia Technology Council; an Eastern Shore event; and event with the Institute of Advanced Research and Learning in Danville, a ribbon-cutting event at Prince William Public Schools and other fulfilled opportunities for the Commonwealth to renew their interest in Registered Apprenticeship.

Starting in January, 2023 the Division will celebrate the 85th Anniversary of the commencement of RA in the Commonwealth and use the opportunity to educate, showcase, elevate the value of the RA model. We ask that the VAC participate as much as possible in what will be known as the Virginia Registered Apprenticeship Challenge.

Virginia Employment Commission (VEC):

Commissioner Roth reported the following:

The Commonwealth, heading in the right direction, unemployment remains low and steady at 3%.

The industries that have grown the most has been hospitality and tourism, just coming back online with it being the number two industry and come with a Virginia. Northern Virginia has made a comeback to where they were. The ports down in Hampton Roads have really helped drive activity in Tidewater. Related to logistics and the port work, and obviously military and government sectors have really pulled that area back along as tourism catches up. Some of the areas of great growth has been in health and life sciences.

As far as GDP goes the fourth quarter of 2021. The southeast led the country and GDP growth. Virginia lagged a little bit behind that.

In the housing industry was really down in Virginia. There are some really challenging factors that are out there. Getting people off the sideline back employed. We continue to lose population in Virginia. Keep retaining folks here because that's how we're going to be able to grow our businesses and try new people to the Commonwealth.

Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI):

Commissioner Pan reported the following:

We are past COVID which has been the main topic over the past two years.

Regarding accomplishments and the direction that I see that we're going, some of the big things that we addressed with the safety and health codes board, we worked to appeal all of the COVID regulations that existed, and that was really important. It took time through the EPA, but I'm glad it has been accomplished.

Covid was covered all the time, and now we're in different situations and bouncing back.

A positive indicator is Youth work permits. The request for youth work certificates is over the top right now, and that's great, our families are getting more comfortable, and people are getting back into the workforce. These youth workers are going to be our future workforce.

Regarding things that DOLI has been doing, we've been focusing on our strategic plan, objectives, and critical results in some of the key areas we want to focus on.

We've been struggling with our staffing in the past two. We haven't backfilled many of our positions. We're talking about positions on our occupational health side, but also more important and relevant here are vacancies in registered apprenticeships. Staff is working hard to fill positions.

The other important part has to do with modernization. When I stepped into this position, I quickly realized we hadn't had any significant investments in our systems for 20 years. So I see this as a huge opportunity to reduce friction and bring automation technology, bringing all the new world tools that will help us be more effective.

DOLI's inspections, as well as safety and health, are very important. However, there's a whole other area now that the administration feel has not had the investment of attention. Before, I was doing the deep dive regarding COVID, and now I'm doing the deep dive into RA.

This coincides with the interests of the governor as well. The governor is looking to add 400,000 new workers to the workforce. We are specifically focused on a goal of 50,000 new apprentices in the next four years. Currently, we have 11,000 registered apprentices in the Commonwealth. That's an opportunity for creativity to come into play and for us to think hard about the opportunities we've been missing or how we need to stretch.

Regarding addressing the registered apprenticeship spotlight.

This is coming from the top down. The administration is looking at this hard, and they're looking throughout all the secretariats to figure it out. So ensure everyone is on board, and we can bring out the best ideas.

My general feeling is that there is a lot of complication and confusion regarding the workforce. Duplication, and lots of misalignment, I believe these, are missed opportunities. The goal is to reconcile all these areas and make them more efficient.

There appears to be confusion about RA., its role in the workforce, and how it can benefit not just employees but also employers.

Yesterday we presented to the Virginia Workforce Development Board. We were at a session where they wanted to address something that came out in the 2022 General Assembly. It was an act to direct the Board of Workforce Development to prepare recommendations for creating a primary office. I was shocked but not surprised because the workforce is complicated.

People may not always understand registered apprenticeship. We need to educate the public and do more outreach and marketing. We need to be louder and tell people who we are and what we do. We must inform our delegates and senators that there has been a central apprenticeship office, a Division in DOLI, for the past eighty-five years.

The Council is focused on doing what's suitable for registered apprenticeship throughout the entire Commonwealth. We need to promote RA. It's not bragging that we do a great job here, and we need to ensure that we get recognition for what we do. We're trying to make sure that people are fully aware of the benefits and how we can make a change for all the workforce and employers in the Commonwealth.

I want to thank you for your service and support to Virginia's Apprenticeship Council and the Registered Apprenticeship Program in general.

Thank you and Mr. Chair that concludes my report.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Chairman Harris announced that the next Council meeting will be Thursday, June 23, 2022.

Chairman Harris thanked the Council, Director Morrison, her staff, and all in attendance.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 am.

Mr. Dudley Harris, Chairman
Mr. Gary G. Pan, Secretary