

## THE VIRGINIA APPRENTICESHIP COUNCIL MINUTES

The Virginia Apprenticeship Council met on Thursday, March 29, 2024

### COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dudley Harris, Chair  
Patrick Dean, Vice Chair  
Christopher Cash  
Dr. Jameo Pollock  
J. Doug Straley  
Grant Shmelzer  
William Dunn  
Dr. Jason Williams

### STAFF PRESENT:

Carrie Roth, Director (Secretary of the Council)  
Angela Kelly-Wiecek, Chief Deputy Director  
Donna Carvana, Assistant Director  
Andrew Johnson, Registered Apprenticeship Consultant  
James Edmunds, Program Support Technician

### CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS:

Chair Dudley Harris called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.

Motion to update the agenda to allow for the vote of the Vice Chair of the Virginia Apprenticeship Council was made and approved by voice vote.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS:

**David Leon, Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)**, DARS is in the beginning of year three of a 9.3-million-dollar grant focused on increasing individuals with disabilities access to Registered Apprenticeships. Mr. Leon wanted to make sure that the council is aware of the program as they are fully staffed related to a Registered Apprenticeship VR liaison. DARS has helped 8 people with disabilities enter into Registered Apprenticeships just in the last year. A group that DARS was hoping to reach were those who are in a Registered Apprenticeship but are struggling to successfully complete their RTI. If these individuals with hidden disabilities and if they choose to come to DARS' voluntary program, additional resources and support can be provided to those employees in the Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

Grant Schmelzer requests that David Leon provide the council with contact information for the members of the DARS team that deal directly with Registered Apprenticeship.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

September 2023 meeting minutes were approved through a voice vote.

**VICE CHAIR:**

Patrick Dean was nominated and selected to be the Vice Chair of the Virginia Apprenticeship Council. This nomination was approved unanimously by the council by a voice vote.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Director Carrie Roth updated the council on Exam Exemptions. Director Roth informed the council that the Code and the regulations allow for individuals who have been issued a completion of a trades apprenticeship by the Director of Virginia Works are exempt from the examination to receive their tradesman licensure from the Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR). Director Roth suggested to vote reaffirming this position during the next meeting (post July 1, 2024) when the director of the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR) is a part of the council.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

The bylaws for the Virginia Apprenticeship Council have not been updated since the Virginia Division of Registered Apprenticeship transitioned from the Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) to Virginia Works. The bylaws were updated to reflect the transition for Registered Apprenticeship and most of these changes were name and title changes. A motion was made to accept the new bylaws and they were approved by a voice vote.

**REPORTS:**

**Virginia Works:**

Carrie Roth, Director of Virginia Works, gave the following report to the Virginia Apprenticeship Council on behalf of Virginia Works:

Director Roth announced that this is the first Virginia Apprenticeship Council meeting to be held under the new agency (Virginia Works). The first public event was also held back on February 15, 2024. This event was the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Outstanding Apprenticeship Awards, and it was very successful.

With Virginia Works becoming a new agency, second division (Registered Apprenticeship) transitioned from the Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, with a goal of transitioning all other agencies by March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024. However, the transition went ahead of schedule and the last program transferred to Virginia Works in January of 2024. There is going to be a new Richmond Headquarters building and it is going to be within 5 miles of the current startup location at Brookfield Place. Virginia Works has done a large amount of engagement to ensure that employees voices are heard. Some of these engagements include: pre and post

transition surveys, kickoffs with all team members as they transitioned, and monthly town hall meetings.

Virginia Works has a dual-centric customer base, which is the employers and jobseekers. Virginia's unemployment rate has maintained at 3%, which is the 7<sup>th</sup> lowest in the country. The labor force participation rate is at 66.6%, which is the highest it has been in over a decade. With that being said, there are 257,000 job openings in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Virginia Works not only wants to make sure that there are individuals to fill those jobs, but also that we can give individuals the skills that they need so that they can compete and succeed as individuals, contribute, and sustain their family, and contribute to their communities. This will lead to a thriving commonwealth from our work together.

The minimum viable product of our website, [virginiaworks.gov](http://virginiaworks.gov), is live as well as the Virginia Works LinkedIn.

There has been a lot of work put into the technology front to have a single front door for Virginia Works and for all individuals that are seeking employment. The legislation that passed in this most recent session does make some changes to the Virginia Apprenticeship Council. As part of these technical changes, five new members will be joining the Council. These five are made up of two individuals and three ex-officio members. Some of these members include the Director of the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR), the Superintendent of Public Schools, and the Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI). The new legislation also altered the number of VAC meeting per year. Previously, the Council had to meet three times a year and we will now meet quarterly.

Within Virginia Works, there is a significant effort underway around our metrics. The goal of this is to see how workforce programs, collectively across the commonwealth, are working. There are over 72 identified programs that are supported by the state. In our first sweep, we worked with over 60 programs to get their data and 100% of the data was inputted. Virginia is the only state that is doing this work – collectively looking at how our workforce programs are performing, how much it costs for employees to be placed, and most importantly are our efforts creating jobs for Virginians.

Governor Glenn Younkin put \$2 million a year for us to have an incentive grant for apprenticeships in the budget – but it did not make it into the conference. It the Governors goal to double the number of apprenticeships in the Commonwealth of Virginia by the end of his term.

#### **Division of Registered Apprenticeship (Virginia Works):**

Angela Kelly-Wiecek, Chief Deputy Director of Virginia Works, gave the following report to the Virginia Apprenticeship Council on behalf of the Division of Registered Apprenticeship:

- Transition Update – Effective Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>, Registered Apprenticeship transitioned to the new agency.
  - We reviewed tasks, processes, and reporting mechanisms.
    - We reduced paperwork processing time by 96% after instituting secure email transmission rather than mailing hardcopy applications.

- We eliminated two duplicative reporting methods, saving 38% of individual reporting time – equivalent to roughly 54 hours per week.
  - We are encouraging our consultants to bring us their ideas from a “boots on the ground” perspective
- Staffing Changes:
  - Congratulations to Donna Carvana who is the new Asst. Director for Registered Apprenticeship
  - Congratulations to Andrew Johnson who is now a Registered Apprenticeship Consultant focusing on Service Trades
  - We have one open Registered Apprenticeship Consultant position open in the Tidewater area which is in the interview phase.
  - We have two grand funded positions under recruitment: Grant Technician and Sales Lead Generation Specialist, as well as a replacement for Andrew’s Program Support Technician position.
- Current Events
  - We submitted our extensive commentary on the NPRM for Federal rules governing apprenticeship.
  - We are currently working on the SAEF Year 2 Formula Grant application in the amount of \$1.6 M that includes money for outreach and multi-media engagement strategies.
  - We are also submitting a proposal written by the VDOE for the competitive portion of this grant leveraging Teach for Tomorrow and Grow Your Own to create a true pipeline to address the teacher shortage.
- Strategies
  - Work is moving urgently towards defining our process for designating/signing up intermediaries – whether they are public or private partners.
  - Integrating our Registered Apprenticeship Consultants and their functions with our Local Workforce Boards and their Business Services Teams – this will help the number of sponsors and also provide assistance to individuals interested in becoming an apprentice.
- New Programs
  - Surgical Assistants Program and Radiology Tech programs are being developed
  - We have designated one of our Registered Apprenticeship Consultants – Jennifer Hynson -to grow our state agency apprenticeship programs.
  - Working with the Virginia and National Apartment Management Association to develop a building maintenance technician program that specializes in multi-family properties.

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

Chair and Council members, I am Dr. Jason M. Williams Sr., the Coordinator of Apprenticeships and Work-Based Learning programs at VCCS in the Workforce and Academic Division. Since our last meeting and as a follow-up to prior talking points, the below applies:

- Virginia approves new teacher academy Nov. 2023:

**Germanna Community College**'s Future Educators Academy is among Virginia's State Board of Education-approved new lab schools. Which is another two-year college focused on an accelerated track for the next generation of high-quality teachers in the region. This lab school will reinvigorate the current teacher cadre with innovative opportunities through observations and hands-on practicums. It will streamline the pathway to teacher licensure by prioritizing an associate degree in high school and allowing students to complete their bachelor's degree in as little as two years after high school graduation. Gov. Glenn Youngkin has secured \$100 million in state funding for the initiative.

- The Growth and Opportunity Foundation has awarded \$1.9 million for eight projects in Virginia Dec. 2023. GO Virginia grants are administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and are designed to bolster economic and workforce development in nine regions across the Commonwealth. The awards include \$250,000 for Brightpoint Community College in Chester to foster talent pathways between their students and local businesses in information technology and pharmaceutical manufacturing. These GO Virginia projects are a testament to the unwavering dedication to fostering economic growth and creating opportunities across Virginia's diverse regions. The grant for Brightpoint Community College affects the counties of Greensville, Chesterfield, Dinwiddie, Hanover, Henrico, and Prince George as well as the cities of Hopewell, Petersburg, and Richmond.
- U.S. Dept. of Labor Celebrating the Very First Youth Apprenticeship Week (YAW) 2024 **Youth Apprenticeship Week (YAW), is scheduled for May 5-11, 2024.**  
YAW 2024 webinar on Wednesday, March 6, 2024, from 3 to 4 p.m. ET  
Nationwide celebration highlighting the benefits and value of Registered Apprenticeship opportunities for youth. Employers, educators, labor unions, workforce professionals, and their partners across the country are launching Registered Apprenticeship Programs that allow youth to earn competitive wages while obtaining training and experience (and often college credit) to start their careers. YAW is an opportunity for stakeholders across the country to host events that will raise awareness of these life-changing Registered Apprenticeship career opportunities for young people and how they create a sustainable pipeline of skilled and diverse talent for the jobs of today and tomorrow.
- NASA Roadshow 2023 Summary:  
Over 2,100 people attended the VCCS and NASA Road Show in 2023, consisting of traditional college students, dual enrollment, and Governor's School students. 21 of the 23 community colleges participated with both in-person and virtual options. I coordinated the efforts between Virginia's community colleges along with Karen Miller and her group at NASA to present detailed information, outlining internship and apprenticeship opportunities for VCCS students interested in positions at NASA.

**MARCH 2024 SYSTEM-WIDE UPDATES**

- Spring enrollments are at 74,330 FTEs with a headcount of 138,028 credit students (as of 3/11/24). Compared to last year, this represents a 4.05% increase in FTEs and a 3.27% increase in headcount.
- Over 230,000 students were served by Virginia's community colleges in 2023, with a notable 81% of community college graduates remaining in the Commonwealth to contribute to Virginia's growing workforce ([Virginia's investments in community college system pay off in jobs - Cardinal News](#) by David Doré and Barry DuVal).
- Spring dual enrollment FTEs have increased from 13,728 in spring 2023 to 15,025 today (as of 3/11/24). Headcount increased from 39,064 to 42,257 dually enrolled students across the Commonwealth.
- As of 3/11/2024, FastForward enrollments increased from 10,731 (this time last year) to 13,258 today, a 23.55% increase. FastForward programs are seeing 95% completion rates and a 72% credential attainment rate, with an average wage increase of \$11,746 within 12-months of earning their credential.
- As of 3/11/2024, Over \$16 million in G3 funding has been awarded to credit students for FY24, serving 8,642 students. Over \$3.8 million has been awarded to 4,253 FastForward (workforce students).
- As a reminder, the VCCS created our Statistics page at [www.vccs.edu/statistics/](http://www.vccs.edu/statistics/). Along with enrollment data and trends by college by year, you can also access data on performance funding, outcomes, and our strategic plan, Opportunity 2027, which has a focus on increasing access and opportunities for Registered Apprenticeships and other work-based learning programs.
- Lastly, VCCS Chancellor David Doré, along with Virginia's 23 community colleges and the strong presence of our students, participated heavily in advocating during the 2024 General Assembly session. VCCS will also focus on the following:
  - Aligning to the nine GO Virginia regions;
  - Using real-time data from the Virginia Office of Education Economics to scale high-demand programs;
  - Convening statewide industry summits to deepen partnerships;
  - Strengthening partnerships with school divisions to ensure high school students graduate with a meaningful postsecondary credential; and
  - We are increasing graduation and transfers, reducing student borrowing (from \$138 million in 2017 to \$56 million in 2022), and increasing completion rates for underrepresented students.

*-System-wide updates provided by Dr. Angela Lawhorne, Director of Career Education Programs & Workforce Partnerships for the Virginia Community College System*

## **ONGOING INITIATIVES**

- Talent Pipeline Challenge/Infrastructure: to fill high-quality jobs that will help rebuild our infrastructure and supply chains by synergizing employers, education, and training providers, at the state and local levels. VCCS has responded by the formation of the Virginia Infrastructure Academy (VIA), aligning business leaders to existing training programs by addressing urgent community needs while forecasting future requirements. Business sectors: heavy construction, maintenance, tunnel construction, broadband expansion, on/offshore wind, and solar energy. Also to note we have a new VIA Coordinator, Sam Northington.
- As a VCCS A&WBL Business and Outreach Initiative, many colleges have increased their hosting of Job Fairs, Career Fairs, and Employer engagement, which will increase internships, apprenticeships, and student employment.
- The VCCS' A&WBL Quarterly Newsletter provides news, updated related information, and guidance on A&WBL topics to our 23 colleges. Each quarterly newsletter is accompanied by a meeting whereby guest speakers, presenters, and A&WBL subject matter experts can deliver important information that provides growth and expansion of the VCCS' A&WBL programs. The next virtual A&WBL NL/Meeting will be on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 at 1 pm.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Chair Harris announced that the next Council meeting is tentatively set for July 18, 2024 at 10:00 am. However, as several of the council members state that they will not be able to attend, Chair Harris is going to collect the schedules of all council members and consider a date and time that may work better for the Council.

Chair Harris thanked the Council, and all in attendance.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 pm.

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**Mr. Dudley Harris, Chair**  
**Carrie Roth, Secretary**