

THE VIRGINIA APPRENTICESHIP COUNCIL MINUTES

The Virginia Apprenticeship Council met on Thursday, September 12, 2024

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dudley Harris, Chair
Carrie Roth, (Secretary of the Council)
William Dunn
Dr. Jameo Pollock
Doris Crouse-Mays
Michelle Ramaker
Gary Pan
Meghan Hurt
Grant Shmelzer
Bo Bundrick, (Designee)
Steve Masterson
Jeb Wilkinson, (Designee)
William Dunn
Dr. Jason Williams

STAFF PRESENT:

Angela Kelly-Wiecek, Chief Deputy Commissioner
Donna Carvana, Assistant Director
Charmaine Eaglin, Registered Apprenticeship Consultant
Jennifer Hynson, Registered Apprenticeship Consultant
Andrew Johnson, Registered Apprenticeship Consultant
James Edmunds, Program Support Technician
Cierra Morgan, Program Support Technician

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS:

Chair Dudley Harris called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed the council and new members.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Laura Duckworth, University of Virginia:

Laura Duckworth shares that she is listening to and supports Registered Apprenticeship. She also states that she likes to be a voice of the importance of the integration of safety and health into Registered Apprenticeship programs. She states that it is even more important now after completing a Registered Apprenticeship program, the apprentice no longer must test (even though it was a codes test and not a safety/health test). She wants to make sure that we remember (as an organization and as the commonwealth) is that we are turning out Registered Apprentices

simply for being in a Registered Apprenticeship program. There needs to be some checks and balances. Are they getting the training that they need? Are they getting the competencies out in the field? Can they take code and apply it in different situations? Are they doing it safely? Are they protecting themselves? Are they protecting the properties that they are working on? Are they protecting the people that are working around them? While she supports the fact that if you get through a robust comprehensive Registered Apprenticeship program, then you absolutely should be able to be licensed without testing. She states that it is important and it's the responsibility of this council and Virginia Works to make sure that that's happening. We need to make sure that small employers that might not have the same resources understand their obligations are still the same to their employees and to the Registered Apprenticeship program. This is something that can be easily overlooked. She also asks where does that liability be laid? Does it fall on the sponsor who graduated registered apprentice who is not competent in their field? Does that responsibility lay with me, the sponsors graduated them? Or does it lay with registered apprenticeship program who signed the paper that says that they completed?

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

July 2024 meeting minutes were approved through a voice vote.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Regarding Laura Duckworths comments, Commissioner Roth states that we have had multiple discussions over the last several apprenticeship council meetings on this issue. We went back to look and see if there have been any violations or any concerns. There were three issues, and they were administrative issues. There were no safety or health codes issues. Commissioner Roth states that the council appreciates the comments. That's why we have the integration with DPOR and DOLI as well on this council.

REPORTS:

Virginia Works:

Apprenticeship within the Commonwealth. There are currently 13,127 Registered Apprenticeships which is 249 higher than it was last week. Virginia Works has also started looking at those apprentices who are registered with a federal program but live in Virginia. There are currently 756 apprentices that are registered with a federal program but live in Virginia. These two numbers combined are around 14,000. Our goal for the end of this calendar year is 15,000 apprentice to get to our December 2025 goal of 20,000 apprentices. Regarding Registered Apprenticeship completions, for Federal Fiscal Year 2024 year-to-date, there have been 1,334 completions. Registered Apprenticeship has a total of 1,835 Registered Sponsors which is 6 higher than it was the previous week. There has been a total of 226 new sponsors for the Federal

Fiscal Year 2024 year-to-date. Commissioner Roth pointed out that these are historical numbers (largest they have ever been).

Virginia Works also celebrated our working with the Department of Education, to obtain a \$6 million grant supporting registered apprenticeship teachers in the Commonwealth. Virginia Works is really excited about how the Department of Education is really embracing registered apprenticeship as a pathway to build up the education talent pipeline as well.

Regarding the overall economic landscape in the Commonwealth of Virginia for the July timeframe we had over 4.4 it's 4.5 million Virginians who are employed which is here in 95,000 more since January of 2022. Our labor force participation rate is 66.1%. We have seen over the last couple of months a down tick in labor force participation which that's really been the number that we have been focusing on is labor force participation just because of the changing dynamics. We continue to see the top reason why people are not working now is retirement. Our unemployment rate has been 2.7% for the last three months. So, our employment is not an issue our labor force participation continues to be the pressure point for all our employers across the Commonwealth. It's not something that we see within our agencies and it's something that we talk about with every single employer.

The governor launched his "Stand Tall, Stand Strong" initiative last month focused on prisoner re-entry. We had a year of pilots that were done, and Registered Apprenticeship is a component of that in working with the Department of Corrections to make sure that we provide those pathways.

Virginia Works has strengthened our partnership with the Department of Social Services again trying to get people upward mobility not in small increments, but large growth as well as with organizations such as Goodwill.

There are still about 257,000 job openings in the Commonwealth. Virginia has been hovering around 130,000 unemployed Virginians that are seeking work. Virginia Works is working on closing that gap.

Commissioner Roth ended her report by informing the council that this is her second to last day as Commissioner of Virginia Works. It has been an honor to be the first Commissioner and to stand up, start up and launch Virginia Works. Virginia Works is excited to share with the council that the governor has appointed Nicole Overley, who has been the deputy secretary for workforce development for the Commonwealth, to become the new the Commissioner for Virginia Works.

Discussion Point: Grant Schmelzer confirmed that the registered apprenticeship numbers were very helpful, and requested that in addition to this information, a schedule of program reviews and audits would be valuable.

Division of Registered Apprenticeship (Virginia Works):

Donna Carvana, Assistant Director of Registered Apprenticeship, gave the following report to the Virginia Apprenticeship Council on behalf of the Division of Registered Apprenticeship:

Registered Apprenticeship will be celebrating National Apprenticeship Week in November from November 17th -23rd, 2024. Registered Apprenticeship will be hosting the 7th Annual Outstanding Apprenticeship Awards. This ceremony is planned for the week before National Apprenticeship Week and is tentatively scheduled for November 14th or 15th.

Ms. Carvana and a number of Registered Apprenticeship staff recently attended the annual NASTAD (National Association of State and Territorial Apprenticeship Directors) Conference. Registered Apprenticeship is looking to possibly start encouraging our sponsor companies to have programs in conjunction with the CTE centers so that they can go in and talk about apprenticeship opportunities in their industries. this will help youth start thinking about participating in their programs, but also start thinking about careers in general.

Ms. Carvana also reported that Reciprocity was an important topic discussed at NASTAD and will need to be addressed by the Council.

Intermediaries are becoming a more integral part of Registered Apprenticeship. Ms. Carvana indicated that both LWDB and community colleges are considering becoming intermediaries and asked for there to be continued conversation with the council these opportunities.

The federal government will be conducting audits with each state. As far as going over the indoctrination to compliance to 2929 and CFR 2930. Registered Apprenticeship is working towards getting our sponsors in compliance. We will start our major push in October for our Registered Apprenticeship Consultants now have different territories and are in new offices. We are starting to push to get them out to go and start the accumulation of data for our CFR 2929 and 2930 requirements. A specific date for the audit was not provided, but it is assumed that they will start the audit before the end of the year.

Lastly, the next phase of our Apprenticeship Academy, which will consist self-guided videos produced by the Federal DOL which go into the requirements and standards of Registered Apprenticeship. The Apprenticeship Academy provides the background they need to understand the program and talk knowledgeably about Registered Apprenticeship. After completing the videos, our Registered Apprenticeship Consultants can provide training on self-service in RAPIDS.

Discussion Point: Grant Schmelzer inquired on the process for making a decision on reciprocity. Mr. Schmelzer suggested to Chair Harris that a working group be convened to discuss and assist with the policy creation. Commissioner Roth confirmed that this issue should be presented with more detail and a staff analysis at the December meeting.

Department of Professional and Occupational Regulations (DPOR):

Jeb Wilkinson, Assistant Director for DPOR, gave the following report to the Virginia Apprenticeship Council on behalf of DPOR:

Mr. Wilkinson is filling in for Brian Woolford. He has been apart of DPOR for about 7 weeks and has been in the administration for two and half years. Mr. Wilkinson states that he is willing to receive any questions.

Virginia Community College System (VCCS):

Dr. Jason M. Williams Sr., the Coordinator of Apprenticeships and Work-Based Learning programs at VCCS in the Workforce and Academic Division gave a verbal report and provided the following written report to the council:

Rappahannock CC Welding Facility in New Kent Opens for Students

1. Through the collaboration of students, instructors, community, government partners, local workforce board members, and Rappahannock Community College personnel celebrated the official opening of RCC's newest welding facility located in New Kent. The cafeteria at New Kent High School was transformed into a state-of-the-art instructional welding facility. The facility has 11 individual training booths. Dual-enrolled high school students attend in the morning, or the afternoon and adult students attend in the evenings. Saturday classes will begin later this year. By May 2025, these students will learn SMAW (Shielded Metal Arc Welding) commonly called ARC welding, GMAW (Gas Metal Arc Welding) commonly called MIG, FCAW (Flux Cored Arc Welding) referred to as FLUX, GTAW (Gas Tungsten Arc Welding) or TIG, and ASME IX Pressure pipe welding, and be ready to become certified and head into the workforce. The facility has all new Lincoln 300C multi-process welders, Lincoln Prism welding extractors, and Miller Dynasty 400 water cooled TIG machines, and students were happy to give tours and talk about the program. Most agreed that they love welding and the chance to create something and work with their hands. "I'm looking forward to training these students at our new facility," said Roman Eppig, RCC Welding Program Head and instructor. "Welding is a valuable skill that can lead to a rewarding and lucrative career." It is estimated that in the next year, 480,000 welders will be needed nationwide. "The shipyard is hiring on a regular basis, seeing about 50-60 new hires monthly," said Lynn Showalter, AWS Director-at-Large and Welding Engineer 5 at Newport News Shipbuilding.

Hospitality Program at Mountain Gateway CC Now Supported By G3 Tuition Assistance

1. Mountain Gateway Community College is pleased to announce the Hospitality program is now supported by G3 tuition assistance. The G3 Program, designed for Virginia residents who qualify for in-state tuition and have a household income falling below an identified threshold (roughly \$100,000 for a family of four), offers a "stackable" pathway for students. This means that most programs start with skills training leading to a certificate with immediate value in the job market. At MGCC, students can enroll in hospitality courses beginning this fall and ultimately earn a Hospitality Management Career Studies Certificate or Hospitality Services Certificate, providing a comprehensive educational journey for aspiring hospitality professionals. Previously, Hospitality courses at MGCC were not supported by G3. "I am thrilled about the expanded opportunities for our students enrolling in the Hospitality program," said Rachael Thompson, Assistant Professor and Business Program Head. "The addition of G3 tuition assistance opens

doors for aspiring hospitality professionals, allowing them to pursue high-demand careers with the necessary support to achieve their educational and career goals.” To be eligible for G3 tuition assistance, students must meet specific criteria, including qualification for in-state tuition, a household income of less than or equal to 400% of the Federal Poverty Level, enrollment in a minimum of six credit hours in a Virginia community college or an eligible FastForward workforce credential program, participation in a designated G3 program (in this case, hospitality), and application for federal and/or state financial aid programs.

Wytheville CC Teachers for Tomorrow 1+1+2 Program

1. Wytheville Community College (WCC) and leaders from Galax City and Bland, Carroll, Grayson, and Wythe County public schools, and Emory & Henry College met to sign an agreement for the “Teachers for Tomorrow 1+1+2 Program.” WCC recently signed a similar agreement with Smyth County Public Schools and Emory & Henry College. This program is designed to develop and implement an expedited pipeline for students from partnering schools to obtain teacher certification. Through the partnership, each participating public-school division will provide information about the “Teachers for Tomorrow” program to all 10th-grade students. High school juniors and seniors then could explore careers in teaching and educational support services. The public schools commit to offering dual enrollment courses that will allow students to earn one year of college credits during their junior and senior years of high school. Emory & Henry College will then offer the final two years of the “Teachers for Tomorrow 1+1+2 Program” to enable students to complete a bachelor’s degree through a prescribed curriculum and obtain teacher licensure. Emory & Henry College is also offering students in the program a discounted tuition rate of \$7,500 per year, excluding the Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant. “Today marks a significant milestone as we celebrate the signing of the MOU between our K-12 education partners, Wytheville Community Colleges, and Emory & Henry College for a transformative grow-your-own teacher preparation program,” said Dr. Dean E. Sprinkle, WCC president. “This collaborative effort underscores our commitment to nurturing talent within our communities and fostering a seamless pathway for aspiring educators.” “This is an extraordinary opportunity for high school students in WCC’s service region who aspire to be teachers,” said Sprinkle. “The ‘Teachers for Tomorrow 1+1+2 Program’ encourages high school students to explore career opportunities and then helps them map out their educational pathway and earn college credits for associate and bachelor’s degrees that lead to rewarding teaching careers.” Sprinkle noted that through WCC’s partnership with public schools, dual enrollment courses are provided at no tuition cost to high school students. After student’s graduate, if they enroll at WCC, there are numerous types of financial aid and scholarships available to help with the costs of the second year of the associate degree. “Emory & Henry College is pleased to participate in this collaborative program to provide students with an accessible path to achieve their goal of becoming teachers,” said Dr. Michael Puglisi, provost. “We want them to be able to complete their educational path here in the region,

to stay here, and to go on to teach in Southwest Virginia. We want to keep our best students in the region to support our future.”

Germanna CC FEA

1. The free Future Educators Academy is an innovative early college academy focusing on preparing tomorrow’s teachers in Culpeper, Orange, Madison, Rappahannock, Clarke, Fauquier, Frederick, Page, Shenandoah, and Warren counties and the City of Winchester. FEA is a collaboration among these school divisions, Germanna, Laurel Ridge, and James Madison University with one shared goal: producing exceptional teachers for the region. Students in FEA earn an associate degree while concurrently completing the requirements for an advanced studies diploma. speakers included Virginia Community College System Chancellor David Doré, Germanna President Janet Gullickson, and Laurel Ridge Community College President Kim Blosser. Youngkin and Gullickson both referred to the first FEA cohort of 17 students as "pioneers."

To be considered, applicants must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. Be a rising junior at a participating high school
2. Completed Algebra II or higher by the end of their sophomore year
3. Completed three verified credits by the end of sophomore year
4. Have a minimum unweighted GPA of 3.0 or higher
5. In good disciplinary standing with the high school

Germanna will request transcripts from your high school to confirm that applicants meet, or are on track to meet, all requirements as part of the application process.

September 2024 System-Wide Updates

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

2. FTE enrollments increased by 4,122 (5.29 %) from 77,979 to 82,101 today (9/3/2024), and headcount increased by 10,102 (7.76 %) from 130,164 to 140,266 today.
3. Compared with the previous year, today’s FTE enrollments of 82,101 are 2,910 (3.67 %) higher, and today’s headcount of 140,266 is 3,418 (2.50 %) higher.
4. Dual Enrollment FTEs have increased from 13,323 to 13,828 (3.79%) as of 9/3/2024.
5. FastForward (workforce credential) enrollments have increased from 3,760 to 4,489 (19.39%) since this time last year.

6. WCG enrollments (FastForward students utilizing the Workforce Credentials Grant) have increased by 20.17% from 3,481 to 4,183 students, representing students pursuing stackable credentials.
7. The General Assembly added new CIP codes for G3 approval. New CTE programs (FastForward and Academic) were added to include Hospitality and Culinary Arts, and Education and Engineering programs including transfer degrees.
8. The G3 Annual Report for FY24 was just released reflecting an increase in G3 enrollments from 12,594 to 13,648, with 42% enrolled in healthcare programs, 28% in manufacturing and skilled trades, 23% in IT, 4% in early childhood development, and 3% in public safety. While G3 eligibility is set at 400% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), we still see 54% of G3 students below 200% of the FPL, representing a large population of students in need and seeking additional skills and employment opportunities. Tracking the wages of G3 program completers, the median wage of AY 2022 G3 academic program completers increased by 95% from preenrollment to post-completion -- more than \$11,000 higher than that of students who left their program before completing.
9. The new VCCS 6-year Strategic Plan included some exciting new goals for our system to focus on:
 1. **4.4 Increase students engaged in paid internships and apprenticeship programs by 25% by 2030.**
 1. Efforts include paid internships being included in our Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs grant
 2. Exploring a new CMS to track and manage work-based learning at the 23 colleges (i.e. Salesforce add-on)
 2. **2.6 Increase annual number of incarcerated students enrolled by 25% by 2030.**
 1. Coordinator at the System Office participating on the Governor's Re-Entry Optimization Initiative
 2. Growing our Higher Education for Justice-Impacted Individuals Consortium to include IIIs, faculty, and employers
 3. Expanding resources and seeking funding and support for colleges to launch programs in carceral facilities

Ongoing Initiatives

1. 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.
2. 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 Wednesday, September 25th 2-2:45 pm 2024.

Department of Education (DOE):

Andy Armstrong spoke to the council on behalf of the Department of Education. Mr. Armstrong stated that he did not have a formal report for the council. He thanked Commissioner Roth, Donna Carvana, and Dr. Jason Williams for their support of the Department of Education.

Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI):

Commissioner Gary Pan stated that the Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) has moved their Headquarters. They were originally located in Downtown Richmond (600 East Main St) and have moved to the current VEC Headquarters (6606 W Broad St).

DOLI is working on creating a better structure for their organization. Previously, Commissioner Pan had about twelve people reporting directly to him. That number has now been reduced to three. These three can be broken down to what they oversee. They have so they focus on three main things:

1. Regulatory Programs, which is the front end of our arrow - the tip of our spear.
2. Business services, which is the shaft of the arrow.
3. External Affairs, which is the fletching, the feathers that helps guide the arrow.

This new organization helps DOLI focus on their mission, which is about safety and health in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Regarding compliance, DOLI has investigators that go out to company to make sure that it is safe for everyone. Most of these are provided through referrals. DOLI also has a list of emphasize program companies, and this list is provided by the federal DOL. DOLI has been struggling with vacancies in their workplace. DOLI used to have about 50% in the front end of their business regarding people who are out in the field. Over the past few years, this number has shot up to 80%.

DOLI also has a division that oversees labor standards. This group is called Labor Law. They do things such as payment of wage, youth employment certificates (making sure that our youth are protected).

Lastly, DOLI also has a division called Boilers and Pressure Vessels. There are about 80,000 boilers and pressure vessels in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and these must be inspected every other year. All of these things help in regard to trying to achieve our desire, which is an injury free Commonwealth of Virginia.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Chair Harris provided some background information on why there are new member seats on the council. These include Department of Education (DOE), Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR).

Chair Harris announced that the next Council meeting is set for December 5, 2024, at 10:00 am at the new Virginia Works Headquarters in Holland Tower.

Chair Harris thanked the Council, and all in attendance.

The meeting adjourned at 11:35 am.

Dudley Harris, Chair
Carrie Roth, Commissioner and Secretary

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