

**VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**Meeting Number 333**

**Tuesday, February 6, 2024**

**Location: ADM Boardroom**

The Virginia Highlands Community College Board convened at 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 6, 2024. Lunch was at noon, and the business portion of the meeting immediately followed at 1:05 p.m. in the ADM Boardroom.

**Members Present**

Dr. Doug Arnold, Washington County  
Don Ashley, City of Bristol  
Donald Bowman, City of Bristol  
Pamela Hill, Smyth County  
Dr. Brian Ratliff, Washington County (*via Zoom, out of town*)  
Dan Smith, Washington County

**Members Absent**

Gwen Beattie, Smyth County  
Charlie Fugate, Washington County  
Beth Rhinehart, City of Bristol

**Staff Present**

Dr. Adam Hutchison, President and Secretary to the Board  
Jessie O'Quinn, Executive Assistant to the President  
Christine Fields, Vice President of Finance and Administration  
Robert Phillips, Dean of Workforce Development  
Dr. Derek Whisman, Vice President of Instruction and Student Services

**Staff Absent**

Laura Pennington, Vice President of Institutional Advancement

**Call to Order**

Don Bowman, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order.

**Approval of Minutes**

Board Member Don Ashley made the motion to approve the minutes for November 30, 2023 Minutes No. 332. Board Member Pam Hill seconded the motion, and the motion carried by acclamation.

**Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**Other Attendees**

Dr. Hutchison introduced Jilly Morrison, a member of the Student Government Association. Jilly is here to observe the Board Meeting, particularly the Board vote regarding the increase in the Student Activity Fee.

**Department Updates**

Instruction and Student Services

Dr. Derek Whisman, Vice President of Instruction and Student Services, began his address to the Board by asking for approval of the new Theatre Arts Career Studies Certificate. This certificate will allow students to use Financial Aid to take some of these courses. Board Member Pam Hill made a motion to approve the new Theatre Arts Career Studies Certificate. Board Member Don Ashley seconded the motion, and it carried by acclamation.

Dr. Whisman also wanted to make the Board aware of changes to the Education, Associate of Science Degree. This change adds two new EDU courses to the program and removes two electives.

Dr. Whisman also provided an enrollment update. For this Spring semester, we have 1132 total FTE, down by 2.7% as compared to last Spring. VHCC is still seeing a huge increase in enrollment from Smyth County due to the Smyth County Promise. Dr. Hutchison commented that at our next Board Meeting, we will be able to see Fall enrollment report. However, with the Department of Education recently making changes to the FAFSA form, this could create a delay in the students' reports being sent to the colleges and could possibly affect the Fall enrollment numbers on the reports.

Workforce Development and Continuing Education

Robert Phillips, Dean of Workforce Development, shared a Workforce Development Report update. Mr. Phillips provided the current Workforce Credentials Grant (WCG) enrollment, as well as the new financial assistance guidelines for FastForward programs. He also reported that the statewide CDL tuition increase from \$4500 to \$6000 is effective February 1.

Institutional Advancement and Educational Foundation

In Vice President Laura Pennington's absence, Dr. Hutchison provided updates in her division. The new building has officially been named the Paramount Applied Technology & Workforce Center. There will be several named spaces inside the building in honor of other donors and contributors. The construction of the building is successfully progressing.

Dr. Hutchison also shared that the student scholarship application system for 2024-25 opened in January and will close May 15. Also, the Foundation closed on two endowed scholarships: the Roberta Looney Memorial Scholarship and the Joseph Johnson Memorial Scholarship.

Finance and Administrative Services

Christine Fields, Vice President of Finance and Administration, began her address to the Board by asking for approval of an increase in the Student Activity Fee. The current fee is \$2.00 per credit hour. Ms. Fields is requesting that the fee be increased to \$2.50 per credit hour, effective fiscal year 2025. There has not been an increase in over ten years. These fees will be used to support ongoing and new initiatives for student activities. Board Member Dan Smith made the motion to approve the Student Activity fee increase to \$2.50 per credit hour. Board Member Doug Arnold seconded the motion, and it carried by acclamation.

Ms. Fields also provided campus projects updates as listed in the attachment. The Collins Student Center is now completely finished. The Coffee Shop has doubled their revenue since moving to the new location. The patio renovation will be taking place over the Summer semester. There are two Maintenance Reserve Projects that the VCCS is funding: entrance door replacement and asbestos abatement in flooring.

**President's Report**

President Dr. Hutchison began by asking the Board for approval for an Emeritus nomination this year: Rachel Law, Classified Staff Emeritus. The nomination has already been reviewed and approved by Human Resources, the ad hoc committee, and Dr. Hutchison. It will now need Board approval. Board Member Doug Arnold made a motion to approve the Emeritus nomination for Rachel Law. Board Member Brian Ratliff seconded, and the motion carried by acclamation.

Dr. Hutchison provided a SACS Fifth Year Report update to the Board. Our Fifth Year Report was submitted in October and December to the SACSCOC Board, and they have reviewed and made some recommendations back to us, which is common. They have identified a few areas for improvement. We will submit a response and additional information to them in the Fall.

Also, Dr. Hutchison commented that last week he traveled to Richmond with Laura Pennington and three of our students for our VHCC Day at the Capital. The students were able to meet southwest Virginia legislators and join the General Assembly session. The students had a chance to share their stories and advocate for VHCC.

Lastly, Dr. Hutchison reported that there is one budget amendment that is in the pipeline in the House budget. It is a request for \$195 million for infrastructure for all VCCS colleges. Each college submitted their key projects and investment opportunities. For VHCC, it is about \$2.8 million of key investment opportunities. Dr. Hutchison will keep the Board updated on this budget amendment.

**Board Chair Address**

Board Vice Chair Don Bowman began his address by asking the Board to enter into closed session. Board Member Dan Smith made a motion to enter into closed session for the purpose of evaluating the performance of the president, pursuant to Section 3.15.2 of the Virginia Community College

Policy Manual, Subject: Presidential Evaluation Procedure, and in accordance with the personnel exemption at Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia. Board Member Pam Hill seconded, and the motion carried by acclamation.

After reconvening to open session, Mr. Bowman took a roll call vote certifying that to the best of each member’s knowledge (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Freedom of Information Act were discussed, and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the meeting by the public body.

Dr. Doug Arnold, AYE  
Don Ashley, AYE  
Donald Bowman, AYE  
Pam Hill, AYE  
Dr. Brian Ratliff, AYE  
Dan Smith, AYE

Absent:  
Gwen Beattie  
Charlie Fugate  
Beth Rhinehart


Mr. Bowman stated that the Board will begin to compile feedback in regards to the VHCC Presidential Evaluation. The Board asks the President’s Office to send the evaluation template in a Word document version.

**Adjournment**

Board Member Don Ashley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Board Member Doug Arnold seconded, and the Board unanimously approved adjournment at 2:30 p.m.

Submitted By:   
Dr. Adam Hutchison, President

Approved By:   
Gwen Beattie, Chair

  
Date