

**DRAFT-SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL**

ONLINE VIRGINIA NETWORK AUTHORITY

BOARD MEETING

Friday, July 14, 2017

**MINUTES**

The Online Virginia Network Authority Board met on Friday, July 14, 2017 at 10:30 a.m. in the Kate and John R. Broderick Dining Commons at the campus of Old Dominion University.

Present from the Board were:

Delegate Lashrecse Aird  
Peter Blake (Via Phone)  
Speaker-Elect Kirk Cox  
Senator Rosalyn Dance  
Delegate Tag Greason  
Ron Ripley  
Delegate Nick Rush  
Senator Bill Stanley  
Michelle Marks  
Ellen Neufeldt

Absent:

James Hazel  
Senator Steve Newman  
3 citizens not yet appointed

Also present were:

ODU President John Broderick	
Donna Meeks	Randy Pearson
Bo Ram Yi	Sarah Herzog
Elizabeth Kersey	David Burge
Jane Dane	Marc Austin
Brian Payne	Marilyn Smith
Scott Harrison	Robin Parker
Andy Casiello	Caitlin Sheer
Heather Huling	Steve Nodine
Rusty Waterfield	Ahmad Teheri
David Kozoyed	Eboni Cotton
Greg Dubois	Mark Smith
Kelly Gee	Niyah White

## **WELCOME**

President John R. Broderick welcomed the committee at 10:30 a.m. He highlighted the benefits of the partnership which will enhance their mutual ability to serve the non-traditional student body here in the commonwealth, military students, and working students who may not be able to access a four year education.

He thanked President Cabrera for this willingness to be a part of this and Michelle Marks along with Ellen Neufeldt. He noted the mutual commitment to being cooperative and innovative. We truly believe that the partnership we formed will leverage us to do that and to provide for our elected officials at the table, quality and affordable online degrees that not only make sense but puts many Virginians in a position to elevate and enhance.

## **OPENING REMARKS**

Speaker-Elect Kirk Cox thanked President Broderick for welcoming the committee. He echoed President Broderick's remarks on the hard work that the President Broderick, Old Dominion and President Cabrera, George Mason and their team Mark Smith, Elizabeth Kersey, Michelle Marks and Ellen Neufeldt.

At the beginning, there were certain key points of focus on such as innovation and the idea that online learning is for many populations the future of education. He acknowledged that some adult learners are entering higher education with many different academic experiences. He posed questions to the group. How do you find them? Once you reach them, how do you have programs and supply all the services? Beyond that we need to look at how we scale it and make programs affordable.

## **APPROVAL OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

Delegate Greason moved to elect a chair and nominated Speaker-Elect Kirk Cox and Delegate Rush seconded the motion. Speaker-Elect Cox was unanimously approved by all members present and voting.

Senator Dance moved to elect a vice chair and nominated Senator Stanley and Greason seconded the motion. Senator Dance was unanimously approved by all members present and voting.

## **OVN PRESENTATION**

Dr. Marks and Dr. Neufeldt presented background and updates on OVN progress.

Dr. Marks thanked Andy Casiello for the fantastic tour and remarked that George Mason University and Old Dominion University is excited for this endeavor. She highlighted the history of the project and stated that in the country there are over 30 million people with some college

credit and no degree. Nationwide only 14% of students who attend community college ever get over or graduate with a four year degree.

In the United States and Virginia, we have a system of very high quality 4 year institutions that have done well for students who are graduating from high school, living nearby or who have parents who have gone to universities. These universities work less well for students who have failed out, chosen the military option, started a career or can't afford to live near a university and spend time on classes. It can also be challenging for students who might have mental or physical impairments. In VA, we believe there are over 1 million folks that have some college credit and no degree and we have actually tracked 647,000 VA residents that have some credit at VA colleges but no degree.

Senator Dance inquired as to the transferability of credits. Dr. Neufeldt responded that many times transfer and military students will arrive with multiple transcripts. We have experts who can work through those transcripts to ensure they have an efficient and affordable pathway.

Dr. Marks remarked that universities currently implement that process with staff who evaluate and determine how many credits will count. With this new initiative, a student could go onto the portal and indicate how much military service and credit they have from other institutions and receive feedback quickly and efficiently.

Delegate Aird inquired as to whether there is consideration for the time in which they took those courses. Sometimes so much time passes especially for those in the 647,000, how will that configure in this process? Dr. Neufeldt responded that while general courses such as history would be fine, a cyber course on the other hand may have some newly updated options. It is important to have the right staff to work with those students and transcripts and pave the most efficient path forward.

Senator Stanley asked if there were ways to collaborate with other institutions to do marketing in relation to the 647,000 count. Dr. Neufeldt responded that we cannot access the information at this point and would need to work with SCHEV to see what is possible.

In reviewing the history of the Board, Dr. Marks remarked that in 2015 the General Assembly put language together that asked George Mason University to write a plan for how to create an online degree completion initiative that targeted the adult learner population. We also looked around and saw that ODU was a leader in this area and President Cabrera and President Broderick met and said we should work together on this. Together we put forth a better comprehensive plan on how this could be done with the two of us leading and the vision is always to find more ways to bring in more and serve more students.

Delegate Greason remarked that the credit goes to the two institutions. The General Assembly felt that this was the most efficient path forward for all institutions to utilize.

Dr. Marks remarked that the goals are always kept in mind such as increasing college graduates by focusing on degree completion and the adult learner. We want to make learning and returning to college accessible especially for populations and different regions in VA that do not have easy access to education today.

This past session the authority was established with the composition of a 15 member board. We are currently waiting on the three Governor appointed citizens. These are the duties of the authority and the role of the board.

Chairman Cox highlighted several goals such as providing cost effective and flexible offerings. He noted that the last two goals were also important such as providing accessible online learning and providing an annual report to the general assembly.

Dr. Marks provided an overview of the progress to date. The Online Virginia Network Authority Board was given over a biennium \$3 million dollars. This February the web portal was launched and in March the authority and the board was established. Online courses are continually placed onto the portal. The media strategy is being refined and there are efforts to place more services and elements onto the portal. There is continued partnership with SCHEV, and efforts to identify those who have some college credit. In the spring we plan to bring on more course and programs that are in high demand. Next fall we will build up more student support at ODU with success coaches. The population that we are trying to support needs a different kind of high touch student service that helps these students be successful.

President Broderick remarked that with 25% of our student body being military affiliated there is a greater need in terms of services particularly for some of the war veteran campuses like ours.

Dr. Marks agreed that it is much more comprehensive in serving a nontraditional population, than the 18 year old that gets dropped off.

Delegate Rush asked about the acceptance process for a potential student. Are they automatically accepted, is there a wait list? How is that compared to a traditional student? Ms. Dane responded that most students apply either as a traditional freshman or transfer student and need to meet the same criteria in the admission process. Mr. Burge responded that consideration is given for the prior learning and perhaps that gap between when the credit was earned. Life occurrences are also factored and accounted for.

Dr. Neufeldt remarked that in year one our enrollment goal is 225 students (175 for ODU and 50 for GMU) the opening year. Old Dominion University is at about 125 students and tracking towards 175 for fall. The infrastructure and enrollment process is being continually built to adjust to student needs. The start time for these students is year round.

Delegate Greason remarked as students find courses they would like to take at another institution, the hope is this network would allow for that. Dr. Neufeldt remarked that yes if a student attending George Mason University wanted to take a course at Old Dominion University that would be allowed. It is also a component that future incoming institutions to the Online Virginia Network would have to accept. Dr. Marks remarked that in the event there is a special professor or a few classes that their institution is not providing, this option allows them to graduate faster.

Delegate Greason inquired as to whether other institutions would need to enter the Online Virginia network for this option to be available. Dr. Neufeldt responded that an institution does not necessarily have to enter the Online Virginia Network however she is unaware of their

requirement. The institution is welcome to use our courses as long as it works with their articulation. Our hope is that incoming institutions would accept the general concept.

Delegate Aird inquired as to whether there are any preliminary information that says these students are around Old Dominion University, George Mason University, and other parts of the state. Are they older students, traditional aged students, who are we already attracting at this time? Mr. Burge responded that in terms of Mason, programmatically we are seeing strong interest in RN and BSN nursing programs which is our own popular offering. Overall the students tend to be closer to our campus. We are seeing at the inquiry stage with the new portal that they are a bit more diverse than what we have seen before.

Dr. Marks remarked that some of the resources in the budget are devoted to creating an outreach campaign to reach all targeted areas.

Senator Dance asked if we could proceed to the budget as she needed to depart shortly. Chairman Cox concurred and noted the last slide on the PowerPoint and the handout in the folder.

Dr. Neufeldt remarked in the past year the budget was used to launch the program and in the next year we will focus on continuing outreach and optimization of the portal. We plan to make it more optimal by adding course search and ensure we have capacity to support students both in and outside of the classroom. Most of the costs are shared and some individual costs are set for courses and faculty.

Mr. Ripley and Senator Dance inquired about the courses that are already developed, the ones that are being developed now and the overall list of courses. Dr. Marks and Dr. Neufeldt responded that they would send out the course information.

Senator Dance remarked that the hope is to get people those skillsets and high paying jobs. Dr. Marks remarked that a lot the research for the development of this project was geared toward that and we would be pleased to make that available. Dr. Neufeldt concurred.

Chairman Cox inquired about the project management. George Mason University is hiring project management resources and that serves to support the OVN under the GMU bucket. Dr. Marks remarked that the institutions are collaborating and making investments in people and mechanisms in managing our project and to ensure we meet timelines and goals.

Delegate Greason inquired as to whether the institutions were sharing information since budget line items were in various places. Dr. Marks and Dr. Neufeldt remarked that the institutions are sharing a lot of information and utilizing individual strengths.

Delegate Greason inquired as to whether we reached out to various vendors for bids. Mr. Kozoyed remarked that the portal was developed with in house staff and leveraged several vendors that Old Dominion University already had contracts with to help design it. New City was involved along with another vendor segment for developing the calculator.

Delegate Greason inquired if we could understand how much this program actually costs at the next meeting. Dr. Marks and Dr. Neufeldt remarked that the information would be provided.

Delegate Greason remarked that he felt that the institutions most likely put forth a great deal more into the program. Delegate Dance remarked on the length of time that has been committed to the project.

Senator Stanly remarked on the importance of marketing and recruitment and inquired how the \$415,000 budget would be utilized to maximize exposure. Ms. Dane responded that while we do not currently have individual names to target direct in the mailbox, the funds helps us to utilize social media. Mr. Burge noted that it also assists with digital advertising. Ms. Dane remarked that as David referenced New City, they specialize in reaching a certain demographic and we have been working on identifying populations. We have been using geofence to market to certain areas.

Mr. Burge remarked that with the launch of a website, there has been a lot of cost put towards a brand awareness campaign. While certain costs are high the first year, it likely will not be recurring the second year.

Delegate Stanly inquired as to what traditional outreach methods will be utilized that perhaps ODU and GMU relies on such as brochures, high school classrooms to career fairs. Do we have a long range plan for that? He noted that not everyone in rural Virginia has access to a computer and broadband can also be a challenge at times. Dr. Neufeldt responded that admissions has sought a multilayered approach through electronic and paper methods as well as meeting individuals in person. Mr. Burge remarked that both institutions have run sophisticated ground games for running out into communities and in outreach to parents, and family members.

## **APPROVAL OF BUDGET**

Delegate Greason moved that the board vote to approve the budget as presented and Senator Dance seconded the motion. The budget was unanimously approved by all members present and voting.

	<b>FY17 (Planning)</b>	<b>FY18 (Year 1)</b>
<b>Total Shared</b>	<b>\$ 800,000</b>	<b>\$ 590,000</b>
Kennedy Financial Model (one time) - GMU	\$ 25,000	
Communication and Outreach - ODU	\$ 415,000	\$ 415,000
Contract Portal Design - ODU	\$ 100,000	\$ 20,000
Web Development - ODU	\$ 205,000	\$ 100,000
Portal Hosting - GMU	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
Contract Cost Calculator - GMU	\$ 45,000	\$ 45,000
<b>Total GMU</b>	<b>\$ 200,000</b>	<b>\$ 805,000</b>
Project Manager - GMU	\$ 200,000	\$ 200,000
Portfolio Development - GMU		\$ 540,000
Student Support - GMU		\$ 65,000
<b>Total ODU</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 605,000</b>
Instructional Capacity - ODU		\$ 300,000
Student Support - ODU		\$ 105,000
Tech Infrastructure/Integration/Development - ODU		\$ 200,000
<b>Total OVN Budget</b>	<b>\$ 1,000,000</b>	<b>\$ 2,000,000</b>

## **OVN PRESENTATION RESUMED**

Dr. Neufeldt commented on the desire to have high quality programs and obtain high demand degrees with the notion of affordability and accessibility. The funding is also going towards instructional design, ensuring optimal platform experience as well as proactive coaching. In terms of affordability we will ensure that these students are not paying for the recreational center and other costs on our campuses.

We are looking at Z degrees, zero cost for textbooks, open access materials, and a seamless process for transferring credits. Additionally, we are working to capitalize on experiential and learning credits. The portal will be accessible and serve as a gateway to provide access to partner schools online. We will have flexible start times and courses can be taken at multiple institutions.

Senator Stanley remarked that with the new 2 plus 2 degree we can work to have students take a credited course at another institution and get approval from their current institution. Dr. Neufeldt remarked that when students struggle to find out the information that can be a setting for why a student will stop out.

Senator Stanley remarked that in his area there are limited options so this concept of going home and still being able to move along with the degree is good.

Delegate Greason inquired about how the process is set up in terms of interaction with students, the transcript and moving forward? Dr. Neufeldt responded that it is a dual approach. Right now with the portal it is more about students being able to obtain as much information as possible and utilizing the cost calculator.

Delegate Greason noted the benefit of having a chat live or chat button. Dr. Neufeldt remarked that as of right now, a student can chat with someone from ODU or GMU. Ms. Dane mentioned the two tools at both institutions that help students identify transfer credit. One is called transformation at ODU and the other is OASIS at GMU. There are ways for students to determine this with some guidance and a combination approach with a success coach and self-service.

Dr. Neufeldt remarked that it is important that both institutions currently have rates above 30% which is higher than the national average for online graduates. Senator Stanley inquired as to whether these folks count as instate rates? Dr. Marks and Dr. Neufeldt both concurred that it was.

Dr. Neufeldt remarked that in relation to the nation and within the online environment, the institutions are doing very well. We have over 2 million impressions and over 5,000 clicks on average a week coming in and moving prospects right into our institutions.

Delegate Greason asked to have the 7,505 count put in the context of the 647,000 individuals who do not have degrees. Dr. Neufeldt responded that the goal is in relation to capacity and dollars. Larger number goals will be achieved once we are able to scale. The original goal was 10,000 however it was adjusted in light of the budget change. Mr. Burge remarked that we followed a model from Minnesota which used a 1% conversion rate. With a smaller investment, this is what brought us to the 7,505 figure.

Senator Stanley inquired about the difference between the ODU and GMU enrollment numbers. Dr. Neufeldt responded that the university had a bit of a head start in the distance world. Dr. Marks noted that ODU has a lot more programs online but their institution is working quickly to build more programs.

Senator Stanley inquired as to whether the institutions will lend themselves to this number of 7,505 or what would occur in the event a flood of 15,000 students were to enroll. Would your institutions seek more funding, is your ability to serve based on funding? Dr. Marks and Dr. Neufeldt both concurred.

Delegate Greason commented that in year five his expectation would be that \$1 from the General Assembly will be more effective than the \$1 we gave you in year one. Senator Stanley remarked that the 7,505 count is the ceiling right now based on finances at the moment.

Mr. Blake asked if the enrollment figures are anticipated above what ODU and GMU currently enroll or does this take away from students who might have enrolled in another way.



Additionally on tuition revenues, are what these students bringing in being factored into the budget? Dr. Neufeldt responded that we have been going above the base online enrollment. Dr. Marks concurred.

Dr. Neufeldt noted that we worked with Kennedy and Company to ensure all of this was factored in to the budget and happy to provide a copy of that information. Delegate Greason asked for the information to be circulated.

Delegate Rush commented that this could be placed into context of a greater landscape. Some state institutions range from 5,000-10,000 student population so these numbers are quite significant.

## **PRESENTATION OF WEB PORTAL**

Ms. Dane remarked that in December we had two months to stand and scale a website, develop a marketing plan and launch the portal. It is important to develop a concept of the brand and we implemented logos on the main page.

Mr. Burge commented that in developing the structure we focused a lot on conversion. We placed a form at the bottom of the page to collect information, answer questions and get the student in touch with a staff member. The length structure at top was placed in consideration of what we felt web visitors would value most such as the cost calculator.

Ms. Dane noted that we also provide information on what financial aid students' quality for, what online learning is and what distance learning looks like. We also can jump off the website directly to either Mason or ODU. Students can see what degrees are offered, identify different categories and learn about career options. Mr. Burge remarked that after phase one we are focusing on rapidly building content and looking at course in relation to a self-service and equipment model.

Delegate Greason inquired as to when a user would get directed outside of the OVN website to start engaging directly with the individual university and the need for a seamless process. Mr. Burge responded that the objective is to push the content to our OVN site. We are working to get our own websites set to go directly in as opposed to being linked. Further, the form gives the student the opportunity to inquire and want to know more about both institutions and gives us an opportunity to work together on that. Dr. Neufeldt remarked that in step 1 we really worked on creating the search feature and making it more seamless. Ms. Dane commented that in the next year our goal is to work on course search.

Delegate Greason commented that for future we should do search engine optimization so that we would come up to the top of the list when folks search. Mr. Burge responded that it is part of our initial development, and phase two is set to expand the number of pages which will help improve that. We also hope the board can help us to increase the number of sites that will like to our site.

## **DISCUSSION ON MEETING SCHEDULE AND CALENDAR**

Dr. Marks led discussion on the next meeting date possibility of November 20 or November 21 and inquired on the frequency of board meetings. It was decided that an email would be sent out to collect best date responses.

## **EARL NANCE – COI/FOIA TRAINING**

Mr. Nance provided an overview of the Freedom of Information Act and Conflict of Interest training. He noted that two members meeting to discuss OVN was fine but three or more is not allowed. FOI requests do not have to be written or formal. If someone wants to see documents related to the Online Virginia Network Authority Board and is a resident of Virginia or a member of the media that distributes in Virginia, we must comply within five business days. The penalty of not doing so is \$2,000 and paying the requestor's attorney fees. The second violation is \$5,000.

A conflict of interest is when a vendor is interested in working with the Online Virginia Network Authority Board and the vendor offers you something of value. The limit is \$25. Beyond that amount the items need to be reported with an annual max of \$200.

Delegate Rush asked, in the event we receive a FOI request who do we submit it to? Mr. Nance noted that those requests would be submitted to Bo Ram Yi. (byi@odu.edu and 757-683-6702)

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:17 p.m.