ONLINE VIRGINIA NETWORK AUTHORITY BOARD MEETING
July 17, 2020

MINUTES

The Online Virginia Network (OVN) Authority Board met on Friday July 17, 2020 via Webex. Present from the Board were:

Delegate Alex Askew
Peter Blake
Delegate Kirk Cox
Jane H. Dané
Senator Adam Ebbin (Attended partially online and via phone)
Speaker Eileen Filler-Corn
Senator Ghazala Hashmi
James Hazel
Karen Jackson
Delegate Mark Keam
Dave Leichtman
Fletcher Linder
Sharon Morrissey
Susan Patrick
Ron Ripley
John Rothenberger

Absent:

Senator Steven Newman
Dietra Trent

Also present were:

Austin Agho	Lisa Ghidotti	Kevin McNulty
Bruce Aird	Gerica Goodman	Annie Morris
Marc Austin	Renate Guilford	Janette Muir
Elizabeth Bartles	Sarah Herzog	Kevin O'Holleran
Kevin Borek	Heather Huling	Brian Payne
David Burge	Josh Humphries	Sheri Prupis
Devon Cabot	T Jones	Bo Ram Yi
Andy Casiello	David Kozoyed	Jake Rubenstein
Heidi Cook	Charles Kreitzer	Caitlin Shear
Ellen Davenport	Tara Kuhn	Mark Smith
Gregory DuBois	Tony Maggio	Marilyn Smith
Anne Gentry	Pamela Martin	Rusty Waterfield
	Jason MClain	Holly Whistler
		Van Wilson

WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

Speaker Filler-Corn welcomed guests and thanked the Virginia Community College System and Glenn DuBois for hosting this afternoon's meeting. She welcomed new board members John Rothenberger, Fletcher Linder, Senator Ghazala Hashmi, and Senator Adam Evan. She thanked and recognized past chair, Kirk Cox for his service.

Chancellor Glenn DuBois welcomed guests to the meeting. VCCS has been part of the online world for 25 years. Northern Virginia Community College, Thomas Nelson, John Tyler, Reynolds and Tidewater Community College served 43,000 students last year. The students were seeking associate degrees, both in the applied and transfer arena. The 23 community colleges and the system office each had their own payroll, procurement and travel reimbursement systems in place. In the last 4-5 years, the functions were consolidated into a shared services center in rural Virginia where jobs are critical.

Northern Virginia Community College has one of the most extensive online menus in the Commonwealth. The courses were shared with the other 22 community colleges and a funding split was created. Guaranteed transfer agreements are continually being developed. There were some issues with students losing credit hours and it is currently being resolved. He recognized and thanked Senator Ebbin, Senator Hashmi, Sharon Morrissey, and Adnan Bokhari for their service.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was submitted.

APPROVAL OF September 13, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

Upon a motion by James Hazel and seconded by Delegate Askew, the minutes were approved by roll-call vote (*Ayes: Askew, Blake, Bokhari, Cox, Dané, Filler-Corn, Hashmi, Hazel, Keam, Leichtman, Linder, Morrissey, Patrick, Ripley, Rothenberger; Nays: None*).

OVN PRESENTATION

Burge provided a historical overview of OVN. In 2015, ODU and Mason initiated discussions at the request of Speaker Cox. An $8 million dollar budget was proposed with a focus on students and achieving the objectives of the Commonwealth. Later a $2 million dollar budget was formalized. A third and then a fourth partner institution was added over time.

A singular website was created to provide information for potential online degree seekers. OVN's primary focus was on promotion, product and service. Network members worked to expand course offerings and efforts were made to reduce redundancy. OVN recognized that an expanded service model is needed when operating more in the online delivery of courses and programs. Other plans included offering career tools and expanding staffing and technology within each of the partner institutions.

Linder thanked his OVN colleagues for working with JMU over the last year. JMU brings a strong reputation for students, teaching and advising, geographical diversity and programs such as early childhood education and nursing. JMU also has an adult degree program that serves the needs of working adults, a primary target audience. OVN is committed to providing student support through advising work as well as offering eight-week courses. Comprehensive transfer guides are being developed as well as a standardized course approval process.

Wilson thanked Jackson for her assistance with the collaboration with NCI, New College Institute. The group is working collaboratively to leverage resources in terms of staffing and providing guidance for students. As OVN adds future partners, there are five primary factors for consideration. Factors include the ability to deliver online courses and programs, serve transfer and adult learner students, share access to online courses, and a willingness to accept transfer credit. Additional elements include participating in joint marketing efforts and providing indirect budget commitments beyond Commonwealth funding for OVN.

Casiello highlighted the critical programs that are being provided such as STEM and areas where workforce development is important. Each institution currently has separate back end engines and there are efforts to integrate their portfolios. The group is working to integrate at an administrative level and will need some additional shared resources including outreach and student support services.

The proposed budget includes supporting the needs of adding our new partner, James Madison. JMU will need to make some investments in their own infrastructure so they have the resources they need. The proposed $500,000 allocation would provide a central administrative support system. The shared administrative team would help pull together the operations and technology behind the shared system.

OVN is looking to invest in coaching on the front end to help potential students. As the future investment in OVN is discussed, there are a few questions to consider. How can we continue to serve larger numbers of Virginians? Which students started and has yet completed a degree? How can we attract and serve that population in a way that meets the Commonwealth's workforce needs? How do we pull together this work in a way that is affordable? How do courses and programs fit together in a way that students can easily access and navigate? How do we develop this robust web presence, so that citizens of the Commonwealth and institutions can really leverage the resources?

BOARD DISCUSSION ON FUTURE OF OVN

Hazel inquired if there will be a meeting of the General Assembly in August. Filler Corn confirmed. Hazel inquired as to whether the state would be able to make any changes to the funding. Is it possible to have a discussion about additional funding prior to or during that session? Should we keep Online Virginia Network out of that particular setup? Filler Corn mentioned that it could be part of the discussion and will know more probably on August 3rd. Is

it going to be based on the needs of the network, marketing, operations, student services, all of those ideas that were mentioned?

Blake referred to the enrollment numbers that were reviewed at the previous meeting. He inquired if the indirect contribution was about tuition revenues from the increased enrollments. Casiello confirmed that the in-kind contribution is an investment of administrative and technology efforts. The efforts include the time spent working with colleagues and looking at ways of providing the most economical possible outcomes. There has been a reduction of fees in the online area to try to make this the most attractive and economical operation possible. The in-kind contribution indicated here was not, at least in this slide, any sort of a revenue share or other kind of incentive-based funding.

Rothenberger mentioned the $2 million allocation to promoting the targeted outreach out of the $4.5 million dollar budget. He asked for background on why it is a problem to reach people to get them to be a part of this.

Burge mentioned that for-profit competitors and those outside of the Commonwealth are probably spending five to six times more. The funding is needed to work with students one on one to get them onboarded and there is a separate exit process. There are 600,000 potential students who have earned some type of credit at one of the Virginia public institutions, and more than a million in the Commonwealth are projected to have some credits but no degree.

Casiello mentioned that the group is not looking to compete against the for-profit organizations in regard to marketing expenditures. As a comparison, Southern New Hampshire University last year spent $147 million versus our approximately $600,000 in marketing and outreach. There have been inquiries about Liberty University and their growth. Liberty has a warehouse in Western Virginia where they have over 800 people calling and coaching individuals. Wilson mentioned that OVN built the infrastructure and has the resources to really connect with individuals in the Commonwealth.

Burge recognized the difference between pre and post COVID-19 in terms of the educational market. OVN institutions are facing unprecedented admission numbers, with students enrolling partially or fully online. There is a risk that the online experience gets branded as lesser quality because so many institutions are being forced to teach online. The presence of the network has better prepared us for this new reality. Moving forward, we should expect higher online enrollments directly from high school and community colleges.

Wilson noted that there are recent changes in student decision patterns and behaviors. Students and parents are finalizing decisions later than the norm. It is challenging to predict enrollment projections for residence halls and food services. There is literature about the gap year and parents deciding to keep students close to home. Other options include starting at the community college first and later transferring to a four-year university.

Hazel inquired as to whether OVN has appeared in front of groups such as the Virginia Business Higher Ed Council or the State Chamber of Commerce and asked for their help? Burge confirmed that OVN has not met with those groups in the past. Hazel noted that Mason has

relationships with companies like Northrup Grumman, and they have been helpful in promoting education and hiring students. This may be something we take to the business community.

Cox noted that if OVN goes in front of the business community, some fundamental questions will need to be answered. How can OVN be a bit more collaborative, a little bit less competitive? How can we effectively use the community college system, especially in the first two years? The unit cost should be lowered, and revenue sharing should be examined. What does OVN look like in the new space and are there any innovations?

Filler-Corn commented that there will be a better sense of where we are at the special session. OVN's current business model relies heavily on resources and staffing from partner institutions. Perhaps an administrative team or executive director should be considered. If so, where does this person go? Where do they work from? It is important to delve into a resource sharing model. What does that look like? How does that work amongst the current OVN partner institutions and does that include institutions outside OVN? What would a strategic plan look like moving forward?

Morrissey mentioned that easy access and pathways must be provided. There needs to be a guarantee that courses are going to transfer. Many high school students are taking dual enrollment courses and no longer attend a single institution. OVN will need to reconsider how it operates and think differently in terms of how courses are integrated. There should be someone who leads the initiative and works with all of the institutions.

Hashmi echoed Morrissey's comments. As the former liaison for OVN from Reynolds Community College, there is an added demand on time and effort for administrators. It is important that OVN is centralized with a cohesive administrative process in place. After students are onboarded, we need to ensure that they have resources and support. Data shows that students struggle in their online classes and there is a low pass rate. It is important to provide a coherent structure for access and pathways so students can succeed.

Jackson highlighted the NCI partnership and mentioned she had not seen the budget proposals prior to the meeting. ROI is important and we currently do not have a clear picture of how many students enter a program and matriculate into a degree. Instead of placing more funding into marketing other components should be considered. How do the budget line items help us better understand the impact that OVN is making to these partner universities? If we are looking at a consolidation of efforts, does that mean that each individual university will use one enterprise type application? Would everybody benefit from the same footprint and the same technology? NCI signed an agreement with a company regarding a non-credential course. If a third-party model is being considered, is the cost worth it or would it be comparable to doing the development ourselves? There are concerns about bringing on more success coaches. We should be looking at organizations in communities where people can go receive support or help with IT. NCI hired an outreach coach to work directly with OVN, we have had minimal contact. Additionally, a company was hired to assist with data collection regarding the neighborhood around NCI and southern Virginia. Different models should be examined as well as affiliate types of organizations.

Filler-Corn asked which support services are currently lacking for students on the online space? What do we need to be doing differently here for those students?

Blake highlighted the partner expansion consideration slide and the number of expectations. In regard to strategic vision, it is important to understand where there is duplication and overlap of the programs that the different institutions bring to bear. It may be helpful at a future meeting to have some sort of crosswalk that showed which institutions have which programs. The course creation and capacity budget line of 1.3 million would presumably go to support those programs. The board could have some discussion about which programs it wants to support through the network separately, say, from what the institutions might more generally offer.

Filler-Corn inquired whether OVN should be looking at new partners at this point. Do we want to provide some sort of programming, like a blended degree program with OVN partner institutions?

Dane indicated that research was collected to identify job opportunities, as well as market and program demand. This research helped inform which online programs would increase capacity. Wilson highlighted the College Anywhere VA portal at the Virginia Community College System as a repository that allows students to search a database if they are looking for a particular course that is offered through the VCCS. This may be a potential model to consider moving forward. Filler-Corn inquired about the future role of OVN in remote learning? How can we assist institutions that are lacking in the infrastructure? How can we help them develop remote courses?

Casiello highlighted the importance of taking advantage of each institution's particular talents within OVN. As an example, ODU has eight teams of instructional designers and technologists who build online courses, and conduct faculty training.

Filler-Corn questioned whether OVN should be adding additional partners at this time. If so, are there ways to allow students to participate and expand without formally adding more partners. Access and affordability are key. OVN should evaluate the current degrees offered by partner institutions in order to determine any duplication. There was good discussion about different models out there that may work for OVN. Filler-Corn requested a broader proposal regarding the expanded scope of the network. Additionally, a timeline for the budget and a job description for the administrator should be created.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to come before the group.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:06 p.m. A meeting will be scheduled later this fall.