

APPROVED BY BOARD 7/17/20

ONLINE VIRGINIA NETWORK AUTHORITY

BOARD MEETING

May 14, 2020

MINUTES

The Online Virginia Network (OVN) Authority Board met on Thursday, May 14, 2020 via Webex.

Present from the Board were:

Delegate Alex Askew
Peter Blake
Adnan Bokhari
Delegate Kirk Cox
Jane H. Dané
Speaker Eileen Filler-Corn
James Hazel
Karen Jackson
Delegate Mark Keam
David Leichtman
Sharon Morrissey
Susan Patrick
Ron Ripley
Senator William Stanley
Dietra Trent

Absent:

Senator Steven Newman

Also present were:

Anne Holton
Sarah Herzog
David Kozoyed
Fletcher Linder
Tony Maggio
Bruce Aird
Deborah Swiecinski
Heather Huling
Jason McClain
Austin Agho
Bo Ram Yi
Holly Whistler
John Broderick
Van Wilson
Andy Casiello
Charles Kreitzer
Darren Troxler

David Burge
Sheri Prupis
Anne Gentry
Brian Payne
Ellen Davenport
Gerica Goodman
Rusty Waterfield
Don Stansberry
Janette Muir
Ghazala Hashmi
Annie Morris
Gregory DuBois
Ahmad Taheri
David Tod
Jon Becker
Jake Rubenstein
Mark Smith

Kevin O'Holleran
Susan Picard
Andrea Adams
Stephen McWilliams
Renate Guilford
Sarah Gmail
Marilyn Smith
Stacie Gordon
Justin Mattingly
Anne Kress
Caitlin Shear
Lujean Baab
Beverly Rebar
Bob Kolvoord
Kevin Borek
Josh Humphries
Catherine Crummett

WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

President Anne Holton welcomed board members and provided an update from George Mason University. 5,200 courses were transferred to their virtual platform this spring semester for over 30,000 students. A virtual commencement event will be held for new degree recipients. Their Board of Visitors recently announced a new President, Gregory Washington.

Chairman Kirk Cox welcomed board members to the meeting. Cox noted several highlights from OVN in the past several years. We have increased fully online student enrollments to 3,247 over the past three years—that's 123% above projections. We have welcomed the Virginia Community College System as a strategic partner. James Madison University officially joins July 1st. We have expanded course and program offerings to meet business and industry trends in the Commonwealth. We have increased awareness of OVN through data driven marketing campaigns and collaborations with NCI and other higher education centers across Virginia. We have ensured dedicated, wrap-around support to guarantee each student is provided individualized assistance at each point in their path. This includes advising, financial aid, disability services, and career services.

From the viewpoint of a prospective student, the OVN portal appears more institution-centric versus program-centric. It takes a few clicks to find a degree program and the programs are categorized by institution. OVN needs to be more collaborative, and institutions should work with SCHEV to eliminate duplicate online courses.

If it is not currently in place, then the Authority needs to make sure that the first two years of an online degree program are provided through the VCCS. It is important to continue working on the “unit cost of providing online education.” It may be useful for legislative staff, SCHEV staff and the OVN institution staff to convene a workgroup and bring recommendations to OVN and the General Assembly. We may want to start thinking about the possibility of a common cost for OVN. Perhaps there is an opportunity to develop a revenue sharing model similar to VCCS.

We need to bring the business community on board to create better linkages to job opportunities. OVN can also take advantage of the relationships with the business community through GO Virginia. This outreach would ensure that we are working to get people trained and placed in important industry sectors.

We should consider appointing an ad hoc committee to explore creative applications, and strategies for OVN to help meet the needs of unemployed Virginians. Further, partnerships with GO Virginia, businesses and other higher education institutions should be explored. It would help to address a re-skilling need for the near-term unemployed. Additionally, the committee should explore how online education and a platform like OVN can be part of a new higher ed business model. The model could be focused on pathways that move students affordably, and efficiently from an education or training program to a good Virginia based job.

The Commonwealth needs to provide the necessary resources for OVN. The legislative budget included one million for the addition of JMU to OVN. This legislation passed in the 2020 Session (HB1660 / SB 1041). The funding was unfortunately part of the unallotment actions proposed by the Governor and adopted by the General Assembly at the reconvened session. However, there is an opportunity for Virginia to prioritize this key initiative through funds provided under the CARES Act. Virginia was allocated \$66 million for education in, what was termed by the federal guidance memo, an “*extraordinarily flexible emergency block grant*”. That memo went on to encourage the Governor by stating “*at a time when so many school boards, superintendents, and institutions of higher education have had to close their brick and mortar campuses for the balance of the school year, to focus these resources on ensuring that all students continue to learn most likely through some form of remote learning*” so as “*to ensure that they don’t fall behind*”.

Hopefully the Governor and the General Assembly will be able to fund the \$1 million as we move forward. However, if that does not occur then the budget for OVN would need to reflect the \$3 million allocated for the four partner institutions – ODU, GMU, the VCCS, and JMU. I would ask the institutions to bring those options to the Board for consideration. It has been an honor to serve as OVN chair for the last several years. I look forward to continuing to work with you all to take OVN to the next level.

APPROVAL OF September 13, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

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

OVN PRESENTATION

Van Wilson, Andy Casiello, and David Burge presented on OVN. Burge provided an overview of the national landscape for online enrollment. In the past 6-7 years, there has been consistent growth in online enrollment for the public 4 year, private 4 year and the for-profit institutions. Two-year institutions have had moderate growth while the 4 year and graduate institutions have seen more growth in recent years.

Wilson reported that 35 million Americans began college, but do not have a degree. Of those, 1.5 million folks reside in the District of Columbia and Virginia metro area. 60% of those individuals reside in Virginia. 52% of male students and 47% of female students dropped out of associate programs. These students are typically parents, half are financially independent and many work full time jobs. Adult learners range from degree completers, career switchers, advancers and enrichers. Adult learners seek affordability, flexibility, career focus and access.

Casiello provided an overview of the current OVN website and web analytics. The number of users increased by 66.59% and the number of new users increased by 66.38%. The most popular pages include the home page, business degrees, campaign landing page, human services degrees, nursing/health degrees, communication degrees and the computer science degrees. An overview of the “Imagine Yourself” and “Call to action” ad campaigns were provided.

Burge welcomed James Madison University as a new partner to OVN. Additionally, OVN will collaborate with the New College Institute and Chris McDonald, a Student Engagement Specialist. The new partnership with JMU and collaboration with NCI will help OVN reach more students in Virginia. Wilson reported on the OVN enrollment growth over the past couple years. A graph of actual enrollment versus projected goals was provided for each institution.

Hazel inquired as to where the campaign ads will be placed. Casiello reported that some funding will be used in print media, but the majority will be spent in digital media. Search engine optimization will be utilized as well as geo-fencing, and retargeting. Blake inquired about the enrollment slide and the numbers. Wilson confirmed the calculation in the headcount. Regarding the national survey and reasons for departing college, Keam inquired as to whether it was consistent with the Virginia state level. In relation to the ad campaigns, are we seeing any regional interest that could be broken down for hits online? Wilson reported that we currently do not have the information for the Virginia state level. However, as part of the marketing campaign there was a focus on identifying personas, and differences based on sector and institution. OVN is about assisting Virginians and currently promote more heavily within the state. The ads are tailored more geographically within Virginia and surrounding states.

Keam inquired about website analytics. Casiello mentioned that the data included all users. He reported that more geographic information can be provided. Jackson inquired about the retention and completion rate of students who entered through OVN. Casiello reported that each institution tracks enrolled students individually. Information from each institution will be provided.

Bokhari inquired about the number of folks OVN has been unable to reach, due to the lack of internet access. Casiello noted that they are aware of the number of Virginians who do not have access to the internet. There are regions with underserved populations and OVN is making connections to reach more students. Burge noted that follow up data will be provided regarding the

bandwidth issue.

Casiello presented two budget scenarios. One would include a \$3 million-dollar budget. Budget areas include project support and management, technology, outreach, course creation and capacity, and student support. The second scenario includes a \$4 million-dollar budget for James Madison University to get started as a partner in OVN.

Ripley inquired about additional information for the revenue side of OVN. Casiello will provide information at the next meeting. Jackson commented on the recent influx of online courses. She inquired about the potential impact on enrollment numbers and the OVN model moving forward. Would there be less funding on content development? Casiello commented that there would be an impact on the model. New faculty have been attracted to online courses. The quality of online courses varies a great deal. There has been an increase in remote teaching versus online courses.

Filler-Corn suggested future conversations on financial sustainability and how to continue providing high quality content. Further discussions will include how to leverage resources, collaborate among institutions, and increase accessibility.

APPROVAL OF BUDGET for 2020-2021

Upon a motion by James Hazel and seconded by Peter Blake, the \$3 million dollar budget was approved by roll-call vote (*Ayes: Askew, Blake, Bokhari, Cox, Dane, Filler-Corn, Hazel, Jackson, Keam, Leichtman, Morrissey, Patrick, Ripley, Stanley, Trent; Nays: None*).

NEW BUSINESS

Blake reported that OVN was not a separate agency when it was first established. The funding came through SCHEV. The General Assembly created OVN as a separate agency at a later date. There are more administrative tasks that SCHEV had to undertake. There were conversations with George Mason University and Old Dominion University. There was a recommendation to have Old Dominion University be the fiscal agent. Bokhari inquired if there were fiscal sponsorship fees. Blake reported that there are no fees related to the fiscal agent responsibility.

APPROVAL OF FISCAL AGENT

Upon a motion by Peter Blake and seconded by Ron Ripley, the fiscal agent transfer from SCHEV to ODU was approved by roll-call vote (*Ayes: Askew, Blake, Bokhari, Cox, Dané, Filler-Corn, Hazel, Jackson, Keam, Leichtman, Morrissey, Patrick, Ripley, Stanley, Trent; Nays: None*).

Ripley commented that OVN should think more like a for profit organization. He commended Cox for his remarks particularly on how OVN can be more collaborative, and core centric going forward. Jackson commented that she also agreed with Cox's remarks at the beginning of the meeting. Differentiation factors will be an interesting conversation moving forward. It's now brick and mortar versus remote teaching and online courses. Jimmy recommended that an additional board meeting be scheduled to discuss this topic alone and the future of OVN. Filler-Corn

commented that additional meetings will be scheduled sooner rather than later. Keam commented that a taskforce sounds effective. Perhaps some folks can work offline and report to the board. This may be helpful particularly for the new board members and with James Madison joining in July. Morrissey noted that Virginia institutions have made great progress towards improving transfer pathways.

NEW CHAIR ELECTION

Delegate Cox made a motion to nominate Speaker Filler-Corn as the new chair of the board. Senator Bill Stanley seconded the motion. Delegate Keam made a motion to close nominations. Senator Bill Stanley seconded the motion. The ayes have it. Nominations are closed. (*Ayes: Askew, Blake, Bokhari, Cox, Dané, Filler-Corn, Hazel, Jackson, Keam, Leichtman, Morrissey, Patrick, Ripley, Stanley, Trent; Nays: None*).

Delegate Cox recommended that the election for the vice chair should be postponed as Senator Hashmi has not been officially appointed. Speaker Filler-Corn agreed to postpone the elections and looks forward to working with everyone. Delegate Keam serves as chair of the Higher Education subcommittee and the House Education committee. Delegate Askew serves on the Communications, Technology and Innovation committee. We are excited for their appointments. Filler-Corn thanked Cox for his work with OVN. Ripley thanked Cox for his work since the beginning of OVN.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:14 a.m. The next meeting will be scheduled for July 2020 at the Virginia Community College System.