

**DRAFT-SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL**

**ONLINE VIRGINIA NETWORK AUTHORITY BOARD**

September 21, 2021

**MINUTES**

The Online Virginia Network (OVN) Authority Board met on Tuesday, September 21, 2021 at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA.

Present from the Board were:

Delegate Alex Askew  
Peter Blake  
Adnan Bokhari  
Delegate Kirk Cox  
Jane H. Dané  
Senator Adam Ebbin  
Speaker Eileen Filler-Corn  
James Hazel  
Fletcher Linder  
Sharon Morrissey  
Susan Patrick  
Murry Pitts  
John Rothenberger  
Dietra Trent

Absent:

Senator Ghazala Hashmi  
Karen Jackson  
Delegate Mark Keam  
David Leichtman  
Senator Steven Newman

Also present were:

Austin Agho  
Bruce Aird  
Andy Casiello  
Ellen Davenport  
Nina Gonser  
Gerica Goodman  
Heather Huling  
Danielle Leek

David Kozoyed  
Charles Kreitzer  
Pamela Martin  
Brian Payne  
Caitlyn Read  
Ashley Schumaker  
Sarah Huang Spota  
Don Stansberry

Rusty Waterfield  
Holly Whistler  
Al Wilson  
Van Wilson  
Bo Ram Yi

## **WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS**

Speaker Filler-Corn thanked President Hemphill and Old Dominion University for hosting the meeting. Filler-Corn recognized the Covid health crisis and the importance of affordable pathways to higher education and skills training. In the recent special session, we were able to increase funding to \$10 million to OVN with the one-time ARPA funds. Filler-Corn recognized new board member Murry Pitts who is replacing Ron Ripley in representing the ODU Board of Visitors.

President Hemphill welcomed board members to ODU. He highlighted the Cyber Security school which has grown from 11 students to over 900 undergrad and graduate students. Hemphill recognized the enrollment cliff of decline in high school graduates in 2025 and the impact on the Commonwealth. Competition continues to increase with out of state institutions competing for students within the Commonwealth. ODU has over 6,000 fully online students. We are excited about the future and honored to be a part of OVN.

Brian Payne presented on the ODU Online Cybersecurity faculty, outreach to students, and growth of online students. Growth can be directly connected to OVN. He highlighted partnerships with community colleges, articulation agreements and curriculum adjustments.

## **APPROVAL OF December 17, 2020 MEETING MINUTES**

Upon a motion by Adnan Bokhari and seconded by Senator Ebbin, the minutes were approved by all members present and voting.

## **OVN PRESENTATION**

Burge presented on the 6-year history of OVN. Linder presented the tuition and cost of other institutions in comparison to OVN. He reviewed the projected cost of an associate degree and a bachelor's degree within OVN.

Massa presented on fall enrollment and high school graduate projections. There is a projected increase of 23,000 students over the next 6 years. Some institutions, particularly private institutions are projecting negative growth. About half of the growth, 10,000, are projected for graduate programs. High school graduates are projected to decline over the next 15 years. Some states are

projecting double digit declines. Virginia is projected to have a decline of 6% which will take the state back to where we were 10 years ago.

The WICHE projections have historically been conservative and have under projected by around 5,000-6,000 graduates. There will be continued changes in race and ethnicity over high school graduates. White student enrollment will drop from 47 to 41 percent. There is continued growth in Hispanic Latinx and Asian populations.

In 2019-2020 there were 51,246 advanced diploma graduates. 11% of those graduates did not attend college within 2 years of graduation. 48% of standard diploma graduates did not attend college at all within two years. There are 1.2 million Virginians who have some credit but no degree. This data goes back to 1992. A segment of the population has almost as much debt as they would have if they had finished the degree. Average wages based on credit hours and debt amount was reviewed.

Undergraduate enrollment is projected to decrease in the two-year sector and remain stable in the four-year sector. Graduate enrollment is projected to increase 19%. For OVN, the most approachable students are the groups with 61-90 or 91-120 credits and those who are on the younger demographic.

Rothenberger inquired about whether a four-year degree is worth the large amount of debt and if there are statistics indicating what future students are looking for in online education. Massa indicated that there was no specific data, however a survey is being finalized by a research laboratory at VCU. Preliminary results show that there isn't a great deal of value in general education, but they do believe in the structure of a 4-year degree. Burge commented that many students seek a blended experience between online and in person. Competitors are looking at unique pricing models such as discounts and scholarship.

Casiello presented on the overall marketing and website traffic of OVN. There were over half a million page views this past year. Overall, there has been almost 3 million views over 4-5 years. That includes 250,000 individual users.

Blake inquired about how the OVN page views differ to say, the ODU website. Are there similar patterns? Casiello noted that ODU and distance education has been in place for almost 30 years therefore has higher traffic. However, we are in the 4<sup>th</sup> year for OVN and traffic is increasing year to year. Huling mentioned that as a fairly new site it's been building a brand and traffic over time. Martin mentioned that there are similar trends of seasonality. ODU is focused more on ads about a specific degree or program.

Pitts noted that Southern New Hampshire and Liberty have 100,000 plus online students. In 2017, Southern New Hampshire spent \$145 million in digital marketing. UMUC is spending \$600 million over 5 years. OVN is spending a small fraction.

Filler-Corn inquired about the student's perspective from beginning to end. Casiello commented on the process. He mentioned that staff is needed at the front end. Success coaches will be brought on as part of OVN not individual institutions. Additional opportunities to learn about internships and student support will be provided.

Bokhari inquired about how OVN is getting prospective students, and some choices they are making through the process. Casiello commented that a vast majority is through digital marketing, ads, search engine optimization, signage at the metro station and more. Some students opt to obtain more information so OVN will outreach through a success coach.

Bokhari inquired if someone can go directly to OVN but doesn't have to go through VCCS for the 2 year plus degree. Morrissey commented that the OVN process has been institution based up until now. Moving forward, they will support a consortium approach. It will be a more collaborative solution for the students.

Wilson commented on an earlier question. He highlighted the G3 program that launched this fall at VCCS with a focus on the skills piece. There is a subset of VCCS institutions who have become a partner of OVN to support the 2 plus 2 model. Wilson provided the FY 21 budget and the traditional model to date. He presented the new model which would provide a true consortium with one platform.

Students would be able to access one consortium application regardless of university affiliation. Any staff working on behalf of OVN would be able to assist regardless of university preference. OVN will also advise on internship and apprenticeship opportunities for students. Transfer Virginia may be utilized as a tool to assist students. How do we serve post traditional students, 25 and up as they move out of the pandemic?

Burge presented on the FY 22 budget proposal. The \$10 million ARPA funding will be split between this fiscal year and next. Investments will be made in hiring staff, building a shared administrative structure and technical solutions. It will allow a seamless transfer of data between institutions. \$3 million is budgeted towards targeted outreach.

Linder presented on the budget concerning course creation, scalability, and capacity. He highlighted the need for additional IT resources such as classroom technology, instructional designers, videographers and more.

Casiello commented on the need for a central solution for career coaching, internship inquiries, financial aid information and more. Linder mentioned that the consortium model will provide more opportunities for online students. Wilson highlighted the importance of the technological platform.

Cox inquired about the one-time expenditures vs ongoing expenditures. What are the projections? Dane commented that there are ways to identify resources that would be a one-time commitment. Burge mentioned using the grant approach.

Morrissey inquired if there is a chance the cost will be passed onto institutions. Is this something that we need to be aware of prior to approving the budget? Linder commented that universities are used to grant like approaches. The Center for Experiential Learning is one aspect that the institutions may be interested in exploring. Even if there was no funding, this is one example where institutions would be interested in wanting it to move forward.

Morrissey inquired about the return on investments, where we stand on enrollment projections and what we anticipate with this investment. Casiello commented that they are exceeding initial OVN goals by a significant amount. They are projecting a great deal of impact with this investment. The operation is also heavily subsidized by all the institutions with staff, television studios and more as in-kind resources.

Wilson commented that OVN is also seeing a higher number of engagements with students of color, non-traditional and Pell eligible students. Bokhari commented on the low cost of the 4-year degree with the 2 plus 2 degree program option. He emphasized the importance of marketing, and the projected outcomes and priorities for OVN's plans. Are we creating systems that might already exist at institutions? Do we really need those services to achieve those outcomes and eliminate barriers, or is there another way?

Blake commented on the centralized function and system. Would it be helpful if OVN hired their own staff, instead of imbedding in institutions? Burge commented on the need for staff with central accountability without entanglements. He proposed a small leadership team. Casiello mentioned that it would be quicker for the institutions to bring on staff and then merge to OVN. Hazel commented on the grant approach and the importance of creating a long-term plan.

## **APPROVAL OF BUDGET**

Upon a motion by James Hazel and seconded by Speaker Filler-Corn, the budget was approved by all members present and voting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.