



**Center for Economic and Community Engagement Advisory Board
Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center
2000 Kraft Drive, Suite 2100
Crescent Conference Room
March 03, 2025, 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM**

- 10:00 AM Welcome and Introductions
- Guru Ghosh, Vice President, Outreach & International Affairs
- 10:15 AM Director's Report and Board Actions
- John Provo, Executive Director, CECE
 - Board minutes for approval
- 11:15 AM Panel: Capacity Building in Roanoke-Blacksburg
- William Amos, Chair, GO Virginia Region 2 Council
 - Erin Burcham, President and CEO, Roanoke-Blacksburg Innovation Alliance
 - Kevin Byrd, Executive Director, New River Valley-Regional Commission
 - John Provo (facilitator)
- 12:00 Noon Lunch Served
- 12:15 PM Group discussion/working lunch: Growth and Diversification Planning for Region 2
- Sarah Lyon-Hill, Director for Research Development, CECE
- 1:00 PM Adjournment

ZOOM

<https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/83200063606?pwd=RR7mDyTixXBJkwbMcEWoTgq2safSYT.1>

Meeting ID: 832 0006 3606

Passcode: 950594

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**CENTER FOR ECONOMIC
AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Director's Report Spring 2025


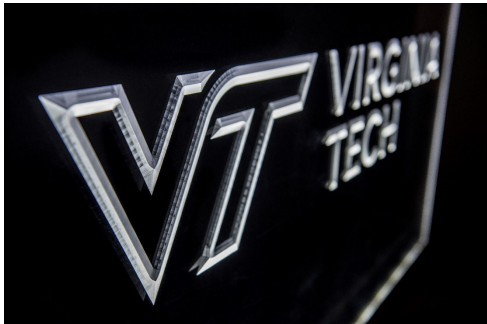


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VIRGINIA TECH.**

CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our Charge

- Increasing the university's impact
- Elevating the *Ut Prosim* difference
- Maintaining a transdisciplinary focus
- Addressing the urban-rural divide



Strategic Landscape

We need to carefully manage federal funding commitments. We also need to be very aware of new economic challenges facing the state and country.

Anticipated Opportunity Areas :

- Appalachian Regional Commission
- US EDA
- GO Virginia
- Vibrant Virginia



Program Updates



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Regional Transformation

Appalachian Regional Commission

- ARISE Planning Grant; Setting Appalachia's Workforce on Track to Adapt to the Changing Construction; Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia; with Virginia Tech College of Engineering

GO Virginia

Region 2, New River, Lynchburg, Roanoke-Alleghany Regions

- Materials and Machinery Cluster Scale-Up Planning; from New River Valley Regional Commission
- Support Organization Services
- Talent Pathways Initiative; with Virginia Tech College of Engineering

Region 5, Hampton Roads

- Secure Energy Futures Center; from Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center

Region 5 and 6, Hampton Roads and Coastal Virginia

- Promoting Careers in Aquaculture; Hampton Roads and Coastal Virginia; with Virginia Seafood Agricultural Research Center

Region 7, Northern Virginia

- Virginia Alliance for Semiconductor Technology; from Virginia Tech Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

Institute for Advanced Learning and Research

- GOVA Region 3; Controlled Environment Agriculture Hub, Project Development and Application Assistance

US Economic Development Administration

- Tech Hubs Program; Virginia's Additive Manufacturing and Advanced Materials Tech Hub, New River Valley and Danville; with the New River Valley Regional Commission and Virginia Tech College of Engineering
- University Center Program; GO Virginia Region 1, 2, 3, parts of 4, 5, 6 and 8; with Virginia State University
- University Economic Development Association; National University Center Cohort Program

Roanoke Blacksburg Innovation Alliance

- Strategic Services, Roanoke and Blacksburg

Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission

- Strategic Planning, Southern and Southwest Virginia



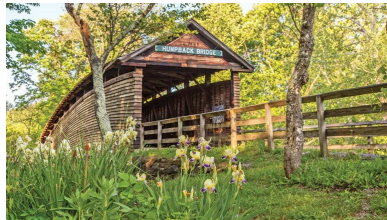
A \$14.3 million GO Virginia project, Project VITAL, will be led by the Roanoke Blacksburg Innovation Alliance in Region 2.



An All-Hands Tech Hub Meeting took place in November 2024 in Virginia Tech's Kelly Hall.

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Community Innovations



Humpback Bridge in Alleghany Highlands



Virginia Tech Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation

Alleghany Foundation, Vibrant Virginia; **Economic Scan and Strategic Work Plan**, Alleghany-Covington

Center for Early Success; **Shared Serviced Model**, Danville-Pittsylvania

Harvest Foundation, Vibrant Virginia; **Strategic Road Map for Thriving Youth**, Martinsville and Henry County

Mellon Foundation; **Monuments Across Appalachia VA**; from Virginia Tech College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences

Virginia Cooperative Extension; **Community Economic Programming Development**, Statewide

Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; **Cultivating Rural Vitality in Virginia Food Systems**; from Virginia Tech Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation

Virginia Tech Outreach and International Affairs; **Childcare Policy Exploration**, Statewide; with Virginia Tech School of Public and International Affairs

Virginia Tech Outreach and International Affairs, Vibrant Virginia; **Housing Security and Landscape Assessment**, Roanoke-Alleghany; with Virginia Tech Roanoke Center

Virginia Tech Outreach and International Affairs and Virginia Cooperative Extension; **Vibrant Virginia**, Statewide

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Impact, Design and Evaluation

Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC); **Evaluation of ARC Outdoor Tourism and Recreation Grants**

National Science Foundation; **EPIIC: Evaluation Capacity Building for Leveraging Innovation to Grow High Tech and University Partnerships (LIGHT UP) collaborative**; with SUNY Canton, Kean University, Marymount University, Bowie College, and Alvernia University

Saint Paul's College 4Life; **Saint Paul's Leadership Institute, Workforce and Entrepreneur Ecosystem Development**, Brunswick County and adjacent communities

Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation; **Economic Impact Study**

Virginia Seafood Agricultural Research and Extension Center; **Economic Impact Analysis**, Hampton

Virginia Tech School of Public and International Affairs; **The Economic Development Studio@VT, Futureproofing the Outdoor Economy of the New River Valley**

Virginia Tech Roanoke Center; **Virginia Local Elected Official Learning Assessment Project**

Wellspring Foundation; **Economic Impact Study for the Creeper Trail, SWVA**; with Virginia Tech SWVA Center

Wellspring Foundation, Vibrant Virginia; **Outdoor Tourism Asset Diversification and Marketing Study for Damascus**, Virginia; with Virginia Tech SWVA Center



Emily Mayo, Damascus Trail Center supervisor (at left), speaks about the impact of Hurricane Helene with Director of the Southwest Center Allison Mays and Economic Development Specialist Dylan Andrews at the Trail Center in Damascus, VA.



Katie Lee (at left) and Sadhana Manthapuri (second from left), graduate assistants with the Center for Economic and Community Engagement, listen as senior economic development specialist Elli Travis (at right) speaks with visitors to the New Market Battlefield.

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Talent Development and Experiential Learning

Chimes; **Cost Benefit Analysis of the AbilityOne Program**, Greater Washington Area

New River-Mt Rogers Workforce Development Board, Southwest Virginia

- **Childcare Workforce Evaluation**
- **Data Analysis**

Tazewell County; Project13Three, **Recidivism and Substance Abuse Needs Assessment**

Urban Alliance; **STEM Internships**, Northern Virginia

Virginia State Council of Higher Education; **VTOP Region 2 Internship Collaborative**, New River, Lynchburg, Roanoke-Alleghany

Virginia Tech Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

- **Major Design Experience Projects**
- **Space @ VT, Industry Collaboration Development and New Frontiers in Space and the Future Workforce Conference**

Wellspring Foundation; **K12 Teacher and School Needs Assessment**, Washington, Grayson, Russell, and Smyth Counties; with Virginia Tech SWVA Center



Makenzie Mann (at left) and economic development specialist Ashley Posthumus (at center) pose for a picture with Executive Director of the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board, Marty Holliday (at right).



Associate Director of Strategic Alliances Afrozeh Mohammed learns from students presenting their project at the ECE Major Design Expo in November 2024.

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Pipeline - Under Review/Development

AbilityOne; **National Cost Benefit-Impact Analysis**

Accomack-Northampton County Planning District Commission; **Opportunity Assessment and Blue Catfish Feasibility for Eastern Shore Hub**

Appalachian Regional Commission; **ARC Ready Outreach and Community Engagement Strategic Plan and Evaluation**; with New River Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board

Chesterfield County; **Economic Development Office Organization Benchmarking and Promising Practices**

Friends of SWVA; **Asset Development and Revitalization of 10 SWVA Main Streets**

Hanover County; **Hotel Feasibility Study**

National Telecommunications and Information Administration; **Digital Equity Program Evaluation**, Floyd County

Town of Bowling Green; **Return on Investment Analysis for Commercial Development**

US Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture; **Participatory Food System Planning**, Virginia; from Virginia Tech Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation,



Chesterfield County, VA



Personnel Updates



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Faculty and Staff Updates



Elli Travis
Senior Economic
Development Specialist



Project Coordinator John Register with his wife Abby and their daughter Olive



Thank You and Other Business



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Thank You For Your Support!



Give to CECE:

<https://cece.vt.edu/about/give.html>



Other business

- Minutes
- Q&A
- Open discussion





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JOHN PROVO

jprovo@vt.edu
cece.vt.edu



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Virginia Tech Center for Economic and Community Engagement (CECE) Advisory Board and the Virginia Tech Council on Vibrant Virginia Meeting

1900 Kraft Drive, Blacksburg, VA, Curiosity Conference Room
September 30, 2024, meeting began at 1:02 PM and adjourned at 2:37 PM

CECE Advisory Board and Council on Vibrant Virginia In-person attendance: Guru Ghosh (Chair), Susan Short, Karen Roberto, Laura Belmonte, John Capps, Matthew Hull

CECE Advisory Board and Council on Vibrant Virginia in Attendance via Zoom: Erik Johnston, Mike Gutter, Keith Holland, Conaway Haskins, Lauren Stuhldreher, Blair Durham, Omar Faison, Leah Fremouw, Steve Harrison, Marc Nelson, Christina Winn, Karen Sanders, Catherine Amelink, Leanna Blevins, Pam VandeVord

CECE staff in Attendance: Dylan Andrews, Holly Carroll, Diane Deffenbaugh, Kim Gray, Bryan Jones (virtual), Julia Kell, Kathryn Lee (virtual), Sarah Lyon-Hill, Makenzie Mann (virtual), Sadhana Manthapuri (virtual), Afroze Mohammed (virtual), Ashley Posthumus, John Provo, John Register, Jemma Sabokrouh, Scott Tate, Mallory Tuttle, Brenna Valle (virtual)

Guru Ghosh called the meeting to order, and new board members Pam VandeVord and Marc Nelson were introduced. Pam is the Associate Dean of Research for the College of Engineering at VT and Marc Nelson is the Director of Roanoke's Department of Economic Development.

Kim Gray, Office Assistant for CECE, took roll call of the CECE Advisory Board and Council for Vibrant Virginia. Each attendee received an agenda for the meeting as well as a hard copy of the Virginia Tech Center for Economic and Community Engagement 2023-2024 Annual Report put together by Julia Kell, Communication Specialist.

John Provo, Director of CECE, gave his Report for Fall 2024 to include the charge, mission and values, strategic initiatives and the programs within. John gave a program update on federal and state programs and indicated CECE has already begun writing an implementation grant for a \$10 million grant for the ARC.

John spoke of community innovations and expanded to indicate that CECE is involved in projects with large and small communities. Some of these projects are focused on childcare while others focus on building construction. CECE has been able to work with communities who see a need and, by working with us, we are able to bring them somewhere new.

CECE's impact, design and implementation also involves some more technical studies. One such study involves outdoor recreation. CECE has collaborated with the Spearhead trail system and, among other goals, working to improve business practices. The Talent Development and Experiential Learning work is focused more on the side of research. Our work with the New River – Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board falls into this category. There are more projects under review in the pipeline.

New employees Bryan Jones, who was promoted to Economic Development Specialist recently, and Jemma Sabokrouh, who is now the Program Manager for GOVA and VTOP, were introduced.

There was time for questions and answers and open discussion. Guru Ghosh asked John Provo about how decisions are made to take on new projects and John expanded with how projects that “fit” are selected. Karen Roberto asked about Broadband access in less developed regions of the state. John indicated that we recently put in an application for a grant that would help us promote digital equity. Scott Tate added that we are starting a project with the Tobacco Revitalization Commission and some broadband in Southwest and Southern Virginia has historically been funded through this program.

Guru indicated he will be traveling to Saudi Arabia in November to represent President Sands. The Saudi Government has a program called Vision 2030 that Guru would like CECE to become informed about as this may present a massive opportunity for the university. Vision 2030 is about transforming the government and covers every aspect of technology to women’s empowerment and education.

Laura Belmonte and Karen Roberto spoke of the work that they are doing with a member of the English Department on the Center for Equitable Research that’s about to go into governance in the Arctic.

Eric Johnston of the Virginia Community Action Partnership explained that he represents the state’s 31 community action agencies, and they are involved in Broadband. They have applied for the NTIA equity competitive grant which is a statewide application. Such funds would be used for digital upscaling and devices and training and integrating it into existing human services programs. He would be excited to partner with everyone on this.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the March 2024 meeting. All were in favor.

Dylan Andrews and Ashley Posthumus, Economic Development Specialists with CECE led a panel on childcare and the hurdles the industry is currently facing. Guest speakers via Zoom were Lakisha Word of the Center for Early Success and Beth Doughty with the Partnership for Regional Prosperity in Danville. Childcare has proven to be a barrier in economic development and is one of the top 3 issues facing Danville. Beth indicated at one point there were 810 people on a waitlist for childcare in Danville. She said her organization is a “think tank and not a do tank” and while they may not be able to create a platform, they can have shared learning. Leah Fremouw, Senior Vice President and Director of Community Innovation for Virginia expressed an interest in collaborating and sharing information. Lakesha spoke of the shared services model. An example of this is various daycare providers use a hub for hiring childcare employees. This would streamline the hiring process for those in the industry. Beth revealed data that of the 690 responses from parents, 32% reduced their working hours, 29% passed on a job opportunities, promotions have been passed up 14% of the time, and 16% of people have left the workforce all due to childcare issues. If this 16% were to be hypothetically applied to the Danville – Pittsylvania region, it would equate to 8,000 people leaving the workforce. Guru suggested that we look at older nations such as France and other European nations to see what they have done regarding childcare. There was some discussion about how issues in the eldercare community often are similar to those faced in the childcare industry. Lakesha emphasized the following to help with some issues: collaboration, listening to community needs, compensation, professional development, data, and resilience. Laura Belmonte indicated that she has been working with the Child Development Learning Resource Center at VT and one third of the Center’s revenue is spent on the benefits for those workers and not paid by the university. This seems to be VT practice.

Scott Tate presented on Vibrant Virginia. Vibrant Virginia's impetus or charge is encouraging vibrant places in every part of the state. The focus was state legislation calling on higher education to respond to the urban/rural divide in Virginia. The work was done by UVA, VT and VSU. Three challenges that Scott pointed out are social disconnectedness, civic divisiveness, and economic disparity. Scott spoke of carrying out the vision through three strategies: supporting a Vibrant Virginia community of practice, growing a civic well-being initiative, and leading community exploratories.

The strategy of community practice includes networking, learning series, blogs, newsletters, and books. The civic well-being strategy involves seed funding, which is funding for faculty stipends and community-based leadership. An example of community exploratories is the Alleghany Highland projects which includes the area of Covington, Clifton Forge, and Alleghany County. Alleghany Foundation is the partner, and the theme is economic opportunity for all.

Another example is in Martinsville-Henry County where they have partnered with the Harvest Foundation with a theme of youth flourishing. A third example is Hopewell/Prince George that have John Randolph Foundation as an anchor and a goal of civil well-being. People can support Vibrant Virginia by joining working groups/affiliates, asking colleagues to join, participating in community practice events, connecting with community exploratories, and direct contributions to Vibrant Virginia in support of initiatives.

Guru thanked the members of CECE, the board, and community members for their role in the success of the center.

Meeting adjourned at 2:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Gray, Recording Secretary



VIRGINIA INITIATIVE FOR
**GROWTH &
OPPORTUNITY**
IN EACH REGION

Growth & Diversification Plan 2025 Update

GOVA Region 2, 3/3/2025 CECE Board Meeting
Sarah Lyon-Hill, Director for Research Development

Goals of 2025 Plan

See if life is better in
Region 2 since 2017

Identify any regional
changes from last update

Reframe and Refine
Industry Clusters

Keep the plan short, reader
friendly

Target Industry Clusters Higher than Average Earnings

Cluster	Entire Region	Urban	Rural
All Industries	\$26/hr*	\$27/hr	\$24/hr
Manufacturing for Transportation, Energy & Autonomy	\$36/hr	\$35/hr	\$38/hr
Advanced Materials	\$37/hr	\$36/hr	\$37/hr
Life Sciences and Biotech	\$32/hr	\$34/hr	\$24/hr
IT, Engineering Services, and Emerging Technology	\$42/hr	\$47/hr	\$38/hr

*\$26/hr = \$54,047 annual earnings divided by 2080 hours

Manufacturing for Transportation, Energy, & Autonomy

WHY?

- Over 20,000 jobs, higher than average workforce concentration (LQ 4.08), and significant contribution to GDP (6.9%), 204 firms estimated
- Similar labor and other supply chain needs
- Individual manufacturers tend to serve on industry vertical (e.g. transportation)

MANUFACTURING VERTICALS

- Transportation
- Energy
- Autonomy and Automation
- Industrialized Construction



Advanced Materials

WHY?

- About 11,000 jobs, higher than average workforce concentration (LQ 3.08), and significant contribution to GDP (5.6%), faster than average GDP growth (45%), 118 firms
- Similar labor and other supply chain needs (e.g. chemical sciences, small-batch/scale)
- Individual manufacturers tend to serve multiple industry verticals from transportation to life sciences to data centers

SUBCLUSTERS

- Chemicals
- Packaging
- Multiple Industry Applications of Materials



Materials for the Future



Life Sciences & Biotechnology

WHY?

- Over 27,000 jobs, significant concentration of workforce (LQ 1.32), significant cluster growth (11.1%), 6.5% of regional GDP, 447 firms, and strong ecosystem assets
- Similar labor and other supply chain needs
- Individual companies support R&D of life sciences and ultimately manufacturing of biotechnology and medical devices

SUBCLUSTERS

- Biopharma and Medical Device Manufacturing
- Life Sciences R&D
- Living Lab: Healthcare System



IT, Engineering Services, & Emerging Tech

WHY?

- 9,000 jobs in cluster, however, significantly more knowledge-worker jobs represented that serve all clusters, particularly those in trade industries
- 3.6% of regional GDP and 1,169 firms
- Similar in-demand occupations in IT and engineering
- Higher than average wages and essential occupations for GOVA Region 2 target cluster development

SUBCLUSTERS

- IT & Cybersecurity
- Engineering Services
- Other R&D



Defining and Prioritizing GOVA Strategies

- Scale up cluster technologies and firms
- Support entrepreneurship and small business development
- Develop, retain, and attract talent
- Improve sites and infrastructure

Manufacturing for Transportation, Energy & Autonomy	Advanced Materials	Life Sciences & Biotechnology	IT, Engineering Services, & Emerging Tech
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation Energy Autonomy and Automation Industrialized Construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chemicals Packaging Multi-Industry Applications of Materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biopharma and Medical Device Manufacturing Life Sciences R&D Living Lab: Healthcare System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IT & Cybersecurity Engineering Services Other R&D



Next Steps...

- ▶ Regional Survey: Where are we now?
- ▶ Listening events
- ▶ Strategy Working Sessions
 - ▶ **Cluster working sessions to develop and prioritize strategies**
- ▶ July-August: Write Plan and Shareable Flyers
- ▶ Sept-Oct: Approve and Submit Plan