

Center for Economic and
Community Engagement
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Joint meeting of the Center for Economic and Community Engagement Advisory Board and the Virginia Tech Council on Vibrant Virginia
Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center
1900 Kraft Drive, Moss Research Building, Blacksburg
Curiosity Conference Room
September 11, 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

John Provo, Executive Director, CECE

10:45 AM Discussion on the economic and policy landscape and its impact on our work

 John Accordino, Professor of Urban and Regional Planning, Virginia Commonwealth University

• Pace Lochte, Asst. Vice president for Economic Development, University of Virginia, Board member, Virginia Economic Development Partnership

Jon Porter, Assoc. Vice President, Strategic Research Alliances, Virginia Tech

John Provo (facilitator)

11:45 AM Transition to Lunch

12:00 PM Vibrant Virginia, accomplishments and plans (Working Lunch)

Scott Tate, Associate Director for Community Innovations, CECE

1:00 PM Adjournment

ZOOM

https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/88526197773?pwd=G7MBguRf3GD6UM4HprHjSHOEoji76F.1

Meeting ID: 885 2619 7773

Passcode: 490513

CECE Magazine: https://cece.vt.edu/content/dam/cece vt edu/cece-magazines/24-25.pdf



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Immediate response

- Economizing (e.g. consolidate and hold open positions)
- Continuing strategic partnerships with groups supporting part of some faculty positions, <u>seeking another partnership before filling an open position</u>
- With one time support from the Virginia Tech Research Division, we are focusing on three large proposals: ARC: Industrialized Construction; US EDA and GOVA: AM2 Tech Hubs
- · Wide open for any other new business for the foreseeable future

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Our Charge

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

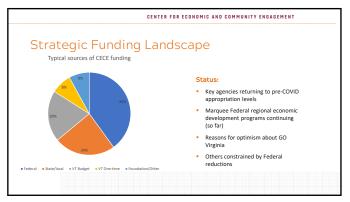
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Exploring new opportunities

- Return to Roots Internships for Virginia Tech
- Industry-driven pipeline programs education and employment, K12 and adult education
- Regional economic development board training programs
- Vibrant VA program, multi-state foundation submission

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CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT Regional Transformation an Regional Commission ning Grant; Setting Appalachis's Workforce on Track to Adapt to the Changing Construction; Kentucke, y, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia; with Virginia Tech College of Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission • Strategic Planning, Southern and Southwest Virginia



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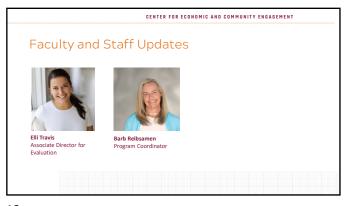
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Impact, Design and Evaluation

- Octagon House; Feasibility Study; Smyth County; with Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governa and SWVA Center
- Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation; Economic Impact Study and Regional Baseline







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Virginia Tech Center for Economic and Community Engagement (CECE) Advisory Board Meeting

2000 Kraft Drive, suite 2100, Blacksburg, VA, Crescent Conference Room March 3rd, 2025, the meeting began at 10:06 AM and adjourned at 12:55 PM

CECE Advisory Board In-person attendance: Guru Ghosh (Chair), Susan Short, John Capps, Kiyah Duffey, Omar Faison, Elizabeth McClanahan, John Provo, Pam VandeVord

CECE Advisory Board in Attendance via Zoom: David Devan, Keith Holland, Lauren Stuhldreher, Blair Durham, Leah Fremouw, Steve Harrison, Marc Nelson, Deborah Flippo, Karen Roberto, Christina Winn, Laura Belmonte, Mike Gutter

CECE staff in Attendance: Dylan Andrews, Holly Carroll, Kim Gray, Julia Kell, Sarah Lyon-Hill, Makenzie Mann, Afroze Mohammed (virtual), Ashley Posthumus, John Register, Jemma Sabokrouh,

OTHER ATTENDEES: Erin Burcham, panelist; William (Eddie) Amos, panelist; Kevin Byrd, panelist; Emily Gibson, invited guest

10:06 AM Guru called the meeting to order; each participant (both in-person and remotely) introduced themselves to the group

10:12 approval of 2024 minutes

10:13 meeting turned over to John Provo for Director's report

Discussed strategic landscape and anticipated opportunity areas with ARC, US EDA, GOVA, and Vibrant Virginia

Program updates – 40 projects currently being worked on categorized into 4 areas:

Regional Transformation – ARC, GOVA, IALR, US EDA, Roanoke Blacksburg Innovation Alliance and VA Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission

Community Innovations – Alleghany Foundation, Center for Early Success, Harvest Foundation, Mellon Foundation, VA Cooperative Extension, VT College of Ag and Life Science, VT OIA

Impact, Design and Evaluation – includes evaluation of ARC outdoor tourism and recreation grants, National Science Foundation, Saint Paul's College4Life, VA AREC, VT School of Public and International Affairs, VT Roanoke Center, Wellspring Foundation

Talent Development and Experiential Learning – Chimes, New River-Mt. Rogers Workforce Development, Project 13Three, Urban Alliance, Virginia State Council of Higher Education, VT Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Wellspring Foundation

Pipeline – Under Review/Development

Ability One, Accomack-Northampton County Planning District Commission, ARC, Chesterfield County, Friends of SWVA, Hanover County, National Telecommunications and Information

Administration, Town of Bowling Green, US Dept. of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture

The floor was opened for further discussion/questions. Elizabeth McClanahan inquired if Blacksburg was included in the Downtown program. They are currently not a part of that program. Guru wanted to see CECE do an economic analysis with Abingdon regarding which non-degree programs could be offered in Abingdon; Laura Belmonte indicated that user price has been a leading issue with respect to such programs; she is piloting a new program called Future Educator's Fund; need consistent funding for this program; Eddie Amos provided insight on various successful on-line programs offered by various universities and the need for us to "catch up" to these programs; Guru suggests we mobilize a task force and come up with a stackable strategy to carry forth this initiative

Ashley explained a grant she has worked with for teacher retention programs. She recently traveled to Washington and Russell County to meet with superintendents, teachers, etc. to come up with actionable steps to move forward and produce a report to implement such a program.

Personnel Updates – John Register has welcomed a baby girl, and Elli Travis is defending her PhD later this semester

Giving Day support – will continue to seek support beyond the one day of giving

Other business - Guru asked Ashley to expand on the teacher retention issues that Washington and Russell County are facing; Pam asked who we had reached out for support and how could the board reach out to alumni or whoever to help support the center; John aspires to meet with board members individually for this purpose.

John Provo asked Christina Winn how they have handled recent issues/concerns about federal funding. She indicated they have intentionally worked to rely less on the federal government previously following BRAC. They also have focused on getting info out to those workers laid off and steering them towards open positions.

Steve Harrison said they were in a similar situation to Christina in trying to understand and educate those on the scale and scope of federal investment in the Hampton Roads region. There is a heavy reliance in the Hampton Road area where he is located. He is trying to put together a comprehensive guide to federal investment in Hampton Road area. Furthermore, he believes there is an opportunity for enhanced investments.

Marc Nelson provided his thoughts on federal funding in the Roanoke region. The City of Roanoke does not have the federal connections as Roanoke County has. They are keeping tabs with Fralin Life Science Center and Carillion with respect to all of this. Omar Faison didn't see federal funding having a major impact on his organization.

11:11 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)

Erin indicates they were formally VERGE; mission is to continue to work with stakeholders to assess what the region needs to do to grow technology and biotech sectors; expanded on her personal bio

Kevin Byrd – New River Valley Regional Commission is a governmental agency with a board of elected officials; VT, Radford and NRCC a part of his community; often works with CECE; try to pull the community together through economic development; expanded on his personal bio

Eddie – 9 regions make up GOVA; looking for public and private partnerships to benefit this region; he is in charge of region 2; expanded on his personal bio

John asked Erin to provide goals for her organization. The long-term goal for the region was to be the number 1 innovation district with respect to assets and talents. Mid-term goal is to elevate physical infrastructure and STEM talent and capital. Short term goals include looking at local capital and how we can invest in that.

Kevin's organization is funded via local government membership and state assembly. Housing is one focus of his agency. They have developed the first regional housing trust fund which allows discretionary funds to invest in housing. Passenger rail is a long-term project for them. Disaster funds are middle and long-range goals such as interconnection of water systems throughout the region.

Eddie said his long and short-term goals are very similar to other groups in the room. The short-term is focusing on growing the job base above the state medium for income and the long-term is looking at the growth and diversity plan which looks at not just where the region is today but where it needs to be in the future.

Emily Gibson, in charge of Government Affairs at VT and David Devon joined and John congratulated David Devon on his recent promotion.

Erin indicated that CECE has worked together on grant writing. Ashley, along with Sarah, have helped Erin secure new funding and diversify their strategies. Kevin indicated they have worked with CECE extensively, and it has been advantageous to have CECE located within his region. His agency is currently working on the Tech Hubs grant with CECE. Eddie said GOVA region 2 has been fortunate to be able to work with CECE staff.

John asked the panel about specific gaps and direction for the team. Gaps included the region not having wet labs and the need to keep looking forward to making sure we have lab space and AI infrastructure to have organizations come and stay in the region. Erin expanded that capital, and funding are a critical piece of keeping people (specifically VT alum) here in this region. Kevin focused on drawing federal and state funds to make land available for growth in the area. Eddie said we need to keep the best workers in this area and not have "brain drain" to other regions such as Raleigh.

John asked the panel members how their constituents see the university and how the university sees their constituents. Kevin said it depends on how they interact but, overall, he sees it as appreciation. Kevin referenced the work that Emily Gibson had done. Emily expanded that Partnership for Progress is proactive and does not arise from crisis. In one example, she explained if various partners are going for

the same grant, how we can collaborate and not work against one another. Partners in Partnership for Progress include the Town of Blacksburg, the Town of Christiansburg, Montgomery County, the Regional Commission and Virginia Tech.

Erin focused on the talent route. Some constituents look at how to recruit VT students.

Eddie indicated that we export much of our talent from the region. Roanoke benefits greatly from Virginia Tech being in the region. Some distressed areas could benefit more from education aspects.

John Provo asked the panel what was a surprise you saw this past year and make a prediction for the future. Kevin said he was surprised at the continued investment in the region. He predicted that Emily's Partnership for Progress program would do wonderful things. Erin said she is surprised that Vital, the largest Go Virginia project, has begun January 1. She predicts we need to restrategize funding and need to think more creatively. Eddie said the number and quality of projects that have come through the pipeline this year were groundbreaking initiatives. He predicted that things may be turbulent this year, so we need to make sure to tell the story about what we do in the region. Predicts we will tell the story better in the future.

11:55 Sarah explained GOVA's growth and Diversification plan – 2025 Update

Goals: 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

4 Industry Clusters:

1. Manufacturing for Transportation, Energy and Autonomy

Manufacturing verticals to include transportation, energy, autonomy and automation and industrialized construction

2. Advanced Materials

to include subclusters of chemicals, packaging, and multiple industry applications of materials

3. Life Sciences and Biotechnology

to include subclusters of biopharma and medical device manufacturing, life sciences, R & D, and living lab: healthcare system

4. IT, Engineering Services and Emerging Tech – smallest cluster but talent represented her is large

To include subclusters of IT and cybersecurity, engineering services and 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

Going forth, Sarah concluded, there will be a regional survey, listening events, and strategy/working sessions.

Guru shared that he appreciates the efforts of CECE and its partners. He was appreciative of the panel's discussions and found value in it. Our companies are going to need higher-level, higher-quality programmers. He referenced Jensen Wong's presentation at CES in January and recommended attendees to go back and review it. Guru said we at VT need to do a better job of investing in our talent as we don't do a good job of maintaining mid-career engineers here at VT.

All is a focus for the future. There was much back-and-forth conversation concerning various ways to become more competitive and growing and flourishing in this region.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Kim Gray, Recording Secretary

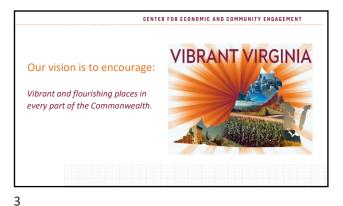


CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT Vibrant Virginia: Positive Returns for The Past Year 2024-2025 PROJECT 13THREE For the past year, OIA invested 'ALLEGHANY FOUNDATION \$20,000 in the Vibrant Virginia Initiative resulting in: Virginia Cooperative Extension \$162,948 in additional funding

for VV program activities

\$260,000 in leveraged funding for other community activities across the Commonwealth.





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We carry out this vision through:

• Place-based partnerships and exploratory projects: We build sustained collaborations with an anchor partner around a pressing, communitydefined issue or opportunity. We also lead or support short-term exploratory projects.

Faculty-initiated micro-projects

We help VT faculty conduct VV-aligned projects through seed awards, technical assistance, and/or resource linkages.

• Civic Well-being Initiative:

We develop and offer capacity-enhancing tools and resources to support civic well-being.



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VV Place-Based Partnerships & Exploratories: Examples

PLACE

• Washington, Grayson, Russell, Smyth

WELLSPRING FOUNDATION OF SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA

ANCHOR Partner:

Wellspring Foundation (tentative)

THEME:

- Outdoor Economy and Healthy Communities – Multiple Projects
- Including support for post-disaster recovery



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VV Place-Based Partnerships & Exploratories: Examples

PLACE

 Alleghany Highlands (includes Alleghany County, Covington, and Clifton Forge)

ANCHOR Partner:

Alleghany Foundation

THEME:

Economic Opportunity for All





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VV Place-Based Partnerships & Exploratories: Examples

PLACE

• City of Roanoke (and Roanoke Region)

ANCHOR Partner:

• City of Roanoke/VT Roanoke Center

THEME:

- Unhoused and Housing Insecurity
- City "Hope and Home Task Force"



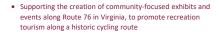
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Strategy II: Faculty-Initiated Micro-projects

In 2025, we helped over a dozen faculty explore Vibrant Virginia project ideas and identified four projects for \$10,000 seed funding awards:



 Facilitating community visioning and planning with Amonate, an unincorporated former coal-company town in Tazewell County;





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Micro-projects (cont.)

- Identifying and reducing barriers to rural Emergency Medical Service (EMS) care delivery in Virginia;
- Providing STEM kits and decision science instruction through neighborhood outreach to underserved communities in Northern Virginia





