

DRAFT-SUBJECT TO BOARD APPROVAL

**ONLINE VIRGINIA NETWORK AUTHORITY
BOARD**

June 28, 2023

MINUTES

The Online Virginia Network (OVN) Authority Board met on Tuesday, June 28, 2023 at Virginia Community College System in Richmond, VA. The meeting began at 10:04AM.

Present from the Board:

Peter Blake

Delegate Amanda Batten

Senator Adam Ebbin

Delegate Eileen Filler-Corn

Senator Ghazala Hashmi

James Hazel

Maribeth Herod

Karen Jackson

Kate Ledger

Fletcher Linder

Bruce Meyer

Sharon Morrissey

Susan Moyer

Senator Steven Newman

Susan Patrick

Murry Pitts

Absent from the Board:

Delegate John Avoli

Delegate Carrie Coyner

Also present:

Andrew Farnsworth

Darren Troxler

Wesley Kinsey

Melissa Unroe

Ahmad Taheri

Cynthia Pascal

Philmika Reid

Amy Robertson

Susan Evans

Marlena Jarboe

Alex McCarthy

Kellie Sorey

Catherine Smith

Terri Milroy

Joe Magee

Becky Sullivan

Robert Askew

Mark Nelson

Timothy Hoffman

Christy Lee

John Kingsley

Kristin Ogden

Robert Young

Micol Hutchinson

Lauren Posey

Myleah Kerns

Savanna Funkhouser

Charlie Ruble

Michelle Woodhouse

John Morea

Claudia Etchebarne Hernandez

Sheri Robertson

Charlie Kreitzer

David Burge

Audrey Burnett

Holly Whistler

Mark Smith

WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

Delegate Eileen Filler-Corn welcomed everyone to the meeting. Filler-Corn recognized the COVID health crisis and the importance of affordable pathways to higher education and skills training. She mentioned how the Online Virginia Network (OVN) has created pathways and opportunities for Virginians to complete their degrees. Filler-Corn Spoke about student support at Virginia institutions and how we have learned what works and what doesn't work to support online learners most effectively. Filler-Corn recognized the OVN team for developing support systems, structures and infrastructure for online students in Virginia. Filler-Corn then welcomed the six new board members and asked the board members to introduce themselves.

Dr. Sharon Morrissey welcomed everyone to VCCS on behalf of their new chancellor, Dr. Dore. She spoke about the non-credit workforce programs at VCCS and how VCCS has been using their OVN funding to focus on quality instruction, teaching and learning in the online space. Morrissey then provided details about VCCS's investment in pathways and delivery modalities to help part-time students complete their educational goals, like certificates and stackable credentials. Morrissey mentioned how important it is to keep graduates in Virginia, especially in the rural areas, and how the OVN partnership pathways help individuals to begin their training and coursework at VCCS and then transfer to a four-year institution to gain their bachelors.

ONLINE EDUCATION PRESENTATION

Holly Whistler presented a case study in online education by following the story of "Kayla," a persona created to demonstrate the online education opportunities at VCCS and the OVN four-year partner institutions. During the presentation, Whistler showed the digital ad campaigns that VCCS has in the market, demonstrated how Kayla could use the TransferVA portal to see where her credits could be used in online pathways to degrees, and showed a video of the VCCS chatbot that assists students with over 2000 questions in real time and a video of Kai, an AI online option for students to interact with their VCCS college. Whistler spoke about the flexibility available while taking online and hybrid courses at the community colleges and the modality options to complete coursework, which especially benefits the non-traditional students. The presentation concluded with the next steps Kayla can take in her education journey post-Associates degree at the four-year institutions within OVN, and stories of real students, like Kayla that have had success in their education through VCCS.

APPROVAL OF JULY 26, 2022 MEETING MINUTES

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

OVN PRESENTATION

David Burge presented on the history and mission of OVN and the purpose of OVN, along with statistics about Virginia online students connected with the OVN partner institutions. Burge continued with information about the rural broadband initiative and how OVN is especially impactful in this space. Holly Whistler presented additional data on online education post-pandemic that showcased the continued and increased desire for online higher education by students in the Commonwealth.

Kate Ledger presented on the onlinevirginia.net website updates and the increased marketing activities and website traffic of OVN. The ARPA funds provided a significant increase in marketing strategies which helped

increase traffic to the website. Additionally, Ledger spoke about how the new website has led to an 80% increase in conversion rate and a 66% increase in inquiries from prospective students to the OVN institutions. Bruce Meyer inquired about additional marketing and outreach metrics that could be shared and Ledger responded with the following data from 2017 through 2023: 1.7 million users, 22,000 RFI forms, 2 million clicks, and offered to provide additional data to the board at a later date. Maribeth Herod asked what platforms are leveraged and the most successful platform for the marketing campaigns. Ledger stated that Google responsive display drives the majority of the form fills and programmatic display ads, streaming podcasts, Facebook and Instagram are other platforms but those are waning in performance.

Audrey Burnett presented on the experiential learning opportunities that the OVN institutions identified and offered to online students, including design thinking, undergraduate research, study abroad and service learning. Burnett went into detail about the study abroad program through JMU, that has added a partnership with VCCS, where online students have travelled to multiple locations in summer 2022 and summer 2023. Holly Whistler presented on the additional projects that the OVN team used ARPA funds for like the enhanced partnership between OVN and TransferVA and the online pathways, the adult non-completer outreach campaign with SCHEV and VCU, and the instructional design services across the institutions. Peter Blake asked about additional details on the non-completer campaign and Fletcher Linder responded that the campaign will go out to 104,000 Virginians to expand awareness of OVN and online offerings and ask for information from these people about their needs to return to higher education.

Board discussion turned to the OVN director and many board members, including Peter Blake, Sharon Morrissey, and Bruce Meyer had questions about the future of centralized staffing for OVN and the concerns from the former director. Uncertain funding for the position and lack of talent in this space are two major concerns about hiring a director at this point in time.

Whistler presented the FY 24 budget proposal, returns to the base \$4 million funding. Investments will be made in project support & management, marketing and outreach, technical solutions, course creation, and student support services and resources. Senator Adam Ebbin wanted to confirm that the budget will be decreasing since the ARPA funds are ending and Maribeth Herod inquired how much of the ARPA funding is remaining and will go into FY24. Kuhn responded that the ARPA funding was split out into centralized funding to OVN marketing and outreach and to the institutions. The centralized marketing funding was completely spent and the remaining ARPA funds are with the institutions for technology, course creation, instructional design, etc.

APPROVAL OF BUDGET

Upon a motion by James Hazel and seconded by Susan Patrick, the budget was approved by all members present and voting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:09PM.