

**Roanoke Higher Education Authority**  
*Supporting Economic Development in the NewVa Region*  
**Annual Report on the Roanoke Higher Education Center (FY 2005)**  
**Fifth Anniversary Report**

**The first 5 years**

- The Center was developed with the participation of many stakeholders. As the building was renovated a broad base of support was developed from the local neighborhood, the city, civic organizations and related groups. Local government and state legislators also provided critical support. Time was taken to understand the Center's impact on the historic Gainsboro neighborhood and the larger downtown area and to establish good working relationships with residents to ensure the needs of the neighborhood were considered in the development of the Center.
- The Center's dedication on November 15, 2000 was followed by a busy time of introduction to the community. Open house events and back-to-school nights were staged to bring the public to the Center to explore educational opportunities. These programs have remained a regular part of the Center's outreach to the community.
- The building itself was completed by the end of September 2000, but sidewalk and parking construction continued into the late spring of 2001. In spite of considerable construction turmoil the Center's classrooms and technology supported a full slate of distance-learning, computer-based, and traditional classes from opening day.
- The Center library offered a critical learning resource to the Center's developing academic community. With assistance from several board members, the library obtained membership in the Virtual Library of Virginia providing access to computer and Internet based library resources from around the world. In addition the library has developed a very strong print collection in the areas of technology, office automation, test preparation, teacher education and writing/research methods. We intend to continue the development of comprehensive library-based collections and electronic databases to support the more than 200 degrees, certificates and other learning opportunities offered at the Center.
- The Roanoke Higher Education Center library continued to grow in scope, number of services offered and in patronage. The library has experienced a dramatic increase in the number of users over the last five years and in an effort to better meet the needs of our users, the library's hours of operation will continue to increase and eventually parallel the hours of operation for the entire building.

### Library Patrons

Fiscal Year	Total number of patrons	Average number of patrons/month
2001-2002	<b>2192</b>	<b>183</b>
2002-2003	<b>3676</b>	<b>306</b>
2003-2004	<b>5140</b>	<b>428</b>
2004-2005	<b>6581</b>	<b>548</b>

- During our start up years the Roanoke Higher Education Center was getting noticed. Along with colleagues from Virginia Tech, Center staff delivered a presentation about the Center’s development to the 2001 national conference of the Society for College and University Planning. The Center also was featured at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting of the Association for Continuing Higher Education in April of 2001, and again in November of 2001 at the Association’s international meeting held in Vancouver, British Columbia. In the September of 2001 the Center concept was also presented at the 47<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the International Downtown Association in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. A more recent presentation on the Center was made to The Virginia Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers at the Association’s annual meeting in December of 2004. Today, we continue to spread the word of our collaborative success through presentations to a variety of foundations and associations.
  
- In June 2001, we hosted a visit and briefing of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness that included committee member Congressman Bob Goodlatte. The Subcommittee recognized the Center as a national model for workforce training and higher education and took the time to learn more about its development and operation.
  
- Many companies have tapped into the opportunity to hold seminars and off-site meetings at the Center. The day rental business has expanded dramatically and continues to grow in support of business community needs. Service organizations also hold meetings at the Center, and the Center’s unique meeting facilities add to existing hotel and conference center resources in the region supporting the tourism industry.

### Conference and Meeting Events, Clients and Participants

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>
<i>Clients</i>	<b>90</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>183</b>
<i>Events</i>	<b>337</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>361</b>
<i>Participants</i>	<b>12,757</b>	<b>21,908</b>	<b>14,951</b>	<b>14,118</b>

- Technology has always been an important component to learning. From videoconferencing to advanced computer labs to deploying the Roanoke WIFI Pilot Project, technology is an initiative that is hard-wired into the Center's culture. Over the Center's first five years, its technology has kept pace with the demand for the most up-to-date software and equipment.
- The NewVa Corridor Technology Council located its headquarters office at the Roanoke Higher Education Center in August 2003. The Technology Council's focus on economic development in the high technology arena contributes to the synergy already created by the many organizations located in the Center that support economic development through training and education.
- A number of public service and work/study groups provide volunteer support. These partnerships have afforded the Center more than 3000 hours of service each year without cost to the Center.
- The Roanoke Higher Education Center receives regular feedback from its customers: the colleges, universities and workforce training organizations that participate in the Center; students served at the Center; and organizations that utilize the Center's conference facilities. In 20045, in addition to positive comments and letters of appreciation, the Center received a 4.5 on a five-point scale on a customer satisfaction survey that is conducted annually.
- The Center's commitment to providing training for growth careers is underscored by our biomedical laboratory that supports Virginia Western's Biotech training program. We are supporting our region's expansion as a medical services hub through strong nursing programs from institutions such as Virginia Western, Radford University, and Jefferson College of Health Sciences. This commitment has included the creation of a nursing laboratory and additional classroom to support the programs. In addition programs are offered in teacher education, computer technology, engineering and business in support of the regional economy.
- Program offerings have changed over the year to meet the needs of people and organizations in the region. In 2005, 206 programs were offered, and the number of program completions reached 563.

Programs Offered

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>
<i>Associate's Degrees</i>	21	9	12	13	12
<i>Bachelor's Degrees</i>	34	33	38	43	45
<i>Master's Degrees</i>	29	36	38	43	42
<i>Certificates</i>	31	33	38	39	44
<i>Other Programs</i>	25	41	48	57	63
<b><i>Total Programs</i></b>	<b>140</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>206</b>

### Program Completions

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>
<i>High School Diploma</i>	0	0	0	3	3
<i>GED</i>	102	105	85	92	93
<i>Certificates</i>	179	144	160	367	66
<i>Associates Degrees</i>	0	11	3	142	138
<i>Bachelors Degrees</i>	37	66	115	186	151
<i>Masters Degrees</i>	34	97	140	88	104
<i>Education Specialist</i>	0	0	10	1	8
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b>352</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>879</b>	<b>563</b>

- Enrollment fluctuates from semester to semester. It exceeded 3300 in the fall of 2002, but it tends to hover just under 3000 each fall and spring and lower in the summer. We believe we are serving a substantial number of people in our service region who are in need of further education, but we also believe we could be reaching more people, and future efforts will be directed to that end.

### Center Enrollment

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Summer</i>	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>
<i>2001</i>		<b>2579</b>	<b>2167</b>
<i>2002</i>	<b>1603</b>	<b>2584</b>	<b>2319</b>
<i>2003</i>	<b>2476</b>	<b>3335</b>	<b>2960</b>
<i>2004</i>	<b>1073</b>	<b>2487</b>	<b>2793</b>
<i>2005</i>	<b>2091</b>	<b>2934</b>	<b>2888</b>

- The Roanoke Higher Education Center has a staff of 13 full time employees and 3 part time employees operating the largest and most diverse higher education center in the Commonwealth. The customer satisfaction ratings we receive from our customers underscore both the effectiveness and efficiency of our staff and our operations. Working within resource constraints the Center has focused its efforts on maintaining its facilities and its services at the highest level possible. Because of a dedicated staff we have often been able to exceed customer expectations; but further effort and resources will need to be directed to responses to demand for additional library hours of operation, provision of career counseling services, and for expanded public information efforts.

### **The Next Five Years**

- The Roanoke Higher Education Center has been able to respond to demand for more space to support new and on-going programs. Utilizing funding from historic tax credits and grants from private sources, the Center has undertaken the renovation of two adjacent historic buildings. The additional 10,000 square feet of space will provide laboratories for a culinary arts program offered by Virginia Intermont College and additional classroom and meeting space for Center members and the public.

- The Center continues, as resources permit, to develop its library collection and related library services. Utilizing state-of-the-art technology, the library will soon implement the electronic delivery of interlibrary loan articles and other documents. Interlibrary Loan (ILL) is one of the library's most utilized services. During FY 2005, over 200 items were borrowed on ILL. Electronic delivery will allow students to receive needed information quickly, without ever coming to the library or waiting for mail delivery. This service is convenient and especially useful to our student base, many of whom are not at the Center on an everyday basis and travel some distance to attend classes here. It remains our goal to continue to provide relevant, timely and high quality information resources and services to the entire RHEC community.
- The Center has initiated collaboration between member institutions and the Art Museum of Western Virginia to develop pre-service and in-service programs for teachers in the 40 county area served by the museum. The outcome is expected to positively impact K-12 teaching in the region through the use of art, and the museum itself, to enhance instruction across disciplines.
- A similar collaboration has begun among the member institutions focused on leadership and management education and training for the business community across the region served by the Center.
- In celebration of the 5<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the opening of the Roanoke Higher Education Center, colleges and universities located at the Center are launching a series of non-credit, short courses designed for individuals 50 years of age and older. *Lifelong Learning at the Roanoke Higher Education Center* will feature a series of lectures and experiences ranging in topics from computers and technology to literature, arts, and music. The inaugural event of the Lifelong Learning Center will be held in September 2005 and will feature Roanoke College's Fulbright Visiting Specialist, Omer Faruk Genckaya.
- These collaborative efforts mark a maturing of the relationships among the member institutions, and represent a melding of academic resources to address educational issues that can now be addressed more effectively than was possible through a single institution approach.
- The Center has been aware for several years that its customers, including its institutional members and the general public, are seeking access to career counseling services independent of the individual institutions. The institutions are also looking to the Center to provide more public information outreach to raise the awareness of opportunities at the Center among employers and the general public in the region served by the Center. As we endeavor to increase the visibility of the Center, we constantly discover the need to reach out to people who are not aware of the opportunities the Center has to provide. The other area that receives attention from our customers in the level of library support services

at the Center. We have seen a clear demand for longer hours of operation and access to more print and electronic materials.

- Based on feedback from customers and the results of an economic development summit conducted in 2003 to assess the role of the Roanoke Higher Education Center in the NewVa Region, the Center's future direction should be focused on these areas:
  1. Continue to pursue the kinds of programs it is offering while continually assessing trends in the region that have implications for new programs.
  2. Develop the capacity to provide career counseling, including testing, test preparation, program advising and career placement.
  3. Function as a clearinghouse for workforce training and higher education information and connections, while providing outreach and dissemination of public information to heighten awareness in the region of opportunities presented at the Center.
  4. Increase the hours of operation and the size of the collection (print and electronic) in the Center's library.
  5. Increase the number of programs at the Center that are based on the collaborative efforts of the member colleges, universities and workforce training organizations.
  
- The Center must continue to maintain building-wide networks for data, telephone, ATM video, and satellite/TV. These networks support the Member Institutions by providing critical technology services so that the Member's Institutions can provide high quality education and training for the NewVa region. The Center also maintains an in-house information kiosk system and two large computer labs for use by the Member Institutions and day rental by the business community. Into the future, the Center will continue to rely on Higher Education Equipment Trust Funds to support ongoing maintenance of the technology infrastructure.
  
- The IT industry is constantly changing and advancing technology infrastructure. Equipment must be upgraded and replaced to meet the needs of Member Institutions. Security of the various network infrastructures must be maintained and enhanced. The Center is a member Network Virginia's broadband ATM network. Network Virginia is in the process of replacing the ATM network with a broadband IP network. This will impact the Center as we transition from this ATM network infrastructure to an IP network infrastructure with full quality of service (QOS). The Center will need to replace the existing ATM Video network infrastructure with an IP video infrastructure to meet the needs of the Member Institutions and Network Virginia. In accordance with State Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) directives, the Center will be setting up a remote server "mirroring" site at a member institution's facilities. This site will include tape retrieval hardware and software to restore the Center staff computing capacity in case of emergency.

## **Supporting State Goals for Higher Education in Virginia**

Structurally the Roanoke Higher Education Center is expected to pursue a set of goals established for the Commonwealth by the Council on Virginia's Future. The Center is focused on three of the Council's long term objectives:

1. Elevate the levels of educational preparedness and attainment of our citizens.
2. Be a national leader in the preservation and enhancement of our economy.
3. Engage and inform citizens to ensure we serve their interests.

Under Virginia's restructuring plan, state colleges and universities are required to work toward meeting 11 state goals in return for greater campus autonomy, and the Center supports the colleges and universities in meeting their goals. As such the Center will also relate directly to 8 of the 11 goals established for the state colleges and universities:

- Provide access to higher education for all citizens of Virginia, including underrepresented populations.

This is a key element of the mission of the Roanoke Higher Education Center. By providing facilities and support services including a full service library and instructional technology the Center actively supports its member colleges and universities in delivering their programs at a venue close to a large population that would otherwise be underserved.

- Ensure that higher education remains affordable regardless of family income.

The Center's individual member institutions set tuition and provide financial aid to students. The Center has the capacity to receive and develop scholarship funds, which to date have been provided on a limited basis by the ABWA. In addition the Center's location and hours of operation facilitate the offering of classes by its member colleges and universities to students who need to work full or part time to support their ongoing education. Because many students work full time they are also eligible for tuition assistance paid by their employers.

- Offer a curriculum that addresses Virginia's needs for sufficient graduates in particular shortage areas.

Working collaboratively with its member institutions and adding members as necessary to meet local education and training needs, the Center has been able to promote programs for nurses, teachers, engineers, bio-medical technicians, and computer technology to meet needs in areas of shortage and new growth potential.

- Maintain high academic standards.

By providing classrooms and laboratories of the highest quality, maintaining cutting edge instructional technology, and by providing a full service library, the Center supports its member institutions in maintaining high academic standards.

- Improve student retention and raise graduation rates.

Because of its central location in the Greater Roanoke Region, its regional focus, and its hours of operation, the Center provides flexibility that is particularly beneficial to working adults who are pursuing career training and higher education. The availability of the Center enables many who would otherwise not be able to pursue further education to do so, and it enables many who would not be able to follow through to completion to do so on their own schedule. The net result is providing more students with the opportunity to receive an education and more to complete that education.

- Allow smooth transition for students moving from two-year to four-year institutions.

Because Virginia Western Community College is a member of the Center opportunities for articulation with the four-year members, including the private colleges and universities, is increased. Already several two-plus-two programs exist, and other collaborative programs are under consideration for the future.

- Stimulate economic development of Virginia.

The Center was founded in part on the conviction that workforce training and higher education are engines of economic development. Its central goal of increasing access to training and education derives from this concept. The Center works closely with the regional economic development organizations to attract new business and retain existing business in the region. In addition to education and training to support the industrial base of the region, the Center also provides the business community with space for conferences, meetings and in-house training they rely on to develop their businesses. The Center's facilities complement those of local hotels and conference centers and add variety to the mix of venues that attract conferences and meetings to the region also supporting the tourism industry.

- Aid elementary and secondary schools to improve student achievement.

Seven of the Center's member colleges and universities provide teacher education through the Center. Not only are classes for teachers offered at the Center, some members use the Center as a base of operations to bring classes for teachers directly to school systems throughout the region. A collaborative program has recently been initiated between these schools and the Art Museum of Western Virginia to provide teachers throughout the 40 county area served by the Museum exposure to the use of art across the curriculum to improve teaching in all subjects at all grade levels. In addition



to instruction to be provided by the participating colleges and universities, the Art Museum will make available its facilities in Roanoke and mobile resources to support teachers throughout the region and to engage their students as well.

## **Center Goals**

**GOAL 1: Provide to its member organizations and institutions a facility and support services of the highest quality that contribute to the expansion of opportunities for workforce training and higher education, and for further economic development in Virginia's NewVa region.**

To expand opportunities for workforce training and higher education a state of the art facility and appropriate support services are required for the member colleges, universities and workforce training organizations to effectively offer the broad range of programs that are required to meet the needs of the people of the NewVa Region. The facility and services contribute directly to the regions capacity to elevate the levels of educational preparedness and attainment of our citizens, and to preserve and enhance the regional economy.

### **Objective #1**

*Maintain facility operations including maintenance, security, housekeeping, and excellent customer service to the measured satisfaction of member institutions and facility rental customers.*

- **Description**

RHEC currently is contained in 150,000 sq ft facility that contains 60 classrooms and 50 offices. Currently, housekeeping and security functions are contracted with private vendors. In 2006, the Center facility will increase its leasable space by 10,000 sq ft with the acquisition and renovation of the Claude Moore Education Complex.

- **Strategies**

- Continuously monitor and enhance contracts for security and housekeeping services to insure adequate coverage and insure customer satisfaction.
- Continue to upgrade software and systems to ensure HVAC operates to optimal performance.
- Continue training of building staff to keep current in best practices.
- Develop a maintenance reserve fund and seek targeted funding from the Commonwealth of Virginia as needed.

### **Objective #2**

*Insure high reliability of Center technology systems by maintaining and upgrading data, telephone, video networks, technology classrooms, and audio-visual equipment.*

- **Description**

The Roanoke Higher Education Center ensures reliability of networks, Internet access, technology classrooms, and audio-visual support provided by the Center 14 hours per day, six days per week, year round.

### **Strategies**

- Continuously monitor and enhance network and telephone infrastructures. Continue to upgrade network and phone software and hardware to ensure that the building technical infrastructure operates to optimal performance.
- Continue training of building staff to keep current in best practices and technology enhancements.
- Continue to receive hardware funds from the Higher Education Equipment Trust Fund to replace out of date and failed equipment.

### **Objective #3**

***Maintain and further develop a fully automated full service library offering quality library services and related student services that satisfy customer needs.***

- **Description**

The Roanoke Higher Education Center operates a full-service library including a circulating print collection, online access to academic databases and the Internet, bibliographic instruction and research assistance.

- **Strategies**

- Increase student awareness of the library and library services.
- Improve the accessibility and usability of the library's website and I-portal.
- Continue to provide exceptional bibliographic instruction and reference services.
- Continue to monitor library usage statistics, reference requests and interlibrary loan transactions to ensure library is satisfying customer needs.
- Continue training of library staff to keep current in best practices.
- Increase library hours as funding permits.

### **GOAL 2: Provide access to non-credit workforce development, technology training, and higher education programs for the people of Virginia's NewVa region.**

Access to non-credit workforce development, technology training, and higher education programs for the people of Virginia's NewVa region is dependent upon colleges, universities and workforce training organizations communicating with one another to maximize opportunities for cooperative and collaborative efforts that increase the total number of programs that can be made available in the NewVa Region. These efforts help to elevate the levels of educational preparedness and attainment of our citizens, to preserve and enhance the economy in the region, and to engage and inform citizens to insure the Center serves their interests.

### **Objective #1**

***Work with Center members to increase the number of students completing workforce training and higher education programs offered at the Roanoke Higher Education Center.***

- **Description**

The Roanoke Higher Education Center offers a variety of programs at a variety of levels, a supportive library and an excellent learning facility that together will foster the development of skills, abilities and knowledge leading to new employment or advancement in current employment.

- **Strategies**

- Further develop the library by adding print and electronic resources and expand the hours of operation to meet the needs of students and faculty. Expanded hours of operation will require additional staffing in some combination of full and part time.
- Provide for expanded access to the Center by developing communications capabilities to more widely communicate to the public the opportunities offered at the Center. Hire staff or contract with a full service marketing firm.
- Provide support services to maximize student success. Develop a career center staffed with a counselor/advisor and clerical support to assist current and potential students in selecting programs of study, with testing and test preparation, and with career information and placement.

## **Objective #2**

Work with Center members to increase the number of training and education opportunities by developing new certificate and degree programs, courses, seminars and other learning events that are related to available career opportunities in Virginia's NewVa region.

- **Description**

The Roanoke Higher Education Center offers a variety of programs at a variety of levels, a supportive library and an excellent learning facility that together will foster the development of skills, abilities and knowledge leading to new employment or advancement in current employment.

- **Strategies**

- Analyze program request data routinely for trends and areas of interest from potential students.
- Collaborate with the business community to assess current workforce training needs.
- Work in conjunction with organizations like the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce, Center for Regional Strategies at Virginia Tech, Virginia Employment Commission, and the Roanoke Valley Economic Development Partnership to gather economic development information for the region.

## **GOAL 3: Provide direct services to the business community through the provision of space for corporate meetings, teleconferences, and in-house training.**

In addition to the Roanoke Higher Education Center providing programs through its members, the facility itself is made available to the business community for corporate meetings, teleconferences and in-house training. The use of the facilities in this way

further elevates the levels of educational preparedness and attainment of our citizens, and directly contributes to the preservation and enhancement of the economy in the region.

**Objective #1**

***Increase the number of business clients utilizing the Center for corporate meetings, training, and teleconferences.***

- **Description**

The Roanoke Higher Education Center offers meeting space to the business community in a well-kept facility with supporting amenities including maintenance, security, and housekeeping, classrooms with reliable computer networks, Internet access, and audio-visual support provided by the Center 14 hours per day, six days per week, year round, accompanied by excellent service from Center staff.

- **Strategies**

- Continue to provide superior customer service to current clients to insure repeat business with special attention to maintaining the quality of the Center's facilities.
- Continue to look for opportunities for free or low cost advertising opportunities, e.g. in the local Convention and Visitors Bureau catalog.
- Target specific business promoting our conference facilities. Previous examples include attorneys, human resource administrators, etc.
- Look for opportunities to partner with business groups that may yield additional business from other companies within the group, e.g. Leadership Roanoke Valley.