



MEMORANDUM

TO: Daniel J. LaVista, Executive Director

FROM: Barry M. Dorsey, New College Institute (NCI), on behalf of
W. Ted Bennett, Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (HEC)
Tim Franklin, Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR)

DATE: October 30, 2007

SUBJECT: Progress Report: Southside Higher Education Coalition

By this point, you are quite familiar with each of our institutions, and we appreciate the guidance and support you have provided to us both individually and collectively. This progress report is to comply with the mandate by the General Assembly to coordinate the activity and leverage the assets of three regional institutions in order to maximize our resources and multiply our impact through cooperation and collaboration.

Since our last report in October, 2006, we have worked together regularly and have together accomplished much. Most notable was our successful proposal to the Virginia Tobacco Commission, through which we received a grant of \$1.5 million to each institution that has enabled us to establish three academic degree programs as well as a number of outreach activities. A summary regarding the grant is below.

In addition to receiving the Tobacco Commission grant, we have also:

- Met with our partnering community colleges to discuss seamless pathways into our bachelor's degree programs, therefore leading dialogues on cooperative arrangements between individual community colleges;
- Established the Southern Virginia Education Network (SVEN) which is designed to deliver high quality distance delivery classes using a private

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- broadband network. This will provide a very rich distance-learning experience enabling students to attend classes at multiple learning centers throughout the Southside region.
- Coordinated and participated in Super Saturday, a regional event to assist prospective students and their families in planning for college, understanding college options, and applying for financial aid;
- Begun work on a joint brochure and website that will be used to cross-market our programs and services; and
- Participated in the successful receipt of a \$13 million grant from Exxon Mobil to improve AP teachers and AP classes in our region. The grant is based at the HEC.

While our work together is already demonstrating positive results, a serious concern must also be raised. In order to provide programs and services, the programs and activities we conduct must be sustainable. Therefore, we ask for your help and support as we request funds from the General Assembly for the coming biennium. We are beginning (and in some cases, have already begun) to offer academic programs to students utilizing a short-term stream of revenue. Clearly, in order to continue this good work, we must have sufficient funding that will enable us to do so.

Thank you, again, for the support and guidance you continue to provide to all the higher education entities in Southern Virginia.

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**Summary:
Virginia Tobacco Commission Collaborative Grant
Southside Higher Education Coalition**

The Coalition’s academic program objective is to create “seamless educational pathways” that enable students to pursue, *within the region*, higher education in areas of study that are aligned with the region’s existing and emerging business needs. Through strategic partnerships with accredited higher education providers, the Coalition will develop and offer degree programs, individual courses, and certifications that meet and anticipate the needs of the region’s businesses and economic direction. Programs will be marketed and delivered not only at the three locations, but also at learning centers throughout the region through the Regional Backbone Initiative fiber optic network.

Learning Centers		
Resident Faculty Locations	Primary Site Locations	Selected Sites in Southwest Virginia
Southern Virginia Higher Education Center, South Boston	Chase City	Abingdon
Institute for Advanced Learning & Research, Danville	Clarksville	Galax
New College Institute, Martinsville	Gretna	Roanoke
	Patrick County	
	Rocky Mount	
	South Hill	
	Charlotte County	
	Halifax County	

Critical to the Coalition’s success is the community outreach and capacity-building programs that aim to saturate the region with enrichment opportunities that will reset cultural expectations around higher education and create a sustainable pipeline of students prepared to enroll in advanced learning programs. Capacity-building outreach programs will engage citizens of the region at an early age, equip them with a strong foundation of basic skills, and help them envision their potential. These programs will build on best practices and models already successfully piloted in the region. Programs for children, teachers, and adults will be marketed and offered at community centers throughout the region.

Primary Service Region	Secondary Service Region
Charlotte County	Amelia County
Danville City	Appomattox County

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Franklin County	Buckingham County
Halifax County	Brunswick County
Henry County	Campbell County
Martinsville City	Cumberland County
Mecklenburg County	Dinwiddie County
Patrick County	Greensville County
Pittsylvania County	Lunenburg County
	Nottoway County
	Prince Edward County
	Sussex County
332,000 citizens	219,694 citizens

Academic Programs

By designating a distinct program emphasis for each Coalition partner, unnecessary duplication of program coordination with accredited providers is avoided. Yet, the distributed, technology-enabled model of course delivery allows all three Coalition partners as well as numerous other learning centers to participate in all programs. The net result is that citizens in Virginia's rural, educationally-underserved areas will have greater access to educational opportunities, and these regions will have a more educationally diverse workforce.

In order to prepare a skilled, diverse workforce, a variety of options, including certificate, licensure, undergraduate, graduate, and doctorate programs, will be provided in these fields:

Southern Virginia Higher Education Center	Institute for Advanced Learning & Research	New College Institute
Graphic Design / Digital Arts Technology / Electronic Gaming Design	Mathematics	Health-related fields (undergraduate and graduate programs)
Wood Science	Mechanical Engineering	Business Administration (undergraduate and graduate programs)
Travel and Tourism / Hospitality	Chemistry / Chemical Engineering	Teacher Education in STEM fields (undergraduate; teacher licensure)
Teacher Education (undergraduate and graduate)	Biology / Horticulture / Forestry	Computer-related programs
Forestry	Electrical Engineering / Nanotechnology	

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	Information Technology	
	Graduate certificates and programs for teachers in STEM fields	
<p>The partner institutions will pursue other high demand and strategic niche programs as they emerge.</p>		

Specifically, the grant has enabled the Coalition partners to pursue and implement the following academic programs:

IALR:

1. Engineering Science, University of Virginia (two areas of concentration)*
 2. Biology, Longwood University
- * The IALR offered an *Explorations in Engineering* course through UVA this fall. Over 30 students are enrolled. This course is articulated with Danville Community College’s new Associate’s in Engineering.

New College Institute:

1. Industrial Technology, Old Dominion University
2. Motorsports Engineering, Old Dominion University
3. Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, Virginia Commonwealth University

Southern Virginia Higher Education Center:

1. Woodlinks and Forestry, Virginia Tech
2. Hospitality and Tourism Management, in exploratory stage
3. Graphic Arts, Virginia Commonwealth University

Community Outreach Programs

Recognizing that cultural perceptions are often a barrier to the pursuit of education, the Coalition seeks to implement outreach programs that will positively impact cultural perceptions of education and cultivate an understanding of its intrinsic value. This is a necessary first step in raising the percentage of the population that holds a baccalaureate degree. Without this conceptual understanding in place, any programs that are implemented will be underutilized.

The Coalition’s outreach programs will target two audiences, youth and working adults. Outreach programs will equip youth with a strong foundation of basic skills and empower working adults with skills valued in today’s workplace. Educational summer camps, computer workshops, entrepreneurship training, professional development and similar opportunities will appeal to and meet the needs of a broad spectrum of the region’s population. By engaging citizens at an early age, and providing for their needs in subsequent life stages, the Coalition seeks to fortify the existing education framework with additional layers of quality.

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Specifically, the grant has enabled the Coalition partners to pursue and implement the following outreach programs:

1. Summer internships for college students who wish to return home for the summer and work within the community in their field of study. IALR sponsored 26 returning college students, providing 80% of the funding support while area businesses contributed 20%. NCI fully sponsored 21 returning college students, providing full funding.
2. Teacher Academies that bring endorsement programs from partner institutions which allow current teachers to be endorsed in a high-need area. NCI has 7 students enrolled in an Earth Science endorsement program by creating a partnership between Radford University and the Virginia Museum of Natural History. Students are currently enrolling in a program to become endorsed in English as a Second Language.
3. Staff positions and instructor stipends for outreach activities such as summer camps and professional development opportunities for K-12 educators. The IALR had 83 K-12 teachers participate in its Southside Educators' Development Institute. NCI sent 8 students to summer Teaching Institutes at Virginia Commonwealth University.
4. The HEC has established outreach programs targeting community members aged 50 and over.
5. Establishment of a center at the HEC to conduct research and best practices on rural education called the Center for Rural Educational Excellence and Economic Development, or CREED.

Funding

The Tobacco Commission has committed a total of \$4.5 Million to the Coalition partners through fall of 2008.

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