



*A Collaborative Model for Advancing Education, Health,
& Economic Prosperity in Southwest Virginia*

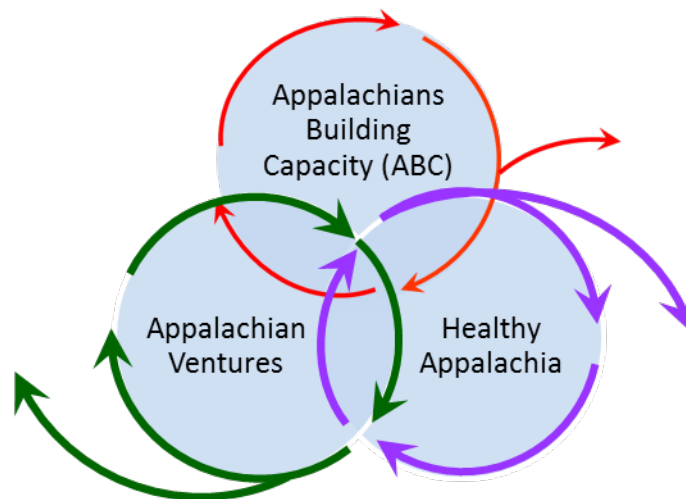
*Annual Report
FY2017*



Southwest Virginia Economic Development Partnership: *Appalachian Prosperity Project*

UVA's Report to the Commonwealth, FY2017

The *Appalachian Prosperity Project* (APP) is a collaborative partnership among the University of Virginia (UVA), UVA's College at Wise (UVA-Wise), the Virginia Coalfield Coalition (comprised of Planning Districts 1 & 2), the private sector, and the Commonwealth. This partnership uses a systems approach to simultaneously advance the inextricably linked fields of education (*Appalachians Building Capacity*), health (*Healthy Appalachia Institute*), and prosperity (*Appalachian Ventures*).



Appalachian Prosperity Project

Whether the APP is bringing world-class executive education to Coalfield business leaders, piloting an innovative early language literacy intervention, or providing a bridge for engineering education, this multi-faceted partnership produces results. The partnership is unique and powerful because it widely encompasses disparate stakeholders while remaining coordinated and focused. The APP views issues from many perspectives by convening public, private, and government agencies that are not often at the same table. It provides the infrastructure to transform those conversations into initiatives today while maintaining a long-term commitment to the overall mission.

This mutually beneficial alliance applies academic rigor to UVA's outreach projects, expands student experiences, encourages the exchange of ideas, and creates new knowledge which will inform future community- and university-based shared research and partner activities.

The APP is an inspiring reflection of the spirit of the region's people who value trust, self-determination, and perseverance. The vision is to ensure regional collaboration, generate new ideas, and establish a process to engage the social, economic, and scientific issues that exist at the interface of health, education, prosperity, and Appalachian culture. Our collective mission is to position the region in the global economy while honoring its traditions and culture, using local assets, engagement by all partners, and true collaboration. <http://aproject.org/>

Leaders in the Coalfields are focused on transforming their historically extractive-based economy from one centered mainly on tobacco, coal, and timber to one built on information technology, education, health care, and energy. To attract companies, local leaders recognize that they must have an educated workforce, business acumen, and widespread access to medical care.

The *Appalachian Prosperity Project* builds on a formal commitment made in 2007 by UVA to the Commonwealth of Virginia to help stimulate economic development in Southwest Virginia. The initiative resides in UVA's Office of Strategic Initiatives; however, UVA-Wise is a critical and influential local presence. It serves as a translator, bridging the geographic distance between partners and opening the door to relationships that would otherwise not exist. The Virginia Coalfield Coalition is leveraging the resources of the APP to attain their regional economic development goals.

A unique aspect of this partnership is its foundation in a systems approach. This brings a diversity of organizations to the table to collectively solve problems. Virtually every school at the University is substantively involved, including the Engineering, Architecture, Business, Education, Nursing, and Medicine schools. Scores of regional partners are engaged from the public and private sectors. Representatives from health, education, and business are involved in every initiative since all play a role in tackling the intractable issues in Southwest Virginia.

The University's role is to listen to the needs of communities and their citizens, initiate conversations, support strategic planning, provide innovation and evidence-based research and evaluation, and collect and analyze data. The Coalfield community identifies challenges, infuses cultural understanding and history, sets the vision and strategic direction, and selects priorities. All partners are givers and receivers of knowledge; together they incubate ideas, generate resources, develop programs, lead, and execute projects. The APP has three co-directors,

representing UVA, UVA-Wise, and the Virginia Coalfield Coalition. Decision-making is shared and each partner is fully consulted before any actions are taken.

Each of the interdigitated foci – education, health, and business – has a signature project that serves as a thematic guide for activities. In health, it is the APP's **Healthy Appalachia Institute** (HAI), created to energize a regional public, private, and government coalition that addresses the region's health disparities. An example of successful shared decision-making is the creation of *A Blueprint for Health Improvement and Health-Enabled Prosperity* (<http://www.healthyappalachia.org/our-health-blueprint>), a community-developed, detailed roadmap for a healthier population with specific goals and outcomes. Similar exercises have included the creation of the *Blueprint for Entrepreneurial Growth and Economic Prosperity in Southwest Virginia*, the *Blueprint for Attracting and Sustaining Advanced Manufacturing in Southwest Virginia*, and *Prescription Drug Abuse in Southwest Virginia*.
<http://aproject.org/resources/reports/#tab-blueprints>

These blueprints demonstrate to external funders and supporters that there is a vision for the region and important early groundwork has been accomplished. Since completion in 2009, the health blueprint has helped the region secure funding, develop regional health statistic data to measure progress, initiate an annual research symposium, mandate insurance coverage for telemedicine, and expand the number of telemedicine sites within the region.

The APP's **Appalachian Ventures** encompasses our initiatives to foster a robust economy. The APP has offered management training through UVA's globally-ranked Darden business program, with faculty traveling to the region and working directly with managers from the private and public sector. This allowed employers to build management capacity for their workforce, which is often promoted from within, and which has limited local professional development opportunities available.

Appalachian Ventures convened over sixty community organizations, business interests, and environmental groups as part of the Clinch River Valley Initiative (<http://clinchriverva.com/>) and the larger regional cultural heritage efforts, including The Crooked Road, 'Round the Mountain and Heartwood, to leverage the natural assets in the area and spur related startups. Five action groups are currently working on issues such as connecting downtown revitalization efforts with the Clinch River, developing river access points and trails, and enhancing water quality.

The APP's **Appalachians Building Capacity** (ABC) is building an educated workforce through innovative pre-K-12 programs. Whether introducing students to a variety of professions via video chat technology or providing near-peer college counseling offered through the Virginia

College Advising Corps, ABC fosters educational opportunities while supporting educated workforce initiatives.

FY2017 HIGHLIGHTS

FUNDING

- This past year UVA helped secure \$3.7 million in new funding to bring programs and services to the residents of Southwest Virginia. Over the past 8 years the total is almost \$20.5 million. This includes funding for creating *UVA's Cancer Center Without Walls* to extend UVA Health System resources into the region, downtown revitalization efforts in the Town of Appalachia, community development for the Town of Cleveland, and advancing the Clinch River Valley Initiative to bring new economies to the region.
- The University of Virginia Board of Visitors awarded UVA's College at Wise \$3.5 million over five years to continue efforts to contribute to the economic vibrancy of Southwest Virginia by increasing entrepreneurship opportunities and supporting enrollment and retention in software engineering, computer science and other areas that bolster development of a "knowledge-based economy."

RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT

- The APP continued to support the Southwest Virginia Economic Forum, May 10, 2017, in Wise, Virginia.

HEALTH

The **Blueprint for Health Improvement and Health-Enabled Prosperity**, developed in 2009 in partnership with the Southwest Virginia Health Authority, outlined 20 goals and objectives, with timeframes divided into three timeline categories: Near (0-2 years), Intermediate (3-9 years), and Long-term (10+ years). The blueprint also outlined strategic goal categories (e.g., overall health, health-related economic developments, etc.) and organizational goal categories, including development funding, advocacy, and operations. The blueprint has galvanized the region into action, increasing awareness and progress toward improving population health.

UVA's Cancer Center Without Walls

To address the unique challenges faced by cancer patients in rural areas, communities and organizations throughout Appalachia and Southwest Virginia are partnering with the University of Virginia Cancer Center to advance a virtual hospital —*UVA's Cancer Center Without Walls*. This effort is designed to better provide patients with advanced cancer care and clinical trials close to home. Funding for the center comes from an 18-month, \$965,000 grant awarded by the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission. This grant has resulted in progress on multiple fronts.

Virginia's rate of adult smokers is above the national average at 19%, and in Southwest Virginia the range is between 28% - 30%. Smoking leads to higher rates of lung and bladder cancer, and it is not surprising that bladder cancer and lung cancer are overrepresented in the tobacco footprint. When detected early both cancers can be treated with curative intent. However, too often these cancers are detected too late, resulting in suffering, death, and costly medical expenses. The UVA Cancer Center is actively utilizing telehealth technology to detect these cancers at early stages among Southwest Virginia residents. These screening projects will result in reduced cancer morbidity and mortality. Grant funding of \$657,716 comes from the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission (TRRC). Funding began in March of 2016. Some activities include:

- Assistant Nursing Professor Emma Mitchell received \$40,000 from the UVA Cancer Center and the National Cancer Institute for an 18-month study of at-home human papillomavirus (HPV) tests. HPV is a precursor to cervical cancer. Rates of cervical cancer are two to three times higher in Southwest Virginia than elsewhere in the Commonwealth. Cervical cancer can be easily treated if detected early. For those who do not have access to clinics and health care practitioners, at-home testing may increase early detection of some cancers.



UVA nursing professor Emma Mitchell is researching at-home cervical cancer testing.

- A National Cancer Institute study identified five geographical clusters in the United States with elevated levels of cervical cancer morbidity and mortality. One cluster is in far Southwest Virginia. The UVA Health System, the Healthy Appalachia Institute, and the Virginia Department of Health have continued their partnership championing cervical cancer screenings in the region. A video-colposcopy program has already provided over 300 women with telemedicine connections to specialty care.
- In addition to cervical cancer screening UVA continues to be active in helping to reduce mortality from breast cancer by providing over 2,000 mammograms to women in Southwest Virginia over the last five years. UVA's mobile mammography van serves women in the most remote areas of the Coalfields who have extremely limited access to specialty care. The van began work in the region in 2015 and continued in FY2017. It is being used in a research initiative led by Dr. Jennifer Harvey to explore the impact of expedited review of mammograms in securing diagnostic follow-up. In 2017, 431 mobile mammogram patients were screened for breast cancer.
- In 2017, the UVA Cancer Center in partnership with the Center for Telehealth inaugurated the nation's first telehealth medicated lung cancer screening program. Using telemedicine technology and low dose spiral computerized tomography, patients with a high risk for lung cancer are screened and referred for further evaluation. This program was initiated in Stuart, Virginia and will be extended to Southwest Virginia in 2018.
- The UVA Health System, UVA Department of Urology and the Center for Telehealth created the first ever tele-cystoscopy program for the ongoing surveillance of bladder cancer which affects a disproportionate percentage of the population in Southwest Virginia. Partnering with the Health Wagon, this program has been awarded an American Cancer Society grant and continues to develop its outreach, screening and training capabilities.

As a result of innovative research, improved early detection, and effective therapies, the number of cancer survivors in the United States is constantly growing. The UVA Cancer Center continues to improve the lives of cancer survivors in the tobacco footprint by expanding access to high-quality healthcare. A *Survivor Network* is being created through partnership with the Healthy Appalachia Institute to collect information on survivors' needs, link individuals to

improved survivorship services and follow-up care, and develop new targeted support services through the use of Telemedicine. This network will improve survivorship, including access to follow up care, geriatric assessment, and prevention of recurrence for obesity-related cancers. Healthy Appalachia Institute will support these efforts in Planning Districts 1 and 2. Funding for the network comes from a three-year grant of \$560,710 awarded by the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission.

The UVA Karen S. Rheuban Center for Telehealth

Over the past 22 years, the University of Virginia in partnership with communities throughout Southwest Virginia has developed a robust telehealth network offering specialty clinical services that are otherwise unavailable. With support from the Tobacco Commission and the USDA, UVA updated aging technology at 11 sites to establish a secure, state-of-the-art, high definition network. In 2017 telemedicine specialty services included dermatology, mental health, neurology, infectious disease, AIDS/HIV, pediatric cardiology and child neurology. The center served 2,931 patients in 2017.

Other health accomplishments include:

- In 2017, the UVA Center for Telehealth received a large-scale Virginia Department of Health grant to extend telehealth-based opiate treatment training for primary care providers in the region.
- In 2017, Mountain States Health Alliance and the University of Virginia Health System signed an agreement for board-certified stroke neurologists at UVA to provide immediate response for suspected strokes in the emergency department at Norton Community Hospital. The program saw 45 patients over the past year offering life-sparing medication for early onset ischemic strokes.
- UVA's Faculty and Employee Assistance Program (FEAP) in partnership with the UVA Center for Telehealth and the College at Wise, continues to provide telehealth-based education and support services in workplace settings. UVA-Wise contracts with FEAP to provide employees and their families access to individual and group encounters. In 2017 services were provided through 119 workplace-based telehealth sessions.

- Since 2008 the University of Virginia’s Diabetes Tele-Education Program has served more than 3,000 participants at over 100 sites across the state. The program offers a series of four classes: *Basics of Diabetes and Medications*, *Nutrition Basics*, *Eat Smart - Change Your Lifestyle*, and *Glucose Control, Activity, and Stress* through a videoconferencing platform. UVA-Wise, through the Healthy Appalachia Institute, offered this program for employees at the Winston Ely Health and Wellness Center. Collaboration among HAI, UVA Diabetes, UVA-Wise, and the Winston Ely Health and Wellness Center continues in 2017 through a telemedicine diabetes prevention program. In 2017 more than 350 residents of Southwest Virginia received Diabetes Tele-Education Program services.
- With initial support from the Tobacco Commission and the UVA Department of Ophthalmology, UVA Health System and the Center for Telehealth has launched an innovative diabetic retinopathy screening program. UVA has developed partnerships with nurses throughout Southwest Virginia to acquire and send retinal images that are rapidly evaluated by UVA Ophthalmology fellows in an effort to obtain earlier diagnosis and prescribe sight-sparing treatment. In 2017, UVA screened 727 patients.

Healthy Appalachia Institute

- Since 2006, the **Healthy Appalachia Institute Fellows Program** has mentored 39 students who have a strong interest in solving health care challenges in the region. Many of the students are now in graduate school, medical school, graduate nursing education, or are practicing health care professionals.
 - Jazlyn Adams, Public Health Practice Fellow for the 2016-2017 Academic Year, supported the *UVA Cancer Center Without Walls: Survivor Network*; provided program support for Weight Loss at Wise; developed a proposal for a Public Health minor at UVA-Wise; supported the Mid-Atlantic Telehealth Resource Center Annual Conference poster presentations; and contributed to the development and submission of a successful oral health education grant proposal to United Way of Southwest



*Public Health Practice Fellow
Jazlyn Adams*

Virginia. Jazlyn is a sophomore in the nursing program at UVA-Wise and plans to pursue a career as a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner.

- Conner Stanley, UVA-Wise alumnus, worked with HAI in spring of 2017 on a research project related to substance use disorders in the workplace and its impact on economic development and employment in Southwest Virginia. Conner is developing the ground work for continued research on this important topic and highlighting evidence based practices to decrease substance use and increase access to work place based screening and treatment programs.
- In collaboration with the UVA Center for Global Health, HAI has funded 10 UVA-Wise students to participate in global health research since 2010. Three students from UVA-Wise were selected as Healthy Appalachia Institute Global Health Scholars in 2017 and will travel with the UVA Center for Global Health in summer 2017.
- Bridgette McCarty, Logan Baker, and Rachel McGlone will join the *UVA Minority Health International Research Training (MHIRT) Program*. MHIRT offers short-term international research opportunities to undergraduate students from health disparity populations underrepresented in the sciences. This includes racial and ethnic minorities, individuals from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds and individuals from rural areas.



*Healthy Appalachia Institute Global Health Scholars
Bridgette McCarty, Logan Baker, and Rachel McGlone*

- Bridgette McCarty, a sophomore Biochemistry major from Castlewood, Virginia will travel to Limpopo, South Africa. She will work with students and faculty from the University of Virginia and the University of Venda to determine the

effectiveness of low-cost point of use water filtration technologies for water purification.

- Rachel McGlone, a junior Biology major from Ewing, Virginia will travel to Mbarara, Uganda. She will work with students and faculty from the University of Virginia and the Mbarara University of Science and Technology to evaluate how exposure to carbon monoxide, food preparation and dietary habits impact esophageal cancer outcomes.
- Logan Baker, a freshman Biochemistry major from Clintwood, Virginia will work in Charlottesville at the Ryan White Clinic as a Clinical Research Assistant. He will work on a smartphone app that supports people living with HIV. The app, called *Positive Links*, provides HIV education and management tools.
- UVA Master of Public Policy student Alyssa Smith supported HAI's tobacco cessation work through her thesis project "Quitting for Good: Policies to Reduce Adult Tobacco use in LENOWISCO and Cumberland Plateau Health Districts." She explored current policies and tobacco use in southwest Virginia and made policy recommendations to decreasing tobacco use in the region. Alyssa met with HAI and key regional partners in March 2017 to inform her research and project development.
- Offered in Spring 2015, 2016 and 2017, **Introduction to Public Health: Appalachian Perspectives** acquaints students with the field of public health, including historical development, foundational principles, and contemporary issues focusing on the challenges of rural public health and health disparities in central Appalachia. The course presents a broad overview of many factors which influence health including behavior, history, culture, geography, society, environment, and policy, and their relationship to disease, prevention, health promotion, and successful public health interventions. Students identified and examined health issues and associated risk factors specific to the college student population. Students proposed an intervention using current data, literature, and evidence-based best practices. HAI is expanding public health education at UVA-Wise through the development of a Public Health Minor curriculum.

- On May 23, 2017 325 participants attended the *Synthetic Narcotic and Opioid Abuse Prevention Seminar* at Mountain Empire Community College in Big Stone Gap, Virginia. The focus of the seminar was to inform and increase capacity of multi-sector participants to address regional challenges related to substance use disorder and opioid abuse. Presentations included state and regional updates, comprehensive harm reduction, drug courts, faith based programming and regional and local coalition success and projects. HAI partnered with the Wise County Sheriff's Office to host this event, with funding from County Health Rankings and Roadmaps and the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services. Chuck Slemp Commonwealth Attorney for Wise County and the City of Norton facilitated the event.
- The Healthy Appalachia Institute **Health Policy Fellows Program** engages community leaders and decision makers, offering evidence-based, health policy information in a non-partisan environment to inform policy, and programming, and support a culture of health in the rural communities of far Southwest Virginia. Multi-sector participation from town governments, education, law enforcement, outdoor recreation, and economic development highlights the importance health considerations in policy decisions. HAI Fellows participate in workshops, training, and site visits to Richmond. During the program, they develop policies and propose program interventions to create "Culture of Health" town models. HAI plans to seek funding for this program from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.
- As part of the DentaQuest Foundation's **Oral Health 2020** efforts, HAI provides public health expertise and project organization support for the development of the LENOWISCO Oral Health Landscape and Engagement Strategies. HAI will develop a project timeline, facilitate stakeholder meetings, analyze and compile data from the community oral health survey, facilitate the development of engagement strategies, gain community input and draft a priorities plan which will drive community-based efforts to improve oral health.
- HAI supported the successful grant application through United Way of Southwest Virginia for the LENOWISCO Oral Health Education Project, a year-long effort that will engage UVA-Wise Nursing students in oral health education efforts in local primary schools and early childhood education centers.

- HAI is currently working with Oral Health 2020 to explore the possibility of piloting a Dental Therapy program in Southwest Virginia.
- In partnership with Tennessee Institute of Public Health, HAI received a \$5,000 grant from the National Network of Public Health Institutes to develop a common definition of population health through stakeholder engagement. A key outcome will be a roadmap for the development of collaborative networks to improve population health in the region. The Community Mobilization Advisory Board will be charged with developing recommendations for establishing sustainable collaborations between key agencies for the improvement of population health in Southwest Virginia and Northeast Tennessee. Year two of this grant will focus on diabetes prevention in Southwest Virginia and Northeast Tennessee, linking communities to current resources and identifying gaps in programming, clinical and support services for diabetes prevention, treatment and management.
- In partnership with UVA-Wise faculty and staff, HAI designed and developed a UVA-Wise campus trail map. The campus trail system highlights the beauty of the campus and creates access to opportunities for increased physical activity and outdoor recreation. The campus map was featured in the UVA-Wise Fall 2016 Magazine. <https://www.uvawise.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/hiking-trails-map.pdf>
- In April 2017, the UVA-Wise Pre-Professional Club students visited Charlottesville and spent time with UVA faculty, staff and students. They visited the Karen S. Rheuban Center for Telehealth, School of Nursing, Center for Global Health, Darden School of Business, School of Medicine Admissions Office, and UVA Cancer Center. Students also toured Grounds and enjoyed the Tom Tom Founders Festival in downtown Charlottesville.

EDUCATION

- The Virginia College Advising Corps (VCAC) had a successful launch year with near-peer college advisers serving Central High School (Wise County) and Burton High School (Norton City). The advisers are recent UVA-Wise graduates. VCAC is a public service program based at UVA with the mission of increasing college access for low-income, underrepresented, and first generation students across the Commonwealth. At

Central High School, the college adviser held 472 one-on-one meetings with seniors, arranged for 25 students to go on campus tours, assisted 52 students to register for the SAT or ACT, helped students to submit 221 college applications and 70 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) forms. The college adviser at Burton High School held 367 one-on-one meetings with seniors, arranged for 15 students to go on campus tours, helped 32 students register for the SAT or ACT, and helped students submit 97 college applications and 39 FAFSA's. The program was very well received by schools, students and families and will continue in the next academic year.



Central High School (Wise County) college adviser Cassandra Blackwell with students

- Professor Frackson Mumba of UVA's Curry School of Education concluded a \$200,000 grant from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia to provide professional development in science for K-12 teachers in the Southwest Virginia Public Education Consortium (SVPEC). This partnership among UVA, Southwest Virginia Public School Education Consortium and 19 high-need school districts in Southwest Virginia focused on improving science teaching and learning in partner schools through a teacher professional development program on content, pedagogy, vertical teaming, technology integration, and science instructional leadership. Three technology integrated inquiry-based courses in life science, physical science, and earth science were offered to 75 middle-school teachers, with summer workshops and follow-up sessions during the school year. Outcomes included: increased teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge, improved instructional practice, and increased student achievement in science. UVA's Center for the Liberal Arts contributed planning, design, and matching support for this effort.
- DreamWakers, a national education nonprofit founded by two UVA alumnae and Virginia natives, uses free videoconference technology to connect classrooms to top career

professionals. Each virtual session, called a “flashchat,” lasts 45 minutes and is designed to shed light on the real world applicability of course lessons, while at the same time inspiring students to prepare for personal and professional opportunities.

- DreamWakers has served hundreds of 4th-12th grade public school students in Southwest Virginia. In 2017 DreamWakers connected Southwest Virginia classrooms with speakers employed by: the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. State Department, the White House, the National Academy of Sciences, and Intel.
- In January 2017 DreamWakers launched a partnership with the Virginia College Advising Corps (VCAC) entitled: "Virginia is for Job Lovers: Virtual Commonwealth Career Series." This series included 50 chats and was designed to enhance students' interests in various career options, as well as prepare them for their undergraduate college studies.
- In June 2017 a group of 26 gifted students from Graham Middle School in Bluefield, Virginia was invited to visit New York City by one of their DreamWakers' speakers, a VP of Digital Marketing at L'Oreal Paris. Working with teacher Valencia Angles, DreamWakers coordinated an overnight trip in which students took a bus from Southwest Virginia to New York City. In Manhattan, the students went on an exclusive tour of the L'Oréal Headquarters and met top executives who led students in career planning activities. The students also toured DreamWakers' Headquarters, participated in education gaming activities, and toured Central Park with members of the DreamWakers team.
- UVA, UVA-Wise, and the Southwest Virginia Public Education Consortium (comprised of 16 school systems) have worked together for a decade to improve knowledge of traditional American history on the part of the region's teachers and children, funded by a series of federal “**Teaching American History**” grants. We continue to seek new opportunities to sustain this work. The Curry School, the Center for the Liberal Arts, and the Miller Center submitted a pre-proposal inquiry to the Teaching Primary Sources program of the Library of Congress for program support and are currently collaborating on a grant proposal to offer professional development for history teachers in the region. The same entities, joined by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, are also applying to the United States Department of Education to support similar work.

- The Center for the Liberal Arts sponsored a visit to Abingdon, Virginia by the American Shakespeare Center (ASC) on June 3, 2017. Nineteen of the region's teachers received a full day of preparation for the center's performances in Wise which are scheduled for Fall 2017. Several of the teachers called it "the best professional development program they'd ever attended."
- A Virginia Space Grant Consortium-funded program will be conducted by UVA Astronomy Professor Edward Murphy in Abingdon, Virginia on August 12, 2017 to prepare 40 teachers for a total solar eclipse which will occur nine days later. Teachers received abundant classroom materials including protective goggles to distribute to their pupils.

- Kelsey Johnson, Assistant Professor of Astronomy at UVA, spoke to 400 sixth-graders at the inaugural "Girls Day in STEM-H" at UVA-Wise. Held in November, the event was organized by UVA-Wise faculty and staff to encourage young girls to consider careers in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and health.



Kelsey Johnson, Assistant Professor of Astronomy, University of Virginia

- *Dark Skies Bright Kids*, a science education program led by Kelsey Johnson through the UVA Astronomy Department, received a three-year grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation to run week-long summer astronomy programs targeting students in rural communities in Virginia. This year's program was held July 24-28, 2017 at UVA-Wise.
- The Central Virginia Writing Project, housed at the Curry School of Education, is one of over 200 sites of the National Writing Project, providing multi-disciplinary support for educators from early childhood through university level. This year the Central Virginia Writing Project engaged teachers from the region to serve as judges for the 2017 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, the nation's longest-running and most prestigious recognition program for creative teens in grades 7–12.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The **Blueprint for Entrepreneurial Growth and Economic Prosperity**, published in 2012, creates a roadmap for promoting entrepreneurial activity. The Blueprint was cited by Virginia's Rural Jobs Council as a model for the state and the APP, through Appalachian Ventures, is leading several initiatives. Opportunity SWVA, the entity formed to implement the Blueprint, inspires collective action, examines policies, fosters regional networks, builds on the region's assets, and seeks new investments. Opportunity SWVA was awarded a \$50,000 Appalachian Regional Commission grant in 2015 and a \$15,000 Building Entrepreneurial Economies Planning grant in 2016, enabling the initiative to pursue the following efforts in FY2017:

Expand the Opportunity SWVA Initiative

- Initially serving Virginia Planning Districts 1 and 2, Opportunity SWVA expanded efforts to include Planning Districts 3 and 4 in FY2017. Now serving the 19-county, 4-city region of Southwest Virginia, Opportunity SWVA consists of 33 members representing 25 small business and community development organizations.
- Opportunity SWVA launched a new and improved website, www.opportunitySWVA.org, which offers entrepreneurs and small business owners information and resources for starting and running a business in the region. The website includes Google Analytics capabilities to track unique visitors and monitor user requests for information.

Encourage Entrepreneurial Competitions

- Southwest Virginia has hosted 39 competitions aimed at increasing entrepreneurial activity and providing opportunities for new ventures and existing businesses. In FY2017 Opportunity SWVA developed an Entrepreneur Challenge Toolkit to encourage competition creation. The Town of St. Paul used the toolkit to launch the *StartUP St. Paul* business competition in April 2017. Additional communities have expressed interest in utilizing the toolkit to host competitions in 2018.



StartUP St. Paul first place winner Clinch Life Outfitters

Build Community Leadership Capacity

- *Rally SWVA*, a signature program of Opportunity SWVA, focuses on building community leadership capacity and reinforcing collaborative, entrepreneurial communities across the region. Launched in summer 2015, the program has continued working with emerging communities throughout FY2017. *Rally SWVA* worked with the towns of Chilhowie, Coeburn, Tazewell, Honaker, Lebanon, Narrows and St. Paul to strengthen leadership capacity through \$3,000 mini-grant projects.



Town of Coeburn completes Rally SWVA project

- *Rally SWVA* recently received additional funding from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development to continue the program, expanding to eight additional communities in the region. Many Opportunity SWVA programs, including *Rally SWVA*, are replicated throughout the Commonwealth.
- Opportunity SWVA hosted a second annual “Community Coaching Summit” in November 2016. The event highlighted the work of *Rally SWVA* and focused on ways to support and strengthen local communities as they build strategic partnerships, market and support local businesses, and explore funding opportunities. The event included 44 community development professionals from Southwest Virginia and the neighboring regions.
- Opportunity SWVA created 12 “Sixty Second Stories” to capture and share small business successes. In its initial phase a dozen minute-long profiles were created to highlight business owners of Haysi, Virginia who are working to transform their local economy.

Increase UVA-Wise Entrepreneurial Capacity

- UVA-Wise engaged the community, alumni, and current students in developing a program to enhance student entrepreneurship capacity. “Start-up Year” is a series of workshops and events to build entrepreneurial skills for students. Various events were held throughout the 2016-2017 academic year, concluding with the first annual UVA-Wise Innovation Day in March 2017.

- UVA-Wise Office of Economic Development launched Innovation Day to encourage students to start their own businesses and raise student awareness of entrepreneurial opportunities.

The day-long event allowed students to showcase their ideas and products and concluded with a pitch opportunity at the *G2K Game Competition*. At the conclusion of the competition, *G2K Games* awarded student startup *Reach More Marketing* \$6,000 to incubate their social media marketing idea.



McKenna Blevins and Tara Greear Win the G2K Game Competition for their Business, Reach More Marketing

- UVA-Wise held the Entrepreneurship Cup Concept Competition in Fall 2016. The competition awarded \$1,750 to students with business ideas. The winning concepts include: a hemp farm, a social media marketing company, and an alternative book purchasing system for colleges.
- In April 2017 UVA-Wise students from the Innovators INC student entrepreneurship club attended the Tom Tom Founders Festival in Charlottesville, Virginia. During the trip twelve students visited with representatives from UVA, HackCville, and the i.Lab.
- In November 2016, UVA-Wise received a \$15,000 Building Entrepreneurial Economies (BEE) Planning grant from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for *The Nest* concept. *The Nest*, “where ideas are hatched”, was proposed by the Innovators INC student entrepreneurship club to develop an off-campus,

collaborative idea incubation space. The planning grant helped UVA-Wise assess the need for entrepreneurial space in the community, identify potential locations, evaluate similar models, and develop an operations plan for the facility. The college submitted a BEE Implementation grant proposal in March 2017 to DHCD for implementation funds for The Nest and is currently awaiting award announcements.

- UVA-Wise was recently awarded \$3.5 million from the University of Virginia Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) to increase enrollment in targeted programs at the College and to create a robust culture of entrepreneurship and innovation in the region. The SIF grant proposal included funding to support an entrepreneurship boot camp and activities at The Nest.

PLACE-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



CLINCH RIVER VALLEY INITIATIVE

- The **Clinch River Valley Initiative** (CRVI) is a multi-partner effort to build local economies in Southwest Virginia by leveraging the natural assets of the Clinch River. <http://www.clinchriverva.com/>
- UVA's Institute for Environmental Negotiation (IEN) serves as convener, facilitator, recorder, administrator, researcher, fund-raiser, and advocate for the Clinch River Valley Initiative. Informal surveys indicate the institute's involvement has been highly valued by CRVI leadership and participants.
- Monthly CRVI Steering Committee phone meetings and quarterly in-person meetings (August and November 2016, February and May 2017) continued to guide the future direction of the initiative with this 25 member consensus-based Committee. Each of the five CRVI Action Groups meets regularly to plan and measure progress.

Five action groups continue to work to address key areas: Clinch River State Park; Access to the Clinch; Water Quality; Environmental Education; and Downtown Revitalization and Entrepreneurship. CRVI Action Group accomplishments include the following:

- **Clinch River State Park**

- The State Park Action Group, working with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), has made two offers for properties that would be part of the new state park; the owners are getting appraisals.

- **Access to the Clinch**

- Two new phased access points are being developed in Tazewell, one at Critterville Park and the second at Swinging Bridge.
- The Miller Yard Access Point in Scott County has been approved by the landowner. The Town of Dungannon officially holds the public easement.
- Grip Outdoors, a recently opened and locally owned outfitter, is the first business to locate in Cleveland in almost a decade.
- Construction began on a new boat launch at Artrip, about two miles upstream from Cleveland, on property to be transferred to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation Division of State Parks.

- **Water Quality**

- The 3rd Annual Youth Summit held on March 11, 2017 in Lebanon was attended by 6 teachers, 13 volunteers, and 56 students. Mini-grants were awarded to multiple high schools for conservation education projects.
- Robyn Goad joined the initiative in November 2016 as a new AmeriCorps VISTA member and worked on the Youth Summit for Spring 2017.
- CRVI received \$101,570 in grant funding from the U.S Forest Service. This grant opportunity, along with an additional \$103,000 in matched funds, provides funding for facilitation and coordination time with IEN, the Save Our Streams project, the Youth Summit, the Youth Symposium. The

funding began June 1, 2016 and will last two years.

○ **Environmental Education**

- The Phase 1 feasibility study has been completed for the ECO-Campus in St. Paul.
- CRVI's *Teach the Clinch* curriculum guide is available for download at <http://teachtheclinch.com/>. Intended for educators, the guide contains nearly 50 lesson plans, each tuned to the Virginia Science Standards of Learning that use habitats, species, and places within the Clinch Valley to introduce broader concepts to students.
- The 5th Annual Environmental Education Symposium was held on May 13, 2017. This year featured a new session on the *Teach the Clinch* curriculum guide.
- From 2016-2017, 170 groups and over 9,436 people visited Wetlands Estonsa in St. Paul, Virginia.
- The VA Outdoor Lovers Expo event took place on April 22, 2017 at Bisset Park in Radford, Virginia.

○ **Downtown Revitalization**

- Tazewell, Lebanon, Honaker, and Dante are continuing the *Hometowns of the Clinch* designation process.
- The Town of Lebanon submitted an application for a Community Development Block Grant in March 2017 and is awaiting the funding decision.
- *Taste of the Clinch*, a marketing strategy aimed at highlighting local restaurants and food in the Clinch River Valley, is in the final stages of development. Heart of Appalachia created a map of all the restaurants which was printed in January 2017 and distributed among the various

restaurants, communities, and visitor centers throughout the Clinch River Valley. The map was featured in the *Blue Ridge Outdoors* magazine in May 2017 and can be found online at <http://www.clinchriverva.dialogueanddesign.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Clinch-River-Map.jpg>.

Other highlights:

- The 3rd Annual Youth Summit was held on March 11, 2017 in Lebanon. Participants included six teachers, 13 volunteers, and 56 students. Mini-grants were awarded to multiple high schools for their conservation education projects.
- The SWVA region and CRVI were featured in *Road Runner Magazine* in an 11-page article [September/October 2016]. The magazine has a 22,000-member readership and the article resulted in increased inquiries for the Clinch River Valley region.

ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS AND RESEARCH

- The APP created a research center under the leadership of Suzanne Moomaw, a faculty member at UVA's School of Architecture. The center provides evidence-based research for Planning Districts 1 and 2 to guide community economic development strategy, inform priorities, assess impact, and create a compelling asset-based narrative that helps attract new jobs to the region. The center's goals are to:
 1. Serve as an academic anchor that will encourage APP scholarly research;
 2. Establish clear guidelines for working in Southwest Virginia with community partners;
 3. Encourage projects that deliver immediate impact and align with the principal goal of job creation.

The following are the center's accomplishments in FY2017:

- Associate Professor of Urban and Environmental Planning Suzanne Morse Moomaw received an Academic Engagement Grant for 2017-2018 to develop a multi-media curricular component for her class, *PLAN 3030 Neighborhoods, Communities, and*

Regions. The class explores the economic and social conditions facing Southwest Virginia through written and video resources as well as experiential learning opportunities for students to travel to the region. As part of the class students will develop a research project that addresses one of the three priority areas of the Appalachian Prosperity Project—health, education, and economic development.

- APP and UVA's Institute for Public History jointly sponsored a research fellow and an intern for an oral history project on the Town of Appalachia. They conducted interviews with 22 townspeople of Appalachia about the hometown heroes who strengthened their community. These interviews are now part of a local play project involving the Appalachia Cultural Arts Center in Appalachia. Plans for FY2018 include the continuing development of a community play. Grants are being sought for the play production.
- The APP actively seeks to create strong partnerships within the region. A concept paper drafted in 2016 for an Appalachian Community Studio proposed a partnership with the Community Design Research Center at the School of Architecture, the Appalachian Prosperity Project, and the Institute for Public History. The studio is intended to foster local partnerships, provide outreach to students and faculty, and help craft participatory design work in Virginia's Coalfield Counties. Funding for this concept is currently being pursued.

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