

2016-18 Executive Progress Report

Commonwealth of Virginia
Secretary of Education

Southern Virginia Higher Education Center

At A Glance

The mission of the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (SVHEC) is to advance Southern Virginia's economic potential through education, innovation, and collaboration.

Staffing 30 Salaried Employees, 0 Contracted Employees, 57.3 Authorized, and 19 Wage Employees.

Financials Budget FY 2017, \$8.65 million, 31.54% from the General Fund.

Trends

Legend

↑ Increase, ↓ Decrease, → Steady

Key Perf Areas

↑ Credentials Earned

↑ STEM-H Outreach to K-12 Students and Divisions

Productivity

↑ Direct operating costs

Legend

↑ Improving, ↓ Worsening, → Maintaining

For more information on administrative key, and productivity measures, go to www.vaperforms.virginia.gov

Background and History

Agency Background Statement

The Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (SVHEC) builds critical workforce capacity in rural Southern Virginia by providing affordable access to comprehensive post-secondary opportunities. For more than thirty years, the SVHEC has brokered unique academic and industry partnerships to leverage scarce resources in overcoming higher education access barriers in a historically underserved region. By filling these access gaps with education and training focused on preparing in-demand skilled workers, the SVHEC is building capacity that advances the region's economic potential.

By partnering with two and four-year colleges and universities, the SVHEC provides access to a comprehensive range of educational choices – from GED to PhD – for an annual unduplicated headcount of almost 1,300 individuals representing 11 counties and two cities. In addition, as employers increasingly have sought the agency's services to develop non-credit and customized workforce training, the SVHEC is now actively engaged in delivering training that leads to stackable, industry-approved credentials. The agency's statutory authority recently was amended to certify this development. In 2016, 313 students earned 401 industry-recognized credentials through SVHEC non-credit programs in welding, mechatronics, information technology, and work ready foundations. Job placement rates for these programs is approaching 90 percent.

Major Products and Services

The Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (SVHEC) builds workforce capacity by providing educational products and services in four distinct yet related categories:

Turnkey Operations For Degree-Granting Institutions: By providing turnkey operations for degree-granting institutions, the SVHEC makes it affordable for degree-granting partners to bring high demand degree and certificate programs like nursing, business administration, human services, criminal justice, education and counseling to Southern Virginia. The SVHEC provides educational spaces, technology, and equipment, as well as complete operational support services: custodial, security, and IT support. Partners have access to more than 100,000 square feet of technologically sophisticated educational space. Facilities include classrooms equipped with networked personal computers and digital audio-visual projection systems; labs featuring advanced machining and simulation technology; and an 80 seat tiered conference center equipped with dual high definition (HD) projection systems and digital audio-visual presentation capabilities. Facilities are continually being upgraded to meet the needs of degree-granting partners and their students. Upgrades slated for the 2018-20 Biennium include adding two video conference web classrooms compatible with next generation VCCS schools, upgrading the campus wireless system to support the latest student mobile devices, upgrading five

classroom projector/AV systems to wide format high definition, adding a new large format touch enabled computer classroom and purchasing new laptops for the student "day-loaner" laptop checkout program.

Non-Degree Technical Credentials: As the economy improves and workforce training needs expand, employers are increasingly seeking out the SVHEC to develop and deliver non-degree, credential-based technical training. The SVHEC has responded by developing a slate of third-party, industry-approved, credential-based programs in high-demand careers such as welding, mechatronics, information technology and work ready foundations. Training is offered on a compressed schedule, which allows employers to rapidly fill new jobs or upgrade existing ones. For program participants who may be out-of-work, the compressed schedule also means getting back into the workforce quickly. In addition, because training is developed around real-world, practice-based exercises, program completers are positioned to offer employers an immediate value-add. Because credentials are stackable and can be built up over time to increase job qualifications, they also serve as a sequenced career path. The advent of stackable credential programs is allowing the SVHEC to expand educational access, particularly for non-traditional students without the time or resources to pursue traditional two or four-year degrees. In the 2018-20 Biennium, the SVHEC will continue building the capacity of its non-degree programs. This includes developing articulation agreements with degree-granting partners. Allowing non-degree program participants to receive college credit for credentials earned in SVHEC non-degree programs is another example of how stackable credentials are expanding educational opportunities and access in Southern Virginia.

Research & Development Services: The SVHEC R&D Center for Advanced Manufacturing & Energy Efficiency (R&D Center) provides affordable, business-boosting research and development services to help regional industry and entrepreneurs succeed. R&D Center staff advise industries and entrepreneurs on technology adoption, provide short production runs and offer proof-of-concept services. The R&D Center also collaborates regularly with the Commonwealth's research universities on a variety of energy efficient construction materials projects. In the 2018-20 Biennium, the R&D Center will assist in the commercialization phase for a proof-of-concept project to develop and commercialize a recyclable wine barrel. If successful, the barrel will be manufactured in Southern Virginia with the SVHEC developing an apprenticeship/internship opportunity tied to one of the agency's non-degree programs. The R&D Center also will continue investigating solar and micro-grid opportunities in the new biennium.

Prekindergarten-12th (PreK-12) Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, and Healthcare (STEM-H) Outreach: Developing a healthy worker pipeline in STEM-H careers is vital to building workforce capacity in Southern Virginia. The agency recognizes this work begins early – in public schools. Therefore, the SVHEC invests significant resources to prime the worker pipeline by delivering hands-on activities that introduce PreK-12 students to STEM-H careers and build awareness about available jobs and training in Southern Virginia. In the 2018-20 Biennium, the agency anticipates increasing its STEM-H outreach significantly. The SVHEC Area Health Education Center will launch a campaign to recruit public school students and others into community college and university nursing programs in an effort to stem the regional nursing shortage. A project also is underway to facilitate regional expansion of high school career and technical programs and prime the pipeline to high-demand community college technical programs. Because the high price tag for career and technical programs makes them cost-prohibitive for individual rural school systems, the SVHEC plans to leverage its current resources with existing grant funds to build out lab facilities to serve students from three geographically connected public school systems. Under this plan, juniors and seniors from three counties will have dual enrollment access to high-demand community college technical programs at the centrally located SVHEC-based labs. By pooling the SVHEC's resources with those of the local community colleges and public school systems, rural students will have access to in-demand STEM-H careers in the Southern Virginia.

Customers

Customer Summary

The Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (SVHEC) serves the following key customers:

Prekindergarten-12th (PreK-12) Public School Systems (Local or Regional Government Organization & Student): The SVHEC helps build workforce capacity by growing the educational pipeline to post-secondary degree and training programs by providing hands-on outreach activities in science, math, engineering, technology, and healthcare (STEM-H) careers. The SVHEC works collaboratively with regional PreKindergarten-12th grade (PreK-12) school divisions, higher education partners, and foundations to grow interest in STEM-H careers by providing year-round outreach opportunities. The agency expects increased growth in its public school customer base on several fronts: (1) expanded access to high school dual enrollment labs on the SVHEC campus; (2) increased outreach through expanded regional events; and (3) increased outreach through the SVHEC Area Health Education Center.

Degree-Granting Institutions (Higher Education Institutions & Students): The SVHEC provides turnkey operations for degree-granting institutions, making it affordable for degree-granting partners to bring high demand degree and certificate programs like nursing, business administration, human services, criminal justice, education and counseling to Southern Virginia. For many students these programs provide an affordable and geographically accessible education option compared to residential higher education programs outside of the region. Recent degree program enrollment declines are attributed to (1) an improving economy and job situation; (2) the growing popularity of non-degree programs; and (3) the increasing practice of four-year partners to rely on online versus onsite education to serve off-campus sites. The agency, however, believes the situation is stabilizing and should remain stable in the coming biennium.

Adult Learners (Adult Workforce/GED): The SVHEC provides in-demand noncredit workforce training programs with opportunities for trainees to obtain third-party, industry recognized credentials. As the economy recovers and the regional job situation improves, the agency anticipates continued growth among this customer base. Enrollment among adult and non-traditional learner customers also is increasing as access to training assistance sources such as the New Economy Workforce Credential Grant Program increases.

Regional Industry & Entrepreneurs (Employer/Business Owner & Manufacturing): The SVHEC provides a range of services to help regional industry and entrepreneurs succeed and remain competitive: research and development, workforce consulting and assessment; and customized

non-degree training. The agency expects this customer base to expand in the next biennium.

Conference & Meeting Planners (Organization & Consumer): Regional organizations increasingly use the SVHEC's facilities, equipment, and services for local and regional events. The agency expects continued growth in this customer group in the next biennium.

Customer Table

Predefined Group	User Defined Group	Number Served Annually	Potential Number of Annual Customers	Projected Customer Trend
Higher Education Students	Students enrolled in post-secondary degree programs at the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center through the Center's accredited partners	1,200	1,200	Stable
Higher Education Institutions	Public and private two and four year colleges and universities, and higher education centers	8	10	Increase
Adult Workforce / GED Student	Individuals in SVHEC workforce training programs, Center of Nursing Excellence clinical and simulation training, Volunteer Literacy Program, and SVCC GED program	500	700	Increase
Local or Regional Government Authorities	Regional public school systems	22	24	Increase
Student	Prekindergarten-12th grade students to whom the SVHEC provides Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, and Health (STEM-H) outreach services to encourage pursuit of higher education	7,020	8,000	Increase
Employer/ Business Owner	Business and industry entities whose labor force receives training at the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center	15	25	Increase
Manufacturing	Industry organizations receiving applied research services through the Research & Development Center for Advanced Manufacturing & Energy Efficiency	27	30	Increase
Organization	External organizations using the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center facilities for conferences, meetings, and events	38	50	Increase
Consumer	Individuals attending conferences, meetings and events at the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center	2,715	3,000	Increase

Finance and Performance Management

Finance

Financial Summary

The Southern Virginia Higher Education Center's (SVHEC) facilities operations and diverse services are supported by both general fund and non-general fund dollars. General fund dollars support approximately 30 percent of operations for the SVHEC facilities and personnel who provide services to educational partners and their students, workforce services to local and regional employers, and applied research services to industry.

Nongeneral funds provide the remaining support needed for programs and services provided by the SVHEC for the region and the Commonwealth of Virginia. The nongeneral funds are nonrecurring and are made up of donations provided, fees paid by educational partners and tenants, grants awarded, and fee-based training and services. With the tremendous growth in programs and services being provided at the SVHEC, the demand on nongeneral funds continues to increase.

Fund Sources

Fund Code	Fund Name	FY 2017	FY 2018
0100	General Fund	\$2,727,339	\$3,051,075
0200	Special	\$5,919,441	\$6,300,336

Revenue Summary

The Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (SVHEC) relies on the non-general fund revenues obtained through grants from both state and

federal agencies, as well as private foundations. Other critical non-general fund sources are revenues earned through services provided such as training for industry workforce, facility usage fee, partner fees, and applied research services to industry. These revenues provide support for key personnel. Developing a skilled workforce and providing applied research services help in the economic growth necessary for the region and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Performance

Performance Highlights

Performance metrics for the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (SVHEC) demonstrate how the agency has adjusted and continues to adjust to the sea change currently churning higher education. Educators, legislators, employers and parents are rethinking the “college for all” mindset as college graduates collect degrees and debt but not jobs. Well-paying skilled jobs on the other hand are going unfilled in Southern Virginia. While high school graduates were being pushed into four-year degrees, the skilled worker pipeline dried up. On the verge of economic recovery and with skilled worker baby boomers aging out, employers are in the unenviable position of gearing up without a trained workforce. As a result, the agency has adjusted its program and service mix to reflect the changing environment.

While college degrees continue to be needed in Southern Virginia, demand clearly has shifted. Performance numbers bear this out. Degree program enrollments are down to 1,200 in 2016 from a high of over 4,000 in 2011. The agency recognizes this as a market adjustment and is working with two and four-year degree-granting partners to ensure the “right” programs – programs that lead to jobs in the region – continue being offered. The agency also is investigating how technology might be leveraged to increase access without increasing partner costs. Linking classrooms remotely across the region prevents the need to replicate programs in multiple locations and is a better educational option for SVHEC students than strictly online offerings. The agency believes degree program enrollments are stabilizing and does not anticipate further significant declines. It should be noted that lower degree program enrollment negatively impacts fees generated under the SVHEC’s partner cost share agreements. While the fees generated are minimal, approximately three percent of total revenues, any decrease in funding affects the SVHEC’s ability to maintain operational standards.

The numbers of credentials being produced by SVHEC demonstrates the agency’s response to employer demand for non-degree credential-based technical programs. In 2016, 401 credentials were produced in information technology, mechatronics, welding and work ready foundations programs. The agency expects to produce more credentials as the agency continues to build out these programs in response to employer need. Increasing access to financial support for non-degree programs such as the New Economy Workforce Credential Grant Program also is anticipated to drive enrollment. A positive, yet unanticipated consequence of credential attainment, is the tendency for non-degree students to continue their higher education pursuits into degree programs. As non-degree students become more confident in their ability to perform in the higher education setting and more proficient in their job positions, they increasingly are seeking additional post-secondary opportunities in degree programs. The local community colleges are making this easier by developing articulation agreements that give credit for credentials earned in non-degree SVHEC programs.

Building the skilled worker pipeline begins by developing an early interest in science, technology, engineering, math and health (STEM-H) careers. In 2016, the agency engaged 7,020 public school students from 22 different public school systems in high-demand STEM-H career activities and events. The agency will continue to expand public school outreach in the next biennium. By leveraging its current resources with existing grants, the agency will establish high school dual enrollment labs for high-demand but otherwise cost-prohibitive technical programs. The labs will serve juniors and seniors in three regional public school systems and feed the pipeline to sought-after community college technical programs.

As the region’s economy slowly recovers, the SVHEC R&D Center for Advanced Manufacturing & Energy Efficiency (R&D Center) provides affordable services to help regional industry and entrepreneurs grow and succeed. While the numbers of businesses assisted this year are down slightly (four percent) from the previous fiscal year, the numbers served still exceed the short term target of 20 for 6/30/2016. The R&D Center continues to forge new relationships with wholesale and retail businesses, manufacturers, materials producers, and equipment manufacturers. Many of these new relationships involve R&D Center consulting and prototyping services. The R&D Center also continues to build its relationship with Siemens AG especially through the SVHEC’s designation as a Siemens GO PLM Training Center. These relationships and the establishment of the SoVA Center of Manufacturing Excellence at the SVHEC have raised the R&D Center’s profile among industry partners. The agency expects to increase the number of business and industry entities served in the next fiscal year.

The SVHEC’s productivity measure reflects the most distinct impact that changes in the higher education environment are having on the agency. The ratio of direct operating costs to course enrollments – the cost of supporting a single enrollment – rose by 15 percent. This increase is the result of declining enrollment in degree programs at a ratio exceeding the reduced operating costs in FY 2016. Declining degree enrollment is associated most immediately with the recovering economy but also increasingly with the cultural shift away from a “college-for-all” mindset. As the economy improves and the number of available jobs increases, individuals leave or forego enrollment in degree programs to take jobs. Community colleges are disproportionately impacted by this counter-cyclical response to the economy. Because over 90 percent of degree program enrollments are through community college partners, degree enrollments at the SVHEC have taken a correspondingly disproportionate hit, a 21 percent annual decrease. The SVHEC operating costs to support those enrollments have decreased by nine percent. In the future, however, it is anticipated that the costs associated with delivering SVHEC technical programs (e.g. specialized equipment, materials and instructors) will experience higher increases relative to costs required to support traditional, lecture-based academic programs.

Selected Measures

Measure ID	Measure	Alternative Name	Estimated Trend
937.0001	Number of credentials conferred through workforce development programs offered by Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (SVHEC).	Credentials Earned	Improving
93719900.002.001	Number of Prekindergarten-12th grade (PreK-12) students participating in science, technology, engineering, math, and healthcare (STEM-H) enrichment opportunities offered by or in conjunction with the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (SVHEC).	STEM-H Outreach to K-12 Students and Divisions	Improving
937.0002	Number of businesses assisted by Southern Virginia Higher Education Center's (SVHEC) Research & Development Center for Advanced Manufacturing & Energy Efficiency (R&D CAMEE) through transfer of technology in the form of design, prototyping, production, and training services, and sharing of applied research results.	Business and Industry Support	Improving
M937SA12003	Ratio of Direct Operating Costs to Course Enrollments During the Fiscal year	Direct operating costs	Improving
93719900.001.001	Number of students enrolled in for-credit courses offered in Southern Virginia Higher Education Center-based post-secondary educational programs, including associate, bachelor, master, and doctoral level programs and career studies certificate programs.	For-credit enrollments	Improving

Key Risk Factors

The following risk factors pose the most significant threat to the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center's (SVHEC's) ability to accomplish its mission in the coming years:

TECHNICAL PROGRAM CHALLENGE: The SVHEC has responded to employer demand for technically skilled workers by developing and delivering a slate of non-degree, industry-approved, stackable credential programs. These programs are producing increasing numbers of in-demand credentials and putting Southern Virginians to work in well-paying jobs in the region. In spite of this success, however, maintaining these programs is proving to be a challenge. Unlike traditional, seat-based degree programs, technical programs require specialized and costly equipment, materials, lab spaces and instructors. Recruiting instructors that possess both technical experience and classroom competency is difficult. In addition, because technical programs do not facilitate large enrollments, the amount of revenue generated is limited. Raising fees to a breakeven amount would price most program applicants out of the market. While programs like the New Economy Workforce Grant Program are extremely helpful in reducing financial enrollment barriers for students, the challenge for the agency is finding a comprehensive way to sustain these in-demand yet high-cost technical programs. Overcoming this challenge is vital in order for the agency to meet the growing need for skilled workers in Southern Virginia.

PARTNER OFFERINGS: Like the SVHEC, the agency's degree-granting partners are adjusting to changes in the higher education environment. Both two and four-year educational partners are struggling to adjust to declining student enrollment and decreasing revenue. Rather than maintaining an onsite SVHEC presence, universities have responded by relying on online education to meet the needs of students in outlying areas. While cost-efficient, this modality is not ideal for most Southern Virginia students who often lack the hardware, software or high speed connectivity required to reliably access online programs. The agency's two community college partners have been the most impacted by declining enrollment. Each has experienced lay-offs and been forced to significantly reduce degree offerings. While students continue to have access to individual program courses at the SVHEC, students must travel to the main college sites to get the full complement of courses required to complete their programs. Both of these trends are reducing access to higher education in Southern Virginia.

PERSONNEL: The SVHEC's continued success is directly associated with maintaining the agency's unique and talented complement of staff. Because the agency is small, however, the talent bench is not deep. Combined with the fact that 70 percent of the SVHEC's key leadership is within five years of retirement, the agency is vulnerable to an approaching brain drain. With this in mind, the SVHEC Strategic Plan (2018-20) includes an objective to develop a leadership succession plan by July 2019. Another personnel related vulnerability relates to the significant percentage (50 percent) of full-time positions that continue to be compensated through non-general funding – grants and other funding that is non-recurring and will expire in the next several years. The uncertainty of funding to compensate these full-time employees puts the SVHEC at additional risk of losing essential human capital. These are the individuals that drive the agency's mission-critical programs and services.

Agency Statistics

Statistics Summary

The statistics below show the magnitude of Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (SVHEC) operations and investments supporting education and workforce training activities during FY 2017.

Statistics Table

Description	Value
Number of educational partners	12
Number of degree & certificate programs offered	100
Number of classroom seats	726
Number of Windows O/S student computers (PCs)	77
Number of dual-booting Mac student computers	52
Number of servers supporting SVHEC and partners	41
Number of video conferencing units available	10
Number of classrooms equipped with audiovisual capabilities	29
Number of Operations "Help" requests handled	1,431
Number of Information Technology (IT) "Help" requests handled	829
Number of meeting spaces seating for 50+ persons, wireless & audio visual equipped	2
Number of grant-funded projects currently underway	0

Management Discussion

General Information About Ongoing Status of Agency

The Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (SVHEC) will continue growing its short-term, non-degree, credential-based technical training programs in order to build Southern Virginia's workforce capacity. One of the agency's most important initiatives involves credential-based training to support manufacturing, Southern Virginia's third largest employment sector. Because many manufacturing jobs are at risk to automation, the agency is focused on training that provides what is predicted to be the skills mainstay of automation and robotics-based production and distribution – Mechatronics. Since 2015 the agency has partnered with Siemens AG to offer the Siemens Mechatronics System Certification Program (SMSCP) in South Boston. The central theme of SMSCP is the System Approach, a special set of teaching and learning methods developed over 25 years in Siemens technical schools in Germany. SVHEC instructors traveled to Berlin in 2016 to learn the System Approach and become certified to teach Mechatronics Level 1 and 2. Siemens also tapped the SVHEC to develop a condensed, non-degree version of its Level 3 Mechatronics Credential, setting the SVHEC up to become the only location in the world where non-degree Level 3 Mechatronics training will be offered. Level 3 training is most closely aligned with academic-level engineering courses and provides the skills to design and build mechatronics systems. SVHEC instructors are now developing the Level 3 curriculum and will travel to Siemens Academie Technik in July 2017 to receive Level 3 instructor certification. A Summer Siemens Experience is also under development with Virginia State University (VSU). Students in VSU's engineering technology program are slated to put classroom theories into practice at the SVHEC's Mechatronics' labs while earning Level 1 and 2 SMSCP, and eventually Level 3, credentials. Siemens executives will be onsite in September 2017 when the SVHEC officially launches the Mechatronics Program with regional manufacturers and distributors. Because there is increasing international demand for non-degree Level 3 Mechatronics training, the agency has engaged a consultant to determine the requirements for accepting nonimmigrant M-1 Visa students.

Another important initiative involves building workforce capacity by growing the science, technology, engineering, math and health (STEM-H) worker pipeline. Over the next biennium, the SVHEC will collaborate with two local community colleges and three geographically connected public school systems to increase access to in-demand technical career and technical training. By leveraging its current resources with existing grants, the agency will establish high school dual enrollment labs at the SVHEC for high-demand but otherwise cost-prohibitive technical programs. The labs will serve juniors and seniors in three regional public school systems and feed the pipeline to sought-after community college technical programs. This initiative is consistent with the call to work regionally to leverage resources and advance potential.

Partnership 2.0 is an initiative to address the degree access gap created as a result of declining degree program enrollment and decreasing revenues. Identified as an objective in the SVHEC Strategic Plan (2018-20), Partnership 2.0 will bring together the SVHEC and its founding partners, Danville Community College, Southside Virginia Community College, and Longwood University, for a partnership "reset." The purpose of the initiative is to revisit the original reasons for the partnership, determine if and how this has changed, determine what degree programs are needed (e.g. lead to jobs in the region), identify gaps and challenges to offering these programs, and determine how resources can be leveraged to overcome the gaps and challenges. Much has changed since the original partnership was forged in 1986, but educational access remains a priority.

Information Technology

The Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (SVHEC) strives to provide current, reliable, and sustainable technologies in a timely manner to meet the needs of students, faculty, partner institutions, and staff. The SVHEC's network operation center (NOC) utilizes a virtualized server environment supporting local and cloud services, campus wide wireless local area network (LAN) and a Single Gateway "BYOD" (Bring Your Own Device) Wireless Network Controller, single authorization network, and a virtualized desktop environment [also wide area network (WAN) accessible] supporting over 275 student computers in 11 computer classrooms and two 12-unit mobile laptop labs. The mobile lab laptops are available for check-out by students for daily use through the SVHEC campus. Campus facilities includes 27 classrooms equipped digital audio-visual (AV) projection systems, and an 80 seat tiered conference center with dual high definition (HD) projection systems and digital audio-visual presentation

technology. The SVHEC's Innovation Center has a Mac-based Adobe Suite Digital Technology & Design computer lab and a Dell workstation windows-based Computer Aided Drawing (CAD) labs each housing 20 computers, three dimensional (3D) printers, a reverse engineering robotic arm, and CAD/Computer Aided Machining (CAM) workstations running Siemens' GO PLM and Tecnomatix software.

Through interagency collaboration, the SVHEC's educational partners are able to deliver distance education using our 100 Megabyte Internet gateway providing multiple distance education classes simultaneously from educational partners including Danville Community College, Longwood University, Old Dominion University, Southside Virginia Community College, University of Virginia, Virginia Tech; and collaborative partners including the Southern Virginia Regional Technology Consortium (SVRTC) (Prekindergarten-12th grade regional consortium) and Lake Country Distance Education Center. The SVHEC also serves as a distance learning site for Old Dominion University.

Workforce Development

The Southern Virginia Higher Education Center workforce is susceptible to future brain drain associated with top leaders approaching retirement and the difficulty of replacing highly-skilled workers should they choose to relocate or leave. Succession planning and ongoing professional development are essential to mitigating these impacts. A recent agency reorganization continued streamlining and flattening the organization for efficiency and effectiveness. All full-time staff have now received project management training and are regularly called on to participate in cross-functional project teams.

Physical Plant

The Southern Virginia Higher Education Center (SVHEC) is housed in two facilities totaling 116,000 square feet. These buildings are former tobacco processing facilities that were renovated using historical tax credits and grant funds, including grants from the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission.

In the current appropriation act, general capital maintenance is funded through Central Maintenance Reserve. Chapters 759 and 769 (2016) provide Virginia College Building Authority construction funds to replace the roof and address other HVAC system needs. Because the SVHEC's facilities were originally built in the 1800s, with one building renovated in 2001 and one in 2010, access to facility maintenance and replacement funds is critical to maintaining the buildings' mechanical and physical infrastructure.
