

# 2014-16 Executive Progress Report

Commonwealth of Virginia  
Secretary of Education

## Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center

### At A Glance

The mission of the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center (SWVHEC) is to strengthen the regional economy of southwest Virginia by preparing its citizens for jobs of the 21st Century.

**Staffing** 22 Salaried Employees, 0 Contracted Employees, 36 Authorized, and 17 Wage Employees.

**Financials** Budget FY 2015, \$9.22 million, 20.74% from the General Fund.

**Trends**

↑ Organizations Holding Meetings	<b>Key Perf Areas</b>	↑ Early Stage Clean Energy Companies
↑ Clean Energy Companies		↑ Organizations Scheduling Events
↑ Undergraduate, Graduate & Certificate Programs		↑ Programs and Activities

**Legend** ↑ Increase, ↓ Decrease, → Steady

**Productivity Legend** ↑ Improving, ↓ Worsening, → Maintaining

For more information on administrative key, and productivity measures, go to [www.vaperforms.virginia.gov](http://www.vaperforms.virginia.gov)

## Background and History

### Agency Background Statement

The Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center was established by the General Assembly in 1992 to provide undergraduate and graduate degrees, professional development, and economic development opportunities to meet the workforce needs across the region. Through its partnership with ten colleges and universities, the Center develops degree and training programs that address career shortages, skills enhancement, and other job related challenges. As the first multi-institutional off campus center in the Commonwealth, the SW VA Higher Education Center has served as a model for future centers of Higher Education throughout the Commonwealth and in other states.

Location-bound, working adults are the primary participants in degree programs at the SW VA Higher Education Center. Since opening its doors in 1998, more than 2000 students have earned a Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctoral degree from one of the ten academic partner schools at the Center. These graduates contribute to the Commonwealth's goal of increasing degree attainment by 100,000 over the next 15 years.

The SW VA Higher Education Center is located in a 100,000 square-foot facility in Abingdon, VA. The Center is fully equipped and staffed to support and exceed the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation requirements for off campus programs. Today, 75% of the degree courses are taught via distance education. To accommodate the needs of adult students, the majority of courses are offered in the evening and on weekends. During the day, business and professional organizations hold meetings, conferences and trade shows in the Center's complex.

### Major Products and Services

Our products and services fall under three headings:

#### EDUCATION AND PROCTORED TESTING

Provide Baccalaureate, Master's and Doctorate Degrees and certificates from 10 top universities and colleges located in the Commonwealth. Offer noncredit Professional Development courses in multiple areas. Provide a proctored testing center for licensure, certification, and admissions exams.

#### CONFERENCE SERVICES

Provide Conference, Meeting, and Special Events space and support services to accommodate small, medium, and large gatherings ranging from 5

participants to 5,000. Facility is equipped with high speed, broadband internet, WiFi, videoconferencing, computers, professional lighting, and amplification.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Through the Center's Clean Energy Research and Development program, early stage energy companies are recruited to southwest Virginia. The Center provides professional assistance, financial management, and marketing service to these companies. Six companies have moved to the region as a result of the Center's efforts and support. Each has contributed new jobs and tax revenues in SW VA. In 2014, the Center opened a 16,000 SF Energy R&D facility to house additional companies.

## Customers

### Customer Summary

Higher education for adults is critical for workforce development, recruitment and retention. Employers and employees alike recognize that education is necessary in order to compete successfully in the global marketplace. Companies tend to locate near university communities in order to gain access to university research, faculty and students. Localities reap the economic benefits of an educated workforce. The Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center is preparing adults for top jobs in the 21st Century. Through non-traditional degree programs, the Center and its 10 college partners assist the Commonwealth to meet the goal of 100,000 new graduates over the next 15 years. At the heart of this endeavor is the Center's reliance on technology to reach location bound students. Broadband deployment across Southwest and Southside Virginia has made higher education more accessible to adult populations that have been grossly underserved in the past.

Technology, and particularly online courses, has enhanced educational opportunities for underserved populations. However, the net effect has been a decline in the number of students who actually attend classes at the Center. Many of them opt to enroll in online degree programs. Unfortunately, the Center does not have a tracking method to monitor their progress, or lend vital support services such as career counseling. As a result, online students are more inclined to drop out before completing their degree requirements. To help adult students achieve success, the Center promotes the use of "hybrid" instructional models that combine on-site classes and career advising with online components that can be completed at home.

### Customer Table

Predefined Group	User Defined Group	Number Served Annually	Potential Number of Annual Customers	Projected Customer Trend
Consumer	Conference, meeting, trade show, etc. attendees	56,575	59,403	Increase
Consumer	Organizations that use the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center for meetings, conferences, tra	221	232	Increase
Employer/ Business Owner	Clean Energy Companies recruited to Southwest Virginia	6	10	Increase
Student	Colleges and universities that offer courses at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center	10	15	Increase
Student	Degree programs, credit certificate programs	123	130	Increase

## Finance and Performance Management

## Finance

### Financial Summary

Revenue for the SWVHEC comes from multiple sources, with the largest percentage being funded by General Fund appropriations from the State. The Center generates non-general fund revenue from other grants; enrichment classes; room rental fees from conferences, trade shows, meetings and special events; fees paid by the partner higher education institutions; and fees paid by participants enrolled in the College for Older Adults. The Center also receives Restricted State Revenue from the Equipment Trust and Maintenance Reserve. Likewise, the Center generates fees for management services on all grant projects.

### Fund Sources

Fund Code	Fund Name	FY 2015	FY 2016
0100	General Fund	\$2,012,323	\$1,911,867
0200	Special	\$7,306,556	\$1,000,000
0900	Dedicated Special Revenue	\$0	\$0

### Revenue Summary

The Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center receives both general fund and non-general fund appropriations. The Center's FY16 General Fund appropriation is \$2,012,483. Non-general fund appropriation for FY16 is \$1,000,000. These funds are for non-general fund revenue generated from grants; room rental fees for conferences, trade shows, meetings and special events; fees paid by the partner higher education

institutions; and fees paid by participants enrolled in the College for Older Adults.

## Performance

### Performance Highlights

The Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center evaluates the effectiveness and quality of its services through the following performance measures:

Number of Baccalaureate, Masters, and Doctoral and credit certificate programs provided to prepare graduates for top jobs of the 21st Century

Number of organizations that use the center for meetings, conferences, special events and economic development activities

Number of clean energy businesses established by the SWVHEC

The Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center's primary mission is to strengthen the economy of southwest Virginia. The Center's focus is to contribute to the success of regional businesses, government agencies, schools and professional organizations by preparing the workforce for knowledge-based jobs of the 21st Century; providing a technology-enabled facility for professional development and other events; and in partnership with the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission, establishing clean energy companies throughout the region.

Since the opening of the Center in 1998, over 2000 students have earned undergraduate and graduate degrees through programs offered by twelve colleges and universities. Most classes are scheduled in the late afternoon and evening and on weekends to accommodate the needs of working adults. Contributing to the Center's success is its innovative use of state-of-the-art technology.

### Selected Measures

Measure ID	Measure	Alternative Name	Estimated Trend
M948SA12003	Number of early stage clean energy companies established and/or expanded through the Higher Education Center Research & Development program	Early Stage Clean Energy Companies	Improving
94819900.002.001	Number of organizations that schedule workforce training, professional development, and related conferences, meetings and special events at the Higher Education Center.	Organizations Scheduling Events	Improving
M948SA12004	Number of registrations in credit, noncredit, and workforce training/professional development classes.	Registrations Credit, Noncredit and Workforce Development	Improving
948.0001	Number of undergraduate & graduate degree programs, certificate programs, and professional development activities available through the Higher Education Center.	Programs and Activities	Improving
948.0003	Number of professional licensure, certification, screening, and admissions exams administered in the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center proctored testing center.	Exams Administered	Improving
948.0002	Number of marketing initiatives (i.e., face-to-face meetings, press releases, print materials, social media posts, YouTube videos, commercial media advertisements, magazine features, information sessions) to support agency goals to increase non-general revenue and enrollment in degree programs.	Marketing Initiatives	Improving

## Key Risk Factors

The Southwest Region is geographically removed from the more densely populated areas of the state where most colleges are located. The Higher Education Center provides a cost effective means by which citizens of the region can advance their career opportunities. With over 118 undergraduate and graduate degree programs, and credit certificates available through 10 top ranked colleges and universities in the Commonwealth, location bound adults are able to excel beyond entry level jobs to ones with greater responsibility and higher pay.

The Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center does not confer degrees or employ academic faculty. Rather, the Center provides space, technology and equipment for top colleges and universities to offer classes. Students graduate with degrees conferred from these partner institutions. Because degree majors are aligned with employer needs, the outcomes are significant: graduates have employment opportunities in the region; employers have access to a talent pool of qualified professionals; and economic developers can recruit new companies.

Currently, the increased availability of on line courses presents a challenge for the Center. Students register online and access instruction from an offsite computer. Most do not talk with on-site college representatives about career pathways, financial aid, and academic support service.

Without these critical support services, many drop out before completing a degree. As a result, class attendance, retention rates, and the number

of graduates are declining at the Center. Prior to this trend in online degree programs, 95% of all students who enrolled in degree programs at the Center graduated.

## Agency Statistics

### Statistics Summary

Key performance factors for the Southwest Virginia Higher Education center are measured through the number of degree and professional development programs available through the center; the number of proctored tests administered; the number of agencies that book meetings and events in our building; the number of educational partners offering courses through the center; and the number of new businesses recruited to our area through the Clean Energy Research and Development Center.

### Statistics Table

Description	Value
Number of Full Time Employees	22
Number of Wage Employees	17
Amount of Energy Savings	56,220

## Management Discussion

### General Information About Ongoing Status of Agency

General Information: The Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center will continue to partner with colleges and universities to provide degree and credit certificate programs for adult students to prepare them for top jobs of the 21st century. The SWVHEC will continue to enhance technology information systems to meet the diverse educational needs of people within Southwest Virginia. In 2014, the Higher Education Center Foundation opened its Clean Energy Research and Development facility. Funded by the Virginia Tobacco Commission, the new building will house early stage energy companies, laboratories, and business support services. The Clean Energy building will serve as a catalyst to bring new energy related businesses to the region of Southwest Virginia. As these businesses mature they will provide professional jobs in the field of energy and technology. Over time, this increase in jobs will provide revenue growth throughout the region and a larger tax base for the Commonwealth.

### Information Technology

Over 120 undergraduate, graduate, and credit certificate programs are provided at the Center by 10 colleges and universities. Greater than 75% of courses are delivered through various distance learning technologies. Primary methods of delivery are high-speed videoconferencing, online instruction, and in-class instruction. The Center's IT staff provides comprehensive support to all faculty and students. Since 1998, thousands of classes have been delivered via technology with minimal loss of interrupted instructional time.

Additionally, the center operates conference facilities which are used daily by business and industry, government organizations, professional associations, and educational customers. Many of these events have technology needs ranging from A/V and computer equipment to videoconferencing and/or webcasting of multi-day conferences. Numerous regional firms rely on the Center's videoconferencing capabilities to transact business with clients across the state or around the globe. From legal depositions to international economic development, the Center has quickly become the "high-tech mecca" of southwest Virginia. To continue providing exceptional service to our partner institutions and professional clients requires sequential equipment and software upgrades coupled with a well-trained I.T. staff. Like hardware and software upgrades, our staff needs continuous training to stay abreast of technology innovations.

### Workforce Development

The primary mission of the Center is to produce an educated and professionally trained workforce to meet the employment needs of regional businesses, government entities, and nonprofit organizations. Focusing on career driven Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degrees, graduates can expand their job opportunities beyond entry level, lower paying positions to those with increased responsibility and income. Companies that plan to expand or relocate in Southwest Virginia rely on the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center and its academic partners to provide advanced education, training, and research options within close proximity of their location. The Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center, through its ten college and university partners, can easily accommodate their unique needs.

Internships and apprenticeships have proven to be successful strategies for matching students with potential employers. As students transition from college to work, on-the-job learning experiences provide opportunities for employers to evaluate a student's potential prior to permanent employment.

In 2010 the Center applied for and received competitive grant funding to support 25 paid intern positions. These internships were open to both students and faculty. Those who were selected were matched with companies based on their major or faculty expertise, and the company's requisite requirements. Interns worked 200 hours. To date, all of the student interns have graduated and are employed. College faculty interns have used their "real world" experiences to enhance their instruction. In order to continue this highly successful program, the Center requested General Funds in FY 2014 to support additional students and faculty.

### Physical Plant

The Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center is now 17 years old and will continue to need updates and renovations to maintain its current level of exceptional service in the region. The roof is showing signs of wear and leaking in certain locations. Short term repairs are becoming more frequent and complex. For example, the aging cooling tower regularly requires new component parts which are difficult to find. Within the next few years, it will eventually need to be replaced. Planning funds have been requested to evaluate and design critically needed equipment storage space and connecting service corridors between classrooms and public meeting areas. As additional programs in healthcare are brought to the Center, new space for simulation labs, science labs, and faculty offices are also essential.

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