

2022 VIRGINIA EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE CONFERENCE

*POSITIONING VIRGINIA'S WORKFORCE FOR SUCCESS:
CONNECTING LEARNING TO EARNING*

OCTOBER 11, 2022 | 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM
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Dr. Jennifer Gentry, The Virginia Foundation for Community College Education
Rebecca Watts, Western Governors University

2022 VIRGINIA WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Speaker Biographies



Barry DuVal **President & CEO** **Virginia Chamber of Commerce**

Barry DuVal was named president and CEO of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce on April 28, 2010.

Under his leadership, the Chamber has become Virginia's largest business advocacy group, growing from 847 members in 2010 to more than 26,000 members today. In 2013, the Chamber produced Blueprint Virginia – the Commonwealth's first comprehensive business-led initiative to provide direction and long-term economic development planning for Virginia. In 2017, the Chamber released an update to the original Blueprint, Blueprint Virginia 2025, which engaged over 6,000 business and community leaders from around the Commonwealth to build an action plan for strengthening Virginia's economic competitiveness and getting Virginia back to the top of business climate rankings.

Barry's public service began in 1988 when he was elected to the Newport News City Council. In 1990 he was elected mayor of the city. He served as mayor from 1990 through 1996, when he stepped down to become the president and CEO of a regional economic development organization representing Southeast Virginia's 1.6 million citizens.

From 1998 through 2002 Barry served as the Secretary of Commerce and Trade for the Commonwealth of Virginia. During his term as Secretary, Virginia attracted a record-setting 1,500 economic development projects representing 156,850 new jobs and \$13.7 billion in private investment.

His private sector experience includes serving as president and CEO of DuVal Associates, Inc, a diversified real estate firm, from 1983-1996. Upon the completion of his term as the Secretary of Commerce and Trade, he served as president and CEO of Kaufman & Canoles Consulting, LLC, an economic development consulting firm specializing in public-private partnerships and strategic planning for business and government agencies.

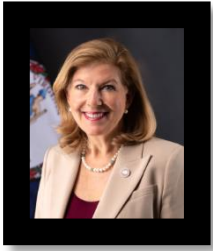
Barry holds a Master's (MLS) from American University Washington College of Law and a BS from James Madison University.



Fred Thompson **Chief Administrative Officer, Thompson Hospitality** **and Chair, Virginia Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors**

Fred Thompson is a business partner and Chief Administrative Officer at Thompson Hospitality. Fred received a B.A. degree in Classical Studies from Hampden Sydney College and a M.A. degree in Public Administration from University of Virginia.

In addition to his work at Thompson Hospitality, Fred is a member of the Global Good Fund Foundation, Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, Virginia Council on Economic Education and serves as a Deacon at First Baptist Church, Vienna, VA.



The Honorable Aimee Guidera

Virginia Secretary of Education

Aimee Rogstad Guidera is the former President and CEO of the Data Quality Campaign (DQC), a national, nonprofit organization leading the effort to empower educators, students, parents, and policymakers with the information they need to make the best decisions to improve student outcomes. Aimee believes that data have the power to transform education to ensure every child in this country is prepared for success in college and careers. Since it launched in 2005, the education and policy fields have come to rely on DQC's research and landscape analyses as the only source of information that captures the "state of the states" on effective data use—first with the 10 Essential

Elements of Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems, and then with the 10 State Actions to Ensure Effective Data Use. Aimee continues to advocate for better access to and use of data so that educators, parents, and policymakers will have the insights they need to inform better decisions to support student achievement. A respected thought leader in education, Aimee was named one of TIME's 12 Education Activists of 2012. She has also been cited as an expert on education policy and the value of education data by publications such as Business Week, NPR, and Education Week.

Aimee is a Pahara-Aspen Education Fellow and an alumna of the Institute for Educational Leadership's Education Policy Fellowship Program. She serves on the board of directors of the Institute for Educational Leadership and the Friends of the Hennepin County (Minnesota) Library. Before founding DQC, Aimee served as the director of the Washington, DC, office of the National Center for Educational Achievement. She previously served as vice president of programs for the National Alliance of Business (NAB), worked in the education division of the National Governors Association's Center for Best Practices, and taught for the Japanese Ministry of Education. Aimee received her bachelor's degree from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs and earned a master's degree in public policy from Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. Aimee and her husband, Bill, are the parents of two school-age daughters. She is an active supporter of her daughters' public schools and has served as a classroom volunteer, parent-teacher organization leader, and advisory committee member. Aimee believes that parents, students, and teachers need to be equally strong legs of the stool of academic success.



Peter Blake

Executive Director, State Council of Higher Education

Peter A. Blake joined the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) as executive director in 2011. A former Virginia secretary of education, Mr. Blake previously worked at SCHEV as an associate director overseeing higher education analyses in the areas of faculty and staff compensation, higher education funding policies, academic libraries, distance learning and instructional technology, and student financial aid. He left SCHEV in 1999 to serve as the legislative fiscal analyst for the Virginia General Assembly's House Appropriations Committee.

Before returning to SCHEV, Mr. Blake served as the vice chancellor of workforce development services for the Virginia Community College System, where he led policy and budget development. Mr. Blake was the deputy secretary of education from 2002 to 2005, and served as the secretary of education under Governor Mark Warner.

In addition to his professional experience, Mr. Blake has served on various advisory committees, including the boards of the Virginia Commonwealth University Alumni Association, the Richmond Public Library, the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, and the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities.

Mr. Blake completed the Virginia Executive Institute and LEAD Virginia programs, as well as the associate program through the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. He has a B.A. in history and an M.S. in communications management from Virginia Commonwealth University.



The Honorable George “Bryan” Slater Virginia Secretary of Labor

“Bryan” Slater brings more than 20 years of experience to the Youngkin Administration with a wealth of knowledge and senior-level experience leading public, non-profit, and private sector organizations. Bryan received his associate’s degree from Ferrum College and his bachelor’s degree in Political Science from University of Richmond and immediately began his career in politics. He has taken on roles large and small from campaign work to serving in senior management, operations, transformation, and administration.

In Virginia, Bryan served as Secretary of Administration for Governor James Gilmore (R-VA) and as Director of Administration for the Attorney General’s Office under Attorney General James Gilmore. Most recently, Bryan served as Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management at the U.S. Department of Labor and Assistant Secretary of Administration for the U.S. Department of Transportation under President Trump. He was the White House Liaison at the U.S. Department of Labor under President George W. Bush, where he managed all non-career appointee hiring, and as a congressional relations officer for the Department of Housing and Urban Development under President George H.W. Bush.

Bryan has served in numerous senior positions in non-profit organizations including Americans United for Life, Freedom Partners Shared Services, and Generation Opportunity. He was also the former Executive Director of the Republican Party of Georgia. Bryan is a recipient of the 2007 Innovation in Government Award from the Virginia Commonwealth University Wilder School of Government, as well as previously serving on the Board of Visitors for Virginia Commonwealth University.



Makola Abdullah President, Virginia State University

Dr. Makola M. Abdullah began his VSU career in February 2016 with an unwavering dedication and commitment to excellence. As a new president, he outlined his core beliefs that became the foundation of his work for VSU: beliefs in God, family, the transformative nature of education, and in Virginia State University. With that foundation in mind, President Abdullah and his new administration began planning the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan: Preeminence with Purpose, to chart the University’s path to continued growth and excellence. His plan set forth the next chapter for VSU which focused on six areas: Student Opportunity and Access, Academic Excellence, The Holistic Experience

for Students, Enhancing the Land Grant Mission of the University, Advancing the VSU Brand and Financial/Operational Effectiveness. Under President Abdullah’s leadership and guidance, VSU experienced the single largest year-to-year increase in enrollment in more than a decade and the highest retention rate in more than twenty years. The University also increased the 4-year graduation rate to the highest recorded rate in the University’s history. Virginia State University also placed in ESSENCE magazine’s top 20 “Best Colleges for African Americans” and in U.S. News and World Report’s “Top 30 in the Best Overall HBCUs for 2022”. The University ranked in the top 30% in the “Performers on Social Mobility” list, Top 10 in Student Retention Programs at HBCUs, and top 15% of Bang-for-your-Buck institutions in the Southeast Region of the United States. The University has also extended its academic offerings with newly added undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees. In addition, the University offers fully online programs/degrees and a free tuition program for students from area high schools.

Under Dr. Abdullah’s guidance, Virginia State University’s year-end financial reserves have more than tripled. The University also received a \$30 million gift—the largest single donor gift in the University’s history—aiding the university in growing the investments from approximately \$40 million to \$80 million. In addition, under Dr. Abdullah, VSU has more new infrastructure happening concurrently than at any point in its 140-year history. This includes a new 30,000-square-foot admissions building, a research and cooperative extension facility, improvements to Rogers Stadium, and a new \$120 million Alfred W. Harris Academic Commons—the largest building ever constructed on the VSU campus. In 2021, VSU also renamed four buildings to honor Black women who have made significant contributions to the University. Under the leadership of President Abdullah, in 2018, Virginia State University successfully completed its reaffirmation of accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The University was reaffirmed for 10 years with no recommendations. The President has led the launch of several major initiatives since taking office. These include the establishment of the John Mercer Langston Institute for African American Political Leadership to assess, develop and empower African American leaders; the establishment of The Center for Policing Leadership and Social Justice to address the critical divide between law enforcement and communities of color; and the establishment of the Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging on campus to promote good relations toward and support those who may be subject to discrimination.



Ed Dalrymple

President, Chemung Contracting Corporation

Ed Dalrymple, Jr. serves as president of Dalrymple Holding Corporation, Chemung Contracting Corporation, and Cedar Mountain Stone Corporation.

He serves on a variety of boards regarding Virginia transportation issues including research, quality, and training. He is past president and current board member of the Virginia Asphalt Association, past president and current board member of Old Dominion Contractors Association, past Chair and current board member of the Virginia

Community College System State Board, past Chair and current board member of Go Virginia Region 9, a council member of the Virginia State Transportation Innovation Council, current board member of Virginia Chamber, Virginia Foundation for Community College Education, Career Partners, Germanna Community College Education Foundation, Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development, Culpeper Wellness Foundation, New Pathways Tech, Inc. and Culpeper Air Fest Foundation.

Ed received a bachelor's degree in Construction Technology from Louisiana Polytechnical Institute of Technology and an associate's degree in Civil Technology from Broome Technical Community College in Binghamton, New York.

He is married to Cathy Dalrymple, has 4 children and 5 grandchildren.



Dr. Sharon Morrissey

Interim Chancellor, Virginia Community College System

Dr. Sharon Morrissey was appointed as Interim Chancellor for the Virginia Community College System on July 1, 2022. As the chief executive officer of the System, she reports to a fifteen-member Board and provides leadership for Virginia's twenty-three community colleges in meeting the System's mission of providing all Virginians with the opportunity to learn and develop the right skills so that lives and communities are strengthened.

Dr. Morrissey came to the Virginia Community College System in 2014. For the past several years, she served as Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Workforce Programs, where she was responsible for state-level coordination of workforce education and college transfer programs, instructional and student support services, research and reporting, federal program administration, and related policy development for Virginia's 23 community colleges. Dr. Morrissey led initiatives to increase student success outcomes across the VCCS, including transfer program realignment to support mapped pathways; direct enrollment with co-requisite learning supports; stackable workforce credentials; credit for prior learning; dual enrollment redesign; and systemwide enterprise technology solutions to support student success. Dr. Morrissey co-chaired the VCCS strategic planning task force, which developed Opportunity 2027, a six-year plan to achieve equity in access, learning, and success for students from every race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic group.

Prior to joining the VCCS, Dr. Morrissey had a 26-year higher education career in North Carolina, where she served as the Executive Vice President for Programs and Chief Academic Officer for the North Carolina Community College System. Dr. Morrissey also served as President of Richmond Community College, Vice President for Instruction at Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College, and Vice President for Academic and Student Services at Fayetteville Technical Community College. She began her community college career as an English instructor at Central Carolina Community College.

Dr. Morrissey serves on the boards of the Community College Research Center, the National Student Clearinghouse, and the Online Virginia Network. She is an adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Education Leadership, Policy & Human Development at North Carolina State University.



Katherine Rowe

President, William & Mary

On February 20, 2018, William & Mary's Board of Visitors unanimously elected Katherine A. Rowe as the 28th president of the university.

Under Rowe's leadership, William & Mary has advanced a whole-institution approach to learning. The cross-university initiatives she has cultivated include a central Entrepreneurship Hub, a Studio for Teaching & Learning Innovation, W&M's first Sustainability Plan and Climate Action Roadmap, realization of William & Mary's long-planned Memorial to the Enslaved, a Veteran to Executive Transition program, an Institute for Integrative Conservation, and a university-wide approach to diversity and inclusion. William & Mary successfully closed its For the Bold campaign in June 2020, raising just over \$1 billion.

As president, Rowe led William & Mary's effective COVID-19 response, joining forces with the City of Williamsburg and other key local partners to keep the Tidewater region as safe as possible. Following the disruption of the 2020 spring semester, Rowe stood up the Path Forward planning initiative to reconvene campus. In the 2020-21 academic year William & Mary continued in-person learning, uninterrupted – flexibly adapting every university practice and system to ensure that students could maintain momentum to their degrees. Key cross-institutional efforts were launched during the pandemic: leading to enhanced career development for students, a unified approach to Communications and Marketing, and a whole-university Council for Community Partnerships.

Rowe serves on the Northern Virginia Technology Council, the Virginia Business and Higher Education Council Board, RVA757 Connects, and the GoVA Region 5 Council. Rowe was named to the Virginia Business Virginia 500 Power List in 2020 and 2021. In 2020, *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* named Rowe one of the top 35 women in higher education.

Previously, Rowe served as provost and dean of faculty at Smith College in Massachusetts. During her tenure, Smith launched a design thinking curriculum, greatly increased diversity in faculty hiring and established one of the first statistical and data sciences majors at a liberal arts college (and the first at a women's college). Rowe also served as Smith's interim vice president for inclusion, diversity and equity. Earlier in her career, Rowe co-founded and served for several years as the CEO of Luminary Digital Media, which developed a series of educational apps enhancing student engagement and learning of classic Shakespearean texts.

An award-winning teacher, Rowe spent 16 years at Bryn Mawr College as an English professor, department chair and director of the Katharine Houghton Hepburn Center for leadership and public engagement. She began her teaching career as an assistant professor of English at Yale. Prior to arriving at William & Mary she held the Sophia Smith chair at Smith College.

Rowe has published three books: *New Wave Shakespeare on Screen* with Thomas Cartelli (Polity Press, 2007), *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion* as co-editor (Penn Press, 2004) and *Dead Hands: Fictions of Agency, Renaissance to Modern* (Stanford, 2000). She also has editing credits in the Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare. With more than 350 scholarly contributors from five continents, this world-standard, multi-volume, reference work was honored in 2016 by the American Association of Publishers with two PROSE awards, considered the most prestigious in the publishing industry. This international collaboration was also recognized in 2016 by the Library Journal for outstanding print reference work for the Cambridge Guide as well as the American Library Association's outstanding academic title.

Dr. Rowe is a past president of the Shakespeare Association of America. She served on Harvard's Board of Overseers' Visiting Committee of the Library and the Executive Committee of the American Council of Learned Societies. She has held various scholarly memberships as well as service positions in the Modern Language Association and the American Council of Learned Societies.

Rowe spent more than a decade coaching Ultimate Frisbee and has led multiple teams to state championships in Pennsylvania. She was a World Ultimate Club Finalist and a Women's Nationals Finalist. She co-founded the nonprofit Boston Ultimate Disc Alliance and the Carleton College women's Ultimate team. Rowe shares her love of Ultimate with her spouse, Bruce Jacobson, William & Mary's First Gentleman. They have two adult children, Daniel and Beah.



Chris West

Director of Government Relations, Kaiser Permanente

Christopher West has nearly a decade of experience advising senior level government and public officials and statewide candidates. Chris is currently Director of Government Relations for Kaiser Permanente. Kaiser Permanente is the largest private integrated health care delivery system in the United States, delivering health care to over 12 million members in eight states and the District of Columbia. In this role, Chris leads the development and execution of KPMAS' legislative agenda, maintains extensive current knowledge of key healthcare policy issues, maintains relationships with elected officials, and analyzes and reports out on key updates and legislation. Chris

works closely and collaboratively with leaders and subject matter experts throughout Kaiser Permanente's national Health Plan and Delivery

System. Additionally, Chris participates in public policy workgroups, industry associations and coalitions in which he represents KPMAS' legislative agenda. He is Vice-President of the District of Columbia Association of Health Plans Board of Directors, a member of the Virginia Association of Health Plans Board of Directors, and a member of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce Healthcare Executive Committee.

Prior to joining Kaiser Permanente, Chris was an Associate at Lamar Consulting, a full-service government affairs and public relations consulting firm representing a variety of clients before the General Assembly and state government. Chris worked with trade associations and businesses to develop and advocate for public policy in Virginia, representing clients on issues related to energy, healthcare, technology, manufacturing, economic development, taxation, and more. In addition to direct lobbying, he worked with clients to develop strategic communications priorities to leverage their needs with the media and the public.

Chris served as Director of Policy & Communications for Virginia House of Delegates Speaker William J. Howell. In that role, he served as the official spokesman and media liaison for the Speaker and the House Majority Caucus, developed internal and external messaging materials, helped develop legislative strategy and supported floor operations, and worked with stakeholders to build support for legislative initiatives in the General Assembly.

Before joining the Speaker's office, Chris served in several capacities with Congressman Robert Hurt from 2011 to 2015, who represented Virginia's Fifth Congressional District. Chris first served as a Field Representative, representing the Congressman in eight localities in Central and Southern Virginia. He then went on to serve as a Legislative Aide to Congressman Hurt in Washington, D.C., advising the Congressman on issues related to healthcare, education, veterans, and social issues.

Chris earned his bachelor's degree in History from Averett University in Danville, Virginia. Chris is also a graduate of the Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership at the University of Virginia. Chris currently serves as a member of the Board of Trustees for Averett University, a member of the Statewide Board for the Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership at the University of Virginia, and a member of the Vestry of St. Paul's Church, Richmond. He was appointed by Richmond City Council to the Human Rights Commission. He is a former member of the Virginia Public Access Project (VPAP) Partners Board.



Dr. Bill Hazel

Senior Deputy Director, The Claude Moore Charitable Foundation

Dr. Bill Hazel is the Senior Deputy Director for the Claude Moore Charitable Foundation. The Foundation funds projects related to health workforce throughout the Commonwealth and focuses on health and human resource philanthropy in Loudoun County and Northern Virginia.

He completed his second term as Secretary of Health and Human Resources of the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2018 and then served as the Senior Advisor for Innovation and Community Engagement at George Mason University. Prior to becoming Secretary of Health, Doctor Hazel grew up in Fauquier County and graduated from Princeton University with a degree in Civil Engineering and Duke University with a degree in Medicine, finishing his orthopedic residency at the Mayo Clinic. He was an orthopedic surgeon with an office practice in Northern Virginia, was Assistant surgeon for the Washington Redskins, and the team physician for the D. C. United Professional soccer club. Dr. Hazel has been active in many local, state and national Medical Society's most notably as President of the Virginia Medical Society and Trustee of the American Medical Association.

In his eight years of service to the Commonwealth, serving under both parties Governors-McDonnell and McAuliffe- Dr. Hazel oversaw 11 state agencies including Medicaid, Health, Behavioral Health, Social Services and Aging and Rehabilitation.

During his first term, he led the Virginia Health Reform Initiative; established the Virginia Center for Healthcare Innovation; negotiated a settlement agreement with the Department of Justice that led to the first training center closures in Virginia; oversaw the implementation of an integrated eligibility system.; and co-chaired the Coordinating Council to address homelessness in Virginia. Throughout this work he stressed the need to recognize that citizens do not fit into siloed programs, and he began to address the need for a culture stressing the collective impact of all of the HHR Agencies.

During his second term, Dr. Hazel helped to establish the Children's Cabinet with the Secretary of Education to develop and implement a comprehensive policy agenda related to the wellbeing of the Commonwealths children from birth to age 21. He co-chaired a Task force on Mental Health and with the Secretary of Public Safety led the Commonwealth's response to the opioid epidemic.

Dr. Hazel has become a strong advocate for evidence-informed policies relating to health, healthcare, human services and technology and has engaged with philanthropy to fund upstream initiatives with a goal of prevention. He and his wife, Cindy, are long time residents of Oakton where they have the good fortune to be near their two very cute granddaughters.



Dr. Scott Brabrand

Executive Director, Virginia Association of School Superintendents

Dr. Scott S. Brabrand became the current Executive Director for the Virginia School Board Association (VASS) on July 1.

Dr. Brabrand was named Executive Director after serving for five years as the Superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools, the 12th largest school division in the United States, serving approximately 180,000 students.

Dr. Brabrand rose through the ranks as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, and assistant superintendent in Fairfax before becoming the school division's superintendent. While superintendent, he has led many significant school division achievements. Among them are successfully returning 99.5% of the division's students to in-person instruction during the Pandemic, increasing the graduation from 91% to 94% from 2017-2021, and leading systemic changes in the school division in order for the division's most challenged students to succeed. Prior to his work in Fairfax, he served for five years as superintendent of Lynchburg City Schools, a division of 8,000 students in central Virginia. In Lynchburg his leadership helped increase the Standards of Learning test pass rate in math by almost 14 points and in reading by 9 points. He also improved the division's graduation rate by 11% for economically disadvantaged students.

Dr. Brabrand is the Past President of VASS, a professional non-profit organization that serves the state's 133 superintendents all of whom are members. As Executive Director, he will provide leadership for the professional growth of Virginia's superintendents and promote advocacy for the improvement of the state's public schools.



Heather McKay

Executive Director, Virginia Office of Education Economics

Heather A. McKay serves as the inaugural Executive Director of the Virginia Office of Education Economics (VOEE). In this role Heather is leading VOEE's efforts to use research and data to inform program, policy, and practice in education and workforce across the Commonwealth. Prior to coming to VOEE, Heather was the founding director of the Education and Employment Research Center at the School of Management and Labor Relations at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Heather has led research and evaluations on education and work topics in 26 states and internationally. Her research areas include student decision making, educational persistence and completion,

and worker preparation. Heather has a B.A from Bryn Mawr College, an M.A. in History, and an M.S. in Global Affairs both from Rutgers University.



Dr. Tim Sands

President, Virginia Tech

Timothy D. Sands is the 16th president of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and a professor in the College of Engineering. Since joining Virginia Tech in 2014, he has worked collaboratively with the provost and university leadership to set the university on track to become a leading modern, global, land-grant institution. Virginia Tech's strategic plan and vision, The Virginia Tech Difference: Advancing Beyond Boundaries, aligns the university with the emerging needs and opportunities of a rapidly changing world in the context of the evolving higher education landscape.

Under President Sands' leadership, undergraduate enrollment has been increased by 5,000 to achieve the benefits of scale while preserving the strong sense of community, rooted in the institution's motto, Ut Prosim (That

I May Serve). Student interest in Virginia Tech has grown continuously and student success is a priority, with four-year graduation rates increasing from 61% to 70%.

President Sands initiated InclusiveVT in 2015, leading an effort that has increased the enrollment of underrepresented minority (URM) students by 64% while closing the 4-year graduation rate gap to 2 percentage points. URM and underserved students (Pell-eligible, first-generation and veterans) now make up nearly 40% of the entering class, including transfers.

Virginia Tech remains a leader in research and innovation with over \$500M in annual expenditures, but with a renewed focus on moving into the upper tier of land-grant research universities in terms of impact and extramural research expenditures. Expansion of the human health sciences in the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at the Virginia Tech Carilion Health Sciences and Technology campus in Roanoke, the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine, and a partnership with Children's National Hospital's Research and Innovation Campus in Washington D.C. are central to enhancing Virginia Tech's research and innovation profile, and its impact on the communities we serve.

The university's residential campus in Blacksburg is being transformed with an emphasis on living- learning experiences, transdisciplinary collaboration, and sustainability. Recent developments include the creation of the Virginia Tech Center for Quantum Information Science and Engineering, a Creativity and Innovation District, the launch of a Global Business and Analytics Complex, and expanded facilities for the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets. A new Multi-modal Transit Facility and upgraded environmental infrastructure are part of the university's Climate Action Commitment to reduce transportation greenhouse gasses by 40% and achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.

Virginia Tech's 3.5-acre Innovation Campus in the greater Washington D.C. area is the centerpiece of a technology education strategy that helped bring Amazon's east coast headquarters to Arlington, VA. The campus is part of a bold new vision for graduate education in computer science and computer engineering, preparing leaders and pursuing research to take on big problems amid a digital revolution that is changing the way we live, work, and think. A partnership with Northrop Grumman will establish a new Center of Quantum Architecture and Software Development, and the university recently announced a partnership with Boeing and the Commonwealth to create the Boeing Center for Veteran Transition and Military Families. Virginia Tech is also leading the Commonwealth Cyber Initiative to establish a "global center of excellence at the intersection of security, autonomous systems, and data."

President Sands' vision is supported by a global community of alumni, friends, and partners. Virginia Tech's Advancement division continues to see record-breaking generosity and engagement, keeping the university on track to raise \$1.872 billion and engage 100,000 Hokies as part of Boundless Impact: The Campaign for Virginia Tech.

President Sands' recent awards and honors include The Edward Bouchet Legacy Award, the National GEM Consortium's Academic Leadership Award, the Virginia Latino Higher Education Network's Leadership Impact Award, and the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council's Regional Leadership Award.

He has published more than 250 refereed papers and conference proceedings and has been granted 21 patents in electronic and optoelectronic materials and devices. His recent research efforts have been directed toward the design and development of novel nanocomposite materials for environmentally friendly and cost-effective solid-state lighting, direct conversion of heat to electrical power and thermoelectric refrigeration. He holds faculty appointments in the Bradley Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering and the Department of Materials Science and Engineering in the College of Engineering, with research interests in microelectronics, optoelectronics, and nanotechnology.

He is a fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, the Materials Research Society, and the National Academy of Inventors.

As part of his civic engagement and community leadership, President Sands chairs the Board of Directors of Jefferson Science Associates (JSA) and the Virginia Space Grant Consortium. He serves on the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Northern Virginia Technology Council (NVTC), and is a member of the Boards of the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), the Business Higher Education Forum (BHEF), the University Research Alliance (URA), and is an ex-officio member of the Board of the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce. He is also Vice Chair of the Virginia Council of Presidents, and a member of the Board of Visitors of the National Intelligence University.

Before coming to Virginia Tech, President Sands was executive vice president for academic affairs and provost of Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, serving as acting president in 2012. Throughout his career, he has participated in and led research teams and academic programs that have been characterized by open collaboration across a wide array of disciplines. Prior to becoming provost, he served as the Mary Jo and Robert L. Kirk Director of the Birck Nanotechnology Center in Purdue's Discovery Park. He was a professor of materials science and engineering at the University of California, Berkeley, and also directed research groups at Bell Communications Research (Bellcore) in Red Bank, New Jersey.

President Sands earned a bachelor's degree with highest honors in engineering physics and a master's degree and doctorate in materials science from the University of California, Berkeley. He joined the Purdue faculty in 2002 as the Basil S. Turner Professor of Engineering in the schools of Materials Engineering and Electrical and Computer Engineering.

President Sands is joined at Virginia Tech by his wife, Dr. Laura Sands[link], a professor of gerontology in the Department of Human Development at Virginia Tech. All four of their children are proud members of the Virginia Tech community. Follow President Sands on Twitter and Instagram at @VTSandsman.



Nile Somerville

VP of Field Human Resources, Cox Communications

Nile Somerville serves as vice president of field human resources for Cox Communications in the Virginia Region. He is responsible for providing strategic direction and oversight to ensure a safe, productive, and inspiring career for the nearly 2,000 Cox employees in Virginia.

Nile is a results-driven senior leader and Human Resources professional with 20 plus years of broad HR experience and a demonstrated track record in building positive employee relations, developing people and creating culture. Beginning as an HR specialist/assistant, human resources manager, he worked his way up through roles of increasing leadership responsibility encompassing all facets of HR for operational organizations with large frontline employee populations including Ardent Mills, ConAgra Foods and Kraft Foods Global.

Prior to joining Cox Communications, Nile served as vice president of human resources – people and culture for the YMCA of South Hampton Roads, an organization with over 1,800 team members and 28 family centers in Virginia and North Carolina. Among his accomplishments in that role, Nile established and oversaw pandemic plans and protocols supporting employee and community safety as well as strategic reopening. He also implemented strategies fostering employee and leadership development, strengthening business partner relationships and advancing ID&E.

Nile is a Morehouse College alum and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with a minor in Business Administration. He is a member of the Society of Human Resources Management – Hampton Roads (SHRM) and Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce. A family-oriented father of four and Boy/Cub Scouts of America volunteer, Nile resides in Chesapeake.



Joe Wilkins

President, Bon Secours Mercy Health - St. Francis Medical Center

Joseph Wilkins is currently the president of St. Francis Medical Center in Richmond, VA. He is originally from Halifax County, Virginia and attended The College of William and Mary receiving his Bachelor's of Science in Kinesiology prior to attending Virginia Commonwealth University where he attained his Master's and Doctorate in Physical Therapy. He began his health care career as a physical therapist at Sheltering Arms Rehabilitation Hospital in Mechanicsville, VA with the goal of "helping people walk again". He attained this goal while working with patients who had suffered spinal cord injuries and CVAs at Sheltering Arms Hospital in Richmond, VA and the Department of Veterans Affairs. After which, he set a new goal of "helping more people". Seeing Health Administration as an appropriate route to achieve this objective he returned to Virginia Commonwealth University and attained his Master's in Health Care Administration degree and embarked on his journey into hospital management. As part of this journey, Joe has served as Director of Rehabilitation for Henrico Doctors Hospital (Richmond, VA), Assistant CEO for Southside Regional Medical Center (Petersburg, VA), VP/COO of Raleigh General Hospital (Beckley, WV), and CEO of Wythe County Community Hospital (Wytheville, VA).

Joe has been married to his lovely wife Tonya for 21 years and they have 3 beautiful children.



Dr. Dietra Trent

Executive Director, White House Initiative on HBCUs

Dietra Trent earned a bachelor's degree in Sociology and Criminal Justice from Hampton University and completed her master's and doctoral degrees in Public Administration and Policy from Virginia Commonwealth University. She has over twenty-five years of experience working to advance equity for Virginia's most disadvantaged populations. Most recently, she served in several leadership positions at George Mason University, including chief of staff and interim VP for Compliance, Diversity, and Ethics. In 2016, Dr. Trent was appointed as Virginia's Secretary of Education. Prior to her appointment, she served as Deputy Secretary of Education, a position she also held during the administration of then-Governor Tim Kaine. Having served in the Administrations of three former Governors (including Mark Warner), as well as the Office of Congressman Bobby Scott, she has a wealth of federal, state, and higher education experience.



Susan Dewey

CEO, Virginia Housing

Susan Dewey has served as Virginia Housing's Chief Executive Officer since being appointed by the Board of Commissioners in 1999. Susan is responsible for Virginia Housing's daily operations as well as the implementation of its strategic plan.

Prior to becoming the Virginia Housing CEO, Susan served for three years as a Virginia Housing Commissioner. At that time, Susan was the State Treasurer of Virginia. She directed all operations of the Department of the Treasury and the Treasury Board. Susan serves on many housing-related nonprofit Boards, such as Housing Forward Virginia, as well as the Virginia Chamber of Commerce. Susan loves the Virginia Housing mission and is most appreciative of the critical work the organization does in support of affordable housing.

Susan currently serves on: the Board of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development; the Board of HousingForward Virginia (Past President); the Virginia Commonwealth University Real Estate Circle of Excellence (Past President and Conference Committee); the Venture Richmond Board; the William and Mary Real Estate Foundation Board; the National Housing Conference (NHC) National Advisory Council; the National Council of State Housing Agencies (NCSHA) (Past President, Board of Directors, and Task Force on Homeownership), and member of the Virginia Chamber Foundation Advisory Board and Virginia Chamber Board of Directors.

She has celebrated many accomplishments over the years, including the Richmond Times-Dispatch Person of the Year Honoree in 2019, the Excellence in Virginia Government Award for Public-Private Partnerships award in 2021, the Outstanding Organizational Partner Award for National Philanthropy Day in 2021, and the Urban League of Hampton Roads' Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Leaders Award for Housing in 2022.

Susan received her BBA and MBA from The College of William & Mary and is a CPA. When she's not advocating for affordable housing, Susan enjoys spending time with family, challenging her husband at backgammon and learning new skills, like Pickleball.



Natasha Gray

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion) Manager with S&P Global

Natasha Gray is a DEI (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion) Manager with S&P Global. She currently manages the company's People Resource Groups with more than 14,000 members and 500 leaders globally. Natasha is active in the Charlottesville community, serving on boards for the American Red Cross Central Virginia Chapter and the Community Investment Collaborative. Natasha has been a local chamber member for several years, and participated in Leadership Charlottesville in 2019, a program sponsored by the Charlottesville Chamber of Commerce.



Dr. Paula Pando

President, Reynolds Community College

Dr. Paula Pando is a strategic, forward-thinking educator with nearly 30 years of experience in both public and private higher education. The daughter of immigrants, she is fluent in both Spanish and English and is wholly committed to strengthening lives and communities through the transformative power of an education. In May 2018, Dr. Pando was appointed the fourth president of J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College. Reynolds is the youngest, and among the largest community college in the Commonwealth of Virginia, serving the greater Richmond area, enrolling over 15,000 students at four campuses. Prior to her role as president of Reynolds, Dr. Pando served as the Senior Vice President for Student and Educational Services at Hudson County Community College in New Jersey, where she spent nearly sixteen years of her career.

Dr. Pando's strong student advocacy and contributions to the field of higher education have been recognized at the local, state, and national levels. In 2014, she was recognized by the New Jersey Council on County Colleges with the Community College Spirit Award for her contributions to statewide policy changes that impacted students. In 2017, she was one of 38 community college leaders selected from across the country for the Aspen Institute's Presidential Fellowship, a rigorous applied executive fellowship in partnership with Stanford University. In 2021, she was awarded the Dana Hamel Leadership Award, the highest award bestowed by the Virginia Community College System for her leadership in the development of the system's ambitious six-year strategic plan. Dr. Pando earned a doctorate in educational leadership from Rowan University, an M.A. in education administration from Saint Peter's University, and a B.A. from Stockton University. Dr. Pando is the proud mother of three adult children, Jake, Luke and Isabella and lives with her husband Eric in Glen Allen, VA.



Kirk Cox

President, Virginia Business Higher Education Council

M. Kirkland "Kirk" Cox, born in Petersburg, Virginia, 17 August 1957, is the son of the late Joseph and Margaret Ann Cox. Cox represented the 66th House District since 1990 until his retirement in 2022, and was unanimously elected Speaker in 2018 serving for one term. He was the first public school teacher to serve as Speaker and the first Speaker from the City of Colonial Heights.

Cox served on the Agriculture, Chesapeake, and Natural Resources; Appropriations; General Laws; Labor and Commerce; Privileges and Elections; and Rules committees. He was chairman of the ACNR Committee (2002 – 2007) and Vice Chairman of the Appropriations Committee (2010 – 2013).

Cox was elected by the Republican Caucus as House Majority Whip in 2007 and then House Majority Leader in 2010.

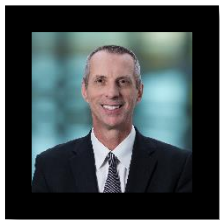
Cox's time in the House has been marked by relentless commitment to a wide-range of policy issues, focused on K-12 education, higher education, economic development, and veterans. Cox introduced over 120 pieces of legislation for the military, veterans, and their families, more than 20 percent of his total introduced while serving in the House. On the Appropriations Committee, Cox championed investments in education spending and behavioral health waivers.

Cox's speakership coincided with the 400th anniversary of the House of Burgesses in 1619, and he served as chairman of the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation and co-chair of the 2019 Commemoration, a nationwide tribute to the First Representative Legislative Assembly in the New World and other concomitant anniversaries.

Cox presently serves as the president of the Virginia Business Higher Education Council (VBHEC), a nonpartisan group focused on aligning the needs of business with higher education.

Raised in Colonial Heights, Cox graduated from Colonial Heights High School. He received his B.A. in Political Science and General Social Science from James Madison University. After graduation, Cox taught at Peabody Middle School in Petersburg, Providence Middle School in Chesterfield, and JEJ Moore Middle School in Prince George before moving to Manchester High School in Chesterfield, where he taught government for 26 years.

Cox is married to Julia Claire Kirkendall and has four adult sons and one beautiful granddaughter.



Kevin Stevenson

President & CEO, PRA Group, INC.

Kevin Stevenson has served as the Company's president and chief executive officer since June 2017. From August 2015 to June 2017, Stevenson served as the Company's president and chief administrative officer and from 2002 to August 2015, as the Company's executive vice president, chief financial and administrative officer, treasurer and assistant secretary. Prior to co-founding PRA Group with Steve Fredrickson in 1996, Stevenson held various positions with HRSC, including controller, and Household Bank, where he served as the controller of a regional processing center and also managed the collections, technology, research and ATM departments. While at Household Bank, he participated in numerous bank and branch acquisitions as well as divestitures. Stevenson holds a B.S. of Accounting from The Ohio State University and is a certified public accountant. He currently serves on the boards of the Greater Norfolk Corporation, The Sandler Center for the Performing Arts and the Judeo-Christian Outreach Center in Virginia Beach.
