

VIRGINIA EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE CONFERENCE

*Strengthening Our Workforce and Economic
Future Through Innovative Partnerships*



OCTOBER 23, 2024
GREATER RICHMOND CONVENTION CENTER



SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

VA CHAMBER
FOUNDATION

BLUEPRINT VIRGINIA 2030

WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



TINA PFALZGRAF
CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER, THE BRANCH GROUP
CO-CHAIR, WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE





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 32,000 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 of Legal Studies (MLS) degree from American University Washington College of Law and a Bachelor of Science degree from James Madison University.



Robert Duvall

**President & CEO, Virginia Natural Gas
Chair,
Virginia Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors**

Robert Duvall serves as president of Virginia Natural Gas. In this role, he is responsible for the safe and reliable delivery of natural gas to over 310,000 customers in southeastern Virginia and the Company's system growth and expansion and community involvement. In addition, Duvall serves as senior vice president of Southern Company Gas and is a member of the Southern Company Gas Management Council. Southern Company Gas is a subsidiary of Southern Company and the parent company of Virginia Natural Gas.

Before assuming his current position, Duvall served as senior vice president of Customer Operations, Safety and Technical Training for Southern Company Gas. In this role, he led the Company's customer experience, work scheduling, safety and technical training operations to deliver an outstanding engagement with customers through uncompromising values of safety, trust, performance and commitment.

In 2020, Robert returned to Virginia, where he served as president from 2014 to 2016, to lead the Company through Covid 19 and to establish the new energy future where natural gas is the foundation fuel. In previous roles, he served in a variety of engineering and operations positions, including as vice president of Operations for Virginia Natural Gas and managing director of Field Operations for Atlanta Gas Light. Duvall joined Southern Company Gas in 1984 as a distribution engineer for Atlanta Gas Light.

A graduate of the Civic Leadership Institute of Hampton Roads Virginia, Duvall has served on numerous charitable and civic boards in both Virginia and Georgia including the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce, Hampton Roads Economic Development Alliance, Georgia One-Call Center and United Way. He also has worked closely with March of Dimes, the Heart Association and Special Olympics.

A native of Irmo, South Carolina, Duvall earned a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering from Clemson University. He is a registered professional engineer in the state of Georgia.

Duvall and his wife, Phyllis, reside in Virginia Beach.



Scott Fleming

Director

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

Scott Fleming was named Director of the State Council of Higher Education (SCHEV) in May 2024. He has led a substantial career in the education sector, leveraging his expertise across public, private, and nonprofit organizations. At the outset, as a staff member on the United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, he led the 2005 reauthorizations of the Higher Education Act and the 2006 Carl D. Perkins Technical and Vocational Act. His efforts helped shape policies to enrich educational opportunities and workforce development.

After several years on Capitol Hill, Scott transitioned into management consulting and subsequent leadership roles at renowned education companies, including Scantron, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, and Teaching Strategies, always striving to enhance educational outcomes through roles at the executive level. His influence extended into the nonprofit sphere as a C-level executive at the Strada Education Foundation, where he applied his strategic approach to advocate for and improve higher education outcomes.

Most recently, as the Chief Strategy Officer for Teaching Strategies, Scott has been at the helm of advancing early learning through innovative software solutions, directly impacting how teachers engage with their classrooms.

On the home front, Scott is a father to four and has a turbulent relationship with the family dog, Cosmo. He holds both bachelor's and master's degrees from Brigham Young University, credentials that have underpinned his lifelong dedication to education.



Tina Pfalzgraf

Chief Human Resources Officer,

The Branch Group

Co-Chair, Blueprint Virginia Workforce and Education Executive Committee

Tina has over 25 years of professional HR experience. She began her professional career in hospitality, serving in various HR leadership roles in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic US, before leaving to take a consulting position in the healthcare industry focused on employee relations and union negotiations.

The past 20 years of her career as been in Engineering and Construction industry, where she has held HR leadership roles for both Federal and Commercial business lines to include Government Facilities, Cyber and Intelligence, Defense, Space and Geospatial, Transportation, Infrastructure and Construction. Today she serves as the Chief Human Resource Officer for the Branch Group.

The Branch Group is a Roanoke based Construction company experienced in heavy civil, vertical, design build, site work construction and mechanical, electrical, and plumbing services.

In addition to her extensive HR Leadership background, Tina's strengths reside in her ability to lead teams, inspire, and influence others, develop talent, foster collaboration while demonstrating sound judgement. Tina has been a long-term resident of Virginia and currently resides in Glen Allen, Virginia.



Mac Beaton

**Director of CTE and Workforce Development
Henrico County Public Schools**

Mac Beaton has served as Director of Career and Technical Education for Henrico County Public Schools Henrico since 2000. He started his career as an apprentice electrician at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard but has spent the last 39 years in Henrico County Schools as a teacher, Education Specialist, and for the last 24 years has served as the director.

Mac received his Bachelor of Science degree from Virginia Tech and his Masters in Administration and Supervision from Virginia Commonwealth University. With the ever-changing world of education, Mac has been recognized with various awards for his progressive approach to workforce development. Most recently he was recognized nationally for the “The CTE Letter of Intent Signing Day” which recognized students leaving high school and entering the workforce much like the signing day for athletes. He also led a project to have students renovate 48,000 sq. ft. of an indoor mall to create an innovative learning environment for adult students providing them with a location to “Shop for their future!” Mac recently was honored as an ICON in Education Design Award recipient.



Anthony Jones
Director of Government Affairs
CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield

Carter Batey is a Director of Government Affairs at CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield in the National Capitol Area. He is responsible for legislative and regulatory affairs in The Commonwealth and works to both craft and implement policy at the state level.

Carter is a veteran of political campaigns at the local, state and federal level, from City Council and State Senate to Presidential primary and general election contests. He spent time working as a Legislative Assistant in the Virginia State Senate, where he worked with members of both the House and the Senate, on both sides of the aisle, to help craft bills focused on Education, Social Services, and Healthcare, including 2014 landmark mental health reform legislation.

Carter is a graduate of Sewanee: The University of the South, where he majored in Political Science and Spanish. He lives with his two children on Alexandria's West End, and has previously served as the Chair of the City's Social Services Advisory Board, and the Alexandria Historic Restoration Preservation Commission. He is currently on the Board of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce.



Dr. Keith Perrigan
Superintendent
Washington County Public Schools

Keith Perrigan is a native of Washington County and attended school there from kindergarten through 12th grade. He also spent six years in Washington County teaching students with emotional and behavioral challenges.

Keith also served as an administrator there for 13 years before becoming Superintendent in Norton and later in Bristol. His career came full circle when he was hired as Superintendent of Schools for Washington County in the spring of 2023.

Keith is one of the founding members of the Coalition of Small and Rural Schools of Virginia. He currently serves as President of the Coalition and of VASS as well.

Keith has been married for 27 years to Amy and has two grown children and five grandchildren, all who live in Washington County.



Maria Tedesco
President & COO
Atlantic Union Bank

Maria Tedesco is President and Chief Operating Officer of Atlantic Union Bank and leads all business lines, including consumer and commercial banking, treasury management, mortgage, wealth management, equipment finance, and all enterprise-wide support functions including technology, operations, marketing, digital strategy, product management, business line risk and customer experience.

Prior to Atlantic Union Bank, Maria was Chief Operating Officer for Retail at BMO Harris Bank based in Chicago and was responsible for retail products, segments, customer experience, indirect auto, consumer lending, small business lending, business banking strategy, channels and risk. Prior to that she served as Senior Executive Vice President and Managing Director of the Retail Bank at Santander Bank, N.A. where she was responsible for leading the US retail strategy and business channels, including branch network, online, mobile, investments, mortgage, call centers, ATMs, marketing, product marketing, customer experience and program management office.

Before Santander, Maria spent 20 years at Citizens Financial Group, Inc. ultimately becoming Group Executive Vice President and Executive Director of Retail Banking and Business Banking for the company. Maria was named one of Most Powerful Women in Banking Team Award by American Banker in 2012 and 2017. In 2015 and again in 2024, she was named one of the Most Powerful Women to Watch by American Banker. Maria was named one of the Bold Women of Richmond by Richmond Magazine in July of 2020. Most recently, named Virginia's Leading Women in 2021 and received the 2024 Richmond YWCA Outstanding Women Award in Business.

She received an M.B.A. from Northeastern University and her B.S. from Ithaca College. Maria is the 2024 Chair of ChamberRVA and is Chair-Elect of the Consumer Bankers Association. She serves on the board of directors of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce and the Virginia Bankers Association. She serves on the Virginia Resource Authority board, chairing the Compliance Committee and sitting on the Portfolio Risk Committee. She is co-chair of the ABA Black Bankers ERG and is on the board of the Richmond Forum. Maria serves on the Virginia Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee for the Workforce and Education Industry Council. She is also member of the Virginia Business Council and Greater Richmond Partnership.



Shawn Avery
President & CEO
Hampton Roads Workforce Council

Mr. Shawn Avery currently serves as the President and CEO of the Hampton Roads Workforce Council. In this role, he provides leadership for strategic initiatives, partner and community relations, business and industry development, industry sector activities, educational initiatives, and management and oversight for the largest Workforce Development Board in the Commonwealth of Virginia. He comes to the Hampton Roads Workforce Council after serving as Vice President for the Peninsula Council for Workforce Development, where he provided leadership for the Councils' Private / Public Partnership Division. In addition, he has held the positions of Senior Manager of Development and Community Affairs for Opportunity Inc., Manager of the Peninsula Workforce Development Center and Grants Specialist for Thomas Nelson Community College.

Mr. Avery holds a Master of Business Administration from Florida Tech and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Christopher Newport University. He has received a Certificate of Studies in Economic Development from Virginia Tech and the University of North Carolina.

Mr. Avery is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Hampton Roads Chamber Visionary Award, MLK Community Leaders Award, Greater Williamsburg Chamber's 15 Under 50, Inside Business Top Forty under 40, as well as an Expanding Workforce Opportunities Award and a Chancellor's Award from the Virginia Community College System, and the Community Builders Award from the Hampton Roads Community Action Program.

Mr. Avery currently serves on various Board and Commissions, including the US Conference of Mayors Workforce Development Council, Hampton Roads Executive Roundtable, GO Virginia Regional Council, Hampton Roads Chamber, Hampton Roads Alliance and the Virginia Business Roundtable for Early Education.



Dr. Tony Brads
Superintendent
Culpeper County Public Schools

Dr. Anthony S. Brads (Tony) currently serves as the Division Superintendent for Culpeper County Public Schools. For the 2024-2025 school year, he is embarking on his 37th year in service to public education in the Commonwealth across four school divisions. That service includes beginning his 20th year as a division superintendent. (10 years with Botetourt County Public Schools and most recently, nine years with Culpeper County Public Schools). Dr. Brads brought valuable and relevant experience to the superintendency as a former teacher, coach, assistant principal, principal, and central office administrator.

Dr. Brads has served in many key leadership roles and has been involved with organizational and committee positions during his tenure as a division superintendent. He has formed several successful partnerships and relationships with leaders in the Virginia Community College System. These roles and positions have led to providing more and improved access to programming and facilities for ALL students. Especially noteworthy has been his advocacy and work in the areas of Career and Technical Education, Special Education, and Gifted Education.

Additionally, Dr. Brads has been a consistent and vocal advocate for the “teaching profession” focused on teacher and staff compensation, teacher and staff support, and teacher and staff working conditions. This advocacy includes support for Teacher Licensure reform working with the VDOE Teacher Licensure Reciprocity Workgroup, the VASS SOA/SOQ Superintendents Work Group, and the VASS Blueprint Work Group—Blueprint for Achieving Equity in Virginia’s Public Schools as the Chairman for “Teacher Shortage”.

Dr. Brads has been married to his wife Kim for 37 years. The Brads are parents of three grown children, one with Autism, and are blessed with two grandchildren. Dr. Brads is quick to credit “public education”, along with devoted parenting, for their children’s success.



Dr. Sara Lockett
Director of Technical and Career Education
Virginia Beach City Schools

Sara Lockett serves as the Director of Technical and Career Education for Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS), where she is dedicated to empowering students with the skills, knowledge, and experiences needed to thrive in today's workforce. With over two decades of experience in education, Sara has a deep commitment to bridging the gap between academics and practical, career-focused learning. In her current role, Sara oversees a wide range of career and technical education (CTE) initiatives, industry certifications, and work-based learning. She consistently pursues grant funding to expand opportunities for CTE students in Virginia Beach. She also serves as the treasurer for the Virginia Association of Career and Technical Education Administrators.

Her leadership has been instrumental in expanding partnerships with local businesses and industries, providing students with internships, youth apprenticeships, and real-world training opportunities. By fostering these collaborations, Sara ensures that students graduate with the skills and credentials Virginia employers are seeking. A passionate advocate for student success, Sara is focused on creating equitable access to career and technical education for all students. She champions innovative instructional strategies and is a driving force behind integrating cutting-edge technology into classrooms, expanding dual enrollment, and preparing students for the ever-evolving demands of the global job market. Sara holds a Doctor of Education in K-12 School Leadership, and Master of Education in Administration and Supervision and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. Her commitment to education and career readiness has earned her recognition as a leader in her field, both within Virginia and nationally.



Dr. Tammy Mann
President & CEO
The Campagna Center

Dr. Tammy Mann has worked at the intersection of research, practice and policy in early care and education for over 30 years. Since 2011, she has served as President and CEO of the Campagna Center, a community-based nonprofit in Alexandria, Virginia that provides cradle to career education and social support programs to over 2,000 children, teens, and adults.

In addition to her work at Campagna, she is actively involved in several initiatives aimed at improving early care and education opportunities across her community and the Commonwealth of Virginia including prior service as Vice President, Virginia Board of Education, and former Chair of the Provider Advisory for the Virginia Promise Partnership. She has been the former Board President and at-large Governing Board member for the National Association for the Education of Young Children and former Chair of Alexandria's Children Youth and Families Collaborative Commission.

She is a former Public Policy Fellow with the American Psychological Association and has held adjunct affiliations with Howard University and George Mason University. Dr. Mann graduated from Spelman College earning a BA Degree in Psychology and graduate degrees (MA & PhD) in Clinical Psychology from Michigan State University. A wife and a mother, in her free time she enjoys reading, spending time with family and going to concerts and the theater.



Doug Straley
Superintendent
Louisa County Public Schools

J. Douglas “Doug” Straley is the proud Superintendent of Louisa County Public Schools in central Virginia and is now in his ninth year in the leadership role. A lifelong native of Louisa County, Mr. Straley has served in a multitude of roles for his hometown school division, including as a teacher, high school principal, athletics director, assistant superintendent, and now superintendent. In total, Mr. Straley has dedicated more than 30 years of service to Louisa County Public Schools.

As superintendent, Mr. Straley has worked to create a positive, team-centered culture throughout Louisa County Public Schools and the entire Louisa County community. In April 2024, Mr. Straley was named the Virginia State Superintendent of the Year by the Virginia Association of School Superintendents. He also received the Region V Superintendent of the Year Award in 2020 and 2023, as well as the nation’s Most Spirited Superintendent Award in 2018 from the nationally recognized company Varsity Brands.

Under Mr. Straley’s leadership, LCPS has developed a mission of challenging every student to reach his or her maximum potential. This mission is fulfilled through a steadfast dedication to the 5 Cs and innovative approaches to learning. During Mr. Straley’s tenure as Superintendent the school division has developed one of the most comprehensive and state-of-the-art Career & Technical Education programs in the country with a priority of hands-on learning and workforce development.

Mr. Straley lives in Louisa with his wife, Kate, who is a teacher. Together, they have six children, all of whom are currently attending Louisa County Public Schools or universities in the Commonwealth.

He earned his B.S. in Education from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and his M.A. in K-12 Educational Leadership from Regent University.



Kenny Bouwens

Director of CTE/STEAM and Innovation
Louisa County Public Schools

Mr. Bouwens is the Director of CTE/STEAM and Innovation for Louisa County Public Schools, overseeing a rural division of approximately 5,000 students. Over the past seven years, he has led instructional practices and designed innovative educational programs. In 2020, he co-developed the Wireless on Wheels (WOW) program, which received national recognition for improving community internet connectivity. This initiative earned him the VACO Community Impact Award and the CoSN Community Leadership in Digital Equity Award.

Mr. Bouwens's CTE programs are two-time recipients of both the Virginia School Board Association's Workplace Readiness Award and the Virginia Department of Education's CTE Excellence Award. His program was one of five selected nationally for the Rural Tech Project, securing over \$200,000 for a cybersecurity training initiative, which he discussed at the White House.

Named Virginia Technology Teacher of the Year in 2017, Mr. Bouwens's innovative approaches to instruction and learning spaces have become models for other Virginia school divisions. His dedication to educational innovation and community impact continues to drive his work, ensuring students are well-prepared for future challenges.



The Honorable Aimee Guidera

**Secretary of Education
Office of Governor Glenn Youngkin**

Aimee Rogstad Guidera was named Secretary of Education by Governor Glenn Youngkin in December 2021. In this Cabinet position, she oversees education from Pre-K through Postsecondary in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Before joining the Youngkin administration, Aimee was a strategic consultant helping states, foundations, companies and nonprofit organizations strengthen their efforts to improve student learning and outcomes. Prior to launching her consultancy, Aimee was Founder, President and CEO of the Data Quality Campaign, a national, nonprofit advocacy organization leading the effort to ensure that students, parents, educators, and policymakers have the right information to guide their actions so that every student can excel.

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, American Enterprise Institute Fellow, and an alumna of the Institute for Educational Leadership's Education Policy Fellowship Program. She has served on the board of directors of the American Succeeds, Institute for Educational Leadership, Policy Innovators in Education Network, the Friends of the Hennepin County Library, Minnesota Comeback, Conservative Leaders for Education, and on the advisory board for the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard.

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.

With the firm belief that parents, students, and teachers need to be equally strong legs of the stool of academic success, Aimee has always been engaged in her local schools. She was an active supporter of her daughters' public schools and has served as a classroom volunteer, parent-teacher organization leader, and advisory committee member.



Dr. Tracy Fitzsimmons

**President
Shenandoah University**

Tracy Fitzsimmons, Ph.D., became Shenandoah University's 16th president on July 1, 2008. She is the institution's first female president since its founding in 1875. She came to Shenandoah in 2001, as dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, became vice president for Academic Affairs in 2002 and was named senior vice president in 2006.

She holds a faculty appointment as professor of political science and still teaches a course each year. Previously, Dr. Fitzsimmons was a tenured faculty member and faculty leader at the University of Redlands in Redlands, CA.

As president of Shenandoah University, she leads an institution of 4,100 students, and 900 faculty and staff at its 129-acre site in Winchester, Va., and sites in Loudoun, Fairfax, and Clarke Counties, Va. Virginia Business has featured President Fitzsimmons twice in its Virginia 500 Power List, and she was featured in 2022 as one of the Virginia Business Women in Leadership Awardees.

Dr. Fitzsimmons serves on the board of directors of the publicly-traded company Shentel (Shenandoah Telecommunications, Inc.) where she is the Lead Independent Director and the Chair of the Nominating & Governance Committee. She also serves on the Region 8 GoVirginia board. Fitzsimmons is a Past-President of the ODAC Conference and a Past-Chair of the Council of Independent Colleges in VA. As past President, she remains very involved at NAICU (the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities).

She also serves on the board of the Loudoun Education Foundation, Opportunity Scholars and Virginia Commonwealth's GenEdge; she is a member of the International Women's Forum of DC, and 100 Women Strong of Loudoun County. Currently, she is the Presidential Sponsor of the VA Women's Network.

Her undergraduate degree in politics is from Princeton University, magna cum laude, and her master's and doctoral degrees are from Stanford University in, respectively, Latin American studies and political science. President Fitzsimmons lives in Winchester, VA, with her husband, Knox Singleton. Combined they share seven children.



Dr. Corey McCray
President
Paul D. Camp Community College

Dr. Corey McCray is the President of Paul D. Camp Community College. During his 28 years in education, Dr. McCray has served as the Associate Vice Chancellor of Programs for the Virginia Community College System, Executive Vice President and Vice President for Workforce at Tidewater Community College, where he led the establishment of TCC's Skilled Trades Academy. Before coming to TCC, he served as Executive Director of the Pruden Center for Industry and Technology in Suffolk Virginia and was a founding member of the Hampton Roads Public Works Academy and one of the first governor's Science Technology Engineering and Math academies for career and technical education. He also served as president of the Virginia Association of Career and Technical Education Administrators.

As President of Paul D Camp Community College, Dr. McCray is focused on ensuring student success, workforce preparation, and community engagement. To that end, he along with his colleagues at Paul D Camp are excited about the new Workforce Trades and Innovation Center in Suffolk, establishing the Nursing and Allied Healthcare building in Franklin and the new Lab School at the Smithfield Campus. Each of these endeavors will help to meet hi-demand workforce and career opportunities for local and regional citizens.



Wendy Shields

**Senior Manager of Corporate Citizenship
Altria**

Wendy Shields is a Senior Manager with Altria's Community Impact team, leading the company's Workforce and Economic Equity community investments in Central Virginia. Wendy brought her focus on sustainability to many other roles that help shape Altria's approach to corporate responsibility – including oversight within the company's environmental program and its arts and culture support in Richmond.

With a passion for her community, she's also managed two of Altria's national community programs, including employee engagement and activation. Wendy received her Bachelors of Science in Biology and Chemistry from Virginia Tech and her MBA from VCU.



Dr. Gregory Washington
President
George Mason University

George Mason University President Gregory Washington leads Virginia's largest and most diverse public university, a top-tier research institution that has rapidly emerged as a leader in innovation, entrepreneurship and social mobility.

Under Dr. Washington's leadership, Mason in fall 2023 became the first four-year public university in Virginia to enroll more than 40,000 students. Mason also continues to grow in stature. The Wall Street Journal (#33) and Forbes (#40) rank Mason among the best public universities in the country. In 2023, Mason was named Virginia's top public university for social mobility by U.S. News & World Report, The Wall Street Journal and Washington Monthly, and the New York Times ranks Mason as Virginia's top public university for economic diversity.

Since launching his Mason presidency in July 2020, Dr. Washington has created new academic and entrepreneurial pathways, opened or broken ground on academic facilities on all three Virginia campuses across the university's 848 acres, and presided over the highest research expenditures and philanthropy in Mason history.

Dr. Washington earned three mechanical engineering degrees at North Carolina State University and is the former engineering dean at Ohio State University (interim) and the University of California, Irvine. The New York City native was inducted into the National Academy of Engineering in 2023.



Patrick Murray
Vice President of Government Affairs
KinderCare Learning Companies

Patrick Murray leads KinderCare's advocacy efforts, working to expand access to quality early childhood education programs and align policy with the needs of children, families, and employers. Patrick joined KinderCare from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation where he led the foundation's federal advocacy strategies on education and health.

Previously, he served as a policy advisor to U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander, Chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. Patrick joined the Board of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce in 2023.



Tom Barkin
President
Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond

Tom Barkin is the president and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond. He has held this position since 2018.

Tom serves as a voting member on the Fed's chief monetary policy body, the Federal Open Market Committee, and is also responsible for the Richmond Fed's bank supervision and the Federal Reserve's technology organization. He is "on the ground" continually in the Fed's Fifth District, which covers South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, D.C., West Virginia and Maryland. His engagement in the region has brought real attention to areas facing economic challenges.

Prior to joining the Richmond Fed, Tom was a senior partner and CFO at McKinsey & Company, a worldwide management consulting firm, where he also oversaw McKinsey's offices in the southern United States.

Tom earned his bachelor's, MBA and law degrees from Harvard University.



The Honorable 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 three grandchildren.



Jen Tutak
Senior Manager
Deloitte Consulting

Jen Tutak is a Senior Manager within Deloitte Consulting's Government & Public Services sector focused on serving institutions at the intersection of the future of education with the future of work. She has more than 15 years of experience in strategy and design, process improvement, and transformation planning.

Jen has led significant workforce development projects for nonprofits, education systems, and state governments, including across the Commonwealth of Virginia. She recently co-authored a healthcare workforce piece on the Value of Human Services, and she is the co-author of *Success by Design: Improving Student Success in Higher Education*, which has become one of Deloitte's most-read publications.

Jen holds three graduate degrees in public administration, business, and education from Harvard and MIT, as well as her undergraduate degree from Dartmouth College.



The Honorable Bryan Slater

**Secretary of Labor
Office of Governor Glenn Youngkin**

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, his bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Richmond, and an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Ferrum College. 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, where he drove the implementation of the departmentwide shared services consolidation initiative, and as Assistant Secretary of Administration for the U.S. Department of Transportation under President Trump. He served as the White House Liaison at the U.S. Department of Labor under President George W. Bush 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 in the Koch Nonprofit Network. He was also the former Executive Director of the Republican Party of Georgia and Political Director of the Republican National Committee.

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.



Dr. William Hazel, Jr.

CEO

Claude Moore Opportunities

Dr. Hazel is 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 the goal of prevention.

He earned a degree in Civil Engineering from Princeton University and followed by a degree in Medicine from Duke University, finishing his orthopedic residency at the Mayo Clinic. He was an orthopedic surgeon with an office practice in Northern Virginia, was an Assistant surgeon for the Washington Redskins, and was the team physician for the D. C. United Professional soccer club.

He completed two terms as Secretary of Health and Human Resources of the Commonwealth of Virginia and then served as the Senior Advisor for Innovation and Community Engagement at George Mason University. Dr. Hazel was President of the Virginia Medical Society and Trustee of the American Medical Association. He co-chaired the Coordinating Council to address homelessness in Virginia and also co-chaired a task force on mental health, and with the Secretary of Public Safety led the Commonwealth's response to the opioid epidemic.