# 2021 SIX-YEAR PLAN NARRATIVE (Part II)

**INSTITUTION:**   Virginia Community College System

**OVERVIEW**

The totality of the six-year plan should describe the institution’s goals as they relate to state goals found in the *Pathways to Opportunity: The Virginia Plan for Higher Education*; the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011 (TJ21); and the Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act of 2005.

The instructions under institutional mission and alignment to state goals, below, ask for specific strategies, in particular related to equity, affordability and transformative outcomes. Other sections will offer institutions the opportunity to describe additional strategies to advance institutional goals and state needs. ***Please be as concise as possible with responses and save this narrative document with your institution’s name added to the file name.***

**SECTIONS**

**Section A. Pandemic Impact:** Briefly discuss, in one to two paragraphs, how the pandemic has impacted your institution. What things did your institution already have in place that proved helpful? What lessons were learned? What short-term changes have been made? What long-term changes will be made? What are the concerns moving forward?

**RESPONSE:**

The most valuable lesson learned from the pandemic is to put students first in how we think about enrollment and onboarding processes, scheduling, course delivery, and student support services.

VCCS shifted all classes and student support services from face-to-face to online in Spring 2020 in response to the pandemic emergency. Although typically 60% of VCCS students enrolled in one or more online courses every semester, many faculty members had never taught fully online, especially those teaching in career technical education (CTE) programs. Colleges offered professional development and instructional design assistance using federal CARES Act funds for faculty and advisors during Summer 2020. As a result, faculty became proficient in delivering instruction through multiple modalities: online asynchronous, online synchronous, hybrid, and flexible hybrid. Advisors became proficient in providing services to students through online group sessions, chatbots, and other web-based resources. Administrators adapted schedules to better meet the needs of students who were working from home and overseeing their children’s education. Based on the lessons learned, the following short-term changes are likely to continue across the VCCS even as colleges reopen for face-to-face instruction:

* HyFlex class offerings that accommodate the schedules of working adults; HyFlex classes include face-to-face, online synchronous, and online asynchronous options for the student.
* Hybrid class offerings for CTE programs, which combine virtual didactic instruction with face-to-face lab instruction to accommodate the schedules of adult students and any continued social distancing requirements.
* Flexibility in scheduling within semesters, such as additional 8-week terms, to increase options for enrolling full-time.
* Online resources to provide students with the support they need when they need it, including virtual advising, tutoring, testing, registration, and other academic and student support services.
* Continued waiver of placement testing and system-wide implementation of the use of multiple measures for placement into gateway math and English courses, including using co-requisite supports for less prepared students.
* Requirement for all faculty to demonstrate proficiency in virtual teaching modalities.

**Section B. Institutional Mission, Vision, Goals, Strategies, and Alignment to State Goals:** Provide a statement of institutional mission and indicate if there are plans to change the mission over the six-year period.

Provide a brief description of your institutional vision and goals over the next six years, including numeric targets where appropriate. Include specific strategies (from Part 3 – Academic-Financial Plan and Part 4 – General Fund Request) related to the following state themes and goals:

* **Equitable:** Close access and completion gaps. Remove barriers to access and attainment especially for Black, Hispanic, Native American, and rural students; students learning English as a second language; students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds; and students with disabilities.
* **Affordable:** Lower costs to students. Invest in and support the development of initiatives that provide cost savings to students while maintaining the effectiveness of instruction.
* **Transformative:** Expand prosperity. Increase the social, cultural, and economic well-being of individuals and communities within the Commonwealth and its regions. This goal includes efforts to diversify staff and faculty pools.

Strategies also can cross several state goals, notably those related to improved two-year and four-year transfer, and should be included here. If applicable, include a short summary of strategies related to research. The description of any strategy should be one-half page or less in length. Be sure to use the same short title as used in the Part 3 and Part 4 worksheets. If federal stimulus funds will fund activities and are included in Part 3 as reallocations, please note how they will be used.

**RESPONSE:**

**VCCS Mission:**

The mission statement for Virginia’s community colleges is:

**We give everyone the opportunity to learn and develop the right skills so lives and communities are strengthened.**

The State Board for Community Colleges adopted this statement in November 2009. No changes to the mission are anticipated over the next three biennia.

**VCCS Strategic Goal:**

In March 2021, the State Board for Community Colleges approved a new strategic plan for Virginia’s Community Colleges.  Named ***Opportunity 2027***, the plan has the following overarching strategic goal:

**Achieve equity in access, learning outcomes, and success for students from every race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic group.**

**Goal 1: Equitable**

Strategy 1: Close Access and Completion Gaps: Increase Advising Capacity. The VCCS six-year strategic plan, *Opportunity 2027,* includes strategies designed to eliminate equity gaps in student access, learning outcomes, and success. A task force examined data on enrollment, retention, and completion outcomes and found disparities for students from minoritized populations, low socio-economic groups, and women, especially mothers of school-age children who lost employment at higher rates than men during the pandemic. Researchers consistently find that community colleges can close access and completion gaps by providing an evidence-based culture of care that responds to the diverse needs of students and supports and inspires their educational and career success. Two areas of particular importance in the next biennium are (1) identifying and eliminating specific barriers that lead to equity disparities in application and onboarding processes across all student groups, and (2) ensuring students receive adequate advising and coaching to connect to effective university transfer and career pathways.

To do so requires increasing the number of full-time professional advisors and creating acceptable advising caseloads to ensure continuity of academic and non-academic support for students. Lack of adequate advising resources to support first-generation students and students from underrepresented populations was a significant finding in the 2017 Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commissions Report to the General Assembly of Virginia on Operations and Performance of the Virginia Community College System. A recent internal study revealed that in 2019-2020, the 23 community colleges employed only 109 full-time non-faculty advisors who are expected to serve more than 230,000 credit and 38,000 non-credit students each year, resulting in an advisor-to-student ratio of 1 to 2,460. Even when colleges hire part-time advisors to fill in during peak enrollment periods, advising is uneven and inadequate. The nationally recommended minimum advisor-to-student ratio is one advisor for every 300 students, and the ideal for community colleges is one advisor for every 200 students (NCADA).

In 2021, in anticipation of G3 implementation, the General Assembly allocated an additional $5 million to hire 60 new full-time non-faculty advisors, who will begin on July 1, 2021, and will focus primarily on G3 students. This down payment toward addressing advising capacity in the VCCS will ensure one advisor for every 1,600 students. During the upcoming biennium, VCCS requests an additional $6.2M in the first year of the biennium and $6.3M in the second year to increase the number of full-time non-faculty advisors by 60 each year and also to fund 1 FTE for a system office advising coordinator. The system office advising coordinator will provide training, establish advising standards, measure outcomes, and provide return-on-investment feedback. The additional 120 advisors over the biennium will reduce the ratio to 1 advisor for every 1,170 students, based on current enrollment numbers.

Strategy 2: Address Mental Health Barriers. A second transformative priority is to address the mental health needs of community college students. Currently, our colleges rely on community service boards to provide counseling services. Those agencies have been overwhelmed during the pandemic emergency. A recent #RealCollege survey of Virginia’s community college students revealed that our students are experiencing high levels of pandemic-related stress as well as three types of basic needs insecurity: food insecurity, housing insecurity, and homelessness. Students reported difficulty concentrating, worries about their academic performance, concerns about their mental and physical health, and concern for the health of their friends and families. Two VCCS student quotes from the survey illustrate these stresses:

*“[College right now] is absolutely terrible. Working a full-time job plus teaching yourself 4+ classes every week and being met with somewhat unreasonable deadlines is absolutely detrimental to the mental health of students. Thank you for taking the time to make students’ voices feel heard for the first time in a very long time.’*

*“All of my teachers and administrative staff have been going above and beyond, but my mental health is driving a huge wedge between me and my success in online learning.”*

VCCS will seek to secure additional funding for 60 new professional counselors employed by the colleges, or to contract with private 3rd party providers to offer mental health services for community college students. . The total cost for the program is $7M in FY2023, $7M in FY 2024, and $7.35M in recurring funding beginning FY 2025.

Strategy 3: Invest in Cloud-Based ERP Systems to Better Support Students

Enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems – which support the complexities of administering student information, human resources, and finance – have become essential to the efficient and effective delivery of higher education. A student information system ERP alone comprises such essential applications as admissions, course catalogs, registration, student finance, financial aid, scheduling, analytics, reporting, and more. All the major ERP vendors have shifted most of their innovation and resources into building and supporting new cloud-based systems. As with all outdated software the support and maintenance costs of the older, on-premises, systems will increase as the utility, durability, and security of the systems decrease, thus making the migration inevitable.  Moving ERP applications to the cloud requires a significant amount of planning and preparation work in the areas of business process, data governance, integration, and security. This preparatory work is the key to a successful cloud migration and represents a significant amount of time and expense. Moreover, certain modules of cloud-based ERP are currently available that function with on-premises systems. Several current options like Analytics and Financial Aid could provide several first steps into a full cloud ERP deployment.

The VCCS is currently monitoring the functionality of cloud-based ERP systems to determine whether a business case exists for their adoption, realizing the significant monetary and personnel costs associated with making the initial move as well as the increased and ongoing costs of cloud-based platforms. As such, VCCS may seek additional funding in the second or third biennium to further explore cloud-based ERPs and, potentially, their implementation.

**Goal 2: Affordable**

Strategy 1: Lower Cost to Students. The Virginia Community College System remains the most affordable public higher education option in the Commonwealth. Community college tuition and fees as a percentage of per capita income in the Commonwealth, however, are nearly double the national public two-year college rate, and the COVID-19 pandemic has widened the wealth gap, putting low-income students at greater risk of not attending, much less completing, college. To ensure that college access remains an attainable goal for all, Virginia’s Community Colleges must strategically balance the financial challenges and needs of students - especially students of color and in low-income circumstances - with institutional funding models that support fiscally healthy, innovative, and student-centered colleges.

As part of the goals for *Opportunity 2027*, VCCS plans to increase transparency in course and program costs for students, develop more flexible within-term tuition-payment options, and collaborate on ensuring that the allocation of state general funds addresses strategic student priorities. Clarity regarding affordability and financial flexibility will improve access and support equity in student outcomes. Refocused funding allocations will incentivize established priorities and promote the attainment of goals directly related to equity in student success.

With recent tuition moderation investments made by the General Assembly, VCCS has been able to avoid tuition increases for three years. Chapter 552, Item 262.80, 2021 Acts of Assembly, Special Session 1, provided $15.0 million in recurring funding and $10.1 million in one-time funding in FY2022 which together allowed the VCCS to hold the line on tuition increases while supporting additional academic advisors and five percent compensation increases for all teaching faculty (including our vitally important adjunct faculty) and full-time employees.  However, continuation of the $10.1 million as recurring appropriation would mitigate the need for tuition increases necessary to support carry-over non-general fund obligations of $4.9 million in FY2023 and $9.8 million in FY2024. The General Assembly’s continued investment in tuition moderation will help hold tuition costs steady while maintaining the effectiveness of instruction. By making access to a high quality, responsive, and affordable education a central goal, Virginia’s Community Colleges will keep the door of equity in opportunity open for all in the Commonwealth.

Strategy 2. Invest in Cost Savings for Students

***Workforce Credentials Grant (WCG)****:* Since 2016, the WCG program has enhanced Virginia’s talent pool by upskilling more than 22,000 Virginians in the fields of greatest business demand. VCCS has leveraged the state’s investment in WCG to provide education for individuals who are sponsored by third-party payers, such as employers, trade associations, and federal employment programs. In total, nearly 30,000 high-demand credentials have been earned by Virginia workers since the program began in 2016.

Based on such performance outcomes and continued business demand, general fund support for the program was increased to $13.5 million appropriated for FY 2020 and FY 2021.  To continue this progress in closing the skills gap identified by Virginia’s business community, funding for the Workforce Credentials Grant should continue to increase. Every $1 million dollars invested in the Workforce Credential Grant program leverages additional funding to generate 1,000 high-demand, high-value industry credentials, strengthening the talent pool needed by Virginia’s businesses, moving more Virginians toward family-sustaining wages, and advancing the commonwealth’s economic vibrancy. Given current WCG fund balances, we do not anticipate a request for additional funding until at least the second biennium.

***Get Skilled, Get a Job, Get Ahead (G3)****:* The Commonwealth’s investment in workforce development was amplified in 2021 with the approval of funding for G3: Get a Skill, Get a Job, Get Ahead. Designed as a “last-dollar” program, G3 leverages federal financial aid and adds state financial aid to cover the difference in costs for tuition, fees, and books for low- and middle-income students who enroll in high-demand workforce programs. Low-income students who enroll full- time will receive an additional student success incentive to help pay for other college attendance costs, such as transportation, childcare, housing, and food.

VCCS will track student enrollments, labor market needs, and G3 state financial aid awards for FY2022 and FY2023 and will recommend any changes necessary to ensure successful continuation of the program in the second biennium.

Strategy 3: Enhance Cybersecurity Systems

In the interest of minimizing costs to students while maintaining effective instruction, this initiative will enable the VCCS to completely assess the cybersecurity posture of all colleges and facilities in real-time and ultimately mitigate cybersecurity vulnerabilities to better safeguard against growing and inevitable cyber threats. The education sector is estimated by many to be the one industry that has felt the greatest overall impact of malware incidents during the past two years.  Because of malware vulnerabilities, and the sudden surge in distance and online education programs, cyber-attacks against schools and colleges have increased dramatically.  Payroll is stolen, ransomware attacks strike with no warning, and private information is lost to cyber thieves.  Education is under greater cyber threat than has ever been the case in the past, and efforts to defend against this threat must now rise to new heights as well.

The VCCS has done a great deal to address cybersecurity.  Still, opportunities exist to improve cybersecurity, particularly by deploying services that permit the VCCS to test and to assess the security readiness of all of our colleges and support units across the entire System.

The proposed cyber assessment infrastructure will determine specifically which corrective actions are necessary before weaknesses are exploited by malicious, outside interests.  This infrastructure -- a combination of monitoring, scanning, defensive, procedural, and human services -- will actively reach into every corner of all VCCS college networks to seek out and eliminate risk before harm is done.  It will try and test every possible known weakness in existence against VCCS defenses on a 24x7x365 basis.  However, instead of exploiting weaknesses when found it will alert VCCS security personnel to the existence of a problem and the corrective action necessary to head off damage before it ever takes place.

The cost for implementing a systemwide security management infrastructure over the next biennium is $5 million with an ongoing cost of $1 million to mitigate security risks identified.

**Goal 3: Transformative**

Strategy 1: Build a Diverse Faculty and Staff Workforce. Excellence in teaching and learning forms the backbone of Virginia’s Community Colleges. The transition to remote teaching and learning during the pandemic has cast a spotlight on inequities within our student population. As students cope with a wide range of adverse factors, it is essential that all faculty are supported and engaged in high impact strategies that focus on and incorporate the individual needs of our students and reflect research in the scholarship of teaching and learning, regardless of instructional delivery modality. High impact student-centered strategies have a demonstrated positive impact on the development of essential academic and workplace skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and communication.

Virginia’s community college students must see themselves and their experiences reflected in their faculty and the curriculum. Virginia’s Community Colleges must invest in the development of a world-class cadre of diverse full-time and adjunct faculty who are focused on equity-minded principles and practices in teaching and learning and committed to student success. To achieve this, in the next two years, VCCS will implement recruiting strategies and hiring practices that advance the goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the search and selection process for all employees; evaluate existing and identify new faculty recruitment and retention strategies to attract and retain qualified and diverse faculty; create an onboarding toolkit for new faculty that provides mentorship and guidance for success and retention and ensures that faculty have what they need to be successful in a diverse teaching environment; and ensure that how we hire is reflective of our college communities.

VCCS struggles to be competitive in salaries in several high-demand, high-need areas, and this is exacerbated when we seek to attract candidates from diverse backgrounds. This plan builds in modest salary increases of 3 percent in FY 2023 and an additional 3 percent in FY 2024 to recognize the continued value and importance of faculty and staff in meeting the Virginia Plan goals.  The estimated cost of the increase is $17.8 million in FY 2023 and an additional $18.2 million in FY 2024. As we delve deeper into expanding our processes related to recruitment and onboarding of diverse faculty, a study of faculty salaries may reveal a need for additional salary support.

Strategy 2: Increase Economic Well-Being of Individuals and Communities: Build Capacity in High-Cost, High-Demand Nursing Programs.

Virginia’s healthcare workforce comprises 10% of all jobs in the Commonwealth. The Virginia Employment Commission projects a need for 7,746 new registered nurses and 2,550 licensed practical nurses by 2028. The healthcare industry job growth will continue in Virginia, particularly in Northern Virginia, Richmond, and the Hampton Roads area.

According to Elizabeth Carter, executive director of the Board of Health Professions and director of the Virginia Department of Health Professions, Healthcare Workforce Data Center, “Based upon current U.S. Department of Labor projections, health care job openings are anticipated to be well above average and among the fastest growing now and into the next decade. Health care workforce policy researchers similarly point to increasing demand due to the growing and aging population and increasing access to insurance coverage.”   ([Virginia health care sector gained 900 jobs in January - State of Reform](https://stateofreform.com/featured/2021/03/virginia-health-care-sector-gained-900-jobs-in-january/))

In 2019, VCCS sent 1,593 candidates for nursing licensure examinations. Of those, 88% of the candidates passed their certifications and were eligible to practice in Virginia.

Each year VCCS colleges admit over 2,000 new students into Associates of Nursing programs.  Another 1,400 are admitted into licensed practical nursing and certified nursing aide programs. Nearly 3,000 students who have applied to these programs are left on waiting lists or turned away each year because of the limited number of spaces available. Another 4,500 students enroll in pre-nursing programs with hopes of eventually being offered a space in a program leading to licensure. Many of these students come from historically underserved and low-income communities.

Included in *Opportunity 2027* are plans to promote program expansion and equitable enrollment representation in high-demand, high-cost programs with low enrollment of historically minoritized populations. Recent survey results suggest that VCCS colleges could potentially enroll an additional 1,600 registered nursing students, 1,400 licensed practical nursing students and 1,500 certified nurse aide students given additional space and faculty.

To meet this demand and to provide pathways to high-paying healthcare jobs, especially for underrepresented populations, VCCS proposes to expand its nursing program capacity by increasing the number of nursing and clinical faculty and by renovating and equipping new nursing labs across the colleges that offer nursing programs.

VCCS colleges estimate that for every 33 additional nursing students, at least one additional teaching faculty instructor AND one additional clinical faculty/instructor will be required to meet accreditation standards. In the VCCS, the median nursing faculty salary is $65,360, in line with the Virginia median nursing faculty salary of $64,606 but below the national faculty salary of $68,850. VCCS will request additional state investment of $37.8M in FY2023 and an additional $13.7M in FY2024 to expand program offerings and increase compensation for existing nursing faculty. This investment includes $14.1M in FY2023 and an additional $14.8M in FY2024 to hire 252.0 additional nursing teaching and clinical faculty over the biennium, and to increase the wages of current faculty towards the national average for associate professors of nursing.

VCCS colleges offering nursing programs estimate that they will need to modernize or expand existing classrooms and lab spaces to accommodate additional students.  Most of this expansion can be accomplished by renovating existing buildings, or modest expansions to off-campus facilities.  In order to expand program offerings, colleges estimate they will need approximately $13.6 million to either upgrade or purchase new equipment.   Equipment includes simulation labs and manikins that replicate a hospital environment but include video and audio equipment that can record so that faculty and students can view and discuss interactions in post-conferences. Labs must also have flexible nursing care units (i.e., beds, curtains, headwalls, assessment tables, carts), hospital equipment (i.e., IV pumps, medicine dispensers, ventilators, code carts), as well as HyFlex classroom equipment (i.e., computers, monitors, cameras, microphones, and specialized testing software.) Colleges would need approximately $10.2 million for minor non-capital renovation of existing spaces to install new equipment and connect to building utilities and infrastructure.

The ability to compete for clinical sites hampers VCCS’s ability to increase the pipeline of nurses. VCCS colleges report that limited availability of clinical practice sites in hospitals, offices and nursing homes create barriers for students in completing the required course and practical training. Only seven colleges (or less than one third) report that their current clinical partners could accommodate additional placements.  Three colleges report that they do not have enough clinical placements for their current students. VCCS will work with the General Assembly, hospital associations, the Virginia Department of Health Professions, and the Secretary of Education to identify and advance policy solutions that provide for equitable access to essential clinical experiences in preparing Virginia’s nursing workforce.

Strategy 3: Expand Economic Prosperity in all Communities of the Commonwealth: Infrastructure Academy

The Virginia Community College System seeks to create pathways to economic prosperity for Virginians through postsecondary education and training in heavy construction and maintenance, focusing on road, bridge and tunnel construction, broadband expansion, and on- and off-shore wind and solar energy infrastructure and distribution, leading to high-paying jobs and career advancement opportunities. Doing so will create a skilled talent pipeline to meet employer needs in these fast-growing industry sectors.

The availability of a trained, skilled workforce continues to stand out as the most significant challenge to infrastructure construction and maintenance industries nationally and in Virginia. Worker shortages in the construction industry are projected to become more severe in future years as workers in positions all along the industry hierarchy retire from the workforce and will need to be replaced. Many firms compensate for construction workforce shortages by bringing-in skilled workers from other states, which adds to project costs, cuts into company margins, and means that Virginians are not entering construction professions that pay well and provide opportunities for career mobility. The Virginia Clean Economy Act signed into law by the Governor in April 2021 is projected to create over 29,000 renewable energy jobs. This means Virginia’s green energy industries will be competing with heavy construction industries to fill future skilled construction workforce needs.

The skilled workforce shortage will impact current and projected demand in Virginia, where large, important projects are underway or in development:

* I-81 Corridor Improvement Program
* Underwater tunnel and road expansion in Hampton Roads
* Multi-mobile transportation build-out around the Capital Beltway
* I-66 express lanes outside the beltway
* I-95 South expansion to Richmond
* I-64 expansion from Richmond to Hampton Roads
* U.S. Route 58 improvements from the Atlantic Ocean to West Virginia
* Upgrades and repair on rail from Northern Virginia to far Southwest Virginia into Tennessee
* Expansion of broadband infrastructure
* Large-scale solar and offshore wind projects in response to The Virginia Clean Economy Act

VCCS seeks to address the skilled workforce demand by coordinating existing infrastructure related courses across VCCS’s constituent colleges into a cohesive academy structure. The VCCS Infrastructure Academy will focus on program alignment, development of online coursework, industry specialization, and provision of seamless, stackable career pathways resulting in increased quality, enrollments, and completions in order to provide good jobs to Virginians and meet the employment needs of expanding infrastructure projects in the Commonwealth. Special emphasis will be placed on increasing participation among black, Latino, and Native American populations, along with increasing the number of women in these traditionally male professions. Funding will be needed for high-cost training equipment and minor facility modifications to deliver more comprehensive programming in solar, on and offshore wind, broadband expansion, and heavy construction/road building. VCCS is working with industry leaders to better understand the employment demand, document competencies needed, and develop cost estimates for equipment and training sites. We are seeking grant and philanthropic funding to support other needed activities to build out the academy concept. An allocation of $1.25M for each year of the biennium, for a total of $2.5M, will allow for the state-of-the-art, high-cost training equipment needed to expand regional coordination of infrastructure training centers in targeted regions of the commonwealth.

**Section C. In-state Undergraduate Tuition and Fee Increase Plans:** Provide information about the assumptions used to develop tuition and fee information the institution provided in the Excel workbook Part 1. **The tuition and fee charges for in-state undergraduate students should reflect the institution’s estimate of reasonable and necessary charges to students based on the institution’s mission, market capacity and other factors.**

**RESPONSE:**

The tuition and fee increases only reflect costs necessary to implement strategic initiatives, to fund potential compensation increases for faculty and staff, mandatory cost increases associated with contracts and leases, operations and maintenance support for new facilities coming on-line and inflationary impacts on utilities. Tuition increases also reflect carry-over commitments for mandatory FY2022 costs that exceed the recurring tuition moderation funding included in the 2021 Appropriation Act.

**Section D. Tuition and Other Nongeneral Fund (NGF) Revenue:** Provide information about factors that went into the calculations of projected revenue, including how stimulus funds may mitigate tuition increases.

**RESPONSE:**

VCCS tuition and fee revenue projections are based on applying projected enrollment change percentages (a decline of 1.0% for FY2022) to FTE enrollments at each community college.  The enrollment change percentage is applied to the respective tuition and mandatory E&G fee rate for each college and a sum total is calculated for the VCCS total.  Tuition and revenue assumptions in the plan assumes no increase in the differential tuition rates in effect at select colleges, which is subject to change when the State Board considers any requests for changes in differential tuition rates.

Regarding federal pandemic funding, colleges will use awards to provide financial assistance to students and offset expenses related to responding directly to the pandemic and its impacts and address non-general revenue shortfalls due to enrollment decline and unpaid student balances from enrolled students.  Given the one-time or limited availability of federal funds, they will not impact tuition and fee calculations associated with sustaining strategic programs for the long-term.

**Section E. Other Budget Items:** This section includes any other budget items for which the institution wishes to provide detail. Descriptions of each of these items should be one-half page or less.

**RESPONSE:**

None.

**Section F. Enrollment Projections:** Include in this section information about how your institution developed its enrollment projections, whether your institution is concerned about future enrollment trends, and, if so, what planning is underway to address this concern. How have enrollment plans been impacted by the pandemic? For example, does your institution plan on enrolling more online students?

**RESPONSE:**

Projecting enrollments for community colleges can be notoriously difficult, as the potential student populations are sensitive to local labor markets and to trends in employment. In times of economic boom, community college enrollments will decline.  In times of economic hardship, community college enrollments will typically grow. The pandemic recession has not been typical of other cycles, and some uncertainty exists in how it will impact community college enrollments.

In calculating the system level enrollment for the next six years, we began by forecasting enrollments at the individual colleges, based on trends over the past 20 years.  While the most recent trend years have the greatest influence on the forecasts, we wanted to factor in two recent recession/recovery periods as a guide for the near-term pandemic recovery.  After aggregating the college level forecasts, we factored in the potential impact of the G3 funding as a positive influence on enrollment in the near term and a stabilizing influence in future years at the system level.

While hopeful that the pandemic recovery will encourage more students to consider enrolling in community colleges, VCCS has several efforts underway to address the needs of entering and continuing students. First, the VCCS is overhauling its onboarding procedures, with the idea that a student could wake up in the morning, decide to go to college, and be enrolled before going to bed that night.  This process will bring more consistency to the student experience across all colleges.  Second, VCCS is employing 60 new full-time advisors to coach new and returning students.  Advisors will work with students to address their academic and non-academic needs.  Finally, colleges are offering significant numbers of HyFlex courses, designed to allow students to attend classes in person or online as needed to manage their busy lives which may be attractive to adult students, in particular.

**Section G. Programs and Instructional Sites:** Provide information on any new academic programs, including credentials and certificates, new instructional sites, new schools, or mergers supported by all types of funding, that the institutions will be undertaking during the six-year period. Note that as part of the revised SCHEV program approval process, institutions will be asked to indicate if a proposed new program was included in its six-year plan. Also, provide information on plans to discontinue any programs.

**RESPONSE:**

Tables listing new academic programs, new instructional sites, and program discontinuances projected for FY 2022 – FY 2026, by college, follow.

**Planned New Programs**

| **College** | **Biennium** | **Degree** | **Program Name** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Blue Ridge | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Early Childhood Development |
| Blue Ridge | 2024-26 | Associate of Applied Science | Surgical Technology |
| Blue Ridge | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Pharmacy Technology |
| Central Virginia | 2022-24 | Associate of Science | Health Science |
| Central Virginia | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Information Systems Technology - Cyber Security Specialization |
| Central Virginia | 2024-26 | Associate of Applied Science | Early Childhood Education |
| Dabney S. Lancaster | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Technical Studies |
| Dabney S. Lancaster | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Mechatronics |
| Dabney S. Lancaster | 2022-24 | Associate of Arts and Sciences | Fine Arts |
| Danville | 2024-26 | Associate of Arts and Sciences | Liberal Arts-Human Services Specialization |
| Danville | 2024-26 | Associate of Applied Science | Amazon Web Services |
| Eastern Shore | 2022-24 | Associate of Arts and Sciences | Psychology |
| Eastern Shore | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Law Enforcement |
| Germanna | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Emergency Medical Technology |
| Germanna | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Medical Laboratory Technician |
| Germanna | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Medical Sonography |
| Germanna | 2022-24 | Associate of Arts and Sciences | Dietetic Technology |
| Germanna | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Digital Game and Simulation |
| J. Sargeant Reynolds | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Surgical Technology |
| J. Sargeant Reynolds | 2024-26 | Associate of Applied Science | Therapeutic Tech/OT PT Assistant |
| J. Sargeant Reynolds | 2024-26 | Associate of Applied Science | Pharmacy Technician |
| John Tyler | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Cloud Computing |
| John Tyler | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Automation and Robotics |
| John Tyler | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Pharmaceutical Manufacturing |
| John Tyler | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Data Analytics |
| John Tyler | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Artificial Intelligence |
| John Tyler | 2024-26 | Associate of Applied Science | Physical Therapy Assistant |
| John Tyler | 2024-26 | Associate of Applied Science | Energy Technology |
| John Tyler | 2024-26 | Associate of Science | Mathematics |
| John Tyler | 2024-26 | Associate of Applied Science | Unmanned Systems |
| Lord Fairfax | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Cloud Computing |
| Lord Fairfax | 2022-24 | Associate of Science | Computer Science |
| Lord Fairfax | 2022-24 | Associate of Science | Data Science |
| Lord Fairfax | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Aviation |
| Lord Fairfax | 2024-26 | Associate of Applied Science | Biotechnology |
| Lord Fairfax | 2024-26 | Associate of Science | Biotechnology |
| Lord Fairfax | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Administration of Justice |
| Lord Fairfax | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Financial Services |
| Lord Fairfax | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Marketing and Sales |
| Lord Fairfax | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Electronics Technology |
| Mountain Empire | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Speech Pathology Assistant |
| New River | 2024-26 | Associate of Applied Science | Early Childhood Education |
| Northern Virginia | 2022-24 | Associate of Arts | History |
| Northern Virginia | 2022-24 | Associate of Science | Mathematics |
| Northern Virginia | 2022-24 | Associate of Science | Data Analytics |
| Northern Virginia | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Cloud Computing |
| Northern Virginia | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Data Science & Analytics |
| Northern Virginia | 2024-26 | Associate of Applied Science | Mobile Application Design & Development |
| Northern Virginia | 2024-26 | Associate of Applied Science | Software Design & Development |
| Northern Virginia | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Data Center Operations |
| Northern Virginia | 2024-26 | Associate of Applied Science | Data Center Technology |
| Northern Virginia | 2024-26 | Associate of Applied Science | Autonomous & Drone Technology |
| Northern Virginia | 2022-24 | Associate of Science | Computer Engineering |
| Northern Virginia | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Applied Computer Science |
| Northern Virginia | 2024-26 | Associate of Applied Science | Game Design, Programming & Development |
| Northern Virginia | 2024-26 | Associate of Science | Computer & Information Systems Management |
| Northern Virginia | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Computer & Network Security |
| Northern Virginia | 2024-26 | Associate of Applied Science | Digital Forensics |
| Northern Virginia | 2022-24 | Associate of Science | Economics |
| Northern Virginia | 2022-24 | Associate of Science | Public Health re-name Health Sciences |
| Northern Virginia | 2024-26 | Associate of Science | Pre-Pharmacy |
| Northern Virginia | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Medical Assisting |
| Northern Virginia | 2024-26 | Associate of Applied Science | Histology Technician |
| Northern Virginia | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Polysomnographic Technician |
| Northern Virginia | 2022-24 | Associate of Fine Arts | Music |
| Northern Virginia | 2024-26 | Associate of Arts | English |
| Patrick Henry | 2022-24 | Associate of Arts and Sciences | General Studies, Specialization in Sports Management |
| Patrick Henry | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Motorsports Technology |
| Paul D. Camp | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Cybersecurity |
| Paul D. Camp | 2022-24 | Associate of Arts and Sciences | Computer Science |
| Paul D. Camp | 2022-24 | Associate of Science | Health Professions |
| Piedmont | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Medical Laboratory Technician |
| Piedmont | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Early Childhood Education |
| Piedmont | 2024-26 | Associate of Applied Science | Alternate Energies |
| Piedmont | 2024-26 | Associate of Applied Science | Automation and Robotics |
| Piedmont | 2024-26 | Associate of Applied Science | Artificial Intelligence/Data Science |
| Piedmont | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Fire Science |
| Southside Virginia | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Physical Therapy Assistant |
| Southside Virginia | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Early Childhood Education |
| Southwest Virginia | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Energy Generation and Maintenance |
| Southwest Virginia | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Culinary Arts |
| Southwest Virginia | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Adventure Tourism |
| Thomas Nelson | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | AWS |
| Thomas Nelson | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Electrical Engineering Technology |
| Thomas Nelson | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Public Health |
| Thomas Nelson | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Fire Protection Systems |
| Virginia Highlands | 2022-24 | Associate of Arts and Science | Computer Science |
| Virginia Highlands | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Computer Aided Drafting |
| Virginia Highlands | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Surgical Technician |
| Virginia Highlands | 2022-24 | Associate of Fine Arts | Fine Arts |
| Virginia Western | 2024-26 | Associate of Applied Science | Occupational Therapist Assistant |
| Wytheville | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Agriculture |
| Wytheville | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Paramedic/EMS/EMT |
| Wytheville | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Computer Science |
| Wytheville | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Automotive Technology |
| Wytheville | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Medical Assisting |

Note: Due to the untimely deaths of the Chief Academic Officer and Chief Workforce Officer, VCCS was unable to confirm new program plans at Rappahannock Community College (RCC).  VCCS will provide an update on any planned new programs at RCC in the final submission of this narrative in October 2021.

**Planned Program Discontinuances**

| **College** | **Biennium** | **Degree** | **Program Name** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Germanna | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Fire Science |
| J. Sargeant Reynolds | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Electrical Engineering Technology |
| J. Sargeant Reynolds | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Electronics Technology |
| Northern Virginia | 2020-2022 | Associate of Applied Science | Fire Science |
| Northern Virginia | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Marketing |
| Northern Virginia | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Hospitality Management |
| Patrick Henry | 2022-24 | Associate of Arts and Sciences | General Studies, Specialization in Recreation and Parks |
| Paul D. Camp | 2022-24 | Associate of Arts and Sciences | General Studies - Specialization in Computer Science |
| Paul D. Camp | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Mechatronics |
| Thomas Nelson | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Electronics Technology |
| Thomas Nelson | 2022-24 | Associate of Applied Science | Fine Arts |

**Planned New Sites**

| **College** | **Biennium** | **Zip Code** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Dabney S. Lancaster | 2022-24 | 24416 |
| Germanna | 2022-24 | 22508 |
| Germanna | 2022-24 | 22554 |
| Germanna | 2022-24 | 22401 |
| John Tyler | 2022-24 | 23831 |
| John Tyler | 2024-26 | 23237 or 23803 |
| John Tyler | 2026-28 | 23114 |
| New River | 2022-24 | 24091 |
| Piedmont | 2022-24 | 22902 |
| Thomas Nelson | 2022-24 | 23188 |

**Section H. Financial Aid:** Discuss plans for providing financial aid, not including stimulus funds, to help mitigate the impact of tuition and fee increases on low-income and middle-income students and their families, including the projected mix of grants and loans. Virginia’s definitions of low-income and middle-income are based on HHS Poverty Guidelines.  A table that outlines the HHS guidelines and the definitions is attached.

**RESPONSE:**

In 2019-2020, 88,979 VCCS students completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), of which 73,929 provided verified family income.  Of these, the VCCS enrolled 65,531 students who fell into either low (45,913) or middle (19,618) income ranges. Acquiring resources to cover the cost of educational expenses for middle-income families and their children is becoming more challenging.  Recent data from the VCCS show nearly $95 million of unmet need exists for middle-income students enrolling in community colleges, and 81% of VCCS students classified as middle income have some level of unmet financial need.  To offset the rising costs of enrolling in and obtaining a college credential, the VCCS is pursuing the following activities and strategies:

College packaging paradigms have been modified to increase state awards made to middle-income students, particularly those who are not eligible for the Federal Pell Grant.  Tuition set-aside programs such as PTAP and the VCCS Grant also focus on this population to offset or, when possible, fully cover tuition and fees.

The colleges’ foundations and the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education continue to expand efforts to raise funds to support non-need-based aid for low and middle-income students.

The new G3 program, which will begin in FY 2022, will provide financial assistance to low-income and middle-income Virginia students who are enrolled in educational programs leading to an occupation in a high-demand field.  This program pays tuition and fees not already covered by other grant aid for students who report a total household income less than 400 percent of the federal poverty guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.  Full-time students who receive a full Federal Pell Grant, our most needy population, will receive a student-support incentive grant to offset indirect costs such as living expenses, transportation, and childcare.

At most VCCS institutions, students are only packaged with grants.  They are informed about the option to apply for loans, but they must submit a separate application to make that request.  Seven of our institutions do not participate in the federal loan programs.  In 2019-20, 50,115 students only received grants while 6,357 students only received loans with 10,425 receiving both.

While it is difficult to project the future mix of grants and loans, historical data has been consistent with the above due to our low cost as well as our on-demand loan packaging paradigm.  However, several factors, each of whose relative impact cannot be predicted, are also at play:

**Federal Pell Grants**:  The maximum award continues to rise. It has increased from $5,920 in 2017-18 to $6,495 in 2021-22. In addition, Year-Round Pell was reintroduced in 2017-18, which has resulted in increased award eligibility in the trailing term of each Aid Year.

**State Aid**:  State aid to VCCS students has increased since 2017-18. Despite a decrease in enrollment, the total amount of state aid increased from $42 million in 2017-18 to almost $47 million in 2019-20. Despite the increase in Pell as well as its year-round availability, VCCS intends to continue using state aid funds to serve more low- and middle-income students to decrease reliance on loan aid.

Additionally, state aid has been targeted to support student access to short-term noncredit credentialing programs leading to high demand occupations through the Workforce Credentials Grant (FastForward).  When the FastForward began in 2016, $1 million was allocated to offset the student tuition for low and middle-income students.  This allocation has since increased to $3 million in 2019-2020 and has been held steady since then.

**Section I. Capital Outlay:**  Discuss the impact, if any, that the pandemic has had on capital planning, such as decreasing the need for space or other aspects. Provide information on your institution’s main Education and General Programs capital outlay projects, including new construction as well as renovations that might be proposed over the Six-Year Plan period that could have a significant impact on strategies, funding, student charges, or current square footage. Do not include projects for which construction (not planning) funding has been appropriated. *Special Note: The requested information is for discussion purposes only and inclusion of this information in the plans does not signify approval of the projects.*

**RESPONSE:**

The VCCS submits one comprehensive capital plan for the 23 community colleges.  Capital requests include construction of new space when space or program justified, renovation and configuration of existing space to meet changing strategic needs, improvements to aging building systems and equipment. Each biennium, the VCCS narrows its capital plan to focus on the top 30 priority requests for the system.  The current capital outlay plan includes 34 unfunded projects at 22 colleges.  Top priority projects include renovation of existing campuses to address healthcare, advanced manufacturing and engineering programs, addressing ongoing deferred maintenance, replacement of outdated academic buildings. The total project cost for the 34 projects in 2022-24 biennium is estimated to be approximately $950 million.

**Section J. Restructuring:** Provide information about any plans your institution has to seek an increased level of authority, relief from administrative or operational requirements, or renegotiation of existing management agreements.

**RESPONSE:**

The Higher Education Restructuring Act continues to provide significant benefits to institutions of higher education and the Level II delegated authority afforded the VCCS continue to provide benefits in the delivery of our educational mission. The VCCS remains committed to pursuing additional delegated authority for procurement.  The VCCS has worked collaboratively with the Division of Purchasing and Supplies in leveraging the delivery of procurement services by our shared-services Center and have strengthened communications between our two agencies.  We are confident that continued collaboration and process improvements will result in favorable consideration of this additional authority when requested.

**Section K. Evaluation of Previous Six-Year Plan:** Briefly summarize progress made in strategies identified in your institution’s previous six-year plan. Note how additional general fund support and reallocations were used to further the strategies.

**RESPONSE:**

**Priority 1: Expand Access to Workforce Education Programs**

Goal 1: Increase access to workforce education by investing in a Virginia College Promise program.

During the 2020 Legislative session, the Governor and General Assembly included $34 million in the budget language to fund the G3 (Get a Skill, Get a Job, Give Back) program. G3 provides last dollar tuition assistance for students enrolled in high demand, high wage career technical programs. G3 programs are designed to be stackable, that is, allow students to take courses and earn credentials and certifications that build skills and knowledge while allowing predictable ways to enter the workforce and re-enter education without loss of credit or momentum.  Due to the Pandemic Emergency, G3 for FY 2021 was unfunded, but colleges continued to build programs and pathways to support students.  During the 2021 Legislative session, G3 was introduced into legislation and funded for the FY 2022 academic year.

Over the past two years, six VCCS colleges (BRCC, DSLCC, ESCC, GCC, NVCC, VWCC) have increased enrollment in career technical degree programs by an average of 10.2%.  Fourteen colleges have increased enrollment in Fast Forward credential programs, for a systemwide increase of 16.4%.

Goal 2: Restructure workforce education programs to Build Accelerated Pathways into the Workforce by creating stackable credentials that align with high-demand, high-wage jobs.

In preparing to offer G3, the VCCS colleges redesigned more than 300 associate degree workforce education programs to be stackable, allowing students to earn credentials, exit to the workplace, then return for additional training with no loss of credit or momentum.

The redesigned programs typically have three levels:

* Level 1 is a short, skills-based career studies certificate leading to entry-level employment, often FastForward programs that lead to industry certifications.
* Level 2 builds from entry-level skills to advanced skills and includes work-based learning experiences.
* Level 3 provides broader knowledge in theoretical, management, and general education competencies to prepare students for middle-management positions.

Many of these restructured programs were introduced during Fall 2020 and required hands-on training. Due to COVID social distancing restrictions, colleges were required to limit the numbers of students in these courses. As restrictions ease, colleges will expand class sizes to accommodate additional students.

Goal 3: (Workforce Alignment) Pursue legislative opportunities to implement Institutional Partnership Performance Agreement and Tech Talent Pipeline programs to meet the Commonwealth’s economic development goals.

*Institutional Partnership Performance Agreement.* In March 2019, the VCCS submitted a letter to the Governor and other policymakers proposing to partner with Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) and Amazon Web Services (AWS) Educate to scale NOVA’s cloud computing degree to a total of 7 additional colleges in the biennium. The intent of the IPPA was to ensure that Virginia remains competitive in the fast-growing cloud computing marketplace. The partnership launched in fall 2019. To date, 9 community colleges have established cloud computing programs. In fall 2020, there were 270 students enrolled in cloud computing programs, in spite of the pandemic emergency. As part of the G3 initiative and with increasing demand for technicians with cloud computing skills, enrollment is expected to continue to grow. Colleges are adding dual enrollment pathways for high school students interested in cloud computing credentials.

*Tech Talent Pipeline*. VCCS received an allocation from the Tech Talent Investment Fund to increase the number of students in computer engineering programs who transfer into bachelor’s and master’s degrees in the fields of computer science, computer engineering, or computer software engineering. Eight colleges were selected to participate: Germanna, J. Sargeant Reynolds, John Tyler, New River, Northern Virginia, Thomas Nelson, Tidewater, and Virginia Western Community Colleges. Colleges invested the funds in outreach and recruitment strategies, additional faculty to increase enrollment, tutors to support students at critical points in the educational pathway and building out state-of-the-art IT facilities. The programs have now finished their second year.

**Priority 2: Increase Completion through Enhanced Coaching Capacity to Support Onboarding, Retention, Progression, and Completion**

Goal 1: Invest in Increased Coaching Capacity for Virginia’s Community Colleges to better serve minority and disadvantaged students, military veterans, and returning adult students.

The JLARC study indicated a need to increase our advising staff to meet the needs of our students more effectively.  A generous investment by the General Assembly has provided funds to create 60 new full-time non-faculty advising positions that will provide focused advising and coaching services at all 23 of our colleges.  Those positions are slated to be filled beginning July 1, 2021.

With the changes that came to all of our colleges with the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been many structural changes to transform how students experience advising. All of our colleges created remote and online advising opportunities to connect with services at the college. In addition, college navigators were identified at all institutions to assist with the onboarding process for new students. In some cases, these are not advisors, but rather skilled professionals who assist students with coordination of the administrative tasks necessary for enrollment.  Their work allows advisors and coaches to focus more time on supportive services.

VCCS has offered many professional development opportunities to support advisors in adopting more comprehensive coaching strategies. A peer group has been established to support the professional development needs of the coaches and advisors. Two face-to face gatherings attracted over 400 attendees each before the pandemic lockdown.  This group will convene again in October 2021. Beginning in March 2020, informational meetings, peer sharing gatherings, and technical assistance. An online library of resources including recordings of webinars, research on promising practices and peer-to-peer sharing has been created to provide ongoing support for coaches, advisors, and navigators.  Over 600 professionals have access to these resources and there have been over 10,000 views of the available resources since March 2020. The coaches and advisors also have access to national sources of training and information through an online platform so they can select relevant training at any time at no cost to the advisor or college.

At the current time, a taskforce of presidents and other leaders across the system are reinventing our student onboarding process. This will engage multiple stakeholders in transformational coaching and advising redesign as we continue to strive to meet the needs of our students and the communities we serve in more innovative ways.

Increased comprehensive coaching supports improved access to community-based support services for students. With the adoption of the Single Stop, advisors can now easily connect any student to the financial and other resources that they may be qualified to receive.

Goal 2: Improve Transfer Outcomes and Close Equity Gaps in Transfer Outcomes for minority and underserved student populations by improving transfer advising capacity.

Transfer Virginia has engaged over 1500 faculty and staff from Virginia colleges, universities, and Virginia Department of Education to build the vision and drive change to improve transfer opportunities for students.  Over the last three years, this collaboration resulted in the development of over 90 transfer courses with common outcomes across the VCCS, a 16-credit Passport and a 30-credit UCGS that provides students assurance that their courses will transfer and apply to general education requirements, eleven common curricula in Engineering, Education, Business, and Computer Science that will streamline transfer for those areas – many more to come, a statewide transfer guide template that provides a consistent platform for communicating the requirements for earning a bachelor’s degree through transfer, streamlining maintenance of transfer agreements through a statewide template, and a statewide Reverse Transfer Toolkit that scales reverse transfer through consistent application of strategies and practices.

The TransferVA portal is a statewide tool that closes the information equity gap for all students across Virginia, providing full transparency of student options in transfer. Through this comprehensive data and resource warehouse and search engine, students have the tools necessary to explore careers, programs, and courses to maximize their experience.  The portal is slated to go live in fall 2021 with approximately 40 institutional partners.

Through the State Committee on Transfer, state policies were recommended to the State Council that supported the practices needed to transform transfer.  VCCS policies were also developed to align VCCS practices to best serve transfer students.

All of the above speak to the structure of transfer.  The attention to the heart of transfer, the students, is a critical piece of the work.  One major step was the Transfer VA Call to Action – Equity Series.  The Call-to-Action web series on the role of transfer in advancing equity fostered dialogue within and between institutions, helped build the Virginia transfer community, and shared ideas, practice, and challenges with peers. The aim of the sessions was to support each institution in setting goals and determining action steps for improving transfer student success and equity at each institution. The ongoing process and conversation culminated in a March 2021 session on goal setting and action planning.  In total, there are four 90-minute content sessions, four data and goal setting office hour sessions, and three think-tank sessions through which institutional teams explored the meaning of equity, transfer barriers, transfer, and social mobility data, advising, and goal setting and action planning.  In June 2021, 7 four years and 10 community colleges presented their action plans for improving transfer experiences for students.

While there is still much work to be done, the foundation for collaboration, high stakeholder engagement, and significant change is established.

**Priority 3: Expand Workforce Credential Grants in High Demand Fields**

Goal 1: Expand non-credit workforce credential grant programs that align with high-demand jobs.

Since 2016, the WCG program has enhanced Virginia’s talent pool by upskilling more than 22,000 Virginians in the fields of greatest business demand. VCCS has leveraged the state’s investment in WCG to provide education for individuals who are sponsored by third-party payers, such as employers, trade associations, and federal employment programs. In total, nearly 30,000 high-demand credentials have been earned by Virginia workers since the program began in 2016.

Based on such performance outcomes and continued business demand, general fund support for the program was increased to $13.5 million appropriated for FY 2020 and FY 2021. To continue this progress in closing the skills gap identified by Virginia’s business community, funding for the Workforce Credentials Grant should continue to increase. Every $1 million dollars invested in the Workforce Credential Grant program leverages additional funding to generate 1,000 high-demand, high-value industry credentials, strengthening the talent pool needed by Virginia’s businesses, moving more Virginians toward family-sustaining wages, and advancing the commonwealth’s economic vibrancy.

**Priority 4: Increase Faculty and Staff Compensation**

Goal: Build faculty and staff compensation towards competitive market rates and realignment with other institutions of higher education.

Thanks to the new state budget approved by lawmakers and signed by the governor, Virginia state employees who were employed as of March 10, 2021, and in good performance standing as of their last evaluation will receive a five-percent salary increase in the fiscal year that begins July 1.

The five-percent increase applies to classified staff, full-time, and adjunct faculty.  Also, as allowed by state budget language, VCCS will extend the five-percent increase to our part-time P-14 colleagues statewide effective with the first hourly pay date.

**Priority 5: Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System**

Goal: Research and plan for a future cloud-based ERP system to better manage the student, business, and human resources functions of the VCCS.

Over the past two years, VCCS has made significant functional upgrades to two key ERP systems -- the administrative information system, which manages accounting and budgeting for all 23 colleges, the system office and the shared services center, and the student information system. In addition to the technical upgrades, VCCS has undergone an extensive review of its business processes in order to take advantage of new functionality in the tools, prepare for eventual transition to cloud-based services and to improve the experience for students.

**Section L. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategic Plan:** Provide an update on the completion status of your institution’s plan that is being coordinated with the Governor’s Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. If a copy of the plan is available, please include it when your institution submits its initial plan. If a copy of the plan is not available for July 1 or if changes are made, please provide a copy with your institution’s final plan submission on October 1.

**RESPONSE:**

The VCCS will collect individual plans from all 23 community colleges. The colleges have received a template that provides information about the six-stage organizational development continuum and includes the five goals identified in the One Virginia plan. Colleges that have an existing diversity plan will use a short form of the template to address goals and assess the institution to fulfill the One Virginia requirement. All other colleges are asked to align with the One Virginia plan. Next year, all colleges are asked to fully align with the One Virginia plan. The VCCS has received an extension from the Governor’s Office until September 15, 2021, to submit all college plans in a single document. We will provide SCHEV a copy of VCCS’ final plan submission no later than October 1, 2021.

**Section M. Economic Development Annual Report:** Provide a copy of any report your institution has produced about its economic development contributions.

**RESPONSE:**

VCCS colleges regularly conduct economic impact studies to better understand their roles in the prosperity of the communities they serve.  Below are links to examples of these studies:

[Germanna Community College](https://drive.google.com/file/d/13c5WgEnoRjNWlZXtT6fAYF6sAE8LRFbG/view?usp=sharing)

[Reynolds Community College](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CBsmny_0B_HhJZY6ho_lNoCuegu3w6-n/view?usp=sharing)

[Southside Virginia Community College](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OexFJwMplo77vSQrgfMufPK8xnz5Jsz7/view?usp=sharing)

[Southwest Virginia Community College](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NyIpH-gn20Cma7FWGlfXbXU7581g-loP/view?usp=sharing)