

SVHEC STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-22



SVHEC

6/3/2020

BOARD-APPROVED FINAL VERSION

SVHEC STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-22

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SVHEC STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-22

SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL TO THE SVHEC BOARD OF TRUSTEES

INTRODUCTION

The culmination of six months of investigation, listening and synthesis, this document lays out a road map of strategic goals and objectives for advancing the SVHEC's mission into the 2020-22 biennium. A number of critical resources were mined in developing the Plan: the 2018-20 SVHEC Strategic Plan, 2018-20 SCHEV Strategic Plan, Virginia Performs Strategic Plan, VCCS Strategic Plan, Virginia DOE Profile of a Graduate, stakeholder feedback, and numerous analytical reports and publications describing the milieu in which the agency will operate in the biennium.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

From September through December 2020 more than 73 representatives from key stakeholder groups provided feedback on the Plan through formal facilitated listening sessions. Represented stakeholder groups included the Southern Virginia Higher Education Foundation, South Central Workforce Development Board, SVHEC Board of Trustees, SVHEC and Partner staffs, SVHEC Leadership Team, SVHEC workforce students, local elected officials and Halifax County Chamber of Commerce's Senior Executive Roundtable and Vision 2020 groups. Feedback was consistently positive with stakeholders encouraging the SVHEC to continue and expand its good work. The following SVHEC strengths and opportunities were expressed across all groups and are reflected in the goals and objectives of this Strategic Plan:

Strengths

- SVHEC Workforce Training Programs

- Degree Access
- SVHEC staff and facilities
- Outreach
- Collaboration

Opportunities

- Expand collaboration
- Add degree and workforce training programs
- Improve visibility in the community and to prospective students

MISSION STATEMENT

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

VISION STATEMENT

Educational victories **equal** economic strength

TAGLINE

Your Opportunity lives here

LONG RANGE GOALS

1. Increase levels of community educational attainment.
2. Encourage and support collaborations that address regional workforce education and training needs by leveraging southern Virginia's economic & educational assets.

3. Provide support services that help workforce training program participants succeed.
4. Anticipate facilities, operational & staff changes required of future growth.
5. Maintain a sound & sustainable business model.

WE BELIEVE

- *In the power of education to transform individuals & communities*
- *That collaboration leverages scarce resources and yields creative solutions*
- *In harnessing technology to improve educational, workforce, & research outcomes*
- *In trying new things*

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

1. GOAL Increase levels of community educational attainment.

A. Objective: By **June 2022** continue to work on the College & Career Readiness Initiative, a Community Strategic Plan Initiative targeted at boosting skills levels, increasing educational attainment, and improving workforce competitiveness by increasing post-secondary credential and degree attainment including industry credentials, GEDs, Associate's, Bachelor's, and Graduate Degrees. [Dr. Adams with College & Career Readiness Work Group]

B. Objective: By **June 2022** continue supporting and leading initiatives of the Community Strategic Plan that target workforce, economic, and community development. [Dr. Adams with SVHEC Leadership Team]

C. Objective: By **June 2022** make it simpler and more convenient for students to transfer into Associate's Degree programs from SVHEC workforce training programs by working with community college partners to develop articulation agreements that award college credits for approved industry credentials. Where appropriate, expand co-enrollment opportunities that leverage resources and increase student access and convenience. [Dr. Adams, Dr. Simon-Owens, Brenda Terry]

D. Objective: By **July 2021** increase awareness among high school students of career pathways available through the SVHEC and its partners by developing promotional "career road maps" that highlight complete career pathways that include the Career Tech Academy (and other dual enrollment opportunities available in the high schools), SVHEC workforce training programs, and 2- and 4-year degree programs. [Amy Cole, Hope Harris-Gayles]

E. Objective: By **July 2021** increase awareness and access to financial aid by working with partners to develop a plan to host Financial Aid Saturdays at the SVHEC to make students and parents aware of all financial assistance available through the SVHEC and its partners and to provide them with assistance filling out the FAFSA. [Amy Cole, Meagan Owen, Hope Harris-Gayles]

2. GOAL Encourage and support collaborations that address regional workforce education and training needs by leveraging southern Virginia's economic & educational assets.

A. Objective: By **June 2022** increase access to high demand degree programs and credentials identified in collaboration with partners during the Partnership 2.0 Initiative by developing and implementing strategies to bring the proposed offerings to the SVHEC. [Amy Cole, Nelson Stevens, Dr. Adams]

B. Objective: By **June 2022** grow high-demand STEM-H career pathways through the Career Tech Academy's high school dual enrollment programs. [David Kenealy, Dr. Adams, Brenda Terry]

- C. Objective:** By **June 2022** expand work-based learning experience by increasing opportunities for internships, apprenticeships, job shadowing, etc. [David Kenealy, Dr. Adams, Brenda Terry]
- D. Objective:** By **September 2021** increase access to regional K-12 STEM-H career awareness opportunities by launching Career Choice EAST. [Amy Cole, Meagan Owen, Hope Harris-Gayles]
- E. Objective:** By **July 2021** increase opportunities to support new and existing industry by acting on the “Bold Steps” (strategic and tactical plans) developed in GENEDGE’s 2020 Strategic Review of the R&D Center. [David Kenealy, Dr. Adams, Brenda Terry, Hope Harris-Gayles]
- F. Objective:** By **June of each year** provide Trustees with an annual progress report on the measures and targets established under the Virginia Performs Strategic Plan. [Dr. Adams, Brenda Terry, Catherine Stevens]

3. GOAL Provide support services that help workforce training program students succeed.

- A. Objective:** By **July 2021** develop and provide centralized supportive services for individuals participating in the SVHEC’s workforce training

programs. [Amy Cole, Meagan Owen, Dr. Nettie Simon-Owens or designee]

B. Objective: By **July 2021** update the SVHEC Student Handbook and Catalog. [Amy Cole, Meagan Owen, Dr. Nettie Simon-Owens or designee]

C. Objective: By **July 2021** replace the Blue Drop Learning Management System with a Student Information System that manages student data more effectively. [Brenda Terry, Dr. Nettie Simon-Owens]

D. Objective: By **June 2022** partner with the SVHEF, SVHEC educational partners and other local groups (Prizery, Chamber, Local Businesses, etc.) to develop a plan to create a more college-like campus. [Amy Cole, Meagan Owen, Nelson Stevens]

4. GOAL Anticipate facilities, operational and staff changes required of future growth.

A. Objective: By **July 2021** complete internal discussions to set the stage for conducting a Master Facilities Plan. [Brenda Terry, Nelson Stevens]

- B. Objective:** By **June 2022** conduct the Master Facilities Plan study and share results of with the SVHEC and SVHEF Boards. [Brenda Terry, Nelson Stevens, Dr. Adams]
- C. Objective:** By **September 2021** develop an agency-level Master Technology Plan to stay apprised of future equipment and technology needs. [Nelson Stevens, Brenda Terry]
- D. Objective:** By **June 2022** develop agency-level safety plans (e.g. Operations, R&D, and Workforce Safety Plans) that include emergency preparedness. [Brenda Terry, Dr. Nettie Simon-Owens, David Kenealy, Nelson Stevens, Amy Cole]
- E. Objective:** By **July 2021** enhance the onboarding process by providing new employees, within their first three months of employment, an opportunity to receive the SVHEC History and Overview presentation from the executive director and to experience a version of the Experience SVHEC Tour with the associate director of communications and outreach. [Amy Cole, Virginia Byrd, Hope Harris-Gayles, Dr. Adams]

- F. Objective:** By **June 2022** engage all SVHEC employees in developing a Succession Plan that addresses risk mitigation, cross-training, and individual staff development. [Dr. Adams, Brenda Terry, Dr. Nettie Simon-Owens.]
- G. Objective:** Beginning **July 2021** provide every full-time employee with at least one professional development opportunity each year. [Brenda Terry, Dr. Nettie Simon-Owens, David Kenealy, Amy Cole, Nelson Stevens]

5. GOAL Maintain a sound and sustainable business model.

- A. Objective:** By **June 2021** continue regular monitoring of signature programs for effectiveness and sustainability by developing annual pro forma statements to ensure enrollment and funding are sufficient to maintain and/or expand programs. [Brenda Terry, Dr. Nettie Simon-Owens, David Kenealy, Amy Cole]
- B. Objective:** By **June of each year** provide the SVHEF with annual Fundraising Needs Assessments to identify funding needs for SVHEC programs, services, and operations. [Dr. Adams, Brenda Terry, Dr. Nettie Simon-Owens, Amy Cole]

C. Objective: By **July 2021** develop a comprehensive marketing plan that

includes recruitment for workforce training programs. [Hope Harris-

Gayles, Dr. Nettie Simon-Owens, Brenda Terry, Dr. Adams]

D. Objective: By **July 2021** appoint and charge a Project Team with a

comprehensive review and revision of the Continuity of Operations Plan

(COOP). [Brenda Terry, Nelson Stevens]

PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS: 2020-22

Environmental Scan and Assumptions

As we enter 2020, a number of high-profile events dominate the news. On the international scene there is continued unrest in the Middle East, particularly in Iran following the US military's assassination of General Qassem Soleimani. The outbreak of a new Coronavirus, originating in China and spreading globally, has seized headlines. And the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union was effective January 31, 2020. On the national stage, the Senate impeachment hearing and campaigns gearing up for the 2020 presidential election vie for attention. In Virginia, the General Assembly is garnering attention as it grapples with gun control and other controversial proposals. In Halifax County, the question of renovating or rebuilding the high school, adjustments within the newly-seated Board of Supervisors, and job losses with major employers are at the forefront of our attention.

In 2019, approximately 4,300 accredited US colleges and universities enrolled 18 million students; a number of additional institutions provide noncredit post-secondary education and workforce training. All institutions of higher education and training are operating in an increasingly challenging environment and must remain aware of emerging threats and opportunities in order to weather the threats and capitalize on the opportunities.

In preparing for a new biennial strategic plan the SVHEC will also need to look beyond today's headlines and holistically assess the current and future environment in which it operates. A review of the current environment and projections for changes to that environment follows. This review is based on analyses of economic, demographic, socio-political, and higher education issues by multiple sources, including recent popular press and scholarly articles, research reports, and state-and federal-level legislation. The summary information below includes assumptions that can serve to inform the new plan.

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

National Economy

The US economy is considered reasonably healthy by a number of measures. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 2.3% in 2019 (growth of 2-3% annually is considered "healthy" (Amadeo, 2020); at 3.5%, unemployment is low; inflation was 2.3%, close to the Federal Reserves' target of 2%; interest rates are stable, though slightly low; and the stock market reached new highs in mid-January.

However, there are signs that not all is well with the national economy:

- Growth as measured by GDP was 3.1% in the first quarter of 2019 but slowed over the last three quarters of 2019 and is forecasted to be only 1.7% annually through 2030;
- Unemployment is low but wages continue to stagnate. Nominal wage growth has been weaker than it should be in a "healthy" economy and some blame is being put on the growing "gig" economy and what is known as "involuntary part-time work." Under normal circumstances, low unemployment leads to higher wages as employers compete for workers, but in the current economy, employers are hiring more part-time workers at low wages. Some researchers believe unemployment is being replaced by underemployment (Bell & Blanchflower, 2018).
- Consumer confidence declined in 2019, which is considered a harbinger for recession;
- Credit card debt and late payments rose in 2019 to their highest levels in 7 years, both a harbinger for and a causal factor in a recession;
- Manufacturing activity shrank in December 2019 to its lowest point in a decade; and
- Farm bankruptcies have hit an eight-year high, up 20% in 2019.

Some economists suggest that after the longest period of economic growth in US history (126 straight months), a recession is imminent. Others, including Bloomberg Economics do not subscribe to the "what goes up, must come down" theory but instead acknowledge the complexity of the current economy and factors which influence it. Bloomberg Economics' model created to predict the probability of a recession in the next 12 months puts that probability at only 26% as of 1/15/2020, but this report preceded the news of the Novel Coronavirus outbreak in China, predicted to adversely impact global economies.

Virginia Economy

Virginia's economy also exhibits some strengths and weaknesses. The 2019 "State of the Commonwealth" report prepared by the Strome College of Business and Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy at Old Dominion forecasted that the state would finish 2019 with a growth rate of 2.5%, its fifth straight year of economic growth. Federal government spending has fueled that growth and should continue to do so through 2020. Unemployment is low at 2.6% but a shortage of qualified labor poses a threat, particularly in the short term. In terms of demographic trends, outmigration of Virginians exceeded in migration of individuals from other states; this has been offset in prior years due to the increases in international students coming to the state, but that number also declined in 2019.

Halifax County Economy

The 2020 County budget is up 1.6%. Bright spots in the county's economic outlook include the construction of SOVA Innovation Hub (a partnership of Microsoft and Mid-Atlantic Broadband Corporation) downtown, the renovation or rebuild of the high school, renovation of the John Randolph Hotel, renovation of the Halifax County Courthouse, establishment of the Henrietta Lacks Life Sciences Center, expansion of affordable housing construction, and coming expansion of fiber optic internet service in the county through state funding awarded to Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative. Setbacks include the recent

ABB layoff of 113 workers, about 25% of the company's South Boston workforce, followed by the bankruptcy and restructuring announcement by Cardinal Homes (located in Charlotte County, but important to Halifax as a regional employer). Continued population loss for the county is expected.

Economic Assumptions

- 1.** In the absence of major, unforeseen disruptions, the US economy should remain relatively stable over the coming biennium, albeit with slow growth (projected at 2.2% for 2020 according to the Congressional Budget Office). In the absence of policy changes to address higher education funding and student debt, fiscal impacts will be negative. Some economic sectors will continue to shrink while others (health care, energy, advanced manufacturing) will continue to grow, requiring institutions of higher education to respond rapidly in terms of educational program offerings and accessibility.
- 2.** The Virginia economy will also remain stable or grow at a slower than US average rate with negative fiscal impacts on higher education funding. Funding already been decreasing to a number of institutions, requiring them to raise tuition levels and cut operations to make up for budget shortfalls. Addressing the shortage of qualified labor through investments in education, training, and workforce recruitment will be key to sparking growth in the Commonwealth's economy.
- 3.** Although the two percent local sales tax passed last fall will enable the county to move ahead with capital projects for renovation or construction of public school facilities and the county budget increased by 1.7% over the 2019 budget, Halifax will continue to face fiscal challenges. These could worsen with additional layoffs or losses of employers which in turn could exacerbate population loss and erosion of the tax base.

County funding to the SVHEC has remained level over the last three budgets, but could change in 2020 if other factors put undue pressure on the county budget.

4. Employment in most industry sectors in Halifax County will shrink over the next biennium. Only Health Care and Social Assistance, Information, and Construction are projected to grow.

Halifax County, Virginia, 2019q3¹

NAICS	Industry	Current			2-Year Forecast				
		Empl	Avg Ann Wages	LQ	Total Demand	Exits	Transfers	Empl Growth	Ann % Growth
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	2,232	\$46,224	1.16	459	208	215	36	0.8%
51	Information	179	\$29,992	0.68	36	12	22	1	0.3%
23	Construction	793	\$44,501	1.04	156	56	100	1	0.1%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	898	\$14,869	0.75	288	128	162	-2	-0.1%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	1,099	\$44,118	1.83	226	99	134	-7	-0.3%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	482	\$16,010	1.81	131	60	75	-4	-0.4%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	428	\$18,908	0.50	94	42	57	-4	-0.4%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	282	\$43,253	0.31	46	18	30	-2	-0.4%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	150	\$25,911	0.65	28	14	16	-2	-0.6%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	53	\$52,234	0.26	9	4	6	-1	-0.6%
99	Unclassified	18	\$19,271	1.14	4	2	2	0	-0.6%
52	Finance and Insurance	219	\$50,612	0.42	37	15	25	-3	-0.7%
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	25	\$40,952	0.42	5	2	3	0	-0.8%
92	Public Administration	688	\$37,438	1.10	111	53	72	-14	-1.0%
61	Educational Services	892	\$28,276	0.82	144	79	85	-19	-1.1%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	662	\$20,906	1.11	135	68	81	-15	-1.1%
44	Retail Trade	1,332	\$23,668	0.96	318	155	196	-34	-1.3%
42	Wholesale Trade	303	\$38,664	0.60	55	24	39	-8	-1.4%
22	Utilities	215	\$78,912	3.14	32	14	24	-6	-1.5%
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	488	\$19,700	2.74	88	44	60	-16	-1.7%
31	Manufacturing	1,916	\$45,761	1.74	325	145	248	-67	-1.8%
	Total - All Industries	13,353	\$35,839	1.00	2,733	1,237	1,656	-159	-0.6%

Source: [JobsEQ®](#)

Data as of 2019Q3 unless noted otherwise

Occupation wages are as of 2018 and represent the average for all Covered Employment. For MSAs, states, and the nation, wages in this analytic are aggregated from the county level details and so may not match exactly the wages for these types of regions shown elsewhere.

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DEMOGRAPHIC ENVIRONMENT

National Trends

- The aging population, where for the first time the number of adults age 65 and older is projected to exceed the number of children by 2035. This trend has serious implications for both the US health care system and the workforce. The country is already experiencing a shortage of primary care providers including nurses at all levels, and the increase in the number of older adults requiring both a larger volume and higher intensity of services could tax the system and drive costs up. With respect to the workforce, the aging population will adversely impact the "old-age dependency" ratio, defined as the number of people age 65 and over to the working-age adults. Many industries are already faced with replacing experienced workers as those people retire and finding trained, skilled workers is difficult in many locales.
- Millennials surpassed Baby Boomers as the largest adult generation. As a group Millennials earn less, have less savings, and less wealth compared to Baby Boomers and are more likely to choose to live in cities;
- Generation Z members are the first true digital natives and are "hungry for digital content" (Argintaru, 2019). Much of what is known about this generation's digital literacy, preferences in terms of communication and social media, and response to different types of advertising is collected by the advertising industry. This data provides insight for higher education as institutions seek to recruit and enroll Gen Z members. Ad industry survey data indicate Generation Z members are open to using new technologies and sharing their personal information in a way that differentiates them from previous generations. They prefer Instagram over Facebook, WhatsApp,

and other social media platforms; constant connectivity and on-demand entertainment are expectations among this group. While they are more inclined to share personal data, Generation Z is savvier and more transactional about that sharing. Per researchers with the Pew Research Center, Generation Z is "on track to be the most-well-educated generation yet" and has shown both a proclivity to political involvement and "openness to emerging social trends."

- White/non-Hispanic Americans are still the racial majority at 60.4 percent, followed by blacks at 13.4percent, but Hispanics as a racial/ethnic minority have increased to 18.3 percent of the US population. Hispanics are projected to be the largest racial or ethnic minority group in the next Census.
- The number of US high school graduates peaked in 2013 and is projected to increase by only 0.2% by 2029, compared to a 6% increase over the last nine years. Moody's Investor Services, using National Center for Education Statistics data, projects that the number of high school graduate will decline by 4% in the Northeast and 2% in the Midwest (down 2%). The South is expected to see a 6% increase in high school graduates over the same period (Paterson, 2019) but this increase will uneven across the region with rural areas likely to see declines while urban-suburban areas experience increases.
- Traditional college students (18-24 years old) who attend college full-time) currently account for only 30% of the current college population in the US. Traditional age college students are expected to enroll at higher rates than their older peers in coming years (Bauer-Wolf, 2019).

State & County Trends

- The Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia just released its 2019 population estimates for Virginia counties and cities, determining that population growth for the Commonwealth was the slowest in a century. Like most

counties in Southern Virginia, Halifax is projected to continue to lose population. The Weldon Cooper Center predicts a loss of 5.1% since the 2010 Census, followed by another 5.6% loss between 2020 and 2030. The number of 15-19 years in Halifax County decreased by eleven percent between 2012 and 2017 and for the two years ending 2018, the entire school age population for the county fell by almost 2%. These trends are likely to continue with overall population loss.

Demographic Assumptions

1. The gender and racial/ethnic proportions of the Halifax population will remain relatively unchanged over the biennium and likely over the coming decade.
2. Population loss, decrease in numbers of high school graduates all present challenges for higher education, for employers, and for economic development in Halifax and surrounding counties. With the pool of college applicants is shrinking in the region, competing on affordability and attraction of “earning a degree without leaving home” may not be enough to keep the SVHEC’s degree partners’ enrollments stable. Those enrollments were beginning to rebound after several years of decline
3. The county’s aging population also has implications for the workforce and future economic development. While the impact is unlikely to be felt in this biennium, planning for replacing retiring workers should be underway.

POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

Trends

- The 2020 presidential election is obviously dominating the headlines. Several Democratic candidates are releasing higher education policy proposals to address college affordability (increase funding for Pell Grants, create "free college" via state-federal partnerships, expand student loan forgiveness, increase dedicated funding for HBCUs and other Minority-serving institutions (MSIs). The Republican National Committee (RNC) has announced no plans for any RNC-sanctioned primary debates and President Donald Trump has stated that he will not debate any primary challenger. Students are expected to be a much more influential voting block in this presidential election.
- Among actions that the current administration has taken that impact higher education are deregulation of policies for accreditors (removal of geographic restriction for accreditors which will make it easier for institutions to get distance education programs approved) and new regulations on Title IX. The latter are expected in early 2020 to give colleges and universities more flexibility to adjudicate campus sexual assault cases, force administrators to allow cross-examination, and narrow the definition of sexual harassment).

Political Assumptions

1. The political landscape has become increasingly partisan and polarized at both the federal and state levels, causing gridlock in some policy areas. This is likely to continue through the biennium no matter what the outcome of the presidential election.

TECHNOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

Technology Trends

- Students today have access to increasing sophisticated technology and expect these technologies to be available to them on their campuses. Mark McColluch at University of Oregon argues out that “Universities must accommodate the new devices students bring to campus each year, and we must respect their preferences for how we communicate with them. Students prefer university apps that push notifications but will still read our email messages if the subject is relevant and the body is short” (Grauer, 2020).
- Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Virtual Reality (VR) is expanding on campuses (up to 46% of campuses report using these technologies) and more than half of institutions are projected to incorporate VR by 2021 (Violino, 2017).
- Corporations are investing in college campuses, not just in terms of learning technology but also in areas of building science and enterprise technology.
- There has already been an increase in number of affordable, flexible online programs as institutions of higher education compete for enrollment revenue. Most community colleges have offered online courses for more than 20 years and four-year institutions have followed, even offering full-degree programs online.
- In 2012 MOOCS appeared to be poised to transform higher education. Providers including Coursera, EdX, and Udacity did extend global access to quality content but the business model was still in development. Today, providers still offer “free courses” but also offer course bundles conferring certificates and degrees on a pay-basis.
- Most institutions are investing in data and analytics projects. Colleges are using data in more ways as they modernize and manage programs to show returns on student and state investments.

- Advances in technology are forcing campuses to raise the bar on privacy and security practices.

Technology Assumptions

1. The SVHEC will need to continuously look ahead to the next technology advances to ensure that the Center meet student expectations. Members of Generation Z, our current and pipeline post-secondary learners, are likely to have higher expectations in regard to technology on college campuses.

2. Technology will be a key tool for fostering partnerships with the SVHEC's educational partners as each institution strategizes to compete for enrollments. Leveraging technology assets and resources will allow the SVHEC to build and maintain those partnerships but will require continued innovative thinking.

HIGHER EDUCATION TRENDS: FISCAL HEALTH

National

- After several years of state funding cuts to public institutions of higher education, funding inched back up by 3.7% in fiscal year 2019 (Inside Higher Ed, 2019). State and federal funding together make up about 34% of institutions' budgets but state funding was traditionally higher than federal funding for education in past years; in 1980, state funding was 140% higher in 1980 than federal funding but this difference declined to about 12% higher in 2015. With enrollment declines following the 2008-2009 recession (an expected counter-cyclical event occurring as a recovering job market attracts individuals away from education), states cut funding with the expectation that institutions would make fiscal adjustments including raising tuition; in fact, tuition increased by an average of 20% over the last five years in Virginia

(Eischens, 2019). In fiscal year 2019, more than two-thirds of the growth in state funding is attributed to nine large states, including Virginia. Others, including Alaska, Kentucky, Minnesota, Ohio, and South Carolina saw continued decreases.

- Private colleges and universities are also struggling with balancing budgets in the face of declining enrollments and rising operating costs. A number of institutions, mostly small, privates in New England and the Midwest have closed due to declining financial health. Moody's predicts 15+/- closures in 2020. Inside Higher announced plans to publish a data-driven forecast of which and when private colleges might close last fall but suspended plans after outcry from institutions. For-profits are also still in financial decline and under US Dept of Educ scrutiny after overpromising and under-delivering in terms of jobs. Some colleges have closed; others are attempting to rebrand, spin off or consolidate.
- Generation Z has replaced Millennials on college campuses. Researchers with the Pew Research Center see Generation Z as "on track to be the most-well-educated generation yet."

Virginia/Southern Virginia

- Institutions which have closed most recently (winter 2018) include the for-profits, Virginia College and Brightwood College both owned by Education Corporation of America and having multiple campuses across several states including Virginia. Others, especially small private institutions have weathered near-misses and moved quickly to trim budgets, revise academic offerings, and reinvent their business model.
- No higher education institutions in Southern Virginia have closed since St. Paul's (Lawrenceville) in 2013 but both Southside Virginia Community College and Danville Community College have battled declining enrollments and budget challenges in the last two years.

CONCLUSION

A “take away” from the review of trends impacting higher education and the SVHEC’s coming biennium can be summed up in the words of Tom Vander Ark writing for Forbes magazine:

"The new architecture of college will...move beyond the confines of the four-year degree to a lifelong learning relationship where short sprints prepare learners for new opportunities."

Agile approaches to change will be needed more than ever in higher education. Adaptive planning, continuous improvement, and rapid and flexible responses in institutional strategic planning will enable innovation and cost-effective operations. Building the right partnerships, leveraging resources, and adopting emerging technologies and educational models as they prove appropriate will enable the SVHEC to survive and thrive in an era of rapid changes to higher education.

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