

VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Meeting Number 342

Tuesday, May 12, 2026

Location: ADM Boardroom

The Virginia Highlands Community College Board convened at 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 12, 2026. Lunch was at noon, and the business portion of the meeting immediately followed at 1:00 p.m. in the ADM Boardroom.

Members Present

Dr. Doug Arnold, Washington County
Gwen Beattie, Smyth County
Donald Bowman, City of Bristol
Charlie Fugate, Washington County
Pamela Hill, Smyth County
Kalen Hunter, City of Bristol
Beth Rhinehart, City of Bristol
Dan Smith, Washington County
Tonya Triplett, Washington County

Staff Present

Dr. Adam Hutchison, President and Secretary to the Board
Jessie O'Quinn, Executive Assistant to the President
Dr. Derek Whisman, Vice President of Instruction and Student Services

Staff Absent

Christine Fields, Vice President of Finance and Administration

Special Guest

Tony Miller, State Board for Community Colleges (SBCC) Member

Call to Order

Don Bowman, Chair, called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes

Board Member Doug Arnold made the motion to approve the minutes for February 10, 2026 Minutes No. 341. Board Member Beth Rhinehart abstained due to not being present at the last meeting, and Board Member Kalen Hunter abstained due to being a new member. Board Member Dan Smith seconded, and the motion carried.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

College Updates

Instruction and Student Services

Vice President Dr. Derek Whisman presented to the Board an enrollment update. The Summer 2026 enrollment is at 234 FTE, an increase of 5.41% (12 FTE). Fall semester enrollment is currently showing 427 FTE, an increase of 4.77%. Dual Enrollment shows a 104% increase for Fall due to early engagement with the high schools for course planning. Dr. Whisman also shared that we have exceeded our FTE goal for the academic year, with 1447 FTE compared to the expected 1330. The Promise Programs and Navigators have contributed to increased enrollment. VHCC has transitioned from part-time to full-time Navigators, which has improved consistency and engagement with the high schools. Our recruitment and engagement teams recently hosted eight local schools and registered over 160 seniors for Summer and Fall classes.

Institutional Advancement and Educational Foundation

President Dr. Hutchison announced that a search is underway for a new Vice President, following the resignation of Laura Pennington as Vice President of Institutional Advancement and Executive Director of the Educational Foundation. Debbie McCroskey is serving as Interim Executive Director of the Foundation.

Our Foundation Office recently recognized Dr. John Lentz at the 2026 Chancellor's Philanthropy Luncheon in Richmond last month. Dr. Lentz was celebrated for his long-standing support and generosity to the college.

Finance and Administrative Services

In Vice President Christine Fields' absence, Dr. Hutchison gave a few brief updates of current campus projects:

- HVAC replacement in OTC Building
- Roof replacements and repairs in ADM, ISC, and MEC buildings beginning this week
- Door replacement and asbestos abatement project closure
- Planned upgrade of the Simulation Lab
- Pre-planning phase in progress for the LRC Building
- Patio renovation continuation under review due to multiple delays

President's Office

Dr. Hutchison began his address to the Board by asking for approval of renaming the Learning Resource Center (LRC) Building. The Bill Gatton Foundation has made a significant contribution to VHCC, therefore the recommendation to the Board is to rename the

LRC Building the “Bill Gatton Center”. A letter of endorsement and support from the VHCC Educational Foundation was included in the packet. Local Board approval is required for naming/renaming college buildings. Board Member Dan Smith made the motion to approve the renaming the LRC Building the “Bill Gatton Center”. Board Member Charlie Fugate seconded the motion, and it carried with all in favor.

Dr. Hutchison continued his address to the Board by sharing information regarding digital accessibility compliance directed by the Department of Justice. The directives require digital accessibility for all published content and communication, even if not requested. This includes course content, website content, and emails. Faculty and staff worked diligently to make the necessary changes by the April 24 deadline.

Dr. Hutchison also provided the Workforce Development report, highlighting a 50% increase in students served compared to last year.

SBCC Update

State Board Member Tony Miller provided some information on SBCC operations. He mentioned that the State Board meets bi-monthly, with members serving on two committees each. The budget committee is discussing tuition increases, with a range of 0%-8.6% proposed for Fall semester.

Board Chair Address

Board Chair Don Bowman began his address by asking the Board to enter into closed session. Board Member Gwen Beattie made a motion to enter into closed session for the purposes of evaluating the performance of the president, pursuant to Section 3.15.2 of the Virginia Community College Policy Manual, Subject: Presidential Evaluation Procedure, and in accordance with the personnel exemption at Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia. Board Member Beth Rhinehart seconded, and the motion carried with all in favor.

After reconvening to open session, Mr. Bowman took a roll call vote certifying that to the best of each member’s knowledge (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Freedom of Information Act were discussed, and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed, or considered in the meeting by the public body.

Dr. Doug Arnold, AYE
Gwen Beattie, AYE
Donald Bowman, AYE
Charlie Fugate, AYE
Pam Hill, AYE
Kalen Hunter, AYE
Beth Rhinehart, AYE
Dan Smith, AYE
Tonya Triplett, AYE

The public meeting continued with the remainder of the agenda.

Dr. Hutchison informed everyone that this is Don Bowman's last Board Meeting. He will be rotating off, and we hope to have a replacement at the August Board Meeting. Dr. Hutchison expressed his appreciation for Mr. Bowman's long-standing service and contributions to VHCC.

Adjournment

The Board unanimously approved adjournment at 3:00 p.m.

Submitted By: _____
Dr. Adam Hutchison, President

Approved By: _____
Don Bowman, Chair

_____ Date