



ROANOKE
HIGHER EDUCATION
CENTER

It's What Happens
Inside...

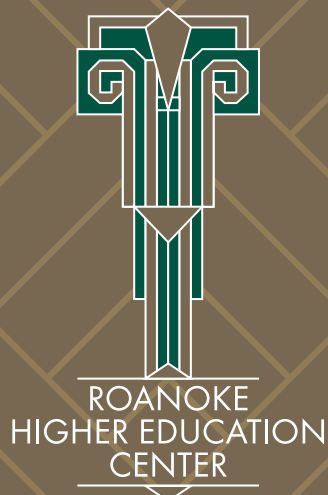
2021 ANNUAL REPORT

VISION

The Roanoke Higher Education Center, known throughout the Roanoke region as a dynamic learning community of colleges and organizations, responds to the evolving needs of the current and future workforce.

MISSION

The Roanoke Higher Education Center develops partnerships and maintains a state-of-the-art facility that provides citizens of the Roanoke region access to training, certifications and degrees.



ROANOKE HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Lori Van Curen	Director of Finance & Administration



CodeVA Comes to Roanoke: Computer Science for all Virginia Students



“Virginia is for Computer Science Lovers” reads a big sign in the Roanoke hub of CodeVA. Indeed, the slogan is apt, as the newest member of the Roanoke Higher Education Center (RHEC) aims to bring equitable computer science education to all Virginia students. Headquartered in Richmond, CodeVA joined RHEC over the summer.

Executive Director Chris Dovi leads the team. He and his wife, Rebecca, founded CodeVA in 2013. At the time, Chris, an investigative journalist for The Richmond Times-Dispatch, covered education and government policy, and Rebecca was a computer science educator. CodeVA was born out of a “confluence of our careers,” as Chris put it.

At Rebecca’s suggestion, Chris reported on an incredible story about a local high school student named James Kearney. Even though James went to a lower performing school—he had taught himself to code—his school’s robotics team was excelling at the same level as the schools with more resources

and top coaches. Chris realized that James’s school offered no computer science classes. “James was really the secret sauce behind this team,” Chris said.

While investigating computer science education in the region, Chris was surprised to learn that while a higher performing school had laptops for each student, James’s school had exactly one computer science class. At the time, Rebecca offered intensive computer science training to teachers, but once the grant for that particular program ended, Chris and Rebecca saw an opportunity to enact change. They founded CodeVA along with Maggie Smith, an arts integration instructor, to ensure that all Virginia students have the same access to computer science education.

Early on, the Dovis had the opportunity to partner with the national non-profit Code.org. Advocacy, they realized, was going to be critical to their work. Meetings with state government officials revealed just how little general awareness there was about computer science. Much of Chris’s time was devoted to having folks start to understand things like the difference between creating a PowerPoint

presentation and developing the computer program PowerPoint itself. “That’s the leap that had to be made,” he said.

Efforts have been incredibly successful. CodeVA’s work helped bring to light the passing of the 2016 legislation mandating computer science literacy for all Virginia students, requiring computer science as an integrated subject from Kindergarten through 8th grade.

“This is an opportunity to create equity for every child,” said Chris Dovi, “and it’s literally a new literacy that we’ve added, first core subject we’ve added to the public schools in 150 years. And so we have an opportunity to do it right around that equity piece. And to do it right around Virginia’s economy, and future economy, and how we define new and exciting technologies that the rest of the world uses.”

Along with advocacy, training public school teachers to be effective computer science educators is a top priority. In 2020, CodeVA clocked in more than 20,000 hours of professional development for 1,034 teachers from more than 300 Virginia public schools. CodeVA offers free computer science training to public school educators to help ensure equal opportunity.


According to Integrated Curriculum Lead Kristen Franklin, computer science has to be accessible to both the students and the teachers. CodeVA helps the teachers to “understand the parts that they don’t understand already so that they can integrate it into what they are already doing so it doesn’t seem like they have to teach a whole other subject separately.”

CodeVA now has seven hub locations around the Commonwealth, and the Roanoke location is very likely the most important, according to Chris Dovi. Having a physical presence in different locations throughout Virginia has been transformational in terms of continued engagement from the teachers they train. Because of the support from the Roanoke Higher Education Center, CodeVA will be able to serve the western side of the state in a much more impactful way. They look forward to developing partnerships with groups within the RHEC as well as the wider Roanoke Valley.

Because of the pandemic, CodeVA has pivoted and reformatted more than 1,200 hours of professional development curriculum from in-person to online. Megan Graybill, Senior Staff Administrator, praised the group’s adaptability, particularly following Covid. They plan for their new Roanoke hub to host teacher trainings, student programs, meetings with partners, and association meetings, to name a few. “When we say we aren’t sure what is going to happen in this room,” Graybill said, “it’s because we

are going to take the needs of the community and figure out what that does look like here.”

With a growing staff (including more than 50 in their facilitator faculty) and firm support from government officials, CodeVA is poised to make a huge impact. Through state advocacy efforts, training teachers and curriculum development, funded research programs, and direct student programs, CodeVA will expand computer science education and opportunity throughout the Roanoke Valley and southwestern Virginia. CodeVA will help to ensure that Virginia remains the Digital Dominion.



This is an opportunity to create equity for every child.

– Chris Dovi





From Early Childhood Education to Social Work: Helping Families Thrive

With an infectious laugh and a heart of gold, Jill Higginbotham has spent her entire career helping families. After a successful career in early childhood education, Higginbotham went back to school two years ago to complete her Bachelor's of Social Work (BSW) degree from Mary Baldwin University at the Roanoke Higher Education Center (RHEC). Following her graduation in May 2021, she was quickly hired as a Family Services Specialist with Roanoke County Department of Social Services (DSS).

THE FLEXIBILITY OF THE PROGRAM was a key factor in Jill Higginbotham's decision to attend Mary Baldwin. She already had a full plate. As a single mom with a 16 year old at home and two older sons already out of the house, she worked full time as a preschool director. She also cared for her mother, who is in assisted living for memory care. Having already earned an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education from Virginia Western Community College, Higginbotham was thrilled that Mary Baldwin accepted the "sizeable amount of credits" she had already earned, plus her work experience, and counted it towards a bachelor's degree.

"I didn't really have the luxury of a lot of free time," Higginbotham explained. "But in helping with my mom, it just gave me the drive to be able to go back to school and finish up what I needed to finish up. It happened pretty expedited, which was great. And then I graduated, which is really cool, as a grown up!"

Saturday classes at the Roanoke Higher Education Center, along with other hybrid classes, made it possible to fit her studies in with all the other things going on in her life. She was able to complete her bachelor's in only two years.

In some ways, Higginbotham has been preparing her for her role as a social worker her entire career. Prior to her studies at Mary Baldwin, Higginbotham worked as the Preschool Director at Covenant Presbyterian Preschool in Roanoke. Previous positions included serving as a church children's director, starting a preschool at Bethel Baptist Church in Salem, and also homeschooling her own children for a time.

"One of my favorite parts about early childhood and being a director was connecting families with early intervention services and just working with the whole entire family," she said.

After interviewing for the Family Services Specialist role with Roanoke County DSS, she was offered the job within 24 hours. In her new position, she connects clients with services that support their personal, social, health, and economic needs. She may be helping with a child's play therapy one day and organizing in-home care the next.

"It's perfect because not only as a single mom, is it a fairly flexible job, but it also has great benefits. It's working with families, which I love to do and have done for twenty years already." She says that she uses what she learned at Mary Baldwin every day and feels "so blessed to have the background that I do."

Higginbotham praises the support and insight of Dianna Parrish, the associate director, Mary Baldwin University Online Social Work Program. In turn, Parrish said, "I am always amazed at the fortitude of our students, and Jill really personified the strong character that makes a person want to become a social worker. She was able to go the extra mile with all of her endeavors and successfully complete her BSW."

For anyone considering going back to school, Higginbotham says to definitely take the chance, especially when you are working with the RHEC and a school that offers hybrid courses.

"I don't think that anyone should ever be afraid to go back and do that. And I think it's even more rewarding as a grown up, in my opinion, because you did it! No matter how many other things you had in place going on adversity-wise, you were able to do it. You feel even more proud because you know how hard it was to make it all happen—juggle all the pieces."



VT COUNSELING STUDENTS Support the Roanoke Community

Almost two years into the pandemic, there's a greater awareness of the importance of mental health than ever before. Lives have been permanently changed, and it can be hard to cope. People are turning to mental health professionals and counselors for help to deal with all of life's challenges, whether that may be job loss, health concerns, or loss of support systems.

The Virginia Tech Counselor Education Master's program has been training students in Roanoke to fill this important community need for more than two decades. The program is located at the Virginia Tech Roanoke Center, a long-standing member of the Roanoke Higher Education Center. The program trains both school counselors and mental health professionals to help people transform their lives and meet their personal, mental health, career, and educational goals.

"Both our current students and the alumni who are in the area have just seen a tremendous increase in needs for mental health support during the pandemic," said Gerard Lawson, Ph.D., a professor in the Counselor Education Program. "Part of that is the isolation that a lot of people felt and the anxiety that came along with the pandemic. There can be some depression and financial strains that make it difficult to be able to manage the other things going on in their lives."

Located on the 7th floor, the Roanoke Center offers an ideal space for both classroom and clinical learning. Classrooms support both in-person and hybrid instruction. According to

Lawson, the Counselor Education Training Clinic allows for direct interaction with clients from the community, and the diversity of the Roanoke population makes the educational program more enriching for students. While the doctoral program is located in Blacksburg, the master's program has intentionally been based in Roanoke.

The Master of Arts in Education program takes about two years to complete full time, with a School Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling option. Program requirements include 60 semester hours of course work, as well as a 600-hour internship. Students start with intensive coursework before beginning their clinical work. The coursework meets requirements for the Virginia School of Licensure (K-12), Virginia Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), and National Certified Counselor (NCC) licensures. This program is CACREP accredited.

Due to strong partnerships with Virginia Western Community College, the Roanoke Diversity Center, and Roanoke Rescue Mission, counselors-in-training provide pro bono services to members of the community while under faculty supervision.

VT Counseling Students, continued on pg.13

Roanoke Higher Education Center Foundation Shaping the Future of Higher Education



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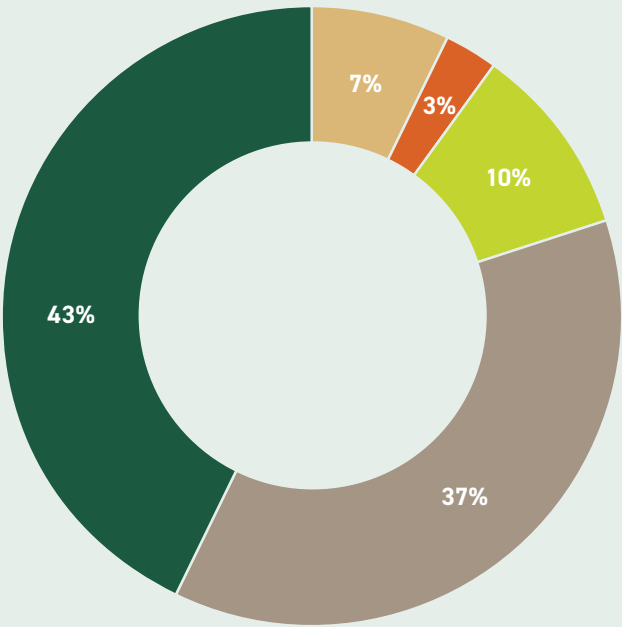
Dear Community of Friends,

Thank you for supporting the RHEC Foundation. Your donations are changing lives and helping us create an educated and skilled workforce that contributes to our region's economic vitality. We appreciate your donations and the support you give to our 12 partner institutions who share space at the Center. Together we can help individuals succeed in the jobs of today and tomorrow.

Sincerely,
Kay Dunkley

Donations

\$10,000 and above	7%
\$5,000 – \$9,999	3%
\$2,500 – \$4,999	10%
\$1,000 – \$2,499	37%
\$50 – \$999	43%



We are honored to recognize and thank the following donors who have made generous contributions to the RHEC Foundation.

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Mr. Charles Price
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Dr. Robert Sandel
Spectrum Design
Mr. Richard A. Turner
Mrs. Lori Van Curen
Mr. Michael Wray



The Roanoke Higher Education Center Foundation is delighted to announce the appointment of Kaitlyn H. Van Buskirk as our new Development Officer. Kaitlyn’s passion for nonprofit development began during her sophomore year of college when she was appointed as the Chair of Relay for Life. Since graduating from Sweet Briar College, she has spent more than half a decade in Planned Giving and Development leadership roles. One of her greatest strengths is connecting local citizens and businesses with life changing causes for the betterment of the community as a whole. Kaitlyn looks forward to advancing the work of the Center.

Supporting the Future of Higher Education — There’s no time like the present!

Help us reach our fundraising goals by supporting current fundraising priorities.
Together, we can make a difference in our community!

RHEC Foundation Funding Priorities

Career and Workforce Development Center:

To assist students and workers, employees and employers in the region. Services include resume writing, interview preparation, portfolio development and presentation, career re-direction, internships, and job referrals.

Scholarship Fund:

To assist students with tuition money to attend classes at RHEC in collaboration with partner institutions.

Innovation Workforce Fund:

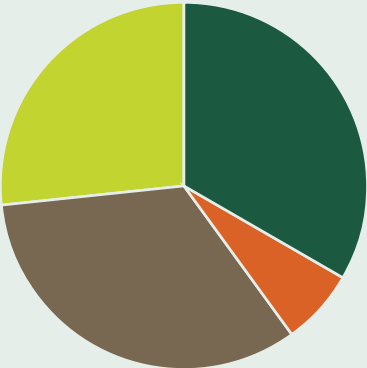
To provide seed money to encourage and incentivize new program development in collaboration with partner institutions.

Support the RHEC mission:

To support the day to day expenses of the RHEC Foundation.

Why Give?

Citizens of the Roanoke Valley are tremendously generous and give to the things they care about most. It’s who we are, and we’re proud of where we live! The Roanoke Higher Education Center is a catalyst for positive change in the commonwealth, and it is our goal to continue to expand our impact in this great region.



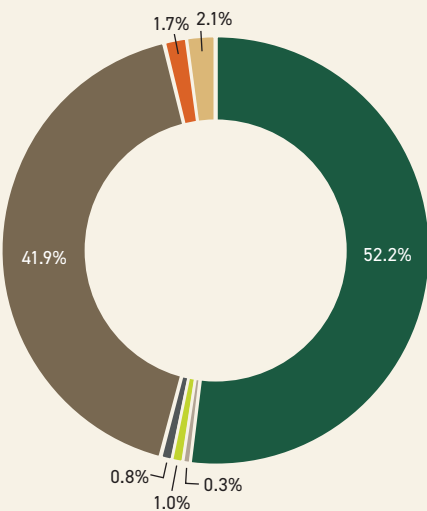
Funding Priorities

- Career Center
\$250,000
- Scholarships
\$50,000
- Innovation Fund
\$250,000
- Mission of the Authority
\$200,000

FISCAL YEAR 2021 BUDGET INFORMATION

Revenue for Fiscal Year 2021

Grand total all sources = \$3.81 million
(\$2.84 Operating & Nonoperating + \$0.97 Capital State/Local and Federal Aid)



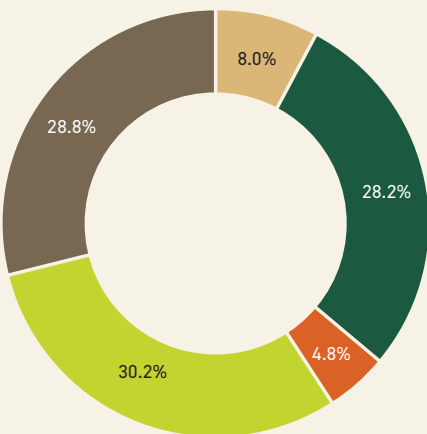
Nonoperating revenues total \$1.52 million:

State Appropriation	52.2%
Local Government	0.3%
Interest Income	1.0%

Operating revenues total \$1.32 million:

Day Rental & Training Initiatives	0.8%
Member & Commercial Leases	41.9%
Phone, Vending, Library & Misc.	1.7%
Testing Services	2.1%

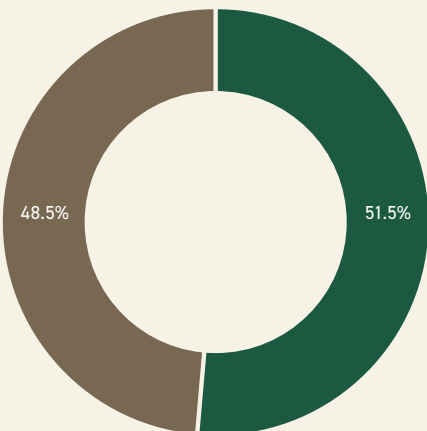
Capital State/Local and Federal Aid Funded Revenues



Total \$0.97 million (\$975K):

Higher Education Equipment Trust Fund (HEETF)	8.0%
Capital Maintenance Reserve (CMR)	28.2%
Capital Outlay — Central Walkway Plaza	4.8%
Local Capital Contribution	30.2%
Public Health Emergency Funding	28.8%

Expenses for Fiscal Year 2021



Grand total all sources = \$2.83 million

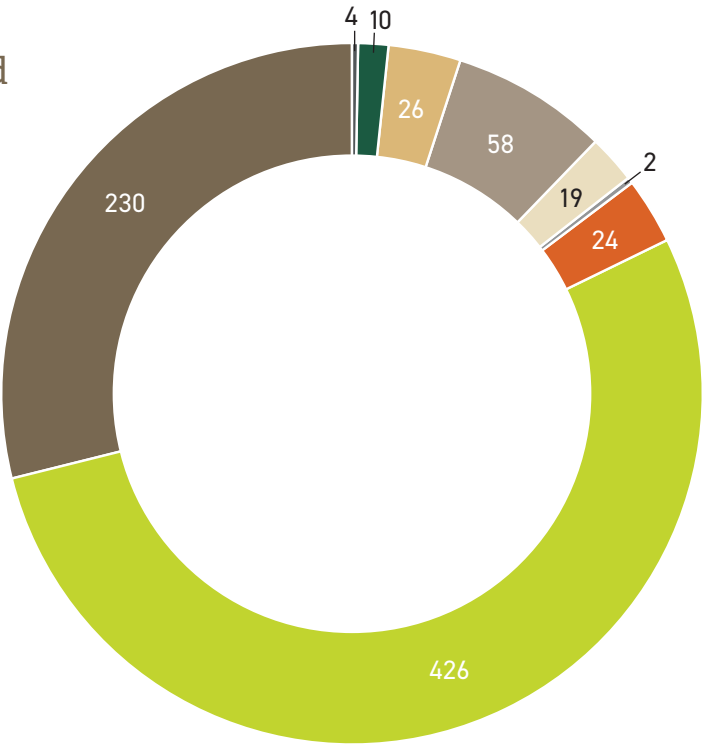
Personnel Services Operating	51.5%
Other Operating	48.5%
• Facility Services	25.7%
• Finance and Administration	11.8%
• Academic and Student Services	5.0%
• Information Technology	6.0%

PROGRAM COMPLETION

Type of Program Completed
FY 2021

Doctoral	1%
Post-Master's Certificate	1%
Master's	3%
Bachelor's	7%
Associate	3%
Teaching Licensure	<1%
Certificate	3%
Workforce Training	53%
Non-Credit	29%

Total Completions 799



Library, Testing, and Day Rental Statistics



LIBRARY STATISTICS

E-journal access (through 101 research databases): **73,000**
E-book access: **173,000**
Video access: **139,000**
Print book collection: **4,000**



TESTING STATISTICS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021

Number of exams administered: **3,020**
Number of GED exams administered: **488**
Number of Praxis exams administered: **741**



DAY RENTAL STATISTICS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021

Number of Events: **79**
Number of Participants: **1,507**

VT Counseling Students, continued from pg.7

Interns can be found throughout the Roanoke and New River valleys at local K-12 public schools, colleges, and in-patient and out-patient settings. From play therapy with children to counseling at senior living communities, students work with all populations.

While some people have been struggling with the effects of the pandemic for a long time, Lawson has seen a resurgence of community members seeking support now due to a “slow rolling trauma.” He does not anticipate that things will slow down anytime soon, and his team works hard to make mental health services accessible.

The counseling students are absolutely making an impact. Last year, the students provided 13,884 hours of free counseling services to the Roanoke and New River valleys. An extremely conservative value of these services would be \$277,680, with countless lives enhanced by the support from their counselors.

“With a longstanding history of excellence in teaching, research, and engagement, the Counselor Education program at the Virginia Tech Roanoke Center exemplifies the university’s *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve) difference,” said Scott Weimer, executive director of the Roanoke Center. “Through collaboration with community partners, faculty members share their expertise to support public health, while students engage in experiential learning by applying what they learn in the classroom to help people live better lives.”

“The more mental health is talked about, the better the community becomes,” Lawson said. “We’re just thrilled to be part of the Roanoke community, and we continue to hope that, as busy as it’s been, these support services mean the community more broadly is tending to mental health. Our hope is that everybody benefits as a result.”

Prospective students may contact Dr. Gerard Lawson at glawson@vt.edu for more information, or visit www.education.edu/program/counselor-education/.

The staff of the Roanoke Higher Education Center strives to provide members the best service and educational environment possible. In addition to a modern, functional, physical facility, we offer online resources to allow members access to event schedules, website traffic statistics, staff contacts, telephone and voicemail guidelines, crime reports, IT support, access card requests and more.

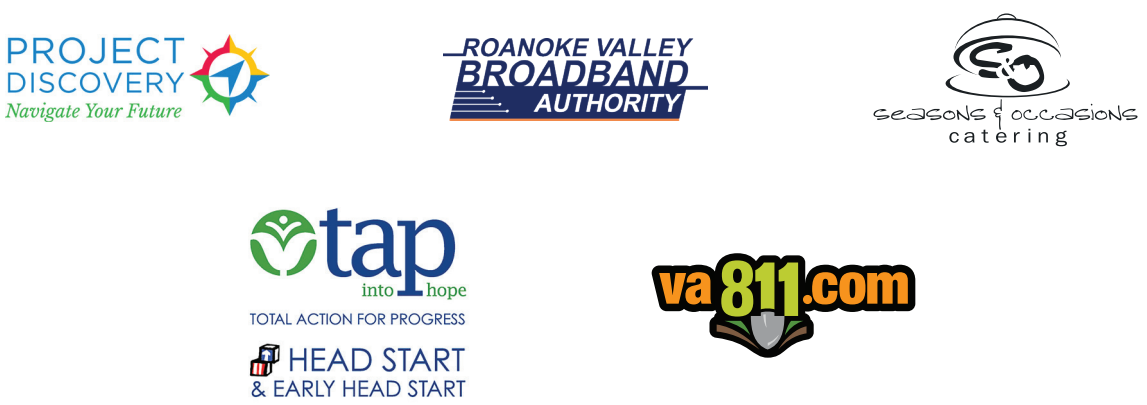
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PARTNER INSTITUTIONS



Coming in 2022...



Student Success Center

The Roanoke Higher Education Center will debut a Student Success Center (SSC) in 2022. The purpose of the SSC is to assist students in achieving their educational goals. Through a high-impact environment designed to support student learning and student services, the SSC offers a dynamic suite of programs to help students persist and become more engaged learners. The programs, services, and resources housed in the SSC provide students advice and assistance for a variety of academic, technical, and career challenges.

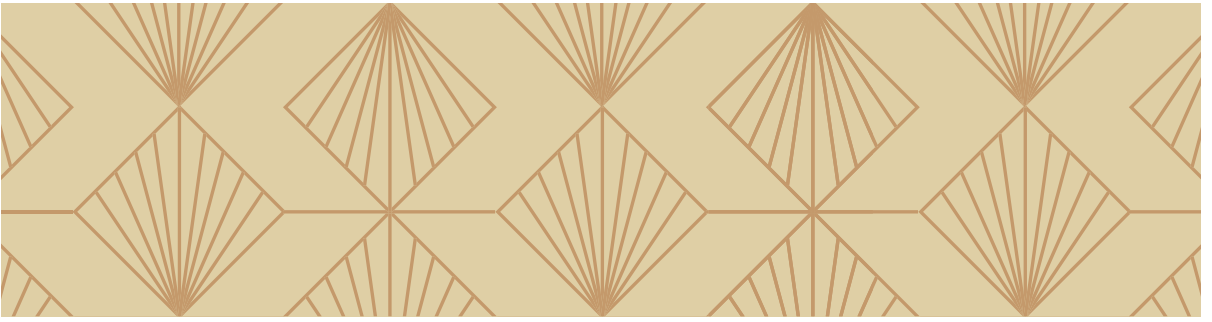
At the SSC, we will provide students with a welcoming environment to:

- set academic and personal goals;
- manage time wisely;
- develop academic and study skills;
- improve work, life, school balance;
- connect with support services (career services, tutoring, writing, and technology assistance); and
- gather for educational, networking, and social programming.

Virginia State University

We proudly welcome Virginia State University (VSU) as the newest member of the Roanoke Higher Education Center. VSU is an HBCU founded in 1882. It is one of two land-grant institutions in Virginia and is located 20 minutes south of Richmond. VSU will join 12 other colleges, universities, workforce training organizations, and non-profits in offering more than 200 degree, certificate, and licensure/endorsement programs to the citizens of the Roanoke Region. Be on the lookout for upcoming VSU information sessions and program announcements.





HOURS:

Mon–Fri 7:00am–10:30pm

Saturday 7:00am–6:00pm

Sunday Closed

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education.edu

