It’s What Happens Inside...

2022 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
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RHEC LEADERSHIP

Kay Dunkley .............................................................. Executive Director
Carla James ............................................................... Senior Director of Academic & Student Services
Jeremiah McMillan .................................................. Director of Facility Services
Lori Van Curen ........................................................ Director of Finance & Administration
Dear Friends,

We opened the new Central Walkway Plaza with a ribbon cutting ceremony on June 1, 2022, before an enthusiastic crowd. The plaza pays tribute to the rich history of Gainesboro, which for years was the center of African American cultural and economic life.

The plaza has granite markings with a phone application telling the story of this area of Roanoke. It offers a campus-style atmosphere connecting the main building to the Claude Moore Education Complex. It provides a place for students and visitors to read and study and an outdoor lab for our culinary arts students. I encourage you to visit this new plaza.

Virginia State University has recently joined the RHEC as a partner and will provide important new programs.

Our new RHEC Foundation is busy raising funds and providing scholarships for worthy students. Our Development Officer, Kaitlyn Van Buskirk, held an exciting and successful fundraising event for the Foundation, “Brews and Bubbles.”

RHEC continues to provide state-of-the art programs by our partner colleges, universities and organizations. They offer education and training, and grant certificates and degrees to meet the needs of our current and future workforce.

We want to thank Kay Dunkley, Executive Director, Carla James, Senior Director of Academic and Student Affairs, and our dedicated staff for their outstanding work in serving the educational needs of our region.

Sincerely,
Senator John S. Edwards
Chair Board of Trustees

Increasing access to education through partnerships with area colleges and organizations is at the heart of the Roanoke Higher Education Center’s (RHEC) mission. Job training and workforce development go hand in hand with fulfilling this goal, stimulating the local economy. The newest member of the RHEC, NuFocus, is a multifaceted organization that uniquely serves this mission and is poised to make an even bigger impact in the Roanoke business community.

NuFocus is the brainchild of Thomas Page, a United States veteran and native of Northwest Roanoke. After 13 years in the military, during which he was able to continue his education, Page pursued his two passions, music and entrepreneurship, which opened up many opportunities and eventually led him down the path of training other entrepreneurs. As a singer and songwriter, Page was deeply connected with the local music business scene and saw how new businesses were emerging that needed training, connections and support.

Page initially started a media company called NuFocus Group LLC to bridge the gap between independent artists and small business artists. Through an online radio station, a magazine, online web shows and original visual media content, Page’s platform promoted local businesses and created opportunities for collaboration. Page stated, “We put them together so that while there’s different spaces
of seasonality where people aren’t able to get contracts, maybe they can work together to supplement each other, and also build more of their clientele.”

Page converted the success he initially found supporting the entertainment industry, expanding into other sectors and creating the non-profit NuFocusedX LLC (NFX). They now work with small to intermediate business owners, non-profit organizations, independent artists and other entrepreneurs to provide business strategy, support and resources.

Being located in Roanoke’s historic Gainsboro neighborhood, which was once an important social and commercial center for African Americans, was very important to Page. “I’m a Black male from Northwest Roanoke,” he said. “Knowing that there have been limited options to that population, we wanted to target there first, but it allowed for us to be able to work with everyone. We wanted to make sure we were connecting businesses together and to be able to have each one of them grow. Everyone gets stronger. Everyone gets bigger.”

One of their signature programs is the WEB Academy (Workforce + Entrepreneurship = Business), which supports Roanoke entrepreneurs with a business curriculum, support resources, technical workspaces and networking. According to Page, they are currently training a cohort of 10 individual small businesses. Page’s team provides training from the Entrepreneurial Learning Initiative, which helps to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset.

Another component of the WEB Academy offers workforce training. They specifically target 16- to 24-year olds to help them launch into successful careers. Not only do they teach administrative skills, but NuFocus also provides an opportunity for students to take on supplemental work from the other entrepreneurs in the program. They also present a summer concert series in Gainsboro, allowing all entities to work together on an actionable project for the community good, Page said.

Since 2013, NuFocus has operated out of the Lawson building in Gainsboro, where entrepreneurs can set up their own storefront, have administrative space or even utilize their recording studio. Page has seen what their Gainsboro neighbor, the Roanoke Higher Education Center, has been doing in the community and wanted to introduce its training there. As the newest member, NuFocus will hold its WEB Academy in the downtown headquarters. On a given day you might find a working classroom where trainees are running through real-world scenarios with their instructors.

According to Page, there are many young people who are skilled in media, event planning or sales, who did not even know that the RHEC has programs to help them learn and succeed. NuFocus will make those connections happen.

“Our goal is just to continue to be there, be a resource to the city, and hopefully stay,” said Page, “and to be able to make some change in the entrepreneur space.”

Learn more at: www.nufocusva.com

“We wanted to make sure we were connecting businesses together and to be able to have each one of them grow. Everyone gets stronger. Everyone gets bigger.”

– THOMAS PAGE
While the JMU main campus is located in Harrisonburg, the university has educational sites located throughout the state. Now in its seventh year, the Educational Leadership program has a home at the RHEC. The program prepares educators to take on principal and other high-level administrative positions in schools and district offices, leading to effective schools for all children.

The program has been very successful. Dr. Richard Turner, Roanoke’s Site Coordinator, Professional and Continuing Education at James Madison University, coordinates the program in Roanoke and is also an adjunct professor. He states that since the first cohort of students completed the program four years ago, they have gone on to fill 46 administrative positions. “They are getting jobs,” said Turner. “They are making more money, and are impacting more students and more teachers too, through their leadership.”

The program offers two options to meet the state requirement to become endorsed as a school administrator: a Certificate in Educational Leadership for those who already have earned a master’s degree; and a Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Education, concentration in Educational Leadership. Candidates who have the appropriate teaching license, who complete either the certificate or master’s degree, are prepared to take the state’s required leadership assessment test, the SLLA (School Leadership Licensure Assessment). Each year, Turner typically has two cohorts running at the same time, which vary in size.

At the moment, there are approximately 30 students in the program. Since the Covid-19 pandemic began, JMU restructured to offer their classes both in person and remotely. This structure is still in place today, allowing for a great deal of flexibility.

Most of the instruction takes place in Room 601 of the Roanoke Higher Education Center. A few courses are only offered remotely; for example, master’s students are required to take an additional five classes online through JMU. The other classes are the same for both cohorts.

All in all, 102 students have studied in the Educational Leadership program at the RHEC and have collectively taken 520 JMU courses. By and large, most students in the program are teachers, with a few on leave from their jobs. Typically, it takes them two years to complete the program, although a few choose to jump into both cohorts at the same time and complete it in as little as a year. Afterward, students are qualified to obtain a variety of jobs, but for the most part they become assistant principals or deans, Turner said.

It’s clear that these educators are very marketable. In the past two years alone, graduates have gone on to hold top positions in Roanoke City, Roanoke County, Salem City, Franklin County, Henry County, Bedford County and more. These new positions include two principals, 13 assistant principals, three deans, plus an additional six who have taken on other leadership positions in administration. “They are having great success,” Turner added.
Importantly, the Central Walkway honors the rich legacy of the Gainsboro neighborhood in which the Center is located. Gainsboro was once a vibrant economic and cultural center for African Americans in Roanoke. RHEC leaders partnered with their Gainsboro neighbors to identify important historical themes and events from 1835-1970, which are engraved in granite markings on the brick walkway.

Dr. Carla L. James, Senior Director of Academic & Student Services, announced the launch of The Gainsboro History Project, an interactive mobile app that provides an interactive history and walking tour of the African American influence in Roanoke. Featuring text, graphics and video, this dynamic app helps preserve the legacy of Gainsboro and its people, sharing stories that have not fully been told.

“I always feel a sense of pride whenever I spend time in the historic Gainsboro neighborhood,” said Roanoke Mayor Sherman P. Lea Sr. “As your mayor, I’m proud of the many accomplishments of the Roanoke Higher Education Center.”

Additionally, RHEC partner American Electric Power Foundation provided scholarships to five need-based minority students in the amount of $13,500, and leaders shared that Virginia State University had joined the Center as its first Historically Black College and University.

Scan the code to view the app!
Educational Testing Center Earns National Certification

In March 2022, the Roanoke Higher Education Center’s (RHEC) Educational Testing Center received the National College Testing Association’s (NCTA) Test Center Certification, achieving national status as a leader in excellent testing practices. With this recognition, the Educational Testing Center joins the ranks of 200 other post-secondary test centers across the United States and around the world that meet exemplary test administration standards.

According to Deborah Snellings-Pate, RHEC’s Educational Testing Center Coordinator, the national certification “recognizes that we go above and beyond what is even required. It establishes that we have high standards in test security, candidate confidentiality and customer service.”

Snellings-Pate spearheaded the effort, which she described as a rigorous year-long process requiring huge amounts of data. Her team helped assemble all the application materials, including their mission statement, annual reports, customer service surveys, opening and closing procedures, and procedures used for individual test sponsors, to name a few. The team even revamped and formalized their proctor training materials, which had the added benefit of enhancing proctor training.

Earning national certification only serves to underscore the high quality of the testing center and the testing center staff.

“Test takers around the Valley already know what a gem they have with the Educational Testing Center, where proctoring is available for graduate school exams, distance-learning students and industry-specific tests. More than 4,000 tests are given there every year. Through partnerships with area universities and individual test sponsors, students have access to hundreds of exams, helping them to achieve their academic and professional goals. On any given day, students may be taking the GED, teacher certification Praxis exams or a distance exam from Old Dominion University, a member of the Roanoke Higher Education Center.”

– Dr. Carla L. James, Senior Director of Academic & Student Services
Several things set the Educational Testing Center apart from other area testing sites, according to Snellings-Pate. First, they work with around 15 different test sponsors, more than any other test center, which each require certification in their own protocol. Additionally, RHEC is the only authorized GED testing center in the region. Roanoke Valley–Alleghany Region 5 Adult Education, another member of RHEC, prepares students to take the GED, and then students take the exam onsite. Further, the Educational Testing Center is the only facility to offer I–9 employment eligibility verification within a large radius.

The Educational Testing Center is modern, quiet and comfortable, and students have access to the RHEC Library for test preparation study guides and materials. The center is open during weekday business hours, as well as select evenings and Saturdays, an added convenience to those working during the day.

The staff always strive to protect the integrity of the exam and the exam environment, as well as to offer exceptional customer service at the same time, Snellings-Pate said. Clearly, these twin goals have been attained, as test takers from other areas of Southwestern Virginia will drive long distances to take their exams at RHEC.

And now they have national recognition to prove it.
MISSION: The Foundation supports the Roanoke Higher Education Center and its partner institutions through fundraising and resource development to meet the evolving demands of our region’s diverse workforce through education, training, student services and lifelong learning programs.

VISION: To strengthen the region’s economy by supporting access to education and training that empowers the region’s workforce and improves the quality of life.

TAGLINE: Advancing Learning, Securing Our Future.
The Roanoke Higher Education Center (RHEC) awarded scholarships to five individuals at a ceremony held on June 1. The money to support this tuition assistance program was made possible by a grant from the American Electric Power Foundation through their Social and Racial Equity: Diversity in Partnership initiative. To be eligible for the funding, adult learners were asked to justify a need for financial assistance and verify their program of study was offered on-site at RHEC.

This is the first time in the history of the Center that scholarships were available. "The American Electric Power Foundation is pleased to support the work of the Roanoke Higher Education Center," said Larry Jackson, Director of External Affairs, Appalachian Power. “Access to education is critical to unlocking the true potential of our region,” Jackson added.

A total of $13,500 was distributed to the following: Bridgette Bentley, a James Madison University student enrolled in an Educational Leadership Certificate Program; Jessica Clervoi, a James Madison University student working toward a master’s degree in educational leadership; Alberta Craighead, a Radford University student seeking a master’s degree in social work; Dareous Davis, working toward a bachelor of science in nursing degree at Radford University; and Renata Hairston, who is studying to be a licensed massage Therapist at Mountain Gateway Community College.

With the help and design services of Access Advertising + PR, foundation staff and counsel created a new logo and brand guide for the RHEC Foundation.
Dear Community of Friends,

Thank you for supporting the Roanoke Higher Education Center (RHEC) Foundation. Your donations are creating a better quality of life for our students and helping us create an educated and skilled workforce that contributes to our region’s economic vitality. The RHEC Foundation celebrated many successes over the past 12 months, and your generosity played an essential role in making our progress a reality. We have established the W. Heywood Fralin Endowment Fund, granted five scholarship awards to deserving students, executed our first major fundraising event, expanded our marketing efforts, and increased our corporate sponsors and individual donors. Thank you for your contributions and support of the RHEC Foundation and our member institutions. Together, we will help individuals succeed in the jobs of today and tomorrow.

Sincerely,
Kaitlyn

Kaitlyn Van Buskirk
Development Officer,
RHEC Foundation

Support Current Fundraising Priorities

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

- Career & Workforce Training Center to assist students and workers, employees and employers in the region.
- RHEC Scholarship Fund to provide financial aid to deserving students.
- Innovation Fund to provide seed money to encourage and incentivize new program development in collaboration with partner institutions.
- Support the RHEC Mission.
We are honored to recognize and thank the following donors who made generous contributions and gifts in kind to the RHEC Foundation during the 2022 fiscal year.

Thank You for Your Support!

419 West
Access Advertising + PR
AEP Foundation
Robert Archer
Jeanne Armentrout
Jack Avis
Avis Construction Company, Inc.
Azar Jewelry and Estate Sales
Kathy Baske Young
Bella Muse Photography
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Custom Originals in Stained Glass
Davidsons
Barbara Dickinson
Kay Dunkley
Bernadine Dykes
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Jewells Fine Jewelry
Gordon Jones
Joran’s Interior Design
Kent Jewelers
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Mast General Store
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Reid’s Fine Furnishings
Roanoke Symphony Orchestra
Salem Ice Cream Parlor
Salem Red Sox
Michelle Swanson
Tacos Rojas
The Conner Group
The Coop
The Fresh Market
The Gift Niche
The Knittin’ Coop
The Lighting Ninja
The Maroon Door
The Orvis Company
The Roanoke Times / Lee Media
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Town Center Tap House
Richard Turner
Two and a Half Sisters
United Way of the Roanoke Valley
ValleyStar Credit Union
Kaitlyn Van Buskirk
Lori Van Curen
Vintage Cellar
Walkabout Outfitters
Wasena City Tap Room & Grill
Weekend by TBC
Woods Rogers Vandeventer Black
Michael Wray

Donations

- $10,000 and above: 5%
- $5,000 – $9,999: 5%
- $2,500 – $4,999: 12%
- $1,000 – $2,499: 55%
- $50 – $999: 23%

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The Roanoke Higher Education Center Foundation hosted its first major fundraising event at The Glen on Glenburn Farms on Saturday, August 27, 2022. “Brews & Bubbles” featured local craft spirits, delicious food, live music, a photo booth, and a silent and live auction. A special thanks to everyone who helped make this event a reality and a success.

The work of the Foundation supports the Roanoke Higher Education Authority to provide educational opportunities for the citizens of our region.
FISCAL YEAR 2022 BUDGET INFORMATION

Revenue for Fiscal Year 2022
Grand total all sources = $3.81 million
($3.21 Operating & Nonoperating + $0.60 Capital State Aid)

Nonoperating revenues total $1.81 million:
- State Appropriation 55.8%
- Local Government 0.3%
- Interest Income 0.2%

Operating revenues total $1.40 million:
- Day Rental & Training Initiatives 2.2%
- Member & Commercial Leases 38.2%
- Phone, Vending, Library & Misc. 1.6%
- Testing Services 1.7%

Capital State Aid Funded Revenues
Total $0.60 million ($598K):
- Higher Education Equipment 9.8%
- Trust Fund (HEETF) 9.8%
- Capital Maintenance Reserve (CMR) 33.1%
- Capital Outlay — Courtyard / Plaza 57.1%

Expenses for Fiscal Year 2022
Grand total all sources = $3.13 million
- Personnel Services Operating 52.8%
- Other Operating 47.2%
  - Facility Services 30.1%
  - Finance and Administration 5.6%
  - Academic and Student Services 6.2%
  - Information Technology 5.3%
**PROGRAM COMPLETIONS FY 2022**

### Type of Program Completed

- **Doctoral**: <1%
- **Master’s**: 2%
- **Graduate Certificate**: 1%
- **Bachelor’s**: 5%
- **Associate**: 1%
- **Certificate**: 4%
- **GED**: 1%
- **Workforce Training**: 63%
- **Non-Credit**: 23%

**Total Completions**: 1,024

### Day Rental Statistics

**DAY RENTAL STATISTICS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022**

- Total Number of Day Rental Events: 137
- Total Number of Clients Served (Unduplicated): 40
- Total Number of Multiday Events: 10
- Total Number of New Clients: 10
- Total Number of Day Rental Program Participants: 5,142

**NUMBER OF EVENTS BY TYPE**

- Professional Continuing Education: 25
- Workforce Training: 11
- Civic Group Meetings: 3
- Professional Business Meetings: 82
- Testing: 7
- Other: 9
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.

**ROANOKE HIGHER EDUCATION CENTER STAFF**

**Beth Avis**  
Receptionist

**Stephanie Coles**  
Receptionist

**Kay Dunkley**  
Executive Director

**Annalee Fairley**  
Library Clerk

**Gary Hiler**  
HR Consultant

**Celeste Holland**  
Receptionist

**Lynn Hurt**  
Educational Testing Asst.

**Habibo Isse**  
Educational Testing Asst.

**Carla James**  
Senior Director of Academic & Student Services

**Christopher Jones**  
Maintenance Technician II

**Tiffany Jones**  
Educational Testing Asst.

**Debbie Lawson**  
Receptionist

**Evan Malone**  
Senior Accountant/Reporting Analyst

**Kimberly Mattson**  
Student Success Center Coordinator

**Jeremiah McMillan**  
Director of Facility Services

**Jeff Repass**  
Senior Maintenance Technician

**Chris Shelton**  
Safety & Security Coordinator

**Deborah Snellings-Pate**  
Educational Testing Center Coordinator

**Cynthia Spahr**  
Educational Testing Asst.

**Michelle Swanson**  
Accountant

**Alexandra Thacker**  
Executive Assistant

**Eli Tilley**  
IT Technician

**Nguyen Tran**  
IT System Administrator

**Kaitlyn Van Buskirk**  
Development Officer

**Lori Van Curen**  
Director of Finance & Administration

**Jessica Yopp**  
Library Associate
Looking Forward…

Dear Community of Friends,

As this report reflects, RHEC has experienced a successful year, and we want to give you a sneak preview of what’s to come:

• The front entrance will take on a facelift to include new walkway brick pavers, a renovated gazebo, a covered bike rack, and replacements of plantings and shrubs.

• We will give a fresh new look to the restrooms in the main building, replace all antiquated fan coils and begin a phased-in approach to complete some interior painting.

• Grant monies and contributions will allow us to move forward with our plans to create a Career and Workforce Training Center to assist students with career re-direction, internship referrals, connectivity to jobs in the region and much more.

• Plans are underway to expand the physical space of the Educational Testing Center.

• We will continue our efforts to meet the goals of our fundraising priorities.

To you, our community, we offer our sincere thanks for your continued support as we continue doing our good work.

Sincerely,
Kay Dunkley

Executive Director