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**TOBACCO REGION REVITALIZATION COMMISSION**

701 East Franklin Street, Suite 501  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

**Education Committee Meeting**

Thursday, January 6, 2022  
2:00 o'clock p.m.

*Richmond Marriott Hotel  
500 East Broad Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219*

1     APPEARANCES:

2     The Honorable L. Louise Lucas, Vice Chair

3     Ms. Gretchen Clark

4     Mr. Joel Cunningham, Jr.

5     Dr. Alexis I. Ehrhardt

6     The Honorable Sam Rasoul

7

8     COMMISSION STAFF:

9     Mr. Evan Feinman, Executive Director

10    Mr. Andy Sorrell, Deputy Executive Director

11    Ms. Sarah K. Capps - Southside Regional Director

12    Ms. Sara G. Williams, Southwest Regional Director

13    Mr. David Bringman

14    Ms. Stephanie S. Kim, Director of Finance

15    Ms. Jessie Stamper

16    Ms. Joyce Knight - Executive Assistant

17

18    COUNSEL FOR THE COMMISSION:

19    Ms. Elizabeth Myers, Assistant Attorney General

20        Richmond, Virginia

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1 January 6, 2022

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MR. FEINMAN: Next will be the Education Committee.

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SENATOR LUCAS: Welcome, everybody, to the

5

Education Committee. And I'll ask Evan to call the roll.

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MR. FEINMAN: Ms. Coleman.

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MS. COLEMAN: (No response).

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MR. FEINMAN: Senator Lucas.

9

SENATOR LUCAS: Here.

10

MR. FEINMAN: Delegate Aird.

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DELEGATE AIRD: (No response).

12

MR. FEINMAN: Ms. Clark.

13

MS. CLARK: Here.

14

MR. FEINMAN: Mr. Cunningham.

15

MR. CUNNINGHAM: Here.

16

MR. FEINMAN: Dr. Ehrhardt.

17

DR. EHRHARDT: Here.

18

MR. FEINMAN: Mr. Harris.

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MR. HARRIS: (No response).

20

MR. FEINMAN: Delegate Hurst.

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DELEGATE HURST: (No response).

22

MR. FEINMAN: Delegate Rasoul.

23

DELEGATE RASOUL: Here.

24

MR. FEINMAN: Ms. Ratliff.

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MS. RATLIFF: (No response).

1 MR. FEINMAN: Mr. Shell.

2 MR. SHELL: (No response).

3 MR. FEINMAN: Mr. Sutherland.

4 MR. SUTHERLAND: (No response).

5 MR. FEINMAN: Delegate Tyler.

6 DELEGATE TYLER: (No response).

7 MR. FEINMAN: You do not have a quorum, Madam  
8 Chairperson, so we'll just proceed.

9 You all have a copy of the minutes published on the  
10 website, so at this point, there'll be a motion for approval of the  
11 minutes of September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021.

12 MR. CUNNINGHAM: I move that we approve the  
13 minutes.

14 SENATOR LUCAS: Thank you, Mr. Cunningham. Do I  
15 have a second.

16 MS. CLARK: I'll second.

17 SENATOR LUCAS: All in favor, say aye. (Ayes).  
18 Opposed? (No response). The minutes are approved.

19 Now, is there any public comment? I see we have no  
20 public comment. So, therefore, we'll go ahead and move on with  
21 the Sarah Capps' update on Workforce Financial Aid.

22 MS. CAPPS: Madam Chairman and members of the  
23 Committee. After meeting last July in Roanoke, you directed the  
24 Staff to evaluate the impact of the G3 funding on Workforce  
25 Financial Aid Grants, so that is what we've prepared for you all

1 today.

2 If you look at page 19 of the Commission book, this is  
3 a detail of the programs that are supported under the conditions  
4 of the Workforce Financial Aid Grants that are not supported by  
5 G3. We did identify to the colleges to identify the programs that  
6 were not supported by G3. This is the priority areas. So, it  
7 starts with Workforce credentials. We estimated 17 percent of  
8 the programs that were submitted to the community colleges for  
9 Commission funding are covered by G3. Thirty percent of that is  
10 not covered by G3.

11 Other short-term programs in the various colleges  
12 vary, they're very different. It's very different. You can see  
13 there's 12 out of 20 at Danville Community College, and John  
14 Tyler, there's two out of five Workforce Programs are not eligible  
15 for G3.

16 For most of the colleges, the CDL program, which is  
17 the truck driver's program, not covered by G3, but that's a very  
18 important program to support this program.

19 You all can read through this, all this information is  
20 listed there.

21 You can flip over to page 20, the Commission  
22 Priorities, Numbers 2 and 3. This is where we focus on the  
23 Advanced Manufacturing and Technology Credit Program. The  
24 Commission has approved under our grant. Thirty percent  
25 though, as I said, are not covered by G3. The level of

1 participation by the community colleges Workforce Program  
2 areas, and there's a number of short-term programs. It varies,  
3 and it's very different. Danville has, I believe, 24 programs, and  
4 those programs are not covered by G3. And John Tyler is two  
5 out of five. And as I said, the CDL program, the truck driver  
6 program, a very important program, and that's not covered by  
7 G3. And we need that to support the Truck Driver Program. You  
8 all can read through that.

9 If you flip over to page 20, and the Commission's  
10 priority Number two and three, focused on advanced  
11 manufacturing credit programs. And when you look at by  
12 college, which of the programs that the Commission has  
13 approved under our grants that are not covered by G3, and on  
14 average about 75 percent of the credit programs are covered by  
15 G3. That all varies by college. For example, Central Virginia  
16 Community College, 36 percent were not covered by G3.

17 MR. FEINMAN: There are really two questions before  
18 the Committee today. The first question is recognizing that the  
19 Commonwealth's significant increase in financial aid via the G3  
20 program has occurred.

21 MS. CAPP: That's correct.

22 MR. FEINMAN: That program is now paying for much  
23 of what our funding of the community colleges pay for and shall  
24 we reduce our contribution by 30 percent? There's no reason to  
25 simply double funds when we don't have to.

1           The second question is how do we used those freed-  
2 up funds, still with projects that are ongoing and programs that  
3 will go to support the community colleges. Where shall we put  
4 the funds to best use and highest priorities? The first question is  
5 how much do we reduce our current Workforce Financial Aid  
6 funding? You've heard from Sarah and Sara and their analysis,  
7 which is around 30 percent of the current funds are not covered  
8 by G3.

9           The first question is do we reduce our funding? And  
10 this would vary from college to college. Some would say more  
11 than that, some less. What I would suggest in the interim, we  
12 could reduce something less than 70 percent, and that could free  
13 up some.

14           SENATOR LUCAS: I think we should hear from our  
15 Committee.

16           MR. FEINMAN: That would be appropriate.

17           MS. CLARK: I think some of our higher ed. people are  
18 in the audience. I think it would be important to hear what their  
19 thoughts are and how this would impact them. I don't know if  
20 they clearly understand it.

21           SENATOR LUCAS: I would agree. Anyone from the  
22 community colleges, a spokesman, would like to offer comments?

23           DELEGATE RASOUL: Thank you, Madam Chair, and  
24 members of the Committee and Staff, it will be interesting to  
25 note, and I think we're going to maybe get into this a little bit,

1 but be comprehensive in what we're going to discuss to try to  
2 understand what else we would do with that couple million  
3 dollars. My understanding is that maybe some creative ideas,  
4 but we just want to make sure that everyone is cognizant of that  
5 before certain comments are made. I don't know how you're  
6 going to proceed with that, Evan, but I'd love to hear some of it.

7 MR. FEINMAN: I'm certainly happy to walk through  
8 what Staff has worked up based on the guidance from the  
9 Committee previously, but we can hear from the community  
10 colleges now or later, it's up to you, Madam Chairwoman.

11 SENATOR LUCAS: Any member in the audience that  
12 would like to speak up in favor of our recommendations?

13 MR. HAIR: Good morning, Senator Lucas, members of  
14 the Education Committee, I'm Shannon Hair. I serve as the Vice  
15 President of Institutional Advancement and Development at  
16 Danville Community College, and I also serve as the Executive  
17 Director of the DCC Educational Foundation.

18 So, your question, would it impact significantly or  
19 impact the amount by 50 percent, obviously it would due to the  
20 fact of the \$315,000 that we receive annually for Workforce  
21 Financial Aid touches between 150 to 175 students across  
22 Danville and Pittsylvania County and Halifax. So, if that number  
23 was reduced by 50 percent, then that's between 85 or so  
24 students, 75 or 85 students less that we would have to provide  
25 for our workforce needs across at least Southside.

1 I'm happy to answer any questions or go into any  
2 details that you might have with regard to this reduction. I know  
3 that we did get to speak back in the summer about the need for  
4 this funding. While G3 is important in our state, G3 is not  
5 covering the significant amount of students that we believe that  
6 they are due to this poverty rate that's required. Again, it's not  
7 necessarily touching the amount of students.

8 I think Evan indicated that it was a double amount,  
9 and a double amount to me means that both the G3 funding and  
10 the Tobacco Commission funding is covering the same student,  
11 it's not. It's not what I would consider double funding. It's just  
12 an additional amount of funding. So, I'm not sure if that helps,  
13 Senator Lucas or not, but I'm happy to answer any questions  
14 from the Staff and/or Commissioners.

15 SENATOR LUCAS: Members of the Commission, do  
16 you have any questions before I turn it back over to Evan for  
17 further explanation? Ms. Clark.

18 MS. CLARK: Mr. Hair, could you, I'm not in the higher  
19 education world, so could you further explain how it is not a  
20 double funding versus maybe an additional funding on a very  
21 basic level?

22 MR. HAIR: So, right now with G3 and the 400 percent  
23 poverty level, those are students that are receiving federal aid,  
24 some portion of federal aid, typically across the 58 corridor,  
25 those students that receive full financial aid or partial financial

1 aid don't always qualify for those Tobacco funds.

2 So, when you look at a student that's part of this 400  
3 percent poverty level, those students are being taken care of  
4 financially with that G3 funding, in addition to the federal  
5 funding. The students that typically are awarded at least in  
6 Danville through the Tobacco Commission Workforce Financial  
7 Aid are not those that are receiving financial aid, not those  
8 receiving G3 and helping a different demographic of student that  
9 is in need of financial assistance.

10 SENATOR LUCAS: Is that good, Ms. Clark?

11 MR. FEINMAN: Madam Chair, I'll just add that the G3  
12 program, 400 percent of federal poverty level is a household  
13 income for a family of four of \$106,000. Everybody under that  
14 level in the targeted spaces is covered by G3. If we maintain our  
15 current level of funding, what we would be doing is subsidizing  
16 students at the community colleges whose household income is  
17 above \$106,000.

18 SENATOR LUCAS: Mr. Owens.

19 MR. OWENS: -- -- how many in the community  
20 college now -- --

21 MR. HAIR: Three hundred and fifteen thousand  
22 dollars.

23 MR. OWENS: Do you know how much money you get  
24 for the G3 program?

25 MR. HAIR: I don't have that number, it doesn't come

1 to the Foundation. I don't know right off how much that is. It's  
2 all based on again different numbers, different allocations. So, I  
3 don't, Mr. Owens, I don't.

4 MR. OWENS: So, you don't know how much money  
5 you're getting from G3?

6 MR. HAIR: Currently, I don't know, I don't manage  
7 that G3 funding, no, sir.

8 MR. OWENS: Over the years, we've been up and  
9 down and back and forth about the money that the Commission  
10 gives directly to the community college for scholarships. Then  
11 there's another pool of money that is for special or competitive  
12 education. You're thinking that if you take it out of the  
13 Scholarship Program and put that same amount of money into  
14 competitive education, would that be more flexible for you or  
15 not?

16 MR. HAIR: It's my understanding now that the  
17 community colleges can actually apply through the competitive  
18 round for programs and things that you also fund. So, to me,  
19 then it's a balance of do you continue to ask for funding that  
20 would help with programs versus with scholarships. Right now,  
21 it's a dual track and you can do both. So, then I think you're  
22 robbing one to help the other if you're not careful.

23 So, if the competitive round stays in place and that  
24 increases, then, I mean, again, typically, what I've had from or  
25 heard from Staff that if you have multiple requests through the

1 competitive round, they want you to choose one. So, then the  
2 question becomes do we help with or does the Commission help  
3 with the Truck Driving Program, or do we provide for scholarships  
4 if scholarships are going to be put into the competitive round?  
5 So, then, to me, I'm not sure what we're gaining by reducing  
6 that amount and putting it into the competitive round.

7 So, I guess my question is so what's the thought of  
8 why that question on G3, I guess the value of that in asking how  
9 much that funding is. I guess I need to understand what that  
10 question means.

11 MR. OWENS: I was just trying to figure out where we  
12 were replacing money that we'd given already?

13 MR. HAIR: To answer that, no, you're not, because  
14 the students that are getting G3 funding that hit that 400 percent  
15 poverty level are not those students that the Commission has  
16 already scholarshipping.

17 MR. OWENS: For clarity sake, so, you're getting  
18 money for a different set of people from G3?

19 MR. HAIR: Correct.

20 MR. OWENS: Totally?

21 MR. HAIR: Correct.

22 MR. MILES: Madam Chair, may I ask a question,  
23 please?

24 SENATOR LUCAS: Yes.

25 MR. MILES: Mr. Feinman, could you, just for clarity,

1 maybe explain the criteria that we have as opposed to what the  
2 G3 has?

3 SENATOR LUCAS: You're directing that question to  
4 Evan?

5 MR. MILES: Yes, ma'am.

6 MR. FEINMAN: I apologize.

7 MR. MILES: No, no problem at all. Could you explain  
8 the difference in criteria in eligibility between the, what we're  
9 talking about as opposed to G3?

10 MR. FEINMAN: I'll do my best. We have a set of  
11 priorities that are given in our Workforce Financial Aid Program  
12 that are given to us from this Committee that include a wide  
13 variety of programs that has a certain amount of overlap on a  
14 programmatic basis with G3, a relatively significant amount, but  
15 not a complete amount, right around 70 percent of the programs,  
16 the degrees that we support G3 also supports.

17 Separate and apart from those two programmatic  
18 questions is the question of which students are supported and  
19 not supported? G3 supports the total cost, as I understand it, for  
20 folks up to 400 percent of the federal poverty line which we set  
21 for a family of four is about \$106,000 a year in household  
22 income. What that means is if we continue our efforts, as we are  
23 this year, it should also be noted that because we didn't have a  
24 full understanding at this time last year of exactly how G3 was  
25 going to play out, we did not decide to have this conversation

1 and reduce our level of support this year.

2 This year there's a full amount of G3 and a full  
3 amount of Workforce Financial Aid happening. What that means  
4 is for the 30 percent of students, of programs that G3 does not  
5 cover and our funds do, regardless of income level, our  
6 Workforce Financial Aid goes to support students pursuing those  
7 courses of study. We do ask that our funds be last dollar, they  
8 should still flow down the income scale.

9 Then for the 70 percent of programs that G3 does  
10 cover this year when we are maintaining our amount of  
11 Workforce Financial Aid, what happens is that the G3 pays for  
12 100 percent of the cost for the students in those 70 percent of  
13 the categories whose household income is up to \$106,000, again,  
14 for a family of four. Then our funds go to pay for students  
15 pursuing those courses of study whose household income is  
16 higher.

17 That is, I am not going to say that budgets don't get  
18 tight for a household making \$107,000 a year and certainly with  
19 two kids, certainly that happens. But the question is, is covering  
20 the cost of community college tuition for those folks the highest  
21 and best use or the highest impact use, recognizing that we have  
22 limited funds, is that the best use of our funds and the best way  
23 to advance and improve the Workforce Development  
24 environment in our footprint, and in Staff's view, it is not. I hope  
25 that helps clear it up.

1 MR. MILES: Yes, thank you.

2 SENATOR LUCAS: You're welcome. Any further  
3 questions?

4 MS. CLARK: I have a question about the household.  
5 In thinking of kids that I know that go to Danville Community  
6 College, those households don't always look like the family of  
7 four, mom and dad and two kids. They may live with  
8 grandparents, aunts, and uncles. So, that formula isn't  
9 necessarily applicable. That's why I'm a little, I think we really  
10 need to think hard about that and maybe not necessarily thinking  
11 that criteria.

12 MR. FEINMAN: Madam Chairwoman.

13 SENATOR LUCAS: Evan.

14 MR. FEINMAN: Ms. Clark, the federal poverty  
15 guidelines take all that into account. I say family of four,  
16 because that's sort of the standard reference point that people  
17 make. A single income person who has a certain number of kids,  
18 they score differently. Their income that they can make or not  
19 make changes dramatically or at least dynamically as their  
20 situation changes.

21 We think, 400 percent, my view is 400 percent of the  
22 poverty level is pretty good. It's certainly not perfect any time  
23 you're making policy like this, as our General Assembly members  
24 here know, you're always painting with a broad brush. I think  
25 the G3 program has been pretty successful this year, is what it

1 looks like.

2 SENATOR LUCAS: Does that answer your question,  
3 Ms. Clark?

4 MS. CLARK: Yes.

5 SENATOR LUCAS: Other questions? Delegate Rasoul.

6 DELEGATE RASOUL: Madam Chair, thank you. My  
7 understanding is ever having this conversation that it is not going  
8 to be the recommendation of the Staff to take the money away,  
9 but rather put it into a competitive process with focused areas so  
10 that way these monies will continue to be available to the  
11 community colleges. However, with the specific focus on what  
12 we believe helps improve the success of the students. I just  
13 think it'll be helpful for us to be holistic about the decision that  
14 we're going to make potentially. Thank you, Madam Chair.

15 SENATOR LUCAS: Further questions? Yes, ma'am?  
16 Go right ahead.

17 UNIDENTIFIED: Question for Sara. Do the colleges  
18 currently expend a hundred percent of the funds that we  
19 administer, by and large?

20 MS. CAPPAS: I administer the community college  
21 grants in Southern Virginia. It's not uncommon for there to be a  
22 balance that gets de-obligated when the funds are not needed. I  
23 think for this school year that's ending, that just ended, we're  
24 estimating about \$300,000 to be de-obligated, just if that gives  
25 some context.

1 MS. WILLIAMS: If I can add though Southwest. They  
2 use the full allocation. It's a little unclear what the balances may  
3 end up being this year. With G3, there's still some things there,  
4 but traditionally the Southwest schools do spend their full  
5 allocation. It would be very unusual in previous years for us to  
6 de-obligate those grants.

7 SENATOR LUCAS: Yes, ma'am, yes, please come to  
8 the microphone.

9 MS. ELKINS: My name is Mary Jane Elkins. I'm with  
10 Southside Virginia Community College. On my way up the road  
11 today I was thinking about the fact that I've been coming here  
12 for 20 years and I feel like maybe we haven't done, we, meaning  
13 the community colleges, have not done a great job of getting  
14 information to the Commission about what these scholarships  
15 have meant to people in our areas. Mr. Hair has talked more  
16 about the specifics of the scholarship. We have hundreds of  
17 students over the years who have gone to Southside because of  
18 these scholarships.

19 Many of them remain in our area, they work in our  
20 area. We are much more apt to train people to stay in our area.  
21 We are very frugal with your funding, it is last dollar, we are very  
22 specific about the application process. So, I believe that the  
23 students in Southside Virginia have just benefitted so much  
24 through scholarships. We did not de-obligate any money last  
25 year. We anticipate that we will about \$15,000 this year.

1       However, we don't spend money that doesn't fit the guidelines of  
2       the Commission.

3                       I called our truck driving instructor yesterday and  
4       asked him about our class that starts in January. We are full  
5       with a waiting list. We offer 11 truck driver training classes, and  
6       G3 does not cover that. If you've read the news recently, you  
7       see one of the huge needs is truck drivers. So, I ask you not to  
8       cut our scholarship funding. If we don't need it, we won't use it.  
9       And I know that lags you behind a year, but we are all very  
10      grateful for it and dependent on it.

11                      And I will also tell you that, Senator Lucas, you know  
12      what the worth is of many of the people in Southside Virginia and  
13      it really gives us a leg up to get students to continue their  
14      training and their education. So, thank you so much for what  
15      you've done for us and we appreciate the fact that we do have  
16      these scholarships.

17                      SENATOR LUCAS: We appreciate what you're doing  
18      and thank you for coming forward with your comments.

19                      Are there others in the audience that would like to  
20      speak on behalf of the community college?

21                      MR. MILES: I'd like to speak. Do you know how  
22      much G3 money you all get?

23                      MS. ELKINS: I knew you were going to ask me that, I  
24      don't know either. I'm just like Mr. Hair, I do not know. That  
25      totally runs through Financial Aid and it does not run through us

1 at all. So, a student who gets G3 is not considered for a Tobacco  
2 scholarship.

3 MR. MILES: Thank you, Madam Chair.

4 SENATOR LUCAS: Thank you, good question. Other  
5 questions?

6 I'm going to send it back to you, Evan.

7 MR. FEINMAN: Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

8 Assuming that the Committee does decide to reduce the  
9 Workforce Financial Aid funding by a certain amount, based on  
10 the feedback that we got from this Committee, as well as from  
11 our colleagues at BCCS and a survey that was done by Sara and  
12 Sarah of other outstanding needs and obstacles preventing  
13 people from pursuing education at community colleges, as well  
14 as what we believe are outstanding opportunities for secondary  
15 institutions, we've come up with a list of potential ways we could  
16 re-task the funds that would be reduced from Workforce Financial  
17 Aid to other education spending. These are still educational  
18 categories that our community colleges would be eligible to  
19 compete for and in many instances are already anticipating  
20 moving in these directions if not with our funding.

21 The first is in the category, and if you'd look on page  
22 24 of Student Retention and Wrap Around Services, we have a  
23 couple of different possibilities underneath these areas. What we  
24 would anticipate if the Committee wanted to move in this  
25 direction was amending our accredited education guidelines to

1 permit consideration of projects of this sort, and they include  
2 child care, which we know anecdotally it's hard to gather really  
3 hard evidence, I know there's a few studies out there in the  
4 world, but we know anecdotally there are a set of parents who  
5 they can't go to class because they've got to watch their kids,  
6 right? And so if there was child care at or near the community  
7 college, and a new category of students who are not currently  
8 able to get post-secondary education, would be able to do so.  
9 The second sub-category under Section A is transportation, same  
10 deal, different problem. You don't have a way to get to the  
11 community college, you're not able to take classes. So, this way,  
12 folks with a transportation issue, we know there is a big issue.

13 In our large metropolitan areas, there's a bus system  
14 that you can take. There is rarely a good or accessible bus  
15 system, particularly a multi-county bus system in the rural area.  
16 That isn't going to work, it doesn't exist. We can't solve that  
17 problem, nor do I think we necessarily should, but we can  
18 certainly help support transportation for students to the  
19 community colleges.

20 The third sub-category here is Non-traditionally Timed  
21 Instruction. This is just another opening up to a different  
22 category of folks an opportunity to pursue post-secondary  
23 education. Many, particularly of our non-traditional students,  
24 non-traditionally aged students, need to work a job, and usually  
25 that job is during the day. And sometimes if you're in food

1 service or retail or hospitality, that job is in the evening. What  
2 you need to have is course offerings that are on the weekends,  
3 that are in the evening, and that creates a whole new huge cost  
4 category for our partners at the community colleges and higher  
5 ed. centers. And so funding from us can help offset that cost,  
6 because they're going to need new staffing, they're going to have  
7 to keep their facilities open longer and later. Those are all ways  
8 in which Wrap Around Services and Retention could, those are  
9 opportunities that we could pursue, that are not currently  
10 available because we restrict what we fund and don't fund  
11 because we have limited funds that we could do here.

12 The second big category is Work Study Program, this  
13 addresses a similar concern. It's really tough to take away time,  
14 you could be making money. So, work studies and  
15 apprenticeships are a great way to make some money while  
16 improving your skill set. That is a category that we sometimes  
17 can fund, but we can certainly change the way in which we fund  
18 those programs if we had more resources to do so that could  
19 include a much more robust, much larger Work Study Programs.

20 The last, and I will admit that this probably interests  
21 me the most, and all of these are good options, is to pursue  
22 areas of excellence, truly transformational programs. So, what  
23 we've discussed previously are all incremental positive  
24 improvements. You would increase across the whole sector, 15  
25 more students at this community college, 25 more at that, 50

1 more at this one, if we had child care or transportation or  
2 nontraditionally timed instruction.

3           The other option would be to work with a post-  
4 secondary institution to really create a true competitive  
5 advantage for them relative to other regions in the state or in the  
6 nation. I do think long term as competition for business and  
7 talent gets more and more and more global, as the world gets  
8 flatter and smaller, communities that are not one of the best at a  
9 thing are not going to be competitive relative to others. Saying  
10 we will do less frequent but much larger and deeper investments  
11 with individual communities.

12           You can imagine, here, I was talking with Dr.  
13 Ehrhardt, some of these very talented professors and  
14 laboratories can cost millions of dollars, but think about what it  
15 means for business attraction if we're able to ask Ferrum College,  
16 or DCC, to approach somebody from MIT or Caltech, by offering  
17 them the facilities or the salary or both necessary to bring a truly  
18 world-class, that's an adjective that gets thrown around a lot, but  
19 a truly world class program and researcher and hopefully an  
20 entrepreneur to one of our institutions, and that could be a really  
21 exciting thing, a long-term change. Now, that's also a higher risk  
22 approach, too. It's a lot of capital to allocate early on, it doesn't  
23 necessarily pay off at all or overnight, but we know that it's  
24 something that's necessary over time from us or from somebody  
25 if we're going to be competitive across our community. So,

1 those are the options that Staff has worked up.

2           What we would suggest would be to, the best course  
3 of action would be to reduce Workforce Financial Aid by, I think a  
4 safe number, recognizing that we think 70 percent of programs  
5 are covered by G3, is to reduce by about 50 percent this year.  
6 That still leaves a fair amount of wiggle room for our community  
7 colleges and higher ed. centers. Then we move that funding, and  
8 this would need to be a budget revision done in the Full  
9 Commission tomorrow, we move that funding over to competitive  
10 education, along with instructions to Staff to pursue, I really  
11 think you should say just one or maybe two of these list items.  
12 We don't want to spread things too thinly in competitive  
13 education.

14           SENATOR LUCAS: Any comments based on those  
15 remarks? Hearing none, we need to go with the  
16 recommendation?

17           DELEGATE RASOUL: Madam Chair, I'm still just a  
18 little delegate. I think that number of great points that have  
19 been brought up and Evan talking about the fiscal year beginning  
20 this July, July 1, and we might even consider a tiered approach,  
21 thinking about a reduction for this year, as I'm sure the  
22 community colleges are thinking about and preparing for next  
23 year already, a tiered approach thinking about a 30 percent and  
24 then a 50 percent for the following year. For example, if there's  
25 some consternation of doing it that way, it gives the, what I'm

1 thinking about is the community colleges having enough time to,  
2 I think the child care is a top issue and having the time to come  
3 up with these ideas. For example, 50 percent of the capital  
4 investment for an on-campus facility, that's an outstanding idea,  
5 and I'm wondering about the time it takes to actually come up  
6 with it and put the project together and so giving them enough  
7 runway.

8 I'm saying two things. Number one, for the  
9 Commission to consider tomorrow potentially a tiered approach,  
10 where maybe it's 30 percent in the upcoming year and then a  
11 larger percentage the year after.

12 Specifically, I like the child care, transportation, and  
13 the work study for the amount of money that there's going to be,  
14 this seems to be an impossible, a couple of choices for us to  
15 focus our dollars on. Thank you, Madam Chair.

16 SENATOR LUCAS: Thank you. I'd really like to  
17 entertain some discussion on the tiered approach as suggested  
18 by Delegate Rasoul.

19 MR. FEINMAN: Madam Chair, I will also share that  
20 and, Sara Williams, you probably can add a little meat to this.  
21 We so know that in the Southwestern region, United Way of  
22 Southwest Virginia, is already working with the community  
23 colleges there on what appears to be a pretty darn ambitious  
24 wrap around services approach that includes child care.

25 MS. CLARK: We can't vote?

1 MR. FEINMAN: No, but you could make  
2 recommendations, Madam Chair, rather than have this  
3 conversation again in the Full Commission. It would be better if  
4 we came out of this meeting with a recommendation.

5 SENATOR LUCAS: Ms. Clark.

6 MS. CLARK: Yes. I'll tag onto Delegate Rasoul's  
7 suggestion, I like a slower approach to this, and 30 percent  
8 sounds like a good number to start with, and we can choose that  
9 next progression after we see how the 30 percent works for the  
10 community colleges. I think that's an appropriate number to  
11 start with.

12 SENATOR LUCAS: Are we developing a consistency  
13 around that figure?

14 MR. OWENS: Is there a uniform qualification for the  
15 use of these funds? Does every community college use it for the  
16 very same thing?

17 MR. FEINMAN: We have a list of priorities. We  
18 recognize the student profiles and the courses pursued at each  
19 college are different. What we have is a set of priorities starting  
20 with, and those were the lists that Sara gave you at the outset.  
21 Number one priority is credentials that can be obtained very  
22 quickly within one year, the certificate credentials. The second is  
23 the Stem-H and Advanced Manufacturing. Then we go on to  
24 High Demand Occupations. And, frankly, number five is a catch-  
25 all. We have recently, and I want to give our partners in the

1 community college system and higher ed. centers credit. For  
2 many years, things were pretty loosey-goosey around our, how  
3 well they were adhering to our prioritization, and that has been  
4 tightened up dramatically and it is true that few of our dollars  
5 flow to that number five, where previously they often did. But it  
6 is not lot of our dollars that are flowing to that number five.

7 So, I do want to be clear that under our current  
8 guidelines and under our current funding level, a certain amount  
9 of our money goes to low demand course offerings for relatively  
10 affluent people. And that's not a bad thing, but it is not the most  
11 impactful use of our funds on a per dollar basis.

12 MS. CAPPs: I just wanted to provide a clarification.  
13 We did revise our Workforce Financial Aid guidelines last year for  
14 the current school year that we're operating under. And we  
15 didn't go over that in detail, but it is covered on 13 and 14 pages  
16 in your book. I just wanted to clarify that Priorities 4 and 5, we  
17 changed our guidelines so that those are for high demand  
18 occupations that do not fit under the STEM-H Advanced  
19 Manufacturing priority areas. So, we did, I just wanted to clarify,  
20 we did revise the guidelines last year and there's a very limited  
21 amount of money that gets allocated to Priorities 4 and 5, but  
22 they are for very specific careers.

23 MS. WILLIAMS: If I could add one other little note on  
24 that. I've heard from a lot of my schools that because they do  
25 have such a small amount allocated for Priority 5 and Priority 4

1 this year that they have used, that the majority of the funds  
2 they've awarded this year, they may have funded G3 programs,  
3 but that student for income or some other reason wouldn't have  
4 qualified. So, there's a little bit of truth to, they may be funding  
5 a student who is outside that 400 percent, but it's not necessarily  
6 always in a nonpriority program. There's a large portion of  
7 students that are in a G3 program but don't qualify for G3 and  
8 based on income, currently could still qualify for our program.

9 SENATOR LUCAS: Thank you, Sara.

10 DR. EHRHARDT: I support the tiered approach, as  
11 well. I think we need more clarity around what's really  
12 happening. I would encourage our institution so that we can do  
13 a better analysis to have that G3 -- I know we're not going to  
14 look at it as any identifying information but so that we can look  
15 at it aggregated to say how many students are getting G3 and  
16 we need to know that number in the future.

17 SENATOR LUCAS: Mr. Hair.

18 MR. HAIR: Dr. Ehrhardt, I'm glad that you brought  
19 that up. Chairman Owens' questions that made me remember  
20 that I can pull emails up on these and still work and talk at the  
21 same time. So, to answer your question, Chairman Owens,  
22 Danville Community College received \$1.2 million this academic  
23 year in G3 funds. To date, Danville has used \$700,000 of that.  
24 And to answer Mary Jane's question, she received about a million  
25 dollars in G3 funding, and she's used right at \$600,000. I could

1 obviously go through all the community colleges within the  
2 Footprint, I have all that here. But it looks like for the VCCS,  
3 about \$20 million was provided for the academic year of '21-'22.  
4 And that \$16 million has been, \$19 million was allocated, and the  
5 remaining allocation is about \$10 million. So, about 50 percent  
6 has been used to date for this academic year. I hope that  
7 answered your question, Chairman Owens and yours, as well, Dr.  
8 Ehrhardt.

9 DELEGATE RASOUL: Just a clarifying question. Does  
10 that include allocations for the spring semester or not yet?

11 MR. HAIR: It looks like that, that does include, well, it  
12 says fiscal year '22, so as of the end of November. So, I don't  
13 think that includes the spring.

14 DELEGATE RASOUL: Thank you.

15 SENATOR LUCAS: Thank you, Mr. Hair.

16 We need to make a recommendation that we move  
17 forward. We need to decide whether or not there is a consensus.

18 MR. FEINMAN: You can certainly vote with the  
19 members you have, it's simply not binding until the Full  
20 Commission takes action on whatever recommendation that you  
21 will provide tomorrow.

22 DELEGATE RASOUL: Madam Chair.

23 SENATOR LUCAS: Delegate Rasoul.

24 DELEGATE RASOUL: Madam Chair, I would like to  
25 move that we employ a tiered approach beginning with a 30-

1 percent reduction in the upcoming fiscal year to give the  
2 community colleges some time to look at some of these  
3 recommendations as we move forward and with the  
4 understanding that there will be a tiered approach as the G3  
5 Program continues to flourish. And I would hope that we would  
6 make that recommendation to the Full Commission.

7 MR. FEINMAN: A voice vote would be sufficient,  
8 Madam Chair.

9 SENATOR LUCAS: All in favor, please let it be known  
10 by saying aye. (Ayes). Nos have the same right? (No response).

11 MR. FEINMAN: The second question, which of the  
12 proposed re-uses of the funds shall the Staff consider in  
13 forthcoming competitive education round?

14 DELEGAGE RASOUL: Could we ask, if they'd be so  
15 kind, any of the representatives if they have any insight they'd  
16 like to come up and share some insight with what they hear from  
17 their students, as well? I know that the Staff did a great job in  
18 probably interviewing. Do you have any insight for child care,  
19 transportation, work study, areas of excellence, if you have any  
20 insight to share with us?

21 MS. ELKINS: Again, I'm Mary Jane Elkins from  
22 Southside Virginia Community College. I don't disagree that  
23 many of these are areas of concern. Our service area is 4,200  
24 square miles, so when you're talking about child care, we  
25 certainly have facilities that provide child care. When I am

1 talking with my students, and I have some emergency funds that  
2 I used that are privately donated to help with various things that  
3 can be obstacles for the students to finish their programs.

4 In many cases in our area, children are kept by Aunt  
5 Sue and their mother and so that makes it just a little bit harder,  
6 because family members help with child care. I have very few  
7 requests for child care in facilities that are already established.  
8 So, I will tell you that.

9 As far as transportation goes, we also work hard to  
10 use some of our funding to help with gas cards. This is not  
11 Tobacco funding, it's private funding, and provide gas cards,  
12 because, again, with 4,200 square miles. So, we have people  
13 who have transportation issues. There is, as Senator Lucas  
14 knows, there's not but so much public transportation in the area.

15 SENATOR LUCAS: None.

16 MS. ELKINS: We have a bus that comes from  
17 Blackstone, so we do have that. We have an Occupational  
18 Technical Center in Blackstone where we do power line worker  
19 training, where we do truck driving, where we do diesel  
20 technology, and we have even worked out a partnership with  
21 Nottoway County to help us with some housing there where  
22 students can stay.

23 So, we try to do everything possible to take care of  
24 those things there, they are huge, I don't know in such a large  
25 area, but I still say to you the top priority is tuition for us. So, I

1 hope I've answered some of your questions.

2 MR. HAIR: Again, Shannon Hair, Danville Community  
3 College, just to provide additional insight. Danville Community  
4 College actually houses a child care center on its campus. I  
5 believe it may be the only community college that has a child  
6 care center on its campus. I have private funding that provides  
7 scholarships and avenues for those students to be able to attend  
8 college and actually bring their children to campus. And we  
9 touch about 25 to 50 students annually for that. So, there's not  
10 an abundance of need for all of our students, a head count of  
11 over 2,000 that are making that request.

12 And, also, I have private funding, as Mary Jane does,  
13 with transportation. Over the last 12 to 18 months, we've  
14 probably had somewhere around five to ten students to request  
15 that funding. Again, the number one concern for our students in  
16 Danville, again, is the idea of what the cost of tuition is.

17 I will add that in this idea of looking at additional  
18 avenues of technology with virtual learning is extremely critical,  
19 as we all know, across the Commonwealth, broadband continues  
20 to be a major issue. So, what we're seeing in the abundance of  
21 hundreds of students, the need for technology, whether that's  
22 laptops or data or cards, in that whole technology realm. So,  
23 that would be a thought as you continue to look at how to  
24 potentially diversify those funds, is to look at how the technology  
25 can be enhanced for those students that are not traveling to

1 campus, that are staying at home and working virtually. Thank  
2 you.

3 MS. CLARK: I have a question for you, Dr. Hair. So,  
4 of these five priorities, which one would you recommend that we  
5 focus on first, would it be the Work Study Programs, because I'm  
6 hearing the child care isn't as demanding and the transportation  
7 isn't demanding?

8 MR. HAIR: So, can give me the list of five again, I'm  
9 sorry, with me trying to getting G3 numbers up, I wasn't  
10 necessarily paying attention to everything that we were talking  
11 about. But I did hear transportation, I did hear child care, I did  
12 hear work study. I think Evan also talked about maybe looking  
13 at, helping with faculty, as well. Thank you.

14 SENATOR LUCAS: Does that answer your question?

15 MR. HAIR: I've got it right here, Senator Lucas. I  
16 think when you look at this list, while all are equally important in  
17 the mind of the Tobacco Commission, I do think that the idea of  
18 this Earn and Learn and looking at how those grant funds can be  
19 used to potentially help with the apprenticeships and working  
20 with those industries and those partnerships and really helping  
21 the employment side would be very, very beneficial. Because, in  
22 theory, that's what those scholarship dollars have been used for,  
23 for almost 20 years now, almost 25 really, of how to find ways to  
24 help those students get educated, to go back into the industry  
25 that's local, that's growing the economy. So, I would think that

1 those programs would be essential to help fund those and look at  
2 those students from that standpoint of helping on the  
3 apprenticeships. And that would be my thought, as well.

4 SENATOR LUCAS: Any further questions?

5 MR. HAIR: Thank you.

6 SENATOR LUCAS: Yes, sir, please come forward.

7 MR. HUGHES: Sara Hughes, Wytheville Community  
8 College. I just want to reiterate what our colleagues have said.  
9 These funds are tremendously important. One dollar short of  
10 some students is the same as being a thousand dollars short.  
11 We need to make sure that we do everything we can to fulfill the  
12 need for tuition, but we also understand the importance of the  
13 other areas that have been discussed.

14 We do thank the Tobacco Commission for everything  
15 that you've done over the years to help our students because  
16 you have been that lifeline that's got some of these students  
17 across the finish line. So, we certainly do appreciate that.

18 MR. FEINMAN: Madam Chair, the only thing I'll say is  
19 that I completely agree that with or without G3, it is an  
20 inarguably good thing for us to fund financial aid for folks at the  
21 community colleges. The question is not is it good, the question  
22 is that the best single use for our funds relative to what else we  
23 might be able to do.

24 In this instance with 70 percent of the programs that  
25 we support, folks being funded up to 400 percent of the poverty

1 line, it seems as though, particularly the approach that Delegate  
2 Rasoul and Dr. Ehrhardt have proposed is a very measured  
3 response, a significant amount of increased funding for financial  
4 aid that's coming in.

5 DR. EHRHARDT: I'd also would just like to briefly  
6 show some support for the work study, Earn and Learn, I know in  
7 Danville and Pennsylvania, there has been a focus on  
8 apprenticeships, and I won't pick on Dr. Julie Brown. We know  
9 that a lot of times the aversion among employers is the financial  
10 cost to do that, and for students, it can be the cost is why they  
11 feel that they can't afford to participate. And so I know that that  
12 can really move the needle not only in getting students through  
13 but retaining them.

14 SENATOR LUCAS: Is that in the form of a  
15 recommendation or motion?

16 DR. EHRHARDT: Merely a suggestion perhaps.

17 SENATOR LUCAS: Suggestion.

18 DR. EHRHARDT: That could be included.

19 SENATOR LUCAS: To be included, thank you.

20 MR. FEINMAN: Madam Chair, we did ask you all to  
21 pick one of these, and I hate to put it back to you, to focus on  
22 one.

23 SENATOR LUCAS: I think there's been a focus on the  
24 Work Study Program and ask for a voice vote. All in favor, say  
25 aye. (Ayes). Any nays? (No response). All right, thank you.

1 That's the recommendation that will be going forward to the Full  
2 Committee.

3 MR. FEINMAN: It is?

4 SENATOR LUCAS: Yes, sir.

5 New possible funding areas?

6 MR. FEINMAN: That is what we discovered, Madam  
7 Chairwoman.

8 SENATOR LUCAS: Other business?

9 MR. FEINMAN: I have no other business for you,  
10 Madam Chairwoman.

11 SENATOR LUCAS: And we don't have any other public  
12 comments? Do we have any further public comments? Call for  
13 public comments? (No response). Hearing none.

14 MR. FEINMAN: That finishes our business, Madam  
15 Chairwoman.

16 SENATOR LUCAS: Then I think we're set for a motion  
17 to adjourn.

18 UNIDENTIFIED: So moved.

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21 **PROCEEDINGS CONCLUDED.**

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**CERTIFICATE OF THE COURT REPORTER**

I, Medford W. Howard, Registered Professional Reporter and Notary Public for the State of Virginia at Large, do hereby certify that I was the Court Reporter who took down and transcribed the proceedings of the **Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission, Education Committee Meeting**, when held on Thursday, January 6, 2022, at 2:00 o'clock p.m., at the Richmond Marriott Hotel, 500 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

I further certify this is a true and accurate transcript, to the best of my ability to hear and understand the proceedings.

Given under my hand this \_\_\_\_\_ day of January, 2022.

\_\_\_\_\_

Medford W. Howard  
CCR