virginia
ASSESSMENT GROUP

VIRGINIA REGIONAL
ACCREDITATION SYMPOSIUM

VAIR

Hosted by VAG
in Partnership
with
VRAS & VAIR

ALIGNED
FOR IMPACT

November 18-20, 2026

VA Collaborative on Institutional Effectiveness
Est. 2025

Dear Colleagues,

I look forward to welcoming you to the VA Collaborative for Institutional Effectiveness (VCIE), hosted by VAG, in partnership with VRAS and VAIR!

We are thrilled to present a truly integrated conference that brings together assessment, accreditation, and institutional research professionals and builds on our collective strengths. This year's theme, ***Aligned for Impact,*** reflects the shifts in the evolving higher education landscape and underscores the importance of strategic collaborations to promote institutional effectiveness. VCIE will take place November 18-20 with sessions you won't want to miss on each day:

- Wednesday will feature a half-day of sessions exploring emerging topics in assessment, accreditation, and institutional research culminating in a featured session with **SCHEV's Tod Massa,** followed by a **Welcome Reception**.

- Thursday kicks off with ***A View From the Top: Where Should We Be Going?****, a* keynote panel with **College Presidents in Virginia**. Afterwards, attendees can choose from a full day of concurrent sessions with themes like AI and analytics, continuous improvement in practice, and collaborations that strengthen institutional effectiveness.

- Friday includes ***Who Decides What Quality Means? Accreditation at a Crossroads****,* a keynote panel featuring leaders from distinct vantage points. This will be followed by an update from **The Commission on Schools and Colleges by Geoffrey C. Klein** and engaging discussions on related policy issues.

I hope you leave this year's conference having strengthened existing connections, built new ones, and gained practical resources, fresh perspectives, and renewed energy to address the challenges and opportunities facing our field.

Sincerely,



Sheena G. Serslev
2026 Conference Planning Chair and VAG President-Elect

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Italics and Bold: ***Keynote***	Purple - Integrative	Blue - Assessment	Orange - Accreditation	Green - Strategic Planning	Brown - Institutional Research

WEDNESDAY – November 18th		
Time	**Event**	**Location**
12:30 - 5:00pm	**Conference Registration (desk outside Shenandoah Ballroom)**	
1:00 - 2:00pm	**The Assessment Cycle Is Not the Point: Understanding Assessment in Context** Megan Good & Riley Herr, James Madison University	Salon C
2:10 - 3:10pm	**The Narrative Toolkit: Strategies for Accreditation Writing** Tisha M. Paredes, Independent Scholar	Salon C
3:20 - 4:20pm	**So, You're New to IR: What Every Institutional Research Professional Should Know** Darrell Tyler, Virginia State University	Salon C
4:30 - 5:30pm	**State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) Data, the Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS), and Return on Investment Measures** Tod Massa, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV)	Salon C
5:45 - 7:00pm	*Reception*	Colonnade
7:30pm	**VAG Board & Planning Committee Dinner**	

THURSDAY – November 19th		
Time	**Event**	**Location**
7:30am - 5:00pm	Conference Registration Sponsor Booth	Outside the Shenandoah Ballroom
7:00 - 8:00am	*Breakfast*	Colonnade
8:15- 8:30am	*Elections*	Shenandoah
8:30 - 10:15am	**A View From the Top: Where Should We Be Going? Presidential Panel** Javaune Adams-Gaston, President of Norfolk State University David Bushman, President of Bridgewater College John Downey, President of Blue Ridge Community College Jim Schmidt, President of James Madison University **Moderator**: ***T. Dary Erwin,*** James Madison University	**Shenandoah**
10:30 - 11:15am	**A Newcomer's Guide to Institutional Effectiveness** Chris Orem, James Madison University Rachel Smith, Hampden-Sydney College Megan Good, James Madison University	Salon C
	Alignment is Not a Feeling: A Rubric for Testing Strategic Coherence Sarah MacDonald, James Madison University	Salon A
	Pack an Assessment Thinking Suitcase for your Gen Ed Reform Journey (workshop part 1) Tisha Paredes, Independent Scholar Stephen Biscotte, Virginia Tech	Salon B
	Do's and Don'ts for Harnessing Agentic AI to Support Institutional Effectiveness Paige Gance, Washington and Lee University	Blue Ridge
11:15-11:30am	*Break: Beverages*	

THURSDAY – November 19th		
11:30am - 12:15pm	**From SLOs to Durable Skills: Assessment as Public-Facing Translator** Anna M. Kuthy, Longwood University	Salon C
	Sponsor Session: From Scattered to Strategic: Reimagining Your Assessment Process Hayden Hall & Dan Alpert, Coursedog	Salon A
	Pack an Assessment Thinking Suitcase for your Gen Ed Reform Journey (workshop part 2) Tisha Paredes, Independent Scholar Stephen Biscotte, Virginia Tech	Salon B
	Using Data Analytics and Assessment Practices to Boost Survey Results Ruth Robinson & Alicia Campbell, The University of Baltimore	Blue Ridge
12:15 - 1:15pm	*Lunch*	Colonnade
1:15 - 2:00pm	**Building an AI Agent for Meta-Assessment: Results and Lessons Learned** Amy Lebrecht, George Mason University + **Integrating LLMs into Dashboards to Enhance Insights** Rob Hopkins, Virginia Tech	Salon C
	Exploring Approaches to Administrative Assessment Bonnie Sylwester, George Mason University Lauren Bryant, Virginia Tech Roger Bryan, William & Mary	Salon A
	SACSCOC Liaison and Campus Engagement Using Dashboards & Audits Sara Halteman, Eastern Mennonite University	Salon B
	From Misalignment to Impact: Radford's Assessment Redesign Noah Elbaor & Nicholas Vaught, Radford University	Blue Ridge

THURSDAY – November 19th		
2:15 - 3:00pm	**Tracked on Campus: Student Views of University Surveillance Practices** Emma Puckett, Riley Herr, Sara Finney & Sarah Blackstone, James Madison University + **Collaborating to Design an Online Administrative Unit Assessment Portal That Works** Lauren Bryant & Zachary Mellon, Virginia Tech	Salon C
	Applied Learning for Everyone. Really? Jodi Fisler, William & Mary	Salon A
	Beyond the Self-Study: Operationalizing Sustainable Dual Accreditation Dustin Anderson & Amber Dees, Columbus State University	Salon B
	Supportive Rigor: Assessment Feedback That Builds Trust and Confidence Anna Maria Kuthy, Longwood University	Blue Ridge
3:00 - 3:30pm	*Break: Snack and Beverages*	
3:30 - 4:15pm	**Building a Data Ecosystem to Understand High-Impact Practices** Laura Lambert, Dena Pastor, & Sarah Blackstone, James Madison University	Salon C
	The Evolution of Data-Driven Targeted Student Success Interventions Strategies Christopher Schreiner & Lindsay Tierney, Virginia Commonwealth University	Salon A
	Faculty Collaboration on General Education Assessment Improved its Impact Chevy Newell & Tim Merrill, Reynolds Community College	Salon B
	Balancing Accuracy and Explainability of ML Retention Models Kristina Podesta & Srikanth Reddy Bhemre, George Mason University	Blue Ridge

THURSDAY – November 19th		
4:30 - 5:15pm	**Demystifying Statistics: Using and Interpreting Marginal Effects** Sarah Blackstone, James Madison University	Salon C
	Assessment as Catalyst: Driving IE & Student Success Justina O. Osa & Aurelia Nicholas Donald, Virginia State University	Salon A
	A Smartsheet Blueprint for Assessment Reporting: From Submission to Feedback Juste Mehou & Megan Rodgers Good, James Madison University	Salon B
	VAIR Board Meeting	Blue Ridge

Friday – November 20th		
Time	**Event**	**Location**
7:00 - 8:00am	*Breakfast*	Colonnade
8:15 - 8:30am	*Awards*	Shenandoah
8:30 - 9:45am	**WHO DECIDES WHAT QUALITY MEANS?** ***Accreditation at a Crossroads*** William L. Hathaway, Regent University Geoffrey C. Klein, The Commission on Colleges and Universities Amanda Wornhoff, Higher Learning Commission **Moderator**: ***Megan Good,*** James Madison University	**Shenandoah**
10:00 - 11:00am	**The Commission on Colleges and Universities Update** Geoffrey C. Klein, The Commission on Colleges and Universities	Shenandoah
11:00 - 11:15am	*Snacks To Go*	
11:15 - 12:00pm	**The Commission on Colleges and Universities Q & A** Geoffrey C. Klein, The Commission on Colleges and Universities	Salon C
	Virginia Assessment of Student Learning Policy Kelsey Kirland, University of Virginia	Salon A
	FVT/GE to STATS Roundtable Discussion Rachel Smith, Hampden-Sydney College & Kathy Walker, Randolph-Macon College	Salon B

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Wednesday, November 18th

12:30 – 5:00PM

Outside Shenandoah Ballroom

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

1:00 – 2:00PM

Salon C

THE ASSESSMENT CYCLE IS NOT THE POINT: UNDERSTANDING ASSESSMENT IN CONTEXT

Session Type: ASSESSMENT

Megan Good & Riley Herr, *James Madison University*

Assessment is often introduced through the familiar cycle of outcomes, evidence, analysis, and use, and this session will provide participants with a practical grounding in that core process. But in a time of rapid change in higher education, the cycle is only part of the story. This introductory session situates assessment as one contributing field within institutional effectiveness and explores how assessment practitioners help institutions demonstrate, understand, and strengthen educational quality. Participants will leave with a clearer understanding of both the basic assessment cycle and the larger role assessment can play in helping institutions make credible claims about educational quality in a time of rapid change.

2:10 – 3:10PM

Salon C

THE NARRATIVE TOOLKIT: STRATEGIES FOR ACCREDITATION WRITING

Session Type: ACCREDITATION

Tisha M. Paredes, *Independent Scholar*

Stating your institution's case for accreditation standards often triggers anxiety, leading to frantic searches for external templates, information-overloaded reports, and reaching out to colleagues with "simple" questions. This introductory session will move past theoretical advice to demonstrate how to create a working outline and shift from a passive to an authoritative institutional voice. Participants will learn how to craft a definitive argument, balancing descriptive text (the official written policies outlining how you say you operate) with demonstrative artifacts (redacted, real-world files proving you follow those rules in practice). Designed for both newcomers navigating their first report and seasoned professionals looking to refine their style, participants will leave with a clearer understanding of the mechanics of report writing, a toolkit for eliminating vague language, and a straightforward roadmap for articulating their institution's compliance story.

Wednesday, November 18th

3:20 – 4:20PM

Salon C

SO, YOU'RE NEW TO IR: WHAT EVERY INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH PROFESSIONAL SHOULD KNOW

Session Type: INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

Darrell Tyler, *Virginia State University*

Many professionals enter Institutional Research (IR) from diverse backgrounds, yet quickly discover that success requires more than technical skills and reporting expertise. This session introduces the foundational functions of IR, key higher education metrics, and common data challenges while emphasizing the importance of understanding institutional culture and building relationships across campus. Participants will learn practical strategies for identifying knowledgeable, responsive, and data-aware colleagues who can help navigate complex data environments and strengthen decision-making. Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of the profession, a roadmap for their first year in IR, and tools for becoming trusted partners in advancing institutional effectiveness and student success.

4:30 – 5:30PM

Salon C

STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA (SCHEV) DATA, THE VIRGINIA LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM (VLDS), AND RETURN ON INVESTMENT MEASURES

Session Type: Integrative

Interactive Discussion Facilitated by Tod Massa, *State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV)*

This session will provide an overview of key data collected and reported by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), with a particular focus on outcomes data such as return on investment (ROI) and collection changes supporting work-based learning. Attendees will learn how the Virginia Longitudinal Data System (VLDS) links P–16 education and workforce data, enabling SCHEV and partner agencies to analyze student pathways and transitions into the workforce.

The Policy Analytics Director will present the methodology used to construct SCHEV's ROI estimates, highlight key insights from the analysis, collection changes supporting work-based learning, and discuss future directions in response to the growing emphasis on ROI among policymakers and accrediting bodies. The session will conclude with ample time for questions and discussion.

Wednesday, November 18th

5:45 – 7:00PM

Colonnade

WELCOME RECEPTION

Session Type: Integrative

Join us for a celebratory welcome reception. We look forward to acknowledging our sponsors and recognizing the graduate student winners of the Linda Townsend Award. There will be heavy hors d'oeuvres alongside a cash bar.

7:30PM

Off-site

VIRGINIA ASSESSMENT GROUP BOARD & PLANNING COMMITTEE DINNER

Thursday, November 19th

7:30AM – 5:00PM

Outside Shenandoah Ballroom

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

7:00 – 8:00AM

Colonnade

BREAKFAST

8:00 – 8:15AM

Shenandoah Ballroom

ELECTIONS

8:30 – 10:15AM

Shenandoah Ballroom

VIEW FROM THE TOP WHERE SHOULD WE BE GOING?

Session Type: INTEGRATED

***Moderator*: T. Dary Erwin,** *James Madison University*

***Panelists*:**

Javaune Adams-Gaston, *President of Norfolk State University*

David Bushman, *President of Bridgewater College*

John Downey, *President of Blue Ridge Community College*

Jim Schmidt, *President of James Madison University*

Thursday, November 19th

10:30 – 11:15AM

Salon C

A NEWCOMER's GUIDE TO INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Session Type: Integrated

Chris Orem, Megan Good, *James Madison University* & Rachel Smith, *Hampden-Sydney College*

Are you new to the field of Institutional Effectiveness? Is this your first time at the conference? If you answered yes (or no) to those questions, then this session is designed for you. Join experienced IE professionals for an engaging introduction to the field and its core functions including accreditation, assessment, institutional research, and strategic planning. Presenters will provide concise overviews of each area, highlight key resources, and share practical insights to help you better understand how these functions work together to support institutional success. Whether you are new to IE or looking to broaden your perspective, this session will help you identify professional development opportunities and build connections within the IE community. Through both structured and open Q&A, participants will have the opportunity to engage with presenters, ask questions, and leave with a stronger understanding of the field, available resources, and valuable support networks for professional growth.

10:30 – 11:15AM

Salon A

ALIGNMENT IS NOT A FEELING: A RUBRIC FOR TESTING STRATEGIC COHERENCE

Session Type: STRATEGIC PLANNING

Sarah MacDonald, *James Madison University*

Institutions often claim alignment across missions, strategies, programs, and outcomes — yet struggle to demonstrate how those connections actually work, or how evidence meaningfully informs direction-setting. "Alignment" becomes something we sense rather than something we can examine. This session introduces a strategic coherence rubric in development, designed to help institutions test alignment rather than assume it. Grounded in assessment, planning, and institutional research practice, the rubric offers a structured way to examine how purpose, strategy, structures, and evidence relate across levels and over time. This is explicitly a research-in-progress session. Participants will engage with the draft framework, apply selected dimensions to real scenarios, and provide feedback to help refine the rubric's clarity, usefulness, and limits. Attendees will leave with a working tool, concrete use cases, and shared language for diagnosing coherence challenges on their own campuses.

Thursday, November 19th

10:30 – 11:15AM

Blue Ridge Room

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR HARNESSING AGENTIC AI TO SUPPORT INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Session Type: Integrative

Paige Gance, *Washington and Lee University*

Using real-world examples, this interactive session will explore the capabilities of Agentic AI to support Institutional Effectiveness and Research offices through streamlined processes and custom tool creation. The presenter will explain the high-level technical differences between Agentic AI and other types of AI workflows, including when to use each and unique risks associated with AI agents. Attendees will learn how to incorporate open-source tools into their orchestration of AI agents to produce the best results. Conversely, the session will also cover how to effectively leverage AI to improve existing tools and platforms. The session will conclude with a guided interactive exercise to help attendees identify opportunities in their own roles to create or improve software tools using AI agents.

10:30 – 11:15AM

Salon B

PACK AN ASSESSMENT THINKING SUITCASE FOR YOUR GEN ED REFORM JOURNEY (WORKSHOP PART 1)

Session Type: ASSESSMENT

Tisha Paredes, *Independent Scholar*

Stephen Biscotte, *Virginia Tech*

Gen ed reform is hard. This practice-oriented session offers a nuts-and-bolts guide to bringing 'assessment thinking' to the four phases of the gen ed reform journey: laying the foundation, program design, program implementation, and sustained engagement. Participants will explore practical activities, tools and prompts to help lead reform efforts thoughtfully and collaboratively. Ideal for both new and seasoned gen ed veterans, attendees will leave with a packed gen ed reform suitcase of useful prompts, planning guides, and activities. We will cover mapping program design to institutional mission, building collaborative teams, and navigating sudden strategic detours.

11:15 – 11:30AM

BREAK: BEVERAGES

Thursday, November 19th

11:30am - 12:15pm

Salon C

FROM SLOS TO DURABLE SKILLS: ASSESSMENT AS PUBLIC-FACING TRANSLATOR

Session Type: Integrative

Anna M. Kuthy, *Longwood University*

Higher education actively teaches students the durable skills employers, communities, and democratic life require—analysis, communication, collaboration, ethical reasoning, problem framing, and evidence-based argument, among others. Yet public and academic conversations continue to question the relevance of liberal arts learning to students' professional readiness and skill growth. One key to this puzzle may lie in translating academic and assessment language into clear, public-facing skill language. This interactive session addresses that gap. Assessment professionals already help faculty shape SLOs into clear, observable, and measurable competencies. Building on that work, participants will examine assessment as a translation model: moving from SLOs and course activities to durable skills, observable behaviors, evidence of learning, and language students can use in interviews and professional settings. The session will be part discussion and part hands-on application, with participants testing and refining the model for their own institutional contexts.

11:30am - 12:15pm

Salon A

SPONSOR SESSION: FROM SCATTERED TO STRATEGIC: REIMAGINING YOUR ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Session Type: ASSESSMENT

Hayden Hall & Dan Alpert, *Coursedog*

Program assessments are critical work at any institution, yet many administrators and faculty find the process cumbersome, time-consuming, and disconnected from their day-to-day work. In this session, learn how institutions are moving to streamlined assessment processes that reduce administrative burden, eliminate data silos, and ensure assessment findings lead to tangible impact.

This presentation covers:

- A roadmap for building a connected, more efficient assessment infrastructure that leverages templates and connected data sources
- Strategies to reduce the burden of assessment on faculty and staff
- How to create a culture of accountability and information sharing across your institution

Thursday, November 19th

11:30am - 12:15pm

Blue Ridge Room

USING DATA ANALYTICS AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICES TO BOOST SURVEY RESULTS

Session Type: Integrative

Ruth Robinson & Alicia Campbell, *The University of Baltimore*

This presentation examines our institution's rollout of the Student Voice Survey through an assessment lens, highlighting the planning, administration, and analytics processes that shaped our approach. We situate the survey within our campus context by outlining its purpose and the institutional data needs it was designed to address. We then trace our survey outreach strategy, offering a practical checklist of campus touchpoints that support participation, communication, and collaboration. In addition, we describe our team's iterative and collaborative approach to data discovery and the development of interactive campus resources responsive to student data questions. Finally, we share strategies for turning findings into momentum by engaging stakeholders early and often. Attendees will leave with a supportive, adaptable framework for assessing the full survey process from start to finish on their own campuses.

11:30am - 12:15pm

Salon B

PACK AN ASSESSMENT THINKING SUITCASE FOR YOUR GEN ED REFORM JOURNEY (WORKSHOP PART 2)

Session Type: ASSESSMENT

Tisha Paredes, *Independent Scholar*
Stephen Biscotte, *Virginia Tech*

Gen ed reform is hard. This practice-oriented session offers a nuts-and-bolts guide to bringing 'assessment thinking' to the four phases of the gen ed reform journey: laying the foundation, program design, program implementation, and sustained engagement. Participants will explore practical activities, tools and prompts to help lead reform efforts thoughtfully and collaboratively. Ideal for both new and seasoned gen ed veterans, attendees will leave with a packed gen ed reform suitcase of useful prompts, planning guides, and activities. We will cover mapping program design to institutional mission, building collaborative teams, and navigating sudden strategic detours.

12:15 - 1:15pm

Colonnade

LUNCH

Thursday, November 19th

1:15 - 2:00pm

Salon C

BUILDING an AI AGENT for META-ASSESSMENT: RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Session Type: Integrative

Amy Lebrecht, *George Mason University*

Can AI effectively support meta-assessment processes?

This session explores the development and testing of an AI agent designed to streamline meta-assessment feedback reviews. Annual assessment procedures at George Mason result in hundreds of reports, each of which is reviewed by a committee that provides essential feedback. Rather than replacing this work, the AI agent reviews the drafted feedback before it is shared with faculty, identifying gaps, flagging potential scoring issues, suggesting tone adjustments, and proposing content where feedback may be incomplete. The goal is to improve consistency and reduce assessment review burden at scale. I will share the design considerations, tools explored, and capabilities of the resulting solution. Equally important, I will discuss what did not work, offering practical insights for those exploring AI integration in other assessment workflows.

1:15 - 2:00pm

Salon C

INTEGRATING LLMS INTO DASHBOARDS TO ENHANCE INSIGHTS

Session Type: ASSESSMENT

Rob Hopkins, *Virginia Tech*

Users often struggle to interpret dashboards, navigate filters, and turn data into insights. This project integrates large language models (LLMs) directly into institutional dashboards to improve usability, data literacy, and insight generation. Using an agentic framework, LLM-powered assistance was embedded into an open-access data application covering admissions, enrollment, student success, degrees, and workforce data. The result is a conversational, interactive interface rather than a static dashboard. Key features include embedded contextual help that explains charts and generates summaries, natural-language querying for tailored answers linked to relevant views, and narrative interpretations supported by a curated data dictionary. Together, these capabilities create a “self-explaining” dashboard that surfaces otherwise hidden insights. The session shares early outcomes, challenges such as metadata quality and filter design, and lessons learned in transforming dashboards into intelligent, user-centered tools.

Thursday, November 19th

1:15 – 2:00PM

Salon A

EXPLORING APPROACHES TO ADMINISTRATIVE ASSESSMENT

Session Type: ASSESSMENT

Bonnie Sylwester, *George Mason University*
Lauren Bryant, *Virginia Tech*
Roger Bryan, *William & Mary*

This session will explore various approaches to administrative assessment as presenters from three different institutions describe the processes employed at their institutions to encourage meaningful assessment of administrative outcomes and address SACSCOC Standard 7.3. Presenters will describe their methods and procedures, discuss contextual considerations, and share challenges they've encountered and strategies for addressing those challenges. Participants will leave the session with a variety of ideas for how to approach and support the assessment of administrative effectiveness.

1:15 – 2:00PM

Salon B

SACSCOC LIAISON AND CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT USING DASHBOARDS & AUDITS

Session Type: ACCREDITATION

Sara Halteman, *Eastern Mennonite University*

How can accreditation liaisons shift the perception of campus stakeholders and transition from an administrative gatekeeper to a strategic guide? Strengthening the campus stakeholder role requires moving beyond basic compliance toward genuine institutional ownership. This session explores effective accreditation leadership through the implementation of a Power BI dashboard that maps SACSCOC standards directly to specific campus stakeholders and resources. The presentation demonstrates how an interactive dashboard serves as the foundation for a structured audit process that repurposes prior narratives to identify institutional gaps and evaluate concern levels. Participants will discover the concrete steps to build a stakeholder-centric dashboard and implement a collaborative audit cycle that actively engages multiple divisions across the institution. Attendees will learn how common, low-cost tools can clarify responsibilities, streamline narrative development, and foster campus buy-in.

Thursday, November 19th

1:15 – 2:00PM

Blue Ridge Room

FROM MISALIGNMENT TO IMPACT: RADFORD'S ASSESSMENT REDESIGN

Session Type: Integrative

Noah Elbaor & Nicholas Vaught, *Radford University*

Imagine your ideal assessment process. How aligned is your current process with that ideal? In this interactive session, Radford University guides participants through a practical framework for aligning assessment practices with institutional values. Using Radford as a case study, we share our experience identifying misalignment and redesigning our assessment system from the ground up. Based on a cross-institutional scan of assessment models, we deconstruct common model components and explore the diverse outcomes they incentivize. After sharing the results of our own redesign, participants will select the components aligned with their desired outcomes and leave with a system tailored to their vision for truly impactful assessment.

2:15 – 3:00PM

Salon C

TRACKED ON CAMPUS: STUDENT VIEWS OF UNIVERSITY SURVEILLANCE PRACTICES

Session Type: Integrative

Sara Finney, Riley Herr, Emma Puckett & Sarah Blackstone, *James Madison University*

Higher education institutions increasingly rely on digital tracking and "big data" systems to monitor student behavior across academic and co-curricular environments. These practices range from learning management system analytics to location-based and activity-based surveillance. Although such data can inform institutional decision-making, concerns remain regarding student awareness, comfort, and perceptions of how their data are collected and used. Our study examined student comfort with various forms of institutional data tracking at an R2 university. Findings highlight variation in comfort depending on the type of data collected, particularly between academic-related surveillance data and more sensitive behavioral or location-based surveillance data. Results emphasized the need to understand student perceptions of data collection for accountability and improvement, as surveillance practices may shape student experiences and perceptions of institutional trust.

Thursday, November 19th

2:15 – 3:00PM

Salon C

COLLABORATING TO DESIGN AN ONLINE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT ASSESSMENT PORTAL THAT WORKS

Session Type: Integrative

Lauren Bryant & Zachary Mellon, *Virginia Tech*

The Institutional Effectiveness unit at Virginia Tech has been using a low-tech approach to Administrative Unit Assessment for the last decade. While this approach was functional, resulted in a reasonably high engagement rate, and got us through our most recent reaffirmation, some important opportunities for improvement emerged over time. We wanted units to have easy and consistent access to their current and past reports (even when the unit has experienced turnover), we wanted to provide easy access to resources in the same place where the reports were being completed, and we wanted to store reports in a way that would facilitate the use of AI for creating our data visualizations. However, we failed to find an existing software option that met our needs, including a way to provide the embedded feedback that was a cornerstone of our process. Additionally, existing systems tended to be overly complicated and downloaded reports from these systems tended to be messy and confusing. In Spring of 2026, we collaborated with the Data & Analytics Infrastructure unit in our office to build our own online portal, with a soft launch planned for Fall 2026 and a full launch in Fall 2027.

2:15 – 3:00PM

Salon A

APPLIED LEARNING FOR EVERYONE. REALLY?

Session Type: ASSESSMENT

Jodi Fisler, *William & Mary*

Applied (or experiential or work-based) learning is all the rage in higher ed right now. But offering high-quality opportunities at scale—and creating the conditions for all students to take advantage of them--is no small undertaking. How do we make these experiences accessible to students across the institution? How do we engage and support faculty? How do we accurately track participation? How do we assess impact? And, wait, what even counts as an applied learning experience? In this session, one newly minted applied learning program director will share her own efforts to answer those questions, including challenges and lessons learned along the way. Attendees will also be encouraged to share their own experiences, questions, and strategies so that we can all learn from one another.

Thursday, November 19th

2:15 – 3:00PM

Salon B

BEYOND THE SELF-STUDY: OPERATIONALIZING SUSTAINABLE DUAL ACCREDITATION

Session Type: ACCREDITATION

Dustin Anderson & Amber Dees, *Columbus State University*

Following the completion of its SACSCOC self-study and site visit, and while awaiting the Board's reaffirmation decision, Columbus State University began pursuing a second institutional accreditation with the Commission for Public Higher Education (CPHE). This presentation shares an in-progress approach to bridging two accreditation frameworks within a compressed timeline and with limited personnel and financial resources.
Rather than treating the CPHE self-study and anticipated spring site visit as isolated milestones, presenters will discuss how they are operationalizing sustainable accreditation practice through shared evidence, coordinated timelines, clear ownership, and continuous compliance processes. The session will explore how the institution is prioritizing high-impact work, strategically engaging campus partners, and integrating accreditation expectations into existing work.

Attendees will gain practical strategies for triaging effort, focusing limited resources on high-impact priorities, and integrating dual-accreditation expectations into existing work without compromising the rigor, quality, or institutional integrity of the evidence presented.

2:15 – 3:00PM

Blue Ridge Room

SUPPORTIVE RIGOR: ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK THAT BUILDS TRUST AND CONFIDENCE

Session Type: Integrative

Anna Maria Kuthy, *Longwood University*

Assessment feedback often sits at the pressure point between compliance and improvement. Academic review committees may include faculty with limited assessment training, members may change every year or two, feedback may vary across reviewers or identify problems without offering usable next steps. This practice-focused session frames the assessment office as pressure valve that coordinates a supportive rigor mechanism: the unit that creates feedback guides, trains committee reviewers, promotes institutional consistency, supports assessment coordinators, and helps program reports move from "this is missing" to "here is a strategy that fits your goals, culture, and scope." Participants will discuss common feedback breakdowns, review principles for clear and useful feedback, and practice moving vague or corrective comments to specific, evidence-based, improvement-oriented guidance. In the second half of the session, participants will revise their own support materials and apply the proposed model to their own assessment committee/reporting contexts.

Thursday, November 19th

3:00 – 3:30PM

BREAK: BEVERAGES

3:30 – 4:15PM

Salon C

BUILDING A DATA ECOSYSTEM TO UNDERSTAND HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICES

Session Type: Integrative

Laura Lambert, Dena Pastor, & Sarah Blackstone, *James Madison University*

Institutions increasingly rely on data to understand student experiences, yet fragmented systems often limit what can be known. This session presents a partnership-based model for building an institutional data ecosystem that integrates assessment and institutional research to support more cohesive, actionable insights. Drawing on work at James Madison University, presenters illustrate how this ecosystem enables the study of high-impact practices, using undergraduate research engagement as a case example. The session highlights both the opportunities and limitations of existing institutional data, including challenges in defining participation, linking systems, and interpreting outcomes. Attendees will gain practical strategies for developing cross-functional partnerships and advancing more integrated approaches to institutional analysis and improvement.

3:30 – 4:15PM

Salon A

THE EVOLUTION of DATA-DRIVEN TARGETED STUDENT SUCCESS INTERVENTIONS STRATEGIES

Session Type: Integrative

Christopher Schreiner & Lindsay Tierney, *Virginia Commonwealth University*

The Evolution of Data-Driven Targeted Student Success Intervention Strategies explores how undergraduate nursing programs can leverage academic and intervention data to identify early indicators of student risk and implement proactive, evidence-informed support strategies. Aligned with the 2026 VA Collaborative for Institutional Effectiveness theme, Aligned for Impact, this session draws on nine semesters of data across 12 cohorts to examine outcomes associated with a revised nursing curriculum and targeted remediation efforts. Particular emphasis is placed on how early assessment performance may predict subsequent academic difficulty and how institutions can distinguish between short-term testing gains and sustained program success. Through collaborative discussion and applied examples, participants will gain practical, transferable approaches to predictive analytics, intervention evaluation, and scalable continuous improvement in health sciences education.

Thursday, November 19th

3:30 – 4:15PM

Salon B

FACULTY COLLABORATION ON GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT IMPROVED ITS IMPACT

Session Type: Integrative

Chevy Newell & Tim Merrill, *Reynolds Community College*

This session shares Reynolds iterative process to seek improvement in student learning on core competencies. These efforts enhance collaborative institutional experiences where conversations among faculty, deans, department chairs, and academic leaders, strengthened both engagement with evidence and the quality of the evidence itself. Our expanded General Education assessment efforts include rubric-assignment alignment, discovering additional course assignments where competencies are taught across the curriculum, informed by rubric alignment in a collaborative refinement of evidence collection. These efforts contributed to a more representative understanding of student learning and strengthened institutional capacity for continuous improvement.

3:30 – 4:15PM

Blue Ridge

BALANCING ACCURACY and EXPLAINABILITY of ML RETENTION MODELS

Session Type: INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

Kristina Podesta & Srikanth Reddy Bhemre, *George Mason University*

Student retention and attrition are key metrics of student success, and machine learning (ML) offers new opportunities to predict which students are at risk. Emerging ML approaches introduce new tradeoffs, though, as more accurate and complex models often produce difficult-to-explain outputs. This is called the “Black Box” problem and limits the ability of stakeholders to act on ML insights and fully assess ethical concerns. This session will provide the results of three increasingly complex ML models developed to predict student retention. Presenters will compare model performance and highlight differences in how easily results can be understood and communicated to stakeholders. For example, traditional decision trees will be contrasted with decision tree ensemble models. Presenters will also discuss whether emerging explainable AI (XAI) techniques can effectively tackle the "black box" problem and improve the usefulness of complex ML models. Participants will gain a practical understanding of how to balance accuracy and interpretability for retention modeling.

Thursday, November 19th

4:30 – 5:15PM

Salon C

DEMYSTIFYING STATISTICS: USING AND INTERPRETING MARGINAL EFFECTS

Session Type: Integrative

Sarah Blackstone, *James Madison University*

Interpreting statistical results can be challenging for non-technical audiences, especially when dealing with binary outcomes (e.g., was a student retained after one year? did a student graduate in 6 years?). Further, misinterpretation of statistics has negative consequences for reporting, planning, and policy development if decisions are made based on an incorrect understanding of results. To combat these challenges, applied research fields are encouraging reporting of marginal effects for binary outcomes, providing interpretable differences in probability of an outcome between groups. Attendees will learn basic principles of marginal effects including how they can be obtained and how they are interpreted using practical examples. This session is suitable for analysts interested in learning how to make results more accessible to diverse audiences and for individuals in non-technical roles interested in learning practical data interpretation skills.

4:30 – 5:15PM

Salon A

ASSESSMENT AS CATALYST: DRIVING IE & STUDENT SUCCESS

Session Type: Integrative

Justina O. Osa & Aurelia Nicholas Donald, *Virginia State University*

Assessment serves as a catalyst for aligning institutional priorities, Program Learning Student Learning Outcomes (PLSLOs), and student success initiatives through evidence-based decision-making and cross-functional collaboration. Grounded in the conference theme, Aligned for Impact, this interactive session explores assessment as a strategic tool for unifying academic and administrative units to support institutional effectiveness and continuous improvement. The presentation highlights collaboration among Academic Affairs, Student Services, and Institutional Effectiveness (IE) to strengthen alignment with institutional mission, strategic planning, and SACSCOC Standard 8.2 related to student outcomes assessment and the use of results for improvement. Through guided discussion, polling, and case-study activities, participants will explore strategies for integrating shared evidence across divisions to improve PLSLO achievement and student success. Attendees will leave with practical tools and actionable strategies for collaborative, evidence-based assessment and institutional improvement.

Thursday, November 19th

4:30 – 5:15PM

Salon B

A SMARTSHEET BLUEPRINT FOR ASSESSMENT REPORTING: FROM SUBMISSION TO FEEDBACK

Session Type: Integrative

Juste Mehou & Megan Rodgers Good, *James Madison University*

This practice session presents a Smartsheet workspace managing the full assessment reporting lifecycle — submission tracking, multi-level feedback, and longitudinal records — across programs, departments, and colleges. At its core is a Program Tracking Sheet: the single source of truth for every degree program, with structured columns for contacts, deadlines, submission status, and cycle-specific notes. A coupled Submission Form and Sheet capture incoming reports automatically, while workflows archive submissions into longitudinal program sheets. Reports and Dashboards provide real-time cycle visibility. Feedback accumulates at program, department, and college levels, with summary Reports supporting pattern analysis. Attendees will learn the design rationale, build patterns, and governance practices that reduce administrative burden — a replicable blueprint for assessment, accreditation, and institutional research offices seeking to modernize reporting operations with low-code tools.

4:30 – 5:15PM

Blue Ridge

VAIR BOARD MEETING

Friday, November 20th

7:00 – 8:00AM

Colonnade

BREAKFAST

8:15 – 8:30AM

Shenandoah

AWARDS

8:30 – 9:45AM

Shenandoah Ballroom

WHO DECIDES WHAT QUALITY MEANS?

Accreditation at a Crossroads

Session Type: Integrative

***Moderator**: Megan Good*

***Panelists**:*

Amanda Wornhoff, *Higher Learning Commission*

Geoffrey C. Klein, *The Commission on Colleges and Universities*

William L. Hathaway, *Regent University*

Higher education accreditation is in a period of significant change. Federal policy and regulation are shifting, new accrediting models are emerging, and established accreditors are adapting while continuing to assure educational quality. This panel brings together leaders with three distinct vantage points: participation in the federal AIM negotiated rulemaking process, development of a new accrediting organization, and leadership within an established institutional accreditor. The conversation will move from what has changed and what may be coming next to larger questions about what quality really means, what accreditation should accomplish, and whether the system can continue to earn the trust of institutions, policymakers, students, and the public.

Friday, November 20th

10:00 – 11:00AM

Shenandoah Ballroom

ALIGNMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND IMPACT: NAVIGATING THE NEXT CHAPTER OF ACCREDITATION

Session Type: ACCREDITATION

Geoffrey C. Klein, *The Commission on Colleges and Universities*

As higher education continues to navigate an evolving regulatory and accountability landscape, institutions must remain aligned with accreditation expectations while advancing student success and institutional effectiveness. This session will provide updates from The Commission, including the comprehensive review process, the implications of emerging AIM regulations, and other key Commission initiatives. Participants will gain insight into how these developments may shape institutional planning, assessment, and continuous improvement efforts while supporting meaningful impact across their organizations.

11:00 – 11:15AM

SNACKS TO GO

11:15AM – 12:00PM

Salon C

THE COMMISSION ON COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES Q & A

Session Type: ACCREDITATION

Geoffrey C. Klein, *The Commission on Colleges and Universities*

11:15AM – 12:00PM

Salon A

VIRGINIA ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING POLICY DISCUSSION

Session Type: ACCREDITATION

Facilitated by Kelsey Kirland, *University of Virginia*

Friday, November 20th

11:15AM – 12:00PM

Salon B

FVT/GE TO STATS ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Session Type: Integrated

Facilitated by *Rachel Smith, Hampden-Sydney College and Kathy Walker, Randolph-Macon College*

12:00PM

Good-bye and safe travels!

Presenter Bios

Alicia Campbell, *Assessment and Technology Coordinator at the University of Baltimore*

Alicia Campbell is the Assessment and Technology Coordinator at the University of Baltimore. Alicia is part of the leadership team for the university's Core Assessment Team (CAT), co-chairs the Administrative Core Assessment Team, (AdCat) and sits on the Academic Core Assessment Team (ACAT). Alicia also sits on the curriculum committee as well as the General Education Council. For the past two years Alicia was co-chair of MSCHE Self-Study Standard 5 subcommittee, as well as a member of the MSCHE Self-Study Steering Committee. In her role as the Assessment and Technology Coordinator, Alicia is responsible for ensuring that the University is assessing all aspects of the University to ensure we are providing our students with a quality education and educational experience. Alicia also chairs a Community of Practice of Assessment that is comprised of all the 4yr public and private institutions in Maryland. She is a member of the Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education (AAHLE) and sits on their professional development committee. Alicia is also in her final semester to obtain her MS in Learning Design and Technology.

Amanda Wornhoff, *Vice President of Accreditation Relations at the Higher Learning Commission*

Amanda Wornhoff serves as Vice President of Accreditation Relations at the Higher Learning Commission, where she works with a diverse portfolio of institutions to advance quality assurance and meaningful innovation in higher education. Dr. Wornhoff brings a broad perspective shaped by experience as both faculty and administrator, with leadership spanning curriculum, assessment, student success, faculty affairs, and institutional effectiveness. As a first-generation college student, Dr. Wornhoff's work is grounded in her commitment to providing accessible, high-quality learning experiences to all students, regardless of background. Her approach to quality assurance aims to be responsive to institutional context and grounded in the daily realities of faculty, staff, and students.

Most recently, Dr. Wornhoff served as Assistant Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Research at Austin Peay State University in Tennessee, where her responsibilities included assessment, program review, institutional data, and state and federal compliance. Prior to her time at Austin Peay, Dr. Wornhoff was Assistant Provost for Core Curriculum and Assessment at Roosevelt University in Illinois, where she served as a faculty member and administrator for over a decade. She holds an Ed.D. in Higher Education Leadership and Policy from Vanderbilt University and an M.A. in English from Roosevelt University.

Amber Dees, *Assistant Provost and Deputy Title IX Coordinator at Columbus State University*

Dr. Amber Dees serves as Assistant Provost and Deputy Title IX Coordinator at Columbus State University. As a member of the Provost's leadership team, she provides strategic oversight for institutional accreditation, academic compliance, state authorization, policy development and review, research compliance, and related governance functions. She serves as the university's SACSCOC Institutional Accreditation Liaison and supports institution-wide Title IX compliance efforts.

Since joining Columbus State University in 2011, Dr. Dees has held a series of leadership roles spanning academic administration, regulatory compliance, and institutional effectiveness. Her work has focused on accreditation, federal and state compliance, academic agreements and contracts, professional licensure, policy review, research oversight, and organizational risk management.

Dr. Dees holds bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from Columbus State University, including a doctorate in curriculum and leadership with a concentration in higher education administration.

Presenter Bios

Amy Lebrecht, *Assessment Planner within the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning at George Mason University*

Amy Lebrecht is an Assessment Planner within the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning at George Mason University, where she oversees academic assessment initiatives. She holds an M.S. in Educational Psychology (Assessment, Evaluation, and Testing) and is pursuing a Ph.D. in Education (Research Methods), both from George Mason. She earned undergraduate degrees in Mathematics and Statistics from James Madison University.

Prior to higher education, Amy worked in technology consulting leading software design projects and built a lasting appreciation for technology, efficiency, and a well-designed spreadsheet. Her work focuses on advancing assessment and evaluation practices in higher education, with a genuine enthusiasm for connecting people, data, and meaningful institutional improvement.

Anna Kuthy, *Director of Assessment at Longwood University*

Anna M. Kuthy serves as Director of Assessment at Longwood University, where she supports academic and administrative assessment, institutional effectiveness, accreditation-related reporting, general education assessment, and faculty development around meaningful use of evidence for continuous improvement. She holds a Ph.D. in International Studies (International Security and U.S. Foreign Policy) from Old Dominion University in Virginia and master's degrees in political science and German Studies from Bowling Green State University in Ohio. She has more than 20 years of experience in higher education, including teaching, academic assessment, and cross-unit collaboration. Her publications and presentations span international relations, comparative politics, teaching and learning, faculty development, and continuous improvement. Her current work includes micro credential quality assurance, assessment of culture surveys, program SWOT analysis, and revision of general education assessment processes.

Aurelia Nicholas Donald, *Associate Professor of Information Systems at Virginia State University*

Aurelia Nicholas Donald is an experienced educator and assessment professional dedicated to advancing student achievement through data-driven instruction, academic accountability, and continuous improvement practices. With experience in educational assessment, curriculum alignment, and instructional leadership, she has worked collaboratively with faculty, staff, and administrators to strengthen assessment systems that support student learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness. Aurelia is committed to using assessment as a tool for growth, ensuring that instructional practices align with academic standards and promote student success. Her professional focus includes program evaluation, accreditation support, student performance analysis, and developing strategies that foster equity, engagement, and measurable academic excellence.

Bonnie Sylwester, *Associate Director for Program Assessment in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (OIEP) at George Mason University*

Bonnie Sylwester is the Associate Director for Program Assessment in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (OIEP) at George Mason University. She oversees annual assessment for all administrative units at the university and provides support in the areas of academic assessment and Mason Core (general education) assessment. She also works in data analytics and reporting and enjoys helping units integrate data into their planning and review processes. Bonnie holds a PhD in Second Language Studies from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, where she focused on program evaluation and assessment, and an MA in Instructional Systems Development from UMBC.

Presenter Bios

Chevy Newell, *Coordinator of Academic Operations in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness at Reynolds Community College*

Chevy Newell serves as Coordinator of Academic Operations in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness at Reynolds Community College. She supports assessment, accreditation, course evaluation, and General Education assessment efforts. Chevy holds a Master of Product Innovation from Virginia Commonwealth University and is interested in collaborative approaches to continuous improvement and understanding student learning.

Chris Orem, *Executive Director for Planning, Analytics, and Institutional Research at James Madison University*

Dr. Chris Orem has over 15 years of higher education experience in the areas of student affairs, assessment, institutional research, strategic planning, and institutional accreditation. Over his career, Chris has worked for a diverse set of institutions, including liberal arts colleges, two-year community colleges, and large research universities. He has presented sessions and workshops at numerous national conferences, including several AIR Forums, on topics related to assessment, planning, accreditation, and enrollment forecasting. Chris currently serves as the secretary for the Virginia Association of Institutional Research.

Christopher Schreiner, *Director of Academic Data Analytics at VCU School of Nursing*

Dr. Chris Schreiner leads academic data analytics for the VCU School of Nursing, translating complex qualitative and quantitative data into strategic decisions that elevate program quality, student outcomes, and accreditation performance.

Dan Alpert, *Regional Sales Director, Coursedog*

Dan Alpert is a Regional Sales Director at Coursedog with over 20 years of experience in consultative sales, account management, and technology solutions across enterprise software, SaaS, analytics, and AI. Dan helps institutions find the right mix of technology and process to support their mission. He starts by asking "why" and listening closely to understand the challenges teams face day to day. He is known for building strong relationships, connecting the right people at the right time, and bringing repeatable, accountable processes to every partnership.

Darrell Tyler, *Director of Institutional Research at Virginia State University*

Darrell Tyler is the Director of Institutional Research at Virginia State University, where he leads institutional research, analytics, reporting, and data governance in support of strategic planning, student success, accreditation, and executive decision-making. His higher education career includes institutional research leadership and analytics roles at Virginia State University, the University of Richmond, and Longwood University. Darrell currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Association for Institutional Research (AIR) and previously served on the board of the Virginia Association for Institutional Research. He is pursuing an Ed.D. in Higher Education Administration at William & Mary and holds an M.S. in Sociology from Virginia Commonwealth University. A retired U.S. Army Sergeant Major and current chairman of a small, historically black credit union, Darrell brings a leadership perspective shaped by higher education, governance, research, and more than two decades of organizational leadership experience.

Presenter Bios

David W. Bushman, *President of Bridgewater College*

An accomplished academic leader, Dr. David W. Bushman draws upon his extensive experience in higher education administration and in the classroom as President of Bridgewater College. Dr. Bushman became the College's ninth president in 2013.During his time at Bridgewater, President Bushman has led the development of new academic and co-curricular programs at the College, including the launch of graduate programs; the creation and naming of three schools to support the College's faculty and academic programs; the development and implementation of Bridgewater's most recent strategic plan, *The Vision for Our Future: Strategic Plan 2025*; and the College's re-affirmation of accreditation from Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) in 2022.

In 2023, Dr. Bushman led the College in a bold, public commitment to tuition transparency in its pricing, making clear to prospective students and families that a private college education is accessible. A primary voice of the initiative, he published op-eds in Inside Higher Ed and *Fortune* magazine and appeared in television and streaming platform ads across Virginia.

Dr. Bushman has also overseen the rejuvenation of Bridgewater's campus, including a centralized location for the Office of Student Life, the creation of vibrant outdoor gathering spaces such as Rebecca Quad, the renovation of Bowman Hall, and, most notably, the planning and construction of the John Kenny Forrer Learning Commons, which transformed and expanded the College's library into a modern hub for learning. President Bushman has been an active leader in fundraising initiatives throughout his tenure at Bridgewater College, including the successful conclusion in 2025 of the College's most recent fundraising campaign—*Connections: The Campaign for Bridgewater College*. While at BC, President Bushman has served in leadership capacities in a variety of higher education groups, including Chair of the Council of Independent Colleges of Virginia and Chair of the President's Council of the Old Dominion Athletic Conference (ODAC).

Dr. Bushman came to BC from Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg, Md. where he was the founding dean of the university's School of Natural Science and Mathematics. Prior to leading Mount St. Mary's School of Natural Science and Mathematics, Dr. Bushman served as President of Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, N.C. Before joining Lees-McRae in 2004, Dr. Bushman served in a variety of roles at Mount St. Mary's, including Dean of Academic Services, Director of Assessment, Chair of the Department of Science, and Associate Professor of Biology. Dr. Bushman earned his Bachelor of Science in biology *summa cum laude* from Loyola College in Maryland. He graduated from the University of Maryland with both his Master of Science and doctorate in entomology. Upon completion of his Ph.D., Dr. Bushman worked for several years in private industry as a research biologist and research fellow. He has been published in the field of entomology as well as undergraduate science education.

Dena Pastor, *Associate Director of Assessment Operations; Professor of Graduate Psychology at the Center for Assessment and Research Studies at James Madison University*

Dr. Dena Pastor is a Professor in the Assessment & Measurement PhD program and Associate Director of Assessment Operations at the Center for Assessment and Research Studies at James Madison University. Her work focuses on examinee motivation in low-stakes testing, college students' civic engagement, and the application of quantitative and psychometric methods in higher education assessment. She oversees large□scale, longitudinal assessment initiatives tracking student learning from enrollment through graduation, teaches graduate courses in quantitative methods, and mentors emerging scholars. Her scholarship emphasizes the integration of rigorous methodology with applied assessment to strengthen the validity and use of educational data for institutional decision-making.

Presenter Bios

Dustin Anderson, *Provost, Executive Vice President, and Chief Academic Officer at Columbus State University*

Dr. Dustin Anderson became Columbus State University's provost, executive vice president, and chief academic officer in July 2025, joining the institution from Georgia Southern University, where he served as associate provost for student success and academic programs.

As a member of the president's Executive Leadership Team, he leads the university's academic enterprise, overseeing a $54 million Academic Affairs budget, over 450 faculty and staff, academic colleges, research and outreach initiatives, faculty development, and administrative units. He is responsible for advancing the academic priorities of the university's strategic plan.

Before joining CSU, Dr. Anderson held faculty and leadership roles at Georgia Southern University and taught at Florida State University. His work has focused on strategic enrollment, student success, career readiness, and institutional accreditation. A past Faculty Senate president and University System of Georgia Executive Leadership Institute Scholar, he holds degrees from Carson-Newman College and Florida State University, including a doctorate in English.

Emma Puckett, *Graduate Student at the Center for Assessment and Research Studies (CARS) at James Madison University*

Emma Puckett is a first-year graduate student in Assessment & Measurement at James Madison University. Prior to graduate study, she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with a minor in Statistics from James Madison University. Her research experiences include working with the Center for Assessment and Research Studies and multiple research positions for undergraduate psychology laboratories. Her research interests include higher education assessment, student test-taking motivation, and educational measurement to support institutional improvement and student success.

Geoffrey C. Klein, *Chief of Staff at the Commission on Colleges and Universities*

Geoffrey Klein, Ph.D., joined the Commission on Colleges and Universities, formerly SACSCOC, as Vice President in December 2021. As of September 1, 2026, he has served as the Commission’s Chief of Staff, maintaining a small portfolio of institutions, while working collaboratively to advance Commission initiatives. Before joining the Commission, he served as Vice Provost for Research, Graduate Studies, and Assessment and SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison at Christopher Newport University in Newport News, Virginia. Dr. Klein served on the SACSCOC Board of Trustees, including the Executive Council; worked as an accreditation consultant; served as chair of the Virginia Regional Accreditation Symposium; and served as a SACSCOC peer evaluator on Substantive Change and Reaffirmation Committees. Geoffrey began his career in higher education as an Assistant Professor of Chemistry in the Department of Biology, Chemistry, and Environmental Science at CNU. As a member of the faculty, he was awarded the inaugural Faculty Excellence Award for Teaching and received over $2.6 million in grants from organizations such as the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the American Chemical Society (ACS) Petroleum Research Foundation to support his research endeavors. Geoffrey received a BS from the College of William and Mary and a PhD in Analytical Chemistry from Florida State University.

Hayden Hall, *Director, Product: Assessment Cloud, Coursedog*

Hayden Hall is Director of Product for Coursedog's Assessment Cloud. He co-founded ClassRanked at Duke University in 2018 with one goal: make course evaluations actually useful, with better response rates, real-time dashboards, and feedback faculty could learn from and act on. ClassRanked has since joined Coursedog, where Hayden now leads the work of connecting course evaluations directly to curriculum, scheduling, and accreditation workflows so student feedback shapes how institutions improve their academic programs.

Presenter Bios

***James C. Schmidt**, President of James Madison University*

A passionate advocate for American public higher education, Dr. James C. Schmidt is the seventh president of James Madison University. A champion of academic excellence, he has pledged to make JMU a preferred partner with business and communities throughout the Shenandoah Valley and the Commonwealth of Virginia. Building relationships and creative collaborations has been a hallmark of President Schmidt's career. Since his arrival at JMU in July 2025, he has met with more than 200 corporate CEOs and community leaders to explore ways to partner in strengthening the region and enriching student experiences. At his previous institution, he forged a groundbreaking research collaboration with the Mayo Clinic that included development of a shared $340 million science and health sciences building. He served as a member of the board of directors for Mayo Clinic Health System Wisconsin for 10 years. He has also included alumni and community members in JMU's bold new strategic vision, culminating in the Madison Promise, a commitment to provide students with a path breaking educational experience that redefines the university degree and opens new opportunities for the future. Centered on academic excellence, real-world engagement, undergraduate research, and development of the power skills needed for a changing world, JMU continues its progress as a national leader. In addition to advocating for academic excellence, President Jim has cheered on Dukes football as the team won its first SunBelt Championship and reached the national College Football Playoff. He is currently a member of the board of directors of the Northern Virginia Technology Council and the Virginia Business Higher Education Council. He is also a member of the board of directors for WNB Financial, a member of the executive committee and past chair. President Schmidt previously served as chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Under his leadership, the university earned top national rankings for undergraduate research, study abroad, and Fulbright and Rhodes scholars. Philanthropy, industry partnerships and capital expansion also flourished under President Schmidt's leadership. While at UW Eau Claire, Dr. Schmidt tripled the university's foundation assets and raised more than $190 million. Previous tenures included service as vice president for university advancement at Winona State University in Winona, Minnesota, and vice president for student affairs at Riverland Community College in Austin, Minnesota. He holds a doctorate in educational policy and administration from the University of Minnesota, a master's degree in business administration from the University of St. Thomas in Saint Paul, Minnesota, and a bachelor's degree in political science from Winona State University. President Schmidt and his wife, Kim Schmidt, have three sons and are proud to call Harrisonburg and the Shenandoah Valley home.

Presenter Bios

Javaune Adams-Gaston, *President of Norfolk State University*

Dr. Javaune Adams-Gaston is the seventh President of Norfolk State University. She began her tenure on June 24, 2019. As President, she is committed to ensuring that Norfolk State University fulfills its mission as an HBCU for the modern world, a university grounded by its heritage, focused on the future, and deeply committed to student success. Her vision is opportunity, access, affordability, growth, sustainability, and student excellence. A strong advocate for collaboration and developing strategic partnerships with local, regional, and state and national stakeholders, Dr. Adams-Gaston is committed to cultivating strong connections in the university, among alumni and in the community.

Under President Adams-Gaston's leadership, Norfolk State University is ranked as number 13 of 100 in the nation of top producers of HBCU graduates of bachelor's degrees according to the US Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics. Norfolk State University successfully achieved the status of a U.S. News and World Report Top 20Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) in 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023. The university attained 10-year reaffirmation of accreditation by its major accrediting body, The Southern Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Enrollment increased to a six-year high in Fall 2025 with over sixty-five hundred students. The University realized record high operating revenues of 104% above projection, the highest in the history of Norfolk State. And Dr. Adams-Gaston has been successful in acquiring multiple donations including a transformational gift of over $40 million from Mackenzie Scott, the largest single donor gift in the history of NSU and a second gift of $50 million from Mackenzie. The University is closing out a 2025 Capital Campaign with a goal of $90 million. Currently the University is surpassing that goal at $147 million.

Since President Adams-Gaston's arrival, Norfolk State University has also expanded its online academic program curriculum to include a master's degree in Cybersecurity and has been recognized nationally by a recent visit by the National Cyber Director, Mr. Harry Coker and designated as a Department of Defense Center of Excellence in Cybersecurity and Department of Energy Cybersecurity Consortium Leader. Under her leadership, the online master's degree in cyber psychology, the first in the nation, launched in Fall 2020 in connection with Academic Partnerships. Many additional successful online graduate programs have been implemented to include Master's programs in Cybersecurity, Urban Education, Special Education, Computer Science, and Electronics Engineering. Her strategic planning has also helped to secure transformational partnerships with the Sentara Healthcare-Public Health Program, Appalachian School of Law 3+3 program, Academic Partnerships, Dominion Energy, Micron Technology, Inc., Landmark, Netflix, 2U, Apple, Amazon, USAA, and the Pharrell Williams Black Ambition Prize, Mighty Dream, Langley Federal Credit union, Chartway Credit Union, Dollar Tree, Inc., Bank of America, Virginia Natural Gas, Towne Bank, Boyd Gaming, and many others. A recognized higher education leader, President Adams-Gaston is an invited speaker nationally and internationally. Her appointments and honors have included: President Biden's Appointment to the Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, NCAA Board of Governors among many other boards.

Prior to joining Norfolk State University, Dr. Adams-Gaston served as senior vice president and affiliate assistant professor at The Ohio State University and led forty departments in the Office of Student Life annually impacting over 66,000 students. Prior to that she held multiple administrative and faculty positions at the University of Maryland College Park including associate dean of academic affairs, faculty member, executive director of the Career Center, psychologist and first UMCP Division I African American female assistant athletic director. Trained as a psychologist, Dr. Adams-Gaston spent more than twenty years in psychology practice. She also served as a member of the graduate faculty at the University of Maryland College Park and Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Adams-Gaston earned a bachelor's degree in biology, psychology, and general science, at the University of Dubuque and a Ph.D. in psychology at Iowa State University. Adams-Gaston was recently honored with the Alumni Award for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Iowa State University.

Presenter Bios

John Downey, *President of Blue Ridge Community College*

Dr. John Downey serves as the fifth President of Blue Ridge Community College (BRCC), a position he has held since 2009. Prior to his service as president, Dr. Downey worked in a variety of capacities at BRCC, as well as at Bunker Hill Community College in Boston. He currently serves on several local boards and is a member of the Harrisonburg Rotary Club. Dr. Downey completed his doctoral program in Higher Education Administration at the University of Virginia where he earned the Annette Gibbs Research Publication Award. He served as the Chair of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) Complete 2021 Strategic Planning Task Force, and was a member of the Achieve 2015 and Accelerate Opportunity 2030 strategic planning committees for the VCCS.

Under his leadership, BRCC has garnered recognition for its progressive workforce initiatives and partnerships, and as a key player in local economic development. BRCC has been recognized frequently by the Chronicle of Higher Education's "Great Colleges to Work For" program. In 2010, Dr. Downey was recognized as the most supportive president of the year at the Enactus (formerly SIFE) National Exposition. In 2018, he was awarded the Business Leadership Award by the Greater Augusta Regional Chamber of Commerce, and in 2019 he received the Shirley B. Gordon Award of Distinction from the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society for his support of the BRCC Alpha Xi Xi chapter.

Juste Mehou, *Doctoral Student at the Center for Assessment and Research Studies (CARS) at James Madison University*

Juste Mehou is Doctoral Student at the Center for Assessment and Research Studies (CARS) at James Madison University, where he assists the assessment reporting lifecycle across degree programs, departments, and colleges. His research work sits at the intersection of measurement and institutional effectiveness. He has published in multiple journals including the Journal of Educational Measurement, the International Journal of Testing and presented research at conferences including the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME). At CARS, he oversees the design and governance of the Smartsheet-based assessment reporting infrastructure described in this session.

Justina O. Osa, *Professor of Educational Leadership and Director of Institutional Assessment at Virginia State University*

Dr. Justina O. Osa is Professor of Educational Leadership and Director of Institutional Assessment at Virginia State University. She has led institution-wide assessment initiatives, developed key performance indicators, and collaborated with leadership to support institutional effectiveness, accountability, and continuous improvement. Dr. Osa holds a doctorate in Educational Leadership and Supervision, a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction, and a master's degree in Library and Information Sciences. Her research interests include assessment, mentoring and coaching, leadership development, and international education. She has published peer-reviewed articles and book chapters and presented at international, national, and regional conferences. Dr. Osa has served as an invited speaker, received grants to support K–12 student achievement, and contributed to educational leadership program development in the United Arab Emirates. She also serves as a reviewer for SACSCOC, ELCC, and CAEP.

Jodi Fisler, *Inaugural Applied Learning Program Director at William & Mary*

Jodi Fisler is the inaugural applied learning program director at William & Mary, a position she has held since December 2025. Prior to that, she spent ten years overseeing Virginia's student learning assessment policy and related initiatives at SCHEV. She holds MEd and PhD degrees in educational policy, planning and leadership from William & Mary's School of Education.

Presenter Bios

***Kathy Walker**, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Research at Randolph-Macon College*

Kathy has served as the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Research at Randolph-Macon College since 2016. She supports all SACSCOC-related projects on campus, including sub changes, level changes, the decennial reaffirmation, and most recently, the 5th-year review. Kathy holds a PhD in Sociology from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

***Kelsey Kirland,** University Assessment Director at the University of Virginia*

Kelsey Kirland serves as University Assessment Director at the University of Virginia, where she leads institutional efforts for competency assessment of general education and student learning outcomes assessment of certificate and degree programs. Her work focuses on helping academic programs use evidence to strengthen student learning. Prior to joining UVA, Kelsey held assessment leadership roles at ODU, Virginia Tech, and 4-VA. She also consulted with colleges and universities nationwide on assessment, program review, and accreditation initiatives. She is passionate about building sustainable assessment practices that support meaningful decision-making.

***Kristina Podesta,** Senior Research Associate in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (OIEP) at George Mason University*

Kristina is a Senior Research Associate in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (OIEP). Prior to joining OIEP, she served as a Legislative Research Analyst for the Tennessee General Assembly, where her research informed a wide range of policy decisions and received awards from the National Conference of State Legislatures. Kristina is currently a doctoral student in the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University and recently earned a Graduate Certificate in Data Science from Austin Peay State University. She holds an M.A. from Alice Solomon University in Berlin, Germany and a B.A. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

***Laura Lambert,** A&P faculty member within the Department of Integrated Science and Technology at James Madison University*

Laura Lambert is an A&P faculty member within the Department of Integrated Science and Technology at James Madison University. There, she serves as the biotech lab coordinator and the assessment coordinator. She also works with colleagues across the School of Integrated Science on survey design, assessment of curricular innovations, and the creation of theory-backed interventions. Laura has a PhD in Assessment and Measurement from James Madison University. Her scholarship focuses on strengthening the evaluation of undergraduate research experiences, evidencing learning improvement, and equity in assessment and data visualization.

***Lauren Bryant,** Assistant Director for Institutional Effectiveness at Virginia Tech*

Lauren Bryant is the Associate Director for Institutional Effectiveness in the Office of Analytics and Institutional Effectiveness at Virginia Tech. She facilitates the administrative unit assessment process for the university, including providing resources and one-on-one coaching for administrative units, tracking report submissions and archiving submitted reports, providing written feedback on submitted reports, and collaborating to create data visualizations from the administrative unit assessment reports. She also provides coaching and reviews for the academic program assessment and leads peer review teams for the academic program review process. She has a background in program evaluation and got her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from Virginia Tech.

Presenter Bios

Lindsay Tierney, *Assistant Dean of Students at Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Dentistry*

Dr. Lindsay Tierney began her career in Neuropsychology as a Psychometrist before transitioning to working within postsecondary student affairs leadership for the last 17+ years. This experience has included such roles as Director of Accessibility Resources, Academic Coach, and Assistant Dean of Students. Tierney received her Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from the University of Lynchburg and also holds a M.S. in Rehabilitation Counseling and a B.S. in Psychology. She has authored several articles and presented at state and national conferences on various topics related to student success in higher education, specifically within health sciences programs. Tierney currently serves as the Assistant Dean of Students at Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Dentistry.

Megan Good, *Executive Director of the Center for Assessment and Research Studies (CARS) at James Madison University*

Dr. Megan Good serves as the Executive Director of the Center for Assessment and Research Studies (CARS) and Assistant Professor in Graduate Psychology at James Madison University. In her leadership role at CARS, she oversees comprehensive assessment support for degree programs, student affairs, general education, and special projects focused on enhancing student learning and development. A graduate of JMU's Assessment and Measurement doctoral program, Dr. Good previously served as Auburn University's inaugural Director of Academic Assessment and SACSCOC liaison. Her expertise centers on creating sustainable systems for institutional improvement.

Noah Elbaor, *Assessment Specialist at Radford University*

As an Assessment Specialist at Radford University, Noah Elbaor guides institution-wide academic program, student-support, administrative, and general education assessment processes. With a background in quantitative methods and pedagogy, Noah specializes in teaching faculty how to design curricula with assessment in mind and how to best leverage assessment data for maximum impact. Prior to joining Radford in 2025, Noah taught secondary school English in Le Havre, France and developed predictive outcome models for TRIO Upward Bound students at St. Olaf College.

Nicholas Vaught, *Director of Institutional Effectiveness at Radford University*

Nicholas Vaught is the Director of Institutional Effectiveness at Radford University where he leads University efforts in continuous improvement, strategic planning, assessment, and accreditation. Nicholas' background includes over 15 years of higher education experience across a variety of public and private institutions where he's shaped data-informed strategies that support student success, expand access, and align institutional action with mission. At his core is a belief that leadership in higher education must be collaborative, student-centered, and driven by clear, actionable insight.

Paige Gance, *Assistant Director of Assessment Strategy at Washington and Lee University*

Paige Gance is the Assistant Director of Assessment Strategy at Washington and Lee University and a recent graduate of Georgia Tech's Master of Science in Analytics, through which she developed a deep understanding of modern analytical and AI tools. She started her higher ed career seven years ago in advancement analytics where she supported development with data-driven insights into fundraising strategies. After moving into institutional effectiveness nearly three years ago, she has coordinated and supported academic program, co-curricular, and general education assessment as well as directly implemented all major institutional survey distribution and analysis. She has presented at the Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education Annual Conference. Prior to W&L, she held various research analyst roles specializing in applied economics.

Presenter Bios

***Rachel Smith**, Director of Institutional Effectiveness at Hampden-Sydney College*

Rachel Smith serves as the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and SACSCOC Institutional Accreditation Liaison at Hampden-Sydney College. She oversees SACSCOC accreditation, institutional research, and academic and support unit assessment. Rachel has completed SACSCOC and specialized accreditation consulting work with several institutions in Virginia, to include Christopher Newport University, Regent University, and William & Mary. She serves on both the VRAS and VAG boards. Rachel holds a PhD in Educational Policy, Planning, and Leadership from the College of William & Mary.

Riley Herr, Assessment Consultant in the Center for Assessment and Research Studies at James Madison University

Riley Herr (MA) is an assessment consultant in the Center for Assessment and Research Studies at James Madison University. In her role, she supports higher education professionals evaluating program effectiveness in both the Academic Program sector and the Student Affairs sector. She has co-authored multiple articles focused on higher education assessment practices. Riley also regularly collaborates with the Student Academic Success office on campus to support and conduct research aimed at improving student retention.

***Rob Hopkins,** Assistant Vice Provost for Analytics & AI at Virginia Tech*

Dr. Rob Hopkins is the Assistant Vice Provost for Analytics & AI at Virginia Tech, where he has served since 2020 in the Office of Analytics & Institutional Effectiveness. Prior to VT, Hopkins worked at a small liberal arts college and was a Professor of Biology with a research focus in ecological modeling and biostatistics. Collectively, Hopkins has over 15 years of experience in higher education in the professoriate and administrative dimensions, has published more than 20 research papers, won more than $2 million in grant funding, completed 40+ conference presentations, and designed and delivered numerous workshops. He leads a talented team of data scientists at Virginia Tech, where they develop and support the University Data Commons, a data science ecosystem that provides reporting intelligence, decision support, and operational insights across a wide variety of functional areas.

***Roger Bryan,** Assistant Director for Institutional Effectiveness at William & Mary*

Roger Bryan serves as the Assistant Director for Institutional Effectiveness at William & Mary. Specializing in institutional effectiveness, he plays a critical role in assisting in guiding university-level assessment and ensuring academic quality through measurable learning expectations. He manages continuous improvement initiatives across both administrative and student support units, helping to translate complex accreditation standards into actionable operational goals. Leveraging expertise in data querying, data organization, and the management of specialized assessment applications and tools, he streamlines reporting workflows and oversees institutional effectiveness website design to maximize transparency and accessibility. He is currently a doctoral student pursuing a Ph.D. in Educational Policy, Planning & Leadership: Higher Education at William & Mary.

***Ruth Robinson,** Institutional Research Analyst at the University of Baltimore*

Ruth Robinson is an Institutional Research Analyst at the University of Baltimore, where she specializes in data analysis, survey support, and dashboard development in Power BI. She is currently completing her MBA, with a concentration in data analytics, and has an academic background in business administration. Ruth also brings experience in advanced statistical analysis from university-level mathematics and statistics teaching, as well as applied statistical and economic analysis in wrongful termination cases using Stata and R. She is an active member of the Association for Institutional Research and has attended both regional and national conferences in recent years. Ruth is also engaged in shared governance and has co-led campus fundraising efforts for the Maryland Charity Campaign, helping exceed institutional goals by more than 200%.

Presenter Bios

Sara Finney, *Associate Director for Student Affairs Assessment; Professor of Graduate Psychology, at James Madison University*

Sara Finney, PhD is a Professor for the Assessment and Measurement PhD program at James Madison University. She is also Associate Director of the Center for Assessment and Research Studies, providing support to colleagues assessing learning and development outcomes. Dr. Finney's research focuses on program theory, implementation fidelity, test-taking motivation and emotions, and the application of latent variable modeling to better understand the measurement of psychoeducational constructs.

Sara Halteman, *Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness at Eastern Mennonite University*

Sara Halteman is the Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness at Eastern Mennonite University, where she oversees internal and external reporting and university assessment efforts. She also serves as the university's SACSCOC liaison. She holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Eastern Mennonite University and an M.Ed. in Higher Education from Pennsylvania State University. Sara has 16 years of experience working in higher education.

Sarah Blackstone, *Assistant Director of Analytics & Research in the Office of Planning, Analytics and Institutional Research at James Madison University*

Sarah Blackstone is the Assistant Director of Analytics & Research in the Office of Planning, Analytics and Institutional Research. Sarah has been with PAIR since October 2022. She is responsible for managing institutional surveys, developing research studies with campus partners, and using advanced analytics to facilitate decision making on campus. Sarah has a PhD from University of Illinois Urbana Champaign. She has expertise in research methodology, survey research, and traditional and advanced quantitative modeling techniques (e.g., multilevel modeling, factor analysis, generalized additive modeling, machine learning).

Sarah MacDonald, *Associate Dean, Professional and Continuing Education at James Madison University*

Sarah has served at JMU since July 2007, in various roles in professional and continuing education. She earned her PhD in 2022 from JMU in Assessment & Measurement; her dissertation focused on assessment practices with part-time students and their learning outcomes. She also holds master's degrees in Writing & Rhetoric and in Adult & Human Resource Education, both from the University of Illinois.

Sheena G. Serslev, *Director of Institutional Assessment at George Mason University*

In this role, Dr. Serslev leads Program Review and annual assessment processes for academic programs at George Mason University. She employs an educational development approach to assessment and was previously the Associate Director of Engaged Teaching at the UC San Diego Teaching + Learning Commons. She studied Visual Arts and Communication at UC San Diego, completed her Master's in Arts Management at Carnegie Mellon University, and earned her Doctorate in Educational Leadership from UC San Diego. Sheena has worked as an educator, researcher, and arts administrator.

Srikanth Reddy Bhemre, *Research Technical Staff in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (OIEP) at George Mason University*

Srikanth joined OIEP as a Research Technical Staff member in 2024, responsible for gathering, organizing, and analyzing large datasets to support various research projects. He provides technical expertise in data collection, organization, and analysis, enhancing data accessibility and insight generation. Srikanth earned his Master's degree in Data Analytics from George Mason University and holds a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science from BML Munjal University.

Presenter Bios

Stephen Biscotte, *Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Curriculum at Virginia Tech*

Dr. Stephen Biscotte has been living and breathing general education and its reimagination and reform for 14 years. Stephen currently serves as Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Curriculum at Virginia Tech where he oversees general education, FYE, and current university-wide initiatives around AI and the Student Experience Project and is the Past President of the Association for General and Liberal Studies (AGLS). His work has appeared in the Journal of General Education, The Teaching Professor, IUPUI's Trends in Assessment, and ASCN's volume on institutional change. He co-authored the forthcoming General Education Reform Guidebook (Spring 2027).

Tim Merrill, *Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness at Reynolds Community College*

Tim Merrill is the Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness at Reynolds Community College. Tim is responsible for leading accreditation, assessment, and effectiveness efforts at Reynolds. Tim's primary focus is on advancing the college's educational mission by providing strategic direction support in the measurement and reporting of student learning.

Tisha Paredes*, Consultant*

Dr. Tisha Paredes is an assessment and accreditation expert with over 25 years of higher education experience. As a SACSCOC reviewer and team leader, she works extensively with faculty and staff to ensure robust assessment planning. Previously, she served as Assistant VP for Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment at Old Dominion University, leading comprehensive accreditation, general education, and strategic planning efforts. Dr. Paredes has delivered over 75 workshops on QEP development, assessment, and institutional infrastructure. She co-authored Using Focus Groups to Listen, Learn, and Lead in Higher Education (2018) and the forthcoming General Education Reform Guidebook (Spring 2027). A Fulbright Specialist (Lesotho 2025) and Peace Corps Virtual Service Participant (Mexico 2024-25), she holds a Ph.D. in Higher Education from ODU.

Tod Massa, *Policy Analytics Director at State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV)*

Tod started at SCHEV in 2001 with nearly a decade of experience in policy research and analysis, and data management. As Policy Analytics Director, Mr. Massa oversees the development and of the Commonwealth's postsecondary education data system; the biennial projections of enrollment and demand; and is one of the architects and leaders of the Virginia Longitudinal Data System. His wide-ranging duties also include directing the collection, maintenance, and analysis of research data from all Virginia colleges and universities related to enrollment, graduation, faculty salaries, and financial aid. He directs the agency's information systems activities and coordinates the agency's relationship with the Virginia Information Technology Agency. He also serves as the Continuity of Operations Director for SCHEV. Mr. Massa frequently serves on federal technical review panels for the US Department of Education. Prior to joining the Council staff, Mr. Massa held institutional research leadership positions at two institutions of higher education. From 1991 to 1994, he served as the Institutional Research Coordinator and Academic Policy Analyst at Saint Louis University. Most recently, Mr. Massa served as the Director of Institutional Research and Planning Support at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. Prior to joining the staff at Willamette, Mr. Massa served in the U.S. Army and was twice awarded the Department of the Army Certificate of Achievement and the Army Achievement Medal for outstanding service.

Presenter Bios

T. Dary Erwin, *Emeritus Professor of Leadership Studies and Psychology at James Madison University*

T. Dary Erwin is Emeritus Professor of Leadership Studies and Psychology at James Madison University. Dr. Erwin wrote the first chapter about student affairs assessment in 1989 and the first book about collegiate assessment in 1991 (Assessing Student Learning and Development); testified before congressional and US executive branch committees; served on the editorial boards of Quality in Higher Education, Assessment Update, and Active Learning in Higher Education; and widely spoke about accountability and public policy at professional conferences and institutions around the world.

Dr. Erwin is past recipient of the Annuit Coeptis Award of the American College Personnel Association; the Ralph F. Berdie Memorial Research Award of the American Association for Counseling and Development; and served as chairperson of the Measurement Services Association.

William L. Hathaway, *Provost of Regent University*

William L. Hathaway, Ph.D., is the Provost of Regent University. He has been in academic leadership roles for nearly three decades, having previously served as a Dean and doctoral program director. He spent several years as an Air Force psychologist and has been active in professional service roles at the state and national level. In his years as a clinician, he previously served as a quality assurance officer for psychiatry and mental health departments in Joint Commission accredited military hospitals. He has served on two negotiated rule making committees for the U.S. Department of Education, both of which resulted in consensus. In 2019, he served on the Faith Entities subcommittee for the accreditation rulemaking process and in 2026, he served on the Accreditation, Innovation, and Modernization committee as a negotiator representing private non-profit universities. His background in the different legs of the "regulatory triad" impacting higher education (i.e, accreditation, state governments, and the U.S. Department of Education) was a focus for the AIM committee. He has extensive experience in the various aspects of programmatic accreditation, having served for nearly two decades as a commissioner or in other roles for the American Psychological Association's Commission on Accreditation. He was a co-writer of APA's current Standards of Accreditation and implementing regulations, conducted self-study reviews, chaired site visits, and led numerous self-study workshops. In terms of state regulation, he has been a long serving member of the Virginia Board of Psychology, chairing both the board and its regulatory committee.

Zachary Mellon, *Assessment Coordinator in the Office of Analytics and Institutional Effectiveness at Virginia Tech*

Zachary Mellon is the Assessment Coordinator in the Office of Analytics and Institutional Effectiveness at Virginia Tech. He supports the institution's academic program and administrative unit assessment processes by providing written feedback to submitted reports. He leads peer review teams during the academic program review process and provides administrative support for the assessment of the general education courses at Virginia Tech. He also assists in the administration of students' end of course evaluations of faculty and trains staff in correct use of the evaluation software used by the institution. He has a background in student affairs and earned his M.Ed. from Western Carolina University.