Jefferson College of Health Sciences and Virginia Western Sign Pacts

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The Jefferson College of Health Sciences and Virginia Western Community College further cemented their long-standing relationship by signing another series of articulations agreements recently. The agreements mean that students in good standing who graduate from VWCC’s two-year programs in respiratory therapy, health & exercise science and health psychology can transition into JCHS bachelor’s level programs without a problem.

That makes around a dozen health care tracts for which the two schools have signed articulation agreements. New River Valley Community College also signed off on articulation agreements with Jefferson College at the same time. JCHS president Dr. N.L. Bishop says the school’s leadership team – the department chairs – and the Deans “work closely with…Virginia Western Community College…in looking at what is projected to be the needs [of the marketplace].”

Bishop says they also work together on curriculum development and opportunities for clinical rotations at Carilion hospital facilities. Jefferson College shares space with Carilion Community Hospital, where long-term therapy care is given. “Having good conversations…helps make these collaborations smooth and effective, and easy for our students as they pursue health care careers” said Bishop.

With the health care field changing all the time Bishop said keeping an ear to the ground to see what’s next is a must. “Improvements [in curriculum] are always being made. We always want to make sure that we keep close watch to that so we can design our programs…so they closely meet the needs of the fast-evolving health care community.”

Being friends with Dr. Bobby Sandel, president of Virginia Western, and Dr. Jack Lewis, his counterpart at New River Community College (where Bishop also went to school) helps make these agreements easier to reach. “It is built on that [foundation] …we’re able to have good conversations that lead to collaborations that end up being effective for students.”

Dr. Elizabeth Wilmer, Virginia Western’s interim Vice President of academic and student affairs, stood in for Sandel at the articulation agreement signing. “This is a wonderful opportunity for the students at Virginia Western, to finish their programs of study with us …and move beyond that. Its fantastic for our students and the college.” Sandel has appeared with Bishop at past articulation agreement signings, held at Jefferson College as staff, faculty and students look on. Jefferson College of Health Sciences has grown by leaps and bounds in recent years, in regards to the programs offered and the student population.

Wilmer said changes in curriculum and course offerings are being made “all the time,” as the health care
market warrants. “We appreciated the partnership that we have – so that our students benefit from our partnership. “We’re always looking at what’s coming.” Stay tuned – Wilmer said there may be other articulation agreement signings on the horizon.

All involve specific courses and grade point averages that must be maintained in order to transfer seamlessly from VWCC to a four-year program at Jefferson College. With health care being king in the valley – Carilion Health Clinic is the single largest employer in Roanoke – the jobs are probably out there for those who choose to stay on that path. The articulation agreements signed to date make it that much easier to pursue those fields.

By Gene Marrano


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