

2026 FUTURE OF TALENT SUMMIT



Thursday, March 5, 2026 | Cregger Center, Roanoke College

Thank you for joining us for the third annual Future of Talent Summit. We look forward to a day of meaningful conversations and valuable takeaways.

SPEED NETWORKING ON THE FAST TRACK

Be ready to briefly introduce yourself and share what collaboration could look like from your perspective. Make relevant connections quickly and intentionally.

HOW IT WORKS

- **Employers** will remain planted at the numbered tables.
- **Educators and workforce partners** will rotate to the next numbered table every 7 minutes.
- We will complete 6 rounds total.

While you won't meet everyone in the room, the goal is to walk away with a few strong connections to follow up with after the session.

We hope the conversation is so good that you stay and chat over lunch!

Scroll down for full agenda and speaker bios

AGENDA

7:30 AM | Breakfast, Coffee & Networking (Lobby-Mezzanine)

8:30 AM | **Keynote Speech**

- Dr. Shushok, President, Roanoke College
- Paul Hudgins, Senior VP & Chief Human Resources Officer, Carilion Clinic

9:30 AM | Coffee Break (Lobby-Mezzanine)

9:45 AM | **Employer Panel:** Strengthening the Talent Pipeline with Inventive Partnerships

- Cynthia Lawrence, Director of Workforce Development, Carilion Clinic
- Stephanie Byers, Regional Internship Manager, GO Virginia Regions 1 & 2
- Chase Parker, Electrical Engineer, Steel Dynamics, Inc.
- Paul Bixel, Vice President of Technology, TMEIC

10:40 AM | **Educator Panel:** Aligning Education with Workforce Readiness

- Dr. Michelle Seref, Assoc. Dean of Undergraduate Programs, Virginia Tech
- Dr. David Berry, Professor and Head of Mechatronics, Virginia Western
- Dr. Bryan Cobb, Assoc. Professor of Math, Computer Science, and Physics, Roanoke College
- Carl York, Coordinator of School and Business Relations, Roanoke County Public Schools

11:25 AM | Coffee Break (Lobby-Mezzanine)

11:35 AM | **Speed Networking on the Fast Track** Begins (Indoor Track)

(See first page for details)

12:35 PM | Lunch (take it to go or stay and continue networking!)

1:30 PM | Official Close of the 2026 Future of Talent Summit

SPEAKER BIOS



Dr. Frank Shushok, President of Roanoke College

Dr. Frank Shushok Jr. became the 12th president of Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia, in 2022. He collaborates with the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and regional partners to position the College as an agile, innovative, and learner-centered institution. Under his leadership, the College launched Imagine Roanoke, a strategic plan that includes creating four transdisciplinary schools and transforming the residential campus into a 21st-century learning laboratory. The plan's signature initiative, Roanoke College–Roanoke Valley (RC-RV), expands access to continuing education and workforce development. The College has launched new programs, begun construction on the McConnon Discovery Center, and revitalized student life. President Shushok came to Roanoke College with over 30 years of experience in higher education.

Immediately prior to coming to Roanoke College, Shushok served 13 years in several executive roles at Virginia Tech, including Vice President of Student Affairs. He was also a tenured professor in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Early on, he served at his alma mater, Baylor University, in several capacities, including the dean for student learning and engagement, associate dean for Campus Living and Learning, and a faculty member and program director for the graduate program in Higher Education and Student Affairs.



Paul Hudgins, Senior VP & CHRO of Carilion Clinic

As a Virginia native, Paul Hudgins joined Carilion in November 2016 as senior vice president and Chief Human Resource Officer and is responsible for all of Human Resources. Paul launched his career in human resources leadership at Alexandria Hospital in Alexandria, VA and at The George Washington University in Washington, D.C.. He eventually took the position of senior vice president and CHRO at the University of Miami Medical Center and Healthsystem, then became the vice president of human resources for

SPEAKER BIOS continued...

Amerigroup, Inc. Most recently, Paul served as vice president of human resources for Dignity Health in Sacramento, CA – the fifth largest health system in the U.S. with over 50,000 employees.

Paul obtained his certification in advanced executive leadership from the Kenan-Flagler Business School at the University of North Carolina. He has served on the board of the Prince William Chapter of the American Red Cross, as the chair of Workforce Task Force for the South Florida Hospital & Healthcare Association, and is a member of the Society of Human Resources Management.



Cynthia Lawrence, Director of the Office of Workforce Development at Carilion Clinic

Cynthia Lawrence serves as Director of Workforce Development at Carilion Clinic and is the founding President of the Blue Ridge Partnership for Health Science Careers, a nonprofit focused on strengthening the region's healthcare workforce. A former entrepreneur who founded and led two companies, she is an active leader on several statewide workforce, education, and business advisory boards.



Stephanie Byers, Regional Internships Manager, GO Virginia Regions 1 & 2 for EO

Stephanie Byers works to strengthen Southwest Virginia's workforce by expanding access to high-quality, paid internships through the InternshipsVA initiative. She partners with employers, colleges, and community leaders to build sustainable talent pipelines and connect students with meaningful, hands-on career experiences.



SPEAKER BIOS continued...



Chase Clark, Electrical Engineer, Steel Dynamics, Inc.

Chase Parker is an electrical engineer at Steel Dynamics, Inc., where he has advanced through multiple technical leadership roles since 2018. A U.S. Navy veteran and trained nuclear electrician, he brings hands-on industry expertise and a strong focus on applied engineering and workforce readiness.



Paul Bixel, Vice President of Technology, TMEIC

Paul Bixel has been with TMEIC since its inception in 2003. His roles have included engineer, chief specialist, Manager of Product Development, and now VP of Technology. Paul is a long-time IEEE member, holds a PE license in 12 states, and has been awarded over 40 patents in the USA and abroad.



Dr. Michelle Seref, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programs; Collegiate Professor, Business Information Technology; Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Tech

Dr. Michelle Seref oversees undergraduate business programs at Virginia Tech's Pamplin College of Business, supporting curriculum development, student success initiatives, and experiential learning opportunities. Her work focuses on advancing career readiness, data-informed education, and industry-aligned programming, alongside a highly cited research portfolio in operations management and decision support systems.



SPEAKER BIOS continued...



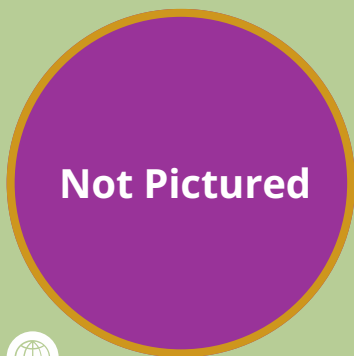
Dr. David Berry, Associate Professor and Program Head of the Mechatronics Program, Virginia Western Community College

Dr. David Berry leads the Mechatronics Program at Virginia Western Community College, where he teaches automation, PLCs, and engineering design. With a background in advanced materials research and power electronics, he is deeply engaged in workforce development and collaborates closely with industry partners to prepare students for modern manufacturing careers.



Dr. Bryan Cobb, Associate Professor of Math, Computer Science, and Physics at Roanoke College

Bryan Cobb, Ph.D., is in his third year as professor and program coordinator for the Engineering Science program at Roanoke College. As program coordinator, one of his areas of focus is to develop industry partnerships that help ensure the College's program aligns with industry needs and connects students with professional opportunities in the region. This is especially exciting as Roanoke's new science discovery center nears completion.



Carl York, Coordinator of School/Business Relations, Career & Technical Education at Roanoke County Public Schools

Thank You to the Partners Who Made It All Happen

