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# COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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### **Executive Directive No. 6 (2013)**

#### **Sustaining and Enhancing Higher Education Reform, Innovation and Investment - State Council of Higher Education for Virginia**

On March 26, 2010, I signed Executive Order 9 (2010) establishing the: "Governor's Commission on Higher Education Reform, Innovation and Investment," stating as follows:

*With great national universities, a higher education system distinguished by both its quality and diversity, and a vibrant knowledge-based economy, Virginia has a unique opportunity to show the way to a new era of American leadership in advanced education, ground-breaking research, and economic growth. Our country's security, our state's prosperity, and our citizens' opportunity all depend on a sustained commitment to higher education excellence and access.*

On December 20, 2010, the Commission issued its interim report recommending passage of landmark higher education in the 2011 session of the Virginia General Assembly to articulate a clear and achievable vision of national and international leadership in college degree attainment and personal income for Virginians. The Commission proposed a name for the comprehensive forward-focused effort: "*Preparing for the Top Jobs of the 21st Century: The Virginia Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011.*" On June 16, 2011, I signed that legislation into law.

[The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia \(SCHEV\)](#) is the Commonwealth's coordinating body for higher education. Its mission is "to promote the development of an educationally and economically sound, vigorous, progressive, and coordinated system of higher education" in Virginia. It therefore has the primary state-level responsibility to guide Virginia's colleges and universities in achieving the vision articulated in "*The Virginia Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011.*"

Accordingly, I direct the State Council of Higher Education to accomplish the following by October 1, 2013, to ensure that the goals and objectives of *The Virginia Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011* are executed efficiently and effectively:

- Undertake an in-depth review of the Council’s essential functions with the aim of enhancing its ability to engage in strategic planning, policy formulation and implementation, and research and analysis on current and developing trends and best practices to support planning policy development and decision making at the state and institutional levels. Council’s review should be conducted in collaboration with stakeholders, including representatives from public and private higher education institutions, legislators, legislative and executive branch staff, business leaders, and other key education policy makers in the Commonwealth, and result in recommendations to the Secretary of Education on the elimination, reassignment, reprioritization, or addition of duties to ensure the alignment of the Council’s work with the essential functions described above while preserving to institutional boards of visitors their independence and responsibility for the operation and management of institutions.
- Organize staff and resources to increase the focus on strategic planning, policy formulation and implementation, and research and analysis of current and developing trends and best practices to support planning, policy development, and decision making at the state and institutional levels in achieving the goals of *The Virginia Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011*.
- Maintain a database of key data elements and analysts to support these responsibilities and decision making at both the state and institutional levels.
- Propose to the Secretary of Education and the institutions specific policies and activities to increase collaboration among the institutions that would enhance quality and obtain greater operational efficiencies through shared resources, including partnerships among public and private institutions and others involved in higher education, and partnering on board member development.
- Continually seek ways to ensure that Virginia’s system of higher education is flexible, responsive, and accountable and that it remains the finest in the nation and achieves the objective and purposes of *The Virginia Higher Education Act of 2011*.

Virginia’s higher education institutions will fuel strong economic growth and prepare Virginians for the top job opportunities in the knowledge-driven economy of the 21st century. The Council members and staff will lead and implement a long-term commitment, policy, and framework for sustained investment and innovation that will enable the Commonwealth to build upon the strengths of its excellent higher education system and achieve national and international leadership in college degree attainment and personal income, and that will ensure these educational and economic opportunities are accessible and affordable for Virginians for years to come.

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Robert F. McDonnell, Governor

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Janet V. Kelly, Secretary of the Commonwealth

