



State Council of  
Higher Education for Virginia

# SAC MINUTES

**Student Advisory Committee Minutes  
Thursday, December 1, 2011  
Newcomb Hall South Meeting Room  
University of Virginia**

**Members Present:** Luis Ferreira (Old Dominion University), Taylor Fix (Blue Ridge Community College), Zach McCoy (Radford University), Avery Newton (College of William and Mary), Brandon Randleman (Virginia State University), Luke Rasnick (University of Virginia's College at Wise), Alex Reber (University of Virginia), and Nathan Roark (Virginia Highlands Community College).

**SCHEV Staff Present:** Kathleen Kincheloe and Kirsten Nelson.

- Kathleen Kincheloe (SCHEV) brought the meeting to order at 2:05 pm. She welcomed the members and thanked Chair Alex Reber for organizing and hosting the meeting.
- Alex introduced UVa Provost Milton Adams, who said that committees such as SAC are good for higher education, the Commonwealth, and the student participants.
- He spoke about several UVa initiatives that relate to the goals of the Higher Education Opportunity Act, know as Top Jobs for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century or TJ21. Specifically, he mentioned that UVa is growing its enrollment to add 1,500 students over the next seven years or so. He also provided details about the University's new 3+1 program that allows students coming in with credits to earn a bachelor's degree in 3 years and a master's in one.
- Additionally, Provost Adams mentioned a recent study of the Access UVa financial aid program, as well as ongoing campus discussions about encouraging more students to have undergraduate research experiences.
- Kirsten Nelson (SCHEV) then led an exploration of possible topics that might generate discussion during the 2012 General Assembly session.
- She stated that Virginia Code language about college and university Boards of Visitors (BOVs) has traditionally been interpreted to mean that institutions' BOVs have full authority to make decisions about their campuses. She believes that there will be legislation introduced that challenges this interpretation – specifically legislation related to weapons on campus.
- Kirsten shared Senate Bill 1250 from the 2011 legislative session that prohibits regulation of firearms by state agencies, including BOVs. Though this bill was not passed, she believes the issue will remain in the forefront during the 2012 session. She also shared campus firearms policies from Liberty University and George Mason University as examples of current policies.
- Luis Ferreira (Old Dominion University) and Alex Reber (University of Virginia) both indicated that their student bodies are having active discussions about this issue, while other reps said it was not a hot topic on campus.
- Kirsten also mentioned the issues of increased state support for financial aid and funding to keep tuition increases reasonably low, sharing the Council's recent recommendations to mitigate tuition increases.
- Finally, Kirsten shared language from Delegate Peace's 2008 bill that sought to prohibit attendance of unlawful aliens at Virginia's colleges and universities. She expects similar bills to be introduced this year.
- Alex Reber (University of Virginia) brought up an additional area of interest for students on his campus: increasing faculty salaries. Kirsten noted that the Council budget

recommendations included \$6.4 million in General Funds and \$6.2 million in Non-General Funds to increase faculty salaries.

- Kathleen (SCHEV) then shared that SAC's Lobbying Day will most likely take place in late February. Interested SAC reps will have the opportunity to come to Richmond to meet with legislators to discuss issues of concern for college students across the Commonwealth. She reminded reps that the issues chosen have to be universal and the positions agreed upon by all. She opened up the floor to take suggestions for topics to be included during the upcoming legislative visit.
- Those present agreed on six topics of interest:
  1. Maintaining BOV autonomy over campus-wide decisions, including the presence of firearms and undocumented students.
  2. Encouraging legislation that helps students and their families plan and pay for college by increasing state support for higher education so that tuition rates would not increase so dramatically.
  3. Supporting state funding to pay for the operation and maintenance of new campus facilities. (The Council's budget recommendations include \$4.9 million in operation and maintenance for new education-related construction.)
  4. Supporting any introduced legislation that encourages sustainability efforts on college campuses.
  5. Increasing the allocations for faculty salaries.
  6. Supporting funding for need-based financial aid.
- Kirsten and Kathleen agreed to keep members apprised as bills are introduced relating to these six issues. SAC reps can also educate themselves about introduced bills by visiting <http://www.schev.edu/policy/longlist.asp>.
- The next SAC meeting will be a teleconference during the week of January 16 to discuss which two or three messages from the list above are most important to deliver to legislators on Lobbying Day.
- The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:15 pm.