



*State Council of Higher Education for Virginia*

**Policy on Mission Statement Changes at Virginia Public Higher Education Institutions**

**Effective: November 1, 2013**

(Approved by Council, October 29, 2013)

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*State Council of Higher Education for Virginia*  
**MISSION CHANGES AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS:**

**Effective: November 1, 2013**

**I. Council's Statutory Obligations Related to Mission Changes at Public Institutions**

The Code of Virginia, §23-9.6:1, charges the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) with various duties and accords Council the authority to carry out those duties. Those obligations related to mission statements at public institutions are listed below.

**A. Duty #2**

Review and approve or disapprove any proposed change in the statement of mission of any presently existing public institution of higher education and to define the mission of all public institutions of higher education created after the effective date of this provision. [...] Nothing contained in this provision shall be construed to authorize the Council to modify any mission statement adopted by the General Assembly, nor to empower the Council to affect, either directly or indirectly, the selection of faculty or the standards and criteria for admission of any public institution, whether related to academic standards, residence or other criteria; it being the intention of this section that faculty selection and student admission policies shall remain a function of the individual institutions.

[The Council shall, within the time prescribed in subdivision 1, make a report to the Governor and the General Assembly with respect to its actions hereunder. No such actions shall become effective until 30 days after adjournment of the session of the General Assembly next following the filing of such a report.] (Code of Virginia, §23-9.6:1.2)

**B. Duty #15**

To adopt such rules and regulations as the Council believes necessary to implement all of the Council's duties and responsibilities as set forth in this Code. The various public institutions of higher education shall comply with such rules and regulations. (Code of Virginia, §23-9.6:1.15)

**C. General Duty**

The Council, insofar as practicable, shall preserve the individuality, traditions and sense of responsibility of the respective institutions. The Council, insofar as practicable, shall seek the assistance and advice of the respective institutions in fulfilling all of its duties and responsibilities. (Code of Virginia, §23-9.6:1)

The Council has established the following policies and procedures related to changes in the mission statements of public institutions as part of its obligation “to promote the development and operation of an educationally and economically sound, vigorous, progressive, and coordinated system of higher education in the State of Virginia.” (Code of Virginia, §23-9.3[a])

## II. Policy Statements on Mission Changes at Public Institutions

### A. Overview

To ensure that the Council is duly apprised of any proposed change in the statement of mission, the Council recognizes the following distinctions. **Note:** The following distinctions are applicable to modification, expansion, and a new mission statement.

#### 1. Types of Mission Changes

- a. “*Modification*” a change to the text of the mission statement, proposed solely for revisions for clarity and grammar, rephrasing (e.g., minor word changes), editorial changes, and restatement that would not alter the institution's nature/character, purpose/function, type, and degree levels offered or curricular offerings.
- b. “*Expansion*” a change to the text of the mission statement including the addition of language, proposed solely to expand the institution's focus (e.g. to increase research or outreach efforts), that would not alter the institution's nature/character, purpose/function, type, and degree levels offered or curricular offerings.
- c. “*New*” a substantive change to the current mission statement that results in a new mission that would alter the institution's nature/character, purpose/function, type, or degree levels offered or curricular offerings (e.g., adding medical education or changing the focus from undergraduate education to graduate education).

#### 2. Levels of Required State Action

- a. *SCHEV Staff Must be Notified in Writing*: any proposed “modification” to a statement of mission (see **Operational Definitions** below).
- b. *Council Must Review and Approve or Disapprove*: any proposed change in the statement of mission determined as an “expansion” or “new” mission statement (see **Operational Definitions** below). For a substantive change resulting in a “new” mission, Council’s review and “preliminary” approval is required. Preliminary approval is a mandatory step and occurs prior to approval from the institution's Board of Visitors. During the preliminary period, the institution shall provide any supplemental documentation requested (see **Operational Definitions** below).
- c. Council delegates approval of individual community college mission statement changes to the State Board for Community Colleges. Provisions of this policy shall apply to the Virginia Community College System as a whole.

## B. Operational Definitions of Key Terms

“Mission Change”: a change in the statement of mission—modification, expansion, or new —of any presently existing public institution of higher education.

“Modification”: a change in the statement of mission proposed solely to restate, clarify, change grammar, or make an editorial change that would not alter the institution’s nature/character, purpose/function, type, or degree levels offered or curricular offerings and would be executable within currently authorized funds.

“Expansion”: a change in the statement of mission proposed solely to expand services currently offered by the institution that would not alter the institution’s nature/character, purpose/function, type, or degree levels offered, or curricular offerings and would be executable within currently authorized funds. Terms such as “globalization” and “international” may be added to the mission to expand the institution's outreach.

“New”: a substantive change in the statement of mission which creates a new statement of mission that would alter the institution's nature/character, purpose/function, type, or degree levels offered or curricular offerings and may or may not be executable within the currently authorized funds. The addition of new discipline areas (e.g., medicine, graduate-level research, law) would typically result from a “new” mission.

“Preliminary” Review/Approval: an action by the Council authorizing a public, four-year institution to conduct a study to change the mission. A preliminary review must address, clearly and completely *new areas of curricular offerings* (e.g., medicine), *change in the character and purpose* of the institution, a *change in primary focus* (e.g., undergraduate education to graduate education), *issues of need* and, issues of costs (e.g., any action that will ultimately require either the purchase, construction or receipt (as donation) of one or more buildings to support curricular offerings). A request for such an approval is a **required** step that allows an institution to seek state (Council) input and permission to continue planning before it receives Board of Visitors approval, expends significant resources, or enters into binding contracts/agreements. The required documentation is detailed in Part III and IV of Council’s “Proposal for Mission Statement Change” form, which appears at the end of this document.

## C. Mission Changes

### 1. Background

The Council recognizes distinctions among modification, expansion, and new missions for proposed change in the statement of mission (see **Operational Definitions** above). This distinction is intended to clarify and streamline the approval process for public institutions’ mission changes. As a result, while the Council will continue formally to approve all institutional mission changes, SCHEV staff have been delegated the responsibility and authority to review and approve a proposed “modification” in the statement of mission. An expansion of a

mission statement or a new mission must be approved by the Council. All changes to the mission statement must be submitted to SCHEV staff using the guidelines, instructions, and forms contained herein.

2. “Modification”

If SCHEV staff concurs with a public institution’s determination that a proposed change in the statement of mission fits the definition of a “modification” (see **Operational Definitions** above), the Council delegates responsibility for the review and approval of such a change to SCHEV staff. SCHEV staff will respond within 60 calendar days of receipt of written request of a proposed "modification" in the statement of mission.

3. “Expansion”

If SCHEV staff and/or a public institution determine(s) that a proposed change in the statement of mission fits the definition of an “expansion” change (see **Operational Definitions** above), the institution shall seek Council approval of the proposed change in accordance with these policies and procedures.

Within 60 calendar days of receipt of a written request for a proposed “expansion” change in the statement of mission, SCHEV staff shall prepare a report and recommendation for Council action on the proposed change.

4. “New”

If SCHEV staff and/or a public institution determine(s) that a proposed change in the statement of mission constitutes a “new” mission statement, the institution shall seek Council approval of the proposed change in accordance with this policy and procedures.

When a proposed change in the statement of mission involves a “new” mission, Council shall consider the proposal for “preliminary” review and approval. The preliminary review allows an institution to seek state (Council) input and approval prior to final approval by the institution's Board of Visitors and to continue planning before it expends significant resources or enters into binding contracts/agreements.

#### **D. Policies Relevant to All Mission Changes**

1. Public institutions shall inform SCHEV staff in writing of any proposed change in the statement of mission. **All changes in the statement of mission must be submitted for Council consideration and approval prior to initiation and no such actions shall become effective until 30 days after adjournment of the session of the General Assembly next following the filing of such a report.**
2. The Council does not possess the authority to disapprove a statement of mission authorized by the General Assembly.

3. Approval of a change in the statement of mission does not obligate the Council to support capital or operating requests in excess of the amounts provided in the institution's current appropriation.
4. If a change in the statement of mission is intended or implied in a request for a new academic degree program or an organizational change, the mission statement change must be approved prior to initiation of the degree program or the organizational change. Council action on a proposed change in the statement of mission must occur prior to approval of action on a new degree program or organizational change.
5. In accordance with the criteria of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) as well as specialized and/or professional accrediting bodies, a change in the statement of mission may constitute a "substantive change" of which an institution must inform its accreditor(s).

### **III. Procedures for Submission of Proposals for Mission Changes**

#### **A. General Guidelines for Mission Changes**

1. Proposals to modify or expand a statement of mission must be submitted to Council at least 10 months prior to the date of proposed change and in accordance with these policies and procedures.
2. Proposals to "modify" a statement of mission shall be submitted via the attached forms.  
All requests must include:
  - A cover letter from the president outlining the proposed change;
  - SCHEV's Mission Change Cover Sheet and Part IV;
  - A detailed narrative explaining the mission change to include rationale, justification, and impact on resources;
  - Text of current and proposed mission statement;
  - Impact on degree program and curricular offerings;
  - Additional supplemental documentation as needed.

Regardless of its form, the proposal document shall include sufficient information to document that the proposed change fits the definition of "modify" and thus can be approved at the staff level. The detailed narrative is submitted in a document separate from the cover letter. SCHEV staff reserves the right to request additional information to evaluate a proposed change.

3. Proposals for "expansion" of a statement of mission may be submitted via the attached forms.  
All requests must include:

- A cover letter from the president outlining the proposed change;
  - SCHEV's Mission Change Cover Sheet, Part II, and Part IV;
  - A detailed narrative explaining the mission change to include rationale, justification, and impact on resources;
  - Text of current and proposed mission statement;
  - Impact on degree program and curricular offerings;
  - Additional supplemental documentation as needed.
4. Proposals for a “new” statement of mission must be submitted prior to final approval by the institution's Board of Visitors and at least 10 months prior to the date of proposed change. Proposals may be submitted via the attached forms and constitute the preliminary review.
- All requests must include:
- A cover letter from the president outlining the proposed change;
  - SCHEV's Mission Change Cover Sheet, Part II, Part III, and Part IV;
  - A detailed narrative explaining the mission change to include rationale, justification, and impact on resources;
  - Text of current and proposed mission statement;
  - Impact on degree program and curricular offerings;
  - Additional supplemental documentation as needed.

## **B. Specific Instructions for Mission-Change Proposals**

1. Complete all relevant parts of the “Proposal for Mission Change” form and attach narratives, supplemental information, and any necessary.
2. Provide a cover letter that summarizes the proposed mission change. The cover letter must be signed and dated by the chief executive officer.
3. Complete the SCHEV Cover Sheet. The cover sheet must be signed and dated by the chief executive officer.
4. Provide a detailed table of contents. The table of contents should reflect the page numbers of all attached forms, documents, narratives and supplemental information.
5. Submit the proposal to the Director of Academic Affairs and Planning. Submit two hard copies of the complete proposal. One document must have an original signature. One electronic copy on CD is required for a change resulting in a new statement of mission.

*STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA*  
**PROPOSAL FOR MISSION CHANGE COVER SHEET**

**Part I: General Information**

<b>1. Institution:</b>			
<b>2. Nature of Proposed Change</b> (i.e., modify, expand, or new). Please summarize the change here and attach a detailed description of the change on a separate page, as well as copies of the institution's current mission and resultant mission.			
<b>3. Purpose of Proposed Change.</b> Please summarize the reason(s) of the change here and attach a detailed description of the purpose for the change on a separate page.			
<b>4. Type of Proposed Change</b> (check one). Part IV must be completed for any change.  <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"><tr><td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top; padding: 5px;"><b>MODIFY</b> _____ Please explain background for change, text changes to mission, and how the change fits with the current curriculum, in a separate document.</td><td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top; padding: 5px;"><b>EXPANSION</b> _____ Please complete and submit Part II of this form.</td><td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top; padding: 5px;"><b>NEW</b> _____ Please complete and submit Part II and III of this form.</td></tr></table>	<b>MODIFY</b> _____ Please explain background for change, text changes to mission, and how the change fits with the current curriculum, in a separate document.	<b>EXPANSION</b> _____ Please complete and submit Part II of this form.	<b>NEW</b> _____ Please complete and submit Part II and III of this form.
<b>MODIFY</b> _____ Please explain background for change, text changes to mission, and how the change fits with the current curriculum, in a separate document.	<b>EXPANSION</b> _____ Please complete and submit Part II of this form.	<b>NEW</b> _____ Please complete and submit Part II and III of this form.	
<b>5. Date of last mission change.</b>			
<b>6. What was the nature of the last change?</b>  <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"><tr><td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top; padding: 5px;"><b>MODIFICATION</b> _____</td><td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top; padding: 5px;"><b>EXPANSION</b> _____</td><td style="width: 33%; vertical-align: top; padding: 5px;"><b>NEW</b> _____</td></tr></table>	<b>MODIFICATION</b> _____	<b>EXPANSION</b> _____	<b>NEW</b> _____
<b>MODIFICATION</b> _____	<b>EXPANSION</b> _____	<b>NEW</b> _____	
<b>7. Date of Approval by the Board of Visitors for the proposed change. (REQUIRED)</b>			
<b>8. Proposed Effective-Date of Mission Change.</b>			

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Part II: Supplemental Information**

1. If a study was conducted to determine the feasibility of the proposed mission change, please summarize its findings and attach a copy of the full report. If no such feasibility study was conducted, please summarize a needs assessment (the institution's need for the change and/or the needs of the Commonwealth) and attach a detailed description of the necessity for the proposed mission change.

2. Summarize here and attach a detailed description of the anticipated effect(s) of the proposed change on the institution's scope, curriculum, and budget.

3. If the proposed mission change will involve the reorganization of an existing academic unit or the merger of two or more currently-separate units, please summarize here and attach a detailed description of the impact of the change.

4. If the proposed change will involve the **establishment of a new academic unit or units** (e.g., institutes and research centers), please summarize here and attach a detailed description of new degree programs and/or new academic programs, and the anticipated operating costs, including costs of and number of FTE personnel. Please discuss and describe whether the institution will be request new state appropriations.

5. Summarize here and attach a detailed description of the effect(s) of the proposed change on the state's system of higher education including state priorities.

**Part III: New Mission Information**

1. Summarize here and attach a detailed description of the institution's character and purpose including the institution's goals and the impact of the new mission on the character and purpose including the goals.

2. Summarize here and attach a detailed description of the institution's current functional emphasis instruction, research, or public service and the new functional emphasis, instruction, research, or public service.

3. Summarize here and attach a detailed description of the current and proposed Carnegie classification, degree levels offered, and relative emphasis given to undergraduate and graduate instruction.

4. If the proposed mission change will include an escalation to a degree-granting level higher than that level to which it is presently restricted, summarize here and attach a detailed description of the study conducted. The study must include the need for and benefits and/or detriments to be derived from the escalation.

**Part IV: Contact Information**

**1. Name(s), title(s), and contact information for institutional personnel who may be contacted to answer questions and/or supply additional information regarding this proposal.**

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Name

Email

Telephone

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Name

Email

Telephone

**2. Printed name(s) and dated signature(s) of person(s) who completed this form.**

--	--

Printed Name

--	--

Signature

Date

--	--

Printed Name

--	--

Signature

Date

**3. Printed name and dated signature of the chief executive officer.**

--	--

Print Name

--	--

Signature

Date