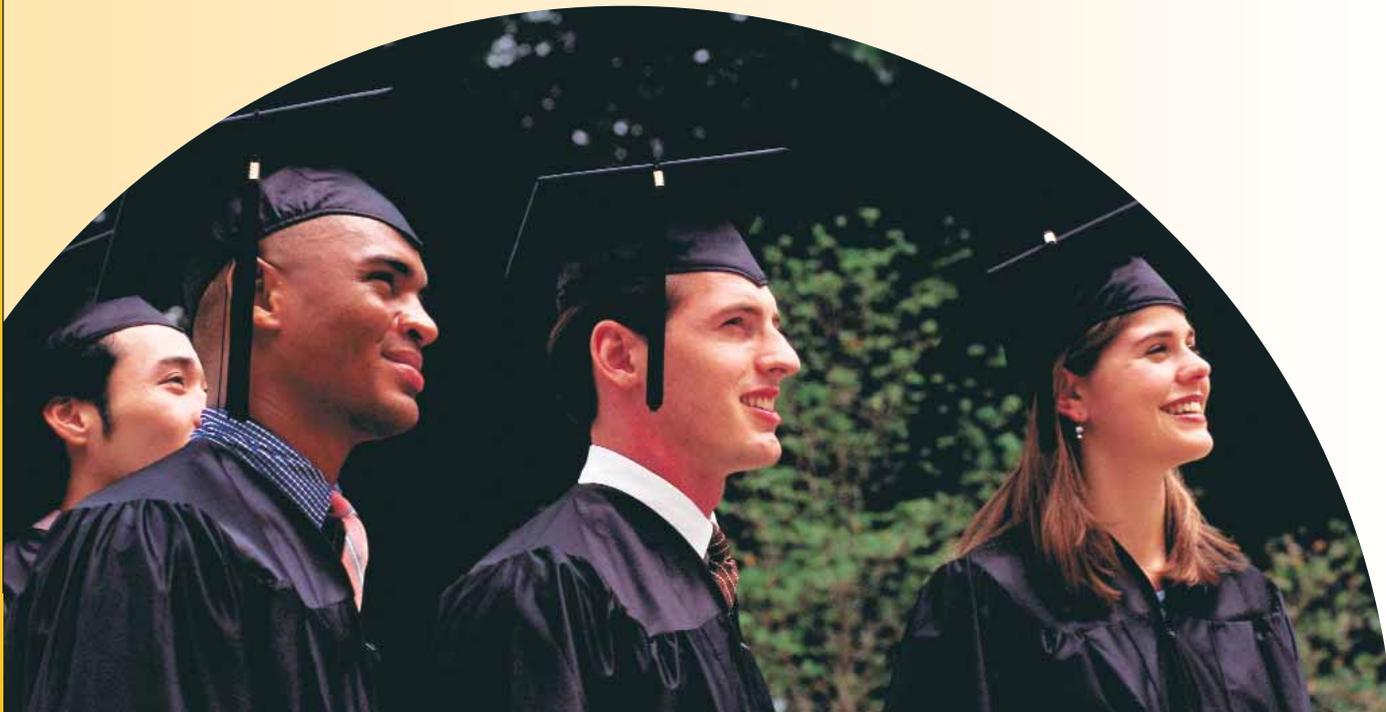




Advancing Virginia: Access, Alignment, Investment

The 2007-13 Strategic Plan for
Higher Education in Virginia



"This plan is a snapshot of the expectations we have for the future of higher education in Virginia. Bringing it to life will enable us to serve students and the Commonwealth in significant ways."

*Daniel J. LaVista,
Executive Director of
the State Council of Higher
Education for Virginia*

The 2007-13 Strategic Plan for Higher Education in Virginia at a Glance

Access

Enhancing Access

1. Enhance Access Through P-16 Curricular Alignment
2. Enhance Access Through Improved Coordination of Information

Enhancing Affordability

3. Enhance Affordability Through Financial Aid Advocacy
4. Enhance Affordability Through Education and Investment Incentives

Alignment

Enhancing Alignment with P-12 Education

5. Improve College Readiness Through Strengthened P-16 Cooperation and Communication
6. Strengthen P-16 Coordination Through Expanded Data Collection and Analysis

Enhancing Alignment with Workforce Needs

7. Support State Workforce Needs Through Strengthened Participation in Post-Secondary Education
8. Conduct a Comprehensive Economic Impact Study of Higher Education
9. Improve Alignment Between Higher Education and the Commonwealth's Workforce Needs

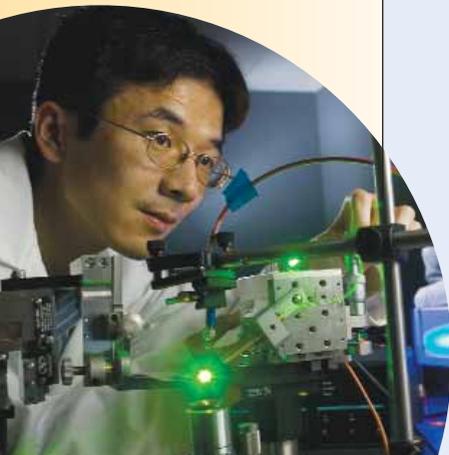
Enhancing Academic Quality

10. Strengthen Academic Program Quality and Accountability Through Assessment

Investment

Enhancing Research

11. Enhance Research Through Investment in Targeted Consortia
12. Enhance Research Through Investment in Infrastructure



Continuing a History of Excellence

Since the days of Thomas Jefferson, Virginia's leaders have recognized that the future of higher education in the Commonwealth is truly the future of Virginia itself. With this rich history in mind, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) recognized the importance of its legislative charge to create a six-year strategic plan for higher education in the Commonwealth. SCHEV assembled a panel of the best and brightest minds, including college presidents and administrators, leaders of industry, legislators, community representatives, financial experts, and those on the cutting edge of academic innovation. The result is a comprehensive strategic plan for 2007-2013 with 12 goals that address three main areas: Access, Alignment, and Investment.

Goal 1. Enhance Access Through P-16 Curricular Alignment

Access must go beyond simply gaining entrance to a college or university. The benefits of a college education can only be realized by those who attend higher education institutions and complete their programs. Virginia must establish high expectations and align curricula between secondary and post-secondary education. College-bound students must graduate from high schools ready to do college-level work. Virginia can improve student preparation by identifying and supporting accelerated college-preparatory experiences that prove successful. Such programs may include dual enrollment, tech prep, Advanced Placement courses, and International Baccalaureate programs.

Goal 2. Enhance Access Through Improved Coordination of Information

Virginia must provide information about college earlier, more systematically, and more strategically to Virginia's children and their families, especially members of underrepresented populations. Such information should "demystify" college by detailing higher education's benefits, outlining preparatory paths, and clarifying financial aid.

The Strategic Plan recommends convening a working group of stakeholders to identify existing Commonwealth resources and consider how they may be mobilized more effectively. This group must work to tap into peers, mentors, families, and guidance counselors. An effort must also be made to deliver information to students and parents "where they are," at sporting events, shopping areas, via television, print media, billboards, and websites.



"In this global economy, the pursuit of excellence is more important than ever. I commend SCHEV for providing a comprehensive strategy that will guide our colleges and universities toward excellence. The strategies outlined in this plan will enable Virginia's institutions of higher education to better meet the needs of our students, our workforce, and the Commonwealth."

*Virginia Governor
Timothy M. Kaine*



“SCHEV’S strategic planning process was a model for higher education coordinating boards throughout the nation. It was inclusive, reflective, focused, and it addressed the critical issues that will surely impact Virginia’s future. Representation from education, business, and government was pivotal in crafting a plan with opportunities for buy-in from all sectors and providing a framework for accountability that will ensure success in achieving its goals.”

*Patricia P. Cormier,
President of Longwood
University*

Goal 3. Enhance Affordability Through Financial Aid Advocacy

In addressing the affordability of higher education, Virginia must look at both the reality and the perception of college costs. This is especially true with students from the lowest income levels. Virginia must advocate for state and institutional policies that seek to moderate increases in tuition and balance them with expanded financial aid.

The 2007-13 Strategic Plan calls for full funding and support of the Partnership Model for need-based programs. This model divides the cost of higher education among the student, state, and federal government in an equitable and sensible way.

SCHEV also recommends increased support for the Tuition Assistance Grant (TAG) program to reflect increases in the cost of higher education at Virginia’s private colleges and universities.

Goal 4. Enhance Affordability Through Education and Investment Incentives

Virginia is fortunate to have the Virginia College Savings Plan (VCSP). Often used as a model in other states, the VCSP educates and offers financial incentives to families that set their sights on college for their children and plan ahead. This program could be expanded by exploring the concept of an income-based incentive program. Corporate partners might also provide financial and human resources in this effort.

Goal 5. Improve College Readiness Through Strengthened P-16 Cooperation and Communication

An effective P-16 system of education expects excellence from students of all backgrounds. To achieve such excellence, public schools and institutions of higher education must establish common standards of college readiness. Two existing, nationally recognized programs are available to help Virginia accomplish this goal: The American Diploma Project and the College Board Standards for College Success.

Educators should also be encouraged to use the results of the upcoming study of academic weaknesses of community college students to develop strategies to improve the preparation of high school graduates.

Goal 6. Strengthen P-16 Coordination Through Expanded Data Collection and Analysis

Successes and failures must be measured in order to track progress and make improvements. Nowhere is this truer than in the field of education. This strategic plan supports the Commonwealth's efforts to achieve the ten essential elements of a state longitudinal data system identified by the national Data Quality Campaign. Researchers should also be encouraged to conduct longitudinal analyses of student experience to determine key factors of college and workplace readiness.

Goal 7. Support State Workforce Needs Through Strengthened Participation in Post-Secondary Education

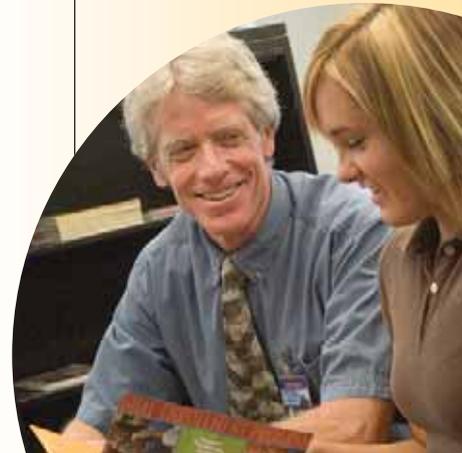
Economic development and the enhancement of human potential are two important goals of higher education. To meet the needs of both individuals and the society in which they live, the Commonwealth must strive to: support scholarship funding in critical shortage areas, such as nursing and teacher education; emphasize "2 plus 2" partnerships between community colleges and four-year institutions; implement programs to increase attraction and retention of "non-traditional" student populations; increase the academic and counseling support for K-12 students and teachers; and expand dual enrollment opportunities.

Goal 8. Conduct a Comprehensive Economic Impact Study of Higher Education

Virginia would benefit from understanding the advantages colleges and universities bring to the communities in which they are located. Under the auspices of the Office of the Governor and the General Assembly the strategic plan recommends establishing baselines and measuring changes over time. Such areas should include: direct institutional spending; tax revenue generated by college graduates compared to non-graduates; annual expenditures by college and university employees, students, and visitors and the state taxes collected; percent of graduates that remain in the state; the number of jobs created off-campus by the institution's presence; annual level of sponsored research; employment supply and demand in critical areas; net job migration; and the impact of the higher salaries generated by an increased graduate population.

"This strategic plan lays the groundwork for greatly expanding research capabilities at Virginia's colleges and universities. The plan outlines ways in which educators, legislators, and industry can work together to better attract research funding and renowned faculty to the Commonwealth."

*Eugene P. Trani,
President of Virginia
Commonwealth University*



“Virginia’s colleges and universities are some of the best in the nation. This strategic plan will allow the Commonwealth to maintain that excellence and improve upon it by providing greater access to higher education for all Virginians.”

*Whittington W. Clement,
Partner at Hunton &
Williams and SCHEV
Vice Chair*



Goal 9. Improve Alignment Between Higher Education and the Commonwealth’s Workforce Needs

Virginia should establish an advisory council with representatives from higher education and industry. This council would identify statewide workforce needs and work to match those needs with the skill sets of college graduates. This advisory council should also work with institutions to speed up the time in which Virginia’s colleges and universities respond to workforce needs. Such efforts should include an emphasis on adult learners.

The development of grants for seeding innovative commercial applications of university research should also be strongly supported.

Goal 10. Strengthen Academic Program Quality and Accountability Through Assessment

Virginia’s colleges and universities must rigorously document whether students are taught what they need to learn in order to be successful in their chosen fields.

In the case of degree programs, assessment should proceed according to standards established by accrediting bodies, both disciplinary and regional, and by the institutions’ own internal standards and expectations. Information about degree program assessments should be made available to the public.

Goal 11. Enhance Research Through Investment in Targeted Consortia

Research is, in some respects, the keystone of higher education. It is from research and scholarship that new knowledge is discovered. An infusion of new research funds will have a significant impact on institutions and the state’s competitiveness. The Virginia Research and Technology Advisory Commission (VRTAC) is an existing entity that can help Virginia achieve this goal.

This strategic plan supports VRTAC’s proposed establishment of a consortium of universities, industry, and federal laboratories. These stakeholders would focus on three main areas: energy, conservation, and the environment; future microelectronics in Virginia; and lifespan biology and medicine, including public health and safety.

Goal 12. Enhance Research Through Investment in Infrastructure

Excellence in teaching and research depends on attracting and retaining renowned faculty, top quality graduate students, talented postdoctoral fellows, and qualified technicians.

When funding research SCHEV's guidelines call for a fifty-fifty split between state and institution. An existing exemption to that rule allows for a higher percentage of state funding in certain circumstances. This strategic plan encourages using that exemption to increase research funding through such projects as the Commonwealth Research Initiative, Virginia Tech and Virginia State University agricultural extension, and the Virginia Institute for Marine Science.

The plan also recommends maintaining the precedent-setting policy of funding research equipment through Virginia's Higher Education Equipment Trust Fund.



State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

SCHEV promotes the development of an educationally sound, vigorous, progressive, and coordinated system of higher education that benefits students, families, businesses, communities, and the entire Commonwealth.

For more information about higher education in Virginia or to read the entire Strategic Plan, please visit the SCHEV web site at www.schev.edu.

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"SCHEV's focus on access, alignment, and investment paves the way for Virginia's schools, colleges, and universities to continue their rise to excellence, while making sure that all students have the opportunity and means to develop skills and abilities that will ensure the Commonwealth's bright future."

*Diana F. Cantor,
Executive Director of the
Virginia College Savings Plan*



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