

**STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA
COUNCIL RETREAT
JUNE 14, 2019
MINUTES**

Mr. Fralin called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. in the Board Room, Virginia Museum of History and Culture, Richmond, Virginia. Council members present: Ken Ampy, Rosa Atkins, Marge Connelly, Heywood Fralin, Victoria Harker, Henry Light, Stephen Moret, Carlyle Ramsey, Minnis Ridenour, Tom Slater and Katharine Webb.

Council members absent: Gene Lockhart, William Murray.

Other attendees present: Jimmy Clarke, Pam Currey, Don Finley, Megan Healy, Marianne Radcliff, Leah Walker, Michael York.

SCHEV staff present: Tom Allison, Peter Blake, Joe DeFilippo, Alan Edwards, Wendy Kang, Tod Massa, Jean Huskey, Paula Robinson, Lee Ann Rung, Paul Smith, Kristin Whelan and Yan Zheng.

Deb Love from the Office of the Attorney General was also in attendance.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Blake thanked our host, Jamie Bosket, President of the VMHC, for accommodating the Council. Mr. Bosket provided a welcome. Mr. Blake introduced the other invited guests as noted above and also introduced Jason Smith from Bridging Richmond, noting that his organization has an affiliation with Virginia Commonwealth University which is funded by the Lumina Foundation. Mr. Blake introduced Marianne Radcliff as SCHEV's new Council member and asked that the SCHEV staff introduce themselves.

Mr. Fralin welcomed all attendees and noted that these sessions are important to SCHEV's work. The Virginia Plan is still relevant but requires continued discussion. He noted that the Plan is only good if it keeps current with the times. Mr. Fralin turned over the meeting to Ms. Connelly and Mr. Slater, who co-chaired the organization of this agenda.

GOALS FOR THE DAY

Ms. Connelly outlined the goals for the meeting, saying that while SCHEV has been successful in driving broad goals for advocacy and communications, there is now a need to develop specific policy and funding recommendations that can be advanced in the next General Assembly session.

Staff provided members with reading materials in advance and potential strategies were posted on flip charts around the room. As the discussions continue throughout the meeting, additional items will be added to the charts. At the end of the day members will tag each item according to the priority they place on each. Mr. Slater reminded

members that after five years' experience with The Virginia Plan, it is now appropriate to review where we are and where there are gaps.

OVERVIEW OF COUNCIL SURVEY

Ms. Connelly reported that based on Council feedback to the survey, there was almost unanimous consensus that the four objectives of The Virginia Plan are the right ones. Most of the feedback was around the strategies. Generally, members felt more could be done, particularly in the areas of affordability and access.

Mr. Moret thanked Mr. Slater, Ms. Connelly and SCHEV staff for preparing the documents in advance, which he found very helpful.

WHERE ARE WE AND WHERE ARE THE GAPS?

Ms. Kang and Mr. Allison provided a presentation and reviewed where we started (best educated state by 2030). In response to a question by a member, Ms. Kang confirmed that Massachusetts is the state with the highest attainment rate.

Mr. Clarke provided information that Lumina has collected regarding state attainment goals and shared them with the members. He shared specifics on North Carolina and Tennessee's adult promise programs. In response to Mr. Fralin's suggestion to have the number of four-year degrees broken down by majors related to workforce demand areas, staff noted that the talent finance plan will address the breakdown of bachelor versus associate degrees. In addition, there is work taking place with VEDP, in partnership with SCHEV to identify degrees that can support workforce demand occupations. Mr. Clarke suggested that when breaking down degrees, it would be useful to include regional information because specific types of degrees are needed in certain areas.

Mr. Moret noted that some of the programs in shortage areas are costly but suggested that when talking to the legislature, it would be more useful to address specific projects. Ms. Healy talked about "stackable pathways" and noted that the Governor's office is working on this initiative. There was some discussion about the benefit of providing financial incentives to institutions to produce certain types of needed degrees.

Mr. Allison discussed enrollment and access. He noted that in Virginia there are approximately 25,000 students per year that do not continue from high school to college. He reviewed the completion percentages, showing gaps in the under-represented population. Virginia is below other states and going down over time with regard to cost per degree. Families see tuition increases, but the total cost per degree indicates we have been more efficient over time.

Mr. Fralin asked if Virginia could help provide mechanisms and capital for start-ups. Members also agreed that there should not just be a focus on technology; soft skills such as critical thinking are equally important.

The Chairman called for a break at 11:30. The meeting resumed at 11:40.

DISCUSSION OF WHAT'S WORKING, WHAT'S NOT, WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS

Affordability, Funding and Workforce Alignment

Ms. Connelly reviewed the suggested options posted around the room and opened a discussion about including additional priorities to the list.

Ms. Healy noted that the proposed items align with the Governor's initiatives. She spoke of the importance of developing partnerships to align jobs to the workforce, including providing access for everyone, particularly "swirling" adults. According to statistics, 20% of people out of work already have a Bachelor's degree. Mr. Clarke talked about debt transparency and competency based learning, and noted the importance of finding ways to measure and count certificates of value. Ms. Healy asked that loan forgiveness be added to the list. She also mentioned that there is software available that links education to jobs and one that connects students to internship opportunities.

Mr. Moret informed Council that even when students have access to data about jobs and salaries, it does not move the needle as much as previously thought. Wraparound services that align with federal programs are needed, including resources for adult students (daycare and other services).

Dr. Ramsey noted that prison reform will impact and accelerate admissions. All agreed that we need to do a better job of preparing students early on about the skills and education necessary for various jobs.

Mr. Fralin inquired if there are any states tackling the higher education communications issue as a statewide effort. Mr. Clarke indicated that there are several states that do a good job of delivering the message about equity in a way that relates to first-generation students, under-represented students, students of color, etc. to help change the attainment numbers for these communities. Ms. Currey said this is a prelude to what the Council will discuss at the July meeting. Virginia higher education funding does not align well with the priorities that have been mentioned. Mr. Blake said some strategies for pricing should consider effective ways to reach audiences while acknowledging different types of institutions. Ms. Connelly asked that opportunities for shared contracting or other services be added to the affordability goal. Ms. Harker suggested that for the efficiency goal, a fast changing set of demands will require more nimbleness. Mr. Slater noted the importance of return on investment.

The meeting paused for lunch at 12:50 and continued the next discussion at 1:05.

LUNCH AND DISCUSSION: PRE-K12 PARTNERSHIPS

Ms. Kang asked that Ms. Robinson provide an update on what SCHEV has been doing in developing Pre-K12 partnerships. Ms. Robinson explained SCHEV's participation in the superintendents' conference and reminded members that the GEARUP program supports 15 school divisions across the state, with an emphasis on low income regions. She also explained the 123-GO initiative, which is another initiative to help students prepare, apply and find ways to pay for college. SCHEV is currently working with

leadership in the Department of Education (DOE) on a postsecondary enrollment goal for Pre-K12.

Ms. Walker provided a presentation on the “Virginia is for Learners” campaign. She showed a short video that demonstrated why this is an important initiative for the state.

She explained DOE’s strategy of establishing a clear set of objectives. First is to establish expectations for students that encompass the five C’s: communication, collaboration, citizenship, critical thinking and creative thinking. Ms. Walker explained that DOE is working to change the way public education is delivered in the classroom. For example, they are looking to shift the dialogue from “who was the first US president” to “what was the impact of the first president.” The new approach is not ‘can you build it,’ but rather ‘how you fix it.’ DOE is studying ways to prepare schools for this new environment and exploring ways to measure their effectiveness in the five C’s. They will be measuring achievement gaps for the first time and looking at dropout rates. Noting that 51% of Virginia students in the system are of color, Ms. Walker said Virginia needs to better address shared goals between Pre-K12 and higher education and how to operationalize it in various regions. She also said we need to take a different approach to get more teachers in the pipeline. These critical conversations need to be at all levels, not just Pre-K12.

Members discussed teacher salaries and the impact of incentives on recruitment. It was noted that increasing pay for teachers will gain better results vs. providing incentives. Mr. Moret reminded members that the state does think education is important but the portion of the state budget for items that must be funded is crowding things out. This structural imbalance is not just an issue in Virginia, but is a struggle throughout the country.

Access, Enrollment and Completion

Ms. Connelly reviewed the proposed ideas that were posted and solicited others. She asked Dr. Finley to provide input to determine if the items discussed are aligned with the goals of the Virginia Business Higher Education Council.

Dr. Finley noted that many issues are best handled by the community college system and he suggested that the state invest more into the community colleges. He felt we are not reaching the population that is needed to achieve our goals. Dr. Finley reminded members that institutions are now being asked to produce talent along with tuition moderation and predictability, which means they won’t be able to use tuition increases to make up for the lack of funding. He encouraged the Council to consider the risk factor.

Mr. Moret said the cost sensitivity of college enrollment equates to a 3% change in enrollment numbers for every \$1,000 change in cost of attendance. This would put a priority on a reserve fund or rainy day fund. Mr. Fralin said it is a communication problem because potential students do not understand that attending a community college is an efficient and effective way to gain access to a four-year college. Mr. Fralin encouraged everyone to look at our future assessment of The Virginia Plan based on what we learn from the upcoming graduate survey.

Items that were added to the Completion page included competency based education, teacher shortage/retention and a high impact communication plan.

Ms. Connelly asked members to place a dot next to the items on the various lists that they favored prioritizing and then she reviewed the top ideas that received the most interest. Mr. Blake suggested that the Council look at things through an equity lens.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER AND PRIORITIZATION OF IDEAS

Mr. Slater said the work done at this meeting has allowed Council to take a deep look at the issues. He thanked Ms. Kang, Dr. Edwards and the SCHEV staff for helping to organize the discussion. He noted that while we work to achieve the goal of being the best educated state by 2030, all competing states will be trying to do the same. Mr. Slater thanked members for being well prepared and for the open discussions.

Mr. Fralin suggested that a follow-up meeting would be helpful and requested that staff send a poll to explore dates in late August.

Ms. Connelly thanked the invited guests for their contributions and members thanked Ms. Connelly and Mr. Slater co-leading the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Katharine M. Webb
Council Secretary

Lee Ann Rung
Director, Executive and Board Affairs