STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA

THE VIRGINIA PLAN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION: ANNUAL REPORT 2019

The Virginia Plan for Higher Education provides a framework for making the Commonwealth the best-education state in the nation by 2030 through goals, initiatives and progress measures. The summary below highlights 2019's strengths and areas for improvement, as well as 2020 recommendations. More details are available in the full report.

STRENGTHS	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
Educational Attainment	
✓ The rate of Virginians with a postsecondary degree or credential rose to 54%.	✘ Gaps in educational attainment, averaging 20 to 30 percentage points, remain by region and by race/ethnicity.
✓ Virginia ranks 6th in the nation in educational attainment.	
Access and Affordability	
✓ Tuition held flat for 2019-20 and financial aid increased over the biennium, primarily resulting from additional state funding.	✘ Tuition as a percentage of family income increased slightly.
Student Success	
✓ Students earned 122,168 awards (degrees, certificates and credentials) last year, the highest number ever in a single year.	✘ Success gaps for underrepresented students remain.
Innovation and Investment	
✓ Virginia's degrees cost less to produce than other states.	✘ In-state students still contribute 52% of the educational related costs of college, well above the state's goal of 33%.
Economic and Cultural Prosperity	
✓ Earnings increased slightly for those with a degree or credential.	✘ Virginia's ranking in annual research expenditures compared to other states remained flat.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2020

Policymakers and policy influencers:

✓ Support funding and initiatives for higher education that make college more affordable and predictable, increase talent in high-demand areas and support institutional quality and excellence.

✓ Adjust the financial aid funding model to support additional aid to low- and middle-income students.

✓ Adopt strategies that further align funding with the needs of the Commonwealth.

✓ Increase information and resources available for students in secondary education to help raise awareness of postsecondary opportunities.

✓ Invest in the technology talent pipeline and other high demand areas in cooperation with institutions and businesses.

✓ Develop affordable pathway programs proven to increase educational attainment.

✓ Encourage agencies and regions to set shared goals for educational attainment.

Institutions:

✓ Review efforts to ensure that all students, including those who are underrepresented, have an opportunity to enroll and succeed.

✓ Continue to develop programs and initiatives that support-workforce alignment, including the technology talent pipeline, other high demand areas and experiential learning.

✓ Continue to identify promising practices and opportunities for efficiencies while maintaining excellence in education.

Business and community organizations:

✓ Increase internships and work-based learning opportunities.

✓ Invest in research and commercialization.

✓ Support educational opportunities for employees and communities.