



State Council of  
Higher Education for Virginia

# **Framing Affordability: From Ideas to Action**

March 10, 2008



# Meeting Goals and Purposes

1. To review the key findings of the three panelists who addressed the Council on January 9: Hans L'Orange, Cheryl Blanco, and Barry Simmons
2. To relate these key findings to those aspects of the higher education strategic plan that address access and affordability
3. To consider proposed staff recommendations stemming from the panelists' presentations and past work by Council and SCHEV staff
4. To consider other recommendations outside the scope of those recommended by staff
5. To confirm the value of reviewing the final state budget for ideas that can add to the discussion on affordability



# The Affordability Panelists and their Key Findings



# Affordability Panelists

- **Hans L'Orange (SHEEO)**
- **Cheryl Blanco (TERI)**
- **Barry Simmons (Virginia Tech)**



# Panelists' Key Findings

## Hans L'Orange

- Cost, price, and affordability impact access and success.
- Virginia faces educational and demographic challenges.



# Panelists' Key Findings

## L'Orange (cont'd)

- States' cost-control efforts share common attributes.
- Virginia should develop its own ideas and initiatives rather than adopting others' models.



# Panelists' Key Findings

## Cheryl Blanco

- “Eye of the beholder” perspective.
- Access and choice are impacted by price/cost, culture/perception, and grant aid.



# Panelists' Key Findings

## Blanco (cont'd)

- States' affordability strategies are often targeted (e.g., at low-income families; at policy alignment).
- States' affordability efforts impact economic development, human-capital development, & various populations' college-going rates.





# Panelists' Key Findings

## Barry Simmons

- Various “roles” in affordability
- The factors that determine affordability are many, varied, and complex.



# Panelists' Key Findings

## Simmons (cont'd)

- Exemplary inst'l access-enhancing efforts = multiple sources of aid funds
- Aid recipients' lower graduation rates
- Business, industry, and community organizations as potential partners



# **Affordability and the Virginia Strategic Plan for Higher Education: Advancing Virginia**



# 2007 Statewide Strategic Plan

## Goal 1

### Enhance access through P-16 curricular alignment

- Strategy 1: Increase student preparation for higher education
- Strategy 2: Promote collaboration between higher education and the P-12 system



# 2007 Statewide Strategic Plan

## Goal 2

### Enhance access through improved coordination of information

Strategy 1: Provide more and better college demystifying info to children earlier

Strategy 2: Mobilize stakeholders to support and inform potential students/families



# 2007 Statewide Strategic Plan

## Goal 3

### **Enhance affordability through financial aid advocacy**

- Strategy 1: Seek policies that moderate tuition increases and expand financial aid
- Strategy 2: Fully fund the 'partnership model' for need-based aid programs
- Strategy 3: Support increases in the Tuition Assistance Program (TAG)



# 2007 Statewide Strategic Plan

## Goal 4

### **Enhance affordability through education and investment incentives**

Strategy 1: Promote educational investment by partnering with families

a: Work toward income-based incentive program with Va College Savings Plan

b: Explore matching-fund program for student progress/completion



# **Staff Recommendations**





# Key Recommendations

- **Position SCHEV as a champion**
- **Develop early-awareness campaign**
- **Deepen stakeholders' understanding**
- **Review financial-aid policies**
- **Investigate pre-college incentives**
- **Review alignment of financing and financial-aid policies**



# Recommendation 1

**Position SCHEV as “champion” for access and affordability by building on past involvement, research, and advocacy.**

- Nine annual “Tuition and Fees” reports (1999-2007)
- Two Affordability studies (2002-2006)
- Two federal GEAR UP grants (2001-2006)
- Fall 2007 budget recommendations
- Affordability policy discussion (January 2008)



# Recommendation 2

**Develop a strategic early-awareness marketing campaign for post-high school academic and financial preparation.**

- Gear Up
- College Access Challenge Grant
- State-level access activities
- Institutional intervention programs



# Recommendation 3

**Deepen stakeholders' understanding of the components/complexities of affordability (e.g., measures of student cost and effects of college cost on different populations of students)**

- Institutional assessment of tuition and fee levels
- “Clearly understandable measure of affordability”
- Institutional data displays



# Recommendation 4

**Review financial-aid policies to ensure that aid to needy students is maximized and delivered efficiently and effectively.**

- Financial aid information dissemination and aid disbursement
- Decentralized and centralized financial aid processes
- Merit aid
- Partnership model
- The financial aid process



# Recommendation 5

## Investigate pre-college incentives

- The promise of financial aid
- Employer tuition-reimbursement programs
- Wisconsin Covenant Program
- Oklahoma Promise Program



# Recommendation 6

## Review the alignment of financing and financial aid policies

Panelists found growing national evidence in three areas:

1. Dedicate a % of tuition increases to need-based aid
2. Link financial aid to rigorous course-taking
3. Reward students with tuition rebates for early completion/graduation



# Overall Themes of the Recommendations

- Sustain and expand leadership
- Strengthen intervention practices
- Inform stakeholders better
- Study and learn from current practice
- Introduce appropriate change





# Meeting Goals and Purposes

- To review the key findings of the three panelists who addressed the Council on January 9: Hans L'Orange, Cheryl Blanco, and Barry Simmons
- To relate these key findings to those aspects of the higher education strategic plan that address access and affordability
- **To consider proposed staff recommendations stemming from the panelists' presentations and past work by Council and SCHEV staff**
- **To consider other recommendations outside the scope of those recommended by staff**
- **To confirm the value of reviewing the final state budget for ideas that can add to the discussion on affordability**