



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Laura W. Fornash
Secretary of Education

To: State Council of Higher Education for Virginia Council Members

CC: Peter Blake, Executive Director

From: Secretary of Education Laura Fornash

Subject: Executive Directive #6

Date: May 17, 2013

Late yesterday, Governor McDonnell issued Executive Directive #6 Sustaining and Enhancing Higher Education Reform, Innovation, and Investment-State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. I've attached a copy of the directive to this memo. As we've been discussing the past few months, the in-depth review of functions described in the directive will complement HB2311 passed this session which strengthens SCHEV's primary responsibilities and changes the composition of the Council.

This directive is critically important to achieving the goals articulated in the legislation unanimously passed by the legislature in 2011: "Preparing for the Top Jobs of the 21st Century: The Virginia Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011." This legislation is the Commonwealth's roadmap for the future of higher education. The Governor and I have been pleased with the work you and the institutions have been doing the past 18 months to respond to the goals in the Top Jobs legislation. We've seen increased enrollments, generally low to moderate tuition increases, new degree programs in high demand STEM-H disciplines, significant efficiency reforms, greater use of technology, exciting programs targeted to improve graduation rates, and new General Fund appropriations to help support these initiatives. New partnerships have been established between institutions and with the private sector. The Governor in partnership with you and our higher education institutions has helped rebuild enthusiasm for higher education amongst the General Assembly as a result of these efforts.

The Governor and I believe the Council along with the staff and numerous stakeholders must closely review the Council's functions and responsibilities to ensure the Commonwealth meets the goals articulated in the legislation. This will require the Council's work to reflect greater policy formulation, research and analysis to help address the challenges facing our institutions and guarantee access and affordability for Virginians to attend and graduate from our institutions. This should be a comprehensive review looking closely at what duties are essential and which duties can be eliminated or reassigned or whether new responsibilities are needed. Let's also find ways to reduce bureaucracy and red-tape as a part of this work.

Thank you for your service on the Council. The Governor and I greatly appreciate your willingness to conduct this thorough review and analysis. We look forward to a bold plan of action for the future.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

