



State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

A Preview of the 2012 General Assembly Session January 10, 2012

Out-of-State Enrollment Caps

Bills to limit the percentage of out-of-state students at Virginia's public colleges and universities have been introduced in the last five legislative sessions. The 2011 proposal required a 25% cap. According to the Fiscal Impact Statement, the loss in revenue to the four affected schools would total more than \$129 million. The Virginia Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011 provided for increased enrollment of in-state students and signaled the Governor's and the General Assembly's preferred approach of incentivizing increased enrollment through per-student funding. *SCHEV supports this approach.*

Campus Crime Reporting

A bill introduced at the 2011 General Assembly session required the chief law-enforcement officer of a public or private institution of higher education to report any death or alleged rape on campus to the law-enforcement agency of the locality in which the institution is located. The local law-enforcement agency would assume responsibility for leading the investigation. This bill was sent to the Crime Commission for further study. SCHEV staff was asked to participate in a special panel of institutional representatives created to advise the Commission on this issue. The Commission's report was completed in November of 2011 and recommend **against** the bill as written. The Commission's report included two major recommendations: mutual aid agreements between institutions and local police, and membership of campus police representatives on local Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTS). *SCHEV supports these recommendations which are also supported by the institutions and the localities.*

One bill addressing issues related to reporting of incidents of child abuse growing out of recent allegations at Penn State University has been introduced. There may be additional legislation in this area. The introduced legislation adds athletic coaches and directors at public institutions of higher education to the list of persons required to report child abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services.

Guns on Campus

Historically, firearms policies at public colleges and universities have been considered the purview of the individual institutions' boards of visitors. This purview has been challenged with legislation as recently as last year which said that no state entity shall adopt or enforce any rule or regulation governing firearms other than those expressly authorized by statute. *SCHEV supports the individual institutions' purview to establish firearms regulations.*

Military Bills

There has been a great deal of legislation introduced in the past five years regarding higher education and the treatment of current service members, veterans, and family members. So far this year a resolution has been introduced that would change the Virginia Constitution and allow students attending nonprofit religious colleges to receive state benefits, such as TAG, if they are studying to be chaplains in the United States Armed Forces. Another bill requires the governing boards of each public institution of higher education to implement policies that award academic credit to students for educational experience gained from military service. Additional legislation regarding members of the military and higher education is expected. *While SCHEV supports efforts to make campuses military friendly, SCHEV considers each bill on a case-by-case basis to ensure policy makers are aware of the fiscal impact and any unintended consequences. The agency is fortunate to have the expertise of Financial Aid Assistant Director Lee Andes who devotes much of his time during session to researching these bills and providing testimony in committee.*

Prohibiting the Admission of Undocumented Immigrants at Public Institutions

While federal law generally prohibits aliens who are unlawfully present from obtaining in-state tuition, there is no law against enrollment. With this decision federal lawmakers appear to have considered the issue and decided not to restrict admission policies at institutions of higher education. In Virginia, admissions decisions have long been held as a prerogative of the individual institutions and are cited in Code. Legislation to circumvent this institutional prerogative and prohibit the enrollment of undocumented immigrants at Virginia's public colleges and universities was introduced and failed in 2011. *SCHEV generally supports efforts to increase access for all students. Furthermore, SCHEV supports institutional prerogative as it relates to admission policies regarding undocumented immigrants.*

Mandatory Acceptance of Credits

A recent trend toward mandating acceptance of specific high school credits began in the 2010 session when a bill was passed that requires institutions to have policies for the acceptance of International Baccalaureate credits that are similar to existing policies for Advanced Placement credits. Last year Cambridge Advanced credits were added to this list even though only three high schools in Virginia offer this program. *SCHEV is concerned that such bills erode the institutions' ability to decide which pre-college programs best prepare students for the rigors of their particular curriculum.*

Two-Year College Transfer Grant (CCTG)

Passed by the 2007 General Assembly, the Two-Year College Transfer Grant Program provides higher education grants of up to \$2,000 to Virginians who successfully complete an associate degree program at a public two-year college. Eligibility is somewhat limited and includes the following requirements: Virginia residency; undergraduate status, full-time enrollment; enrollment in the fall immediately following completion of a two-year degree; demonstrated financial need; and a minimum grade point average of 3.0. In order to reach more students Council has recommended increasing the expected family contribution from \$8,000 to \$12,000. This change would serve an additional 800 students in the first year and allow families with incomes of more than \$60,000 to participate. This legislative would require a budget amendment of approximately \$1.3 million in FY2013 and \$1.6 million in FY2014. *Legislation to make this change was drafted by the VCCS with SCHEV's support and a bill has been introduced.*

Potential Assignments for SCHEV

Legislation has been introduced that would require SCHEV to develop a uniform lower division curriculum consisting of no more than 60 credit hours which will be uniform across all public institutions of higher education, both 2-year and 4-year schools. The bill also requires Council to set a uniform number of credit hours to be required for each bachelor's degree offered in a public institution of higher education.

A Senate resolution requires SCHEV to study the feasibility for community colleges to offer selected baccalaureate degrees in high-demand fields, particularly in geographic areas underserved by other public institutions of higher education. While SCHEV stands ready to act on the will of the General Assembly the agency is concerned about having the necessary resources to execute the study adequately without additional funding.

SCHEV Legislation

Virginia Community Colleges currently offer one-credit personal development courses that are specifically designed to help freshman successfully transition from high school to the rigors of college-level coursework. These courses also include important information to assist students in planning for eventual transfer to four-year institutions. The four-year institutions do not give transfer credit for the personal development courses because they are not offered by their institutions and because they are not academic subject coursework. In 2011 SCHEV was charged in Code with developing a uniform certificate of general studies program in conjunction with the Virginia Community College System. In order for the personal development courses to be included in the certificate, the following change must be made to SCHEV Code.

Develop a uniform certificate of general studies program, in consultation with the Virginia Community College System and Virginia public institutions of higher education, to be offered at each community college in Virginia. Such program shall ensure that a community college student who completes the one-year certificate program shall be able to transfer all credits earned in academic subject coursework to a four-year public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth upon acceptance to the institution.