

State Council of Higher Education for
Virginia
Results from Public Data Collection - Draft

Strategic Plan Development Project

August 8, 2014

Introduction

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) has embarked on the development of a statewide strategic plan for higher education in Virginia. SCHEV has contracted with JBL Associates (JBLA), a research firm, to assist in the process. This document is one of a number of reports prepared by JBL Associates in fulfillment of its contract to assist SCHEV.

The tables in this memo were created from the responses of 499 participants from the Commonwealth who took the time to complete a survey on their impressions of higher education in Virginia. This analysis did not include out-of-state respondents, but if they are counted, over 500 responses were received in total. This effort is part of the larger state higher education strategic planning process that is being undertaken in the summer of 2014.

Individuals heard about the process through announcements in newspapers and other outlets. SCHEV hosted the website and invited respondents from across the state. It is not a random sample that can be claimed as a valid portrait of Virginia citizens, but it does provide guidance on attitudes and values that shape the larger discussion of higher education in the state. A copy of the data collection instrument is included as an appendix to this memo. A more detailed analysis is also planned.

The following table shows the distribution of respondents by their employment status. Thirty-seven percent of the respondents were employed in Virginia higher education in some capacity. Retired respondents were grouped according to the last occupation they held. The few responses from participants living outside of Virginia were not included.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Employment in Virginia		
	Number	Percentage
Not Working	28	5.6%
College Student	30	6.0%
Employed in VA Higher Education	185	37.1%
Employed in For-Profit Sector	89	17.8%
Employed in Non-Profit Sector	54	10.8%
Employed by Government	49	9.8%
Self-Employed	29	5.8%
Other	35	7.0%
Grand Total	499	100.0%

Higher education and the economy

The first set of tables provides results related to the role that higher education plays in supporting a positive economic future in Virginia and the effectiveness of colleges in preparing students for future employment.

Respondents were almost equally divided on their estimates of Virginia’s economic prospects for the next five to ten years. Prosperity for the majority may be a mirage according to nearly one third of respondents. This item has nothing to do directly with higher education in the state, but provides an overview of expectations about the future held by respondents.

Table 2. Beliefs on Economic Prospects for Virginia in the Next 5 to 10 Years		
	Number	Percentage
I believe most Virginians will prosper while some will struggle.	170	34.1%
I believe that most Virginians will struggle, while some will prosper.	157	31.5%
I believe the same number of Virginians will prosper as will struggle.	156	31.3%
Missing	16	3.2%
Grand Total	499	100.0%

Contribution to the economy—Moving from the general to the more specific set of items on the contribution of higher education to the future economic future of Virginia suggests strong belief in the value of higher education. There is broad agreement that higher education is one of the most important contributors to the future economic well-being of Virginia. This belief in the link between higher education and economic prosperity is a widely held value among respondents.

Table 3. To what degree does higher education in the Commonwealth contribute to improving Virginia’s economic future?		
	Number	Percentage
Higher education is about as important as other factors.	93	18.6%
Higher education is not as important as other factors.	11	2.2%
Higher education is one of the most important contributors, along with other factors.	340	68.1%
Missing	55	11.0%
Grand Total	499	100.0%

One comment stressed the importance of colleges helping local communities and contributing to the solution of real problems. They went on to suggest that colleges that do this should be rewarded.

Preparing students for employment—The majority of respondents believe that college graduates have the necessary skills to step into a meaningful job, but need additional training from their employers. Over 30 percent of the respondents were even more optimistic about the job-readiness of graduates and thought they could start a job successfully with no further training. This result is not consistent with the press stories suggesting that recent graduates are grossly deficient in basic skills necessary for employment.

	Number	Percentage
Do not have the skills they need to step into a meaningful job right out of college.	25	5.0%
Have some of the skills they need to step into a meaningful job, but cannot perform the job satisfactorily without additional on-the-job training.	263	52.7%
Have the skills they need to step into a meaningful job right out of college.	152	30.5%
Missing	59	11.8%
Grand Total	499	100.0%

Respondents stressed the need not for narrow occupational skills, but for graduates to have leadership, critical thinking and decision-making skills. Colleges and universities should prepare students for learning throughout their life. At the core, a liberal education should develop independent and intellectual thinkers. Colleges and universities should consciously include opportunities for students to learn skills that will be necessary upon graduation. This can be done, commentators suggest, by excluding “fluff” courses that do not teach critical skills and align curriculum with business needs.

One comment pointed out that employers are inflating job requirements so that jobs that did not require a college degree in the past do now. This inflation may be an artificial stimulus that increases the demand for college graduates unnecessarily.

Taxes and higher education support—Given the perceived value of higher education to the economic future of the state, there was less agreement on the willingness to raise taxes to help more students attend college. Respondents were essentially asked if taxes should be raised to help more students attend college or if colleges should find other ways to help students attend college. Just under 40 percent of respondents said they would pay higher taxes if helped more students attend college, but 43 percent indicated that taxes are high enough and other ways should be found to help students. Very few respondents thought the best approach would be to reduce taxes. Respondents understand the value of education to the future, but are not sure they want to pay more to achieve that future.

	Number	%
I would pay higher taxes if I knew that the money would help more students attend colleges and universities in the state.	193	38.7%
Taxes are high enough and colleges should find other ways to help students afford college.	213	42.7%
Taxes should be reduced even if that meant students and their families have to take more responsibility for paying for college.	30	6.0%
Missing	63	12.6%
Grand Total	499	100.0%

Comments on how colleges and universities could save money included reducing administrative costs, spending less on athletics and putting emphasis on teaching instead of research. One comment suggested that making colleges attractive resorts for students reduced support for academics, which should be corrected.

Adequacy of support—Adding to the inconsistency of the views, there was high agreement that support for higher education in Virginia is inadequate. Less than 25 percent were satisfied with the current level of support. Just a handful of respondents thought support was excessive.

	Number	Percentage
About right	122	24.4%
Excessive	13	2.6%
Inadequate	301	60.3%
Missing	63	12.6%
Grand Total	499	100.0%

Some comments suggested spending increases to assure colleges and universities can hire and retain quality staff and faculty with strong teaching skills. One person suggested salary increases for adjunct faculty.

Summary: These responses provide an interesting inconsistency. Our respondents believe higher education is critical to the future success of Virginia. They see affordability as an important value and believe that support for colleges and universities is inadequate, but they are not sure they want to raise taxes to help more students attend. If the survey had asked a question tying increased taxes to protecting the quality of education, it is possible that respondents would have given a different answer, but the suggestion is strong that colleges should undertake efforts to be more efficient if they want to enroll more students.

Quality of higher education

Respondents were asked in several different ways about their perception of the quality of higher education in the state. In each item, quality of higher education in Virginia is highly prized and there is broad agreement that it should be protected.

Quality of higher education—Respondents have little doubt that higher education in the state is either excellent or good. This reputation is an important strength of higher education in Virginia.

Table 7. Impression of Virginia's Quality of Higher Education		
	Number	Percentage
Excellent	195	39.1%
Fair	33	6.6%
Good	208	41.7%
Poor	8	1.6%
Missing	55	11.0%
Grand Total	499	100.0%

Critical attributes—When asked to identify three attributes that should be protected in Virginia higher education, quality of educational programs and making college affordable for all who are prepared to attend rose to the top. There is a tension in these two goals. Professionals in higher education argue that achieving quality takes resources and keeping college affordable at the same time means that the state needs to provide more resources, but the earlier results on raising taxes suggests that not everyone is convinced that the state is the best place to get the necessary resources to achieve these two goals.

Table 8. Responses on Most Critical Attributes That Should Be Protected in Virginia Higher Education*		
	Number	Percentage
Quality of educational programs	354	27.2%
Affordability for all who are prepared to attend	333	25.6%
Diversity of educational offerings	106	8.1%
Institutional freedom from government control	134	10.3%
Maintaining a positive reputation for higher education national and internationally	138	10.6%
Making sure the curriculum provides a balance between occupationally oriented courses and those that enhance the quality of life and citizenship	213	16.3%
Other	25	1.9%
Grand Total	1,303	100.0%
*Respondents were asked to pick three most critical attributes		

Respondents in their comments inferred that tuition in Virginia is unaffordable for most families and, therefore, scholarships and student aid should be provided. Commenters noted that entering students and their families should be better educated on the price of attendance and the realities of student loans as a strategy for paying for college.

Biggest challenges—Maintaining affordability was identified as the biggest challenge that higher education will face in the next decade. A distant second challenge was the lack of academic preparation of incoming students. The third choice, meeting the changing need of employers, got half as much support as keeping college affordable.

	Number	Percentage
Keeping up with new technology	106	8.4%
Improving efficiency and productivity	118	9.3%
Lack of academic preparation of incoming students	218	17.3%
Keeping college affordable	340	26.9%
Meeting the changing needs of employers	169	13.4%
Providing a meaningful education to an increasingly diverse student body	129	10.2%
Hiring and retaining qualified faculty	121	9.6%
Other	62	4.9%
Grand Total	1,150	100.0%
*Respondents were asked to pick three biggest challenges		

One comment suggested using lottery funds to support higher education as it was originally designed. It was suggested that Virginia should benchmark its tuition against tuition charged in other states as a way to monitor increases.

New approaches—Table 10 lists the events or trends that will require new approaches to higher education. Respondents were asked to pick three events or trends that have the greatest possibility of requiring new approaches. Most frequently mentioned was the demand for new technical skills in new emerging industries followed by delivering education services online.

	Number	Percentage
Increasingly diverse state population	155	13.5%
Demand for technical skills in new and emerging industries	266	23.1%
New options for delivering education services online	227	19.7%
Reductions in federal spending on military and civilian projects in the state	91	7.9%
Eroding public support for colleges and universities in the state	205	17.8%
Competition from colleges and universities outside the state	105	9.1%
Declining number of high school graduates in the state	57	5.0%
Other	44	3.8%
Grand Total	1,150	100.0%
*Respondents were asked to pick three events or trends		

Comments supported the development of online courses, especially for students living in rural parts of the state. One person did not want to lose the face-to-face interactions that on-the-ground classrooms foster because they build social skills. One comment suggested the need to start teaching employable skills in the lower grades and make it possible for students who may not want college, but do not have

any way to make a reasonable living. Comments stressed the need for guidance and counseling in high school to help students explore career choices.

Priorities for higher education—In the next table, respondents were asked to rank items from 1 to 6 with 1 being the highest priority and 6 the lowest. The item with the highest priority ranking was reducing the cost of attending a college or university in the state. The next two priorities: making the opportunity to attend college more available to Virginia citizens and making sure graduates have skills that help them succeed in their occupations, were not significantly different from each other. By far, the lowest priority item was measuring the degree to which colleges and universities contribute to the welfare of Virginia.

Table 11. Responses on Top Priorities for Higher Education in Virginia Over the Next 5 to 10 Years

	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 5	Priority 6	Total	
Making the opportunity to attend college available for more Virginia citizens	20.5%	19.4%	20.5%	23.9%	9.8%	5.9%	439	100.0%
Increasing the percentage of students who successfully complete their program	11.8%	18.0%	22.0%	22.3%	20.7%	5.2%	440	100.0%
Reducing the cost of attending a college or university in the state	28.4%	19.1%	14.8%	15.7%	16.8%	5.2%	440	100.0%
Engaging with employers and other outside groups to make sure graduates have the skills necessary to succeed in their occupations	19.5%	19.8%	18.4%	16.6%	19.8%	5.9%	440	100.0%
Working with high schools to make sure entering students are prepared to succeed in college	17.5%	20.2%	18.9%	13.2%	23.0%	7.3%	440	100.0%
Measuring the degree to which colleges and universities in the state contribute to the welfare of Virginia	2.3%	3.6%	5.5%	8.4%	10.0%	70.2%	440	100.0%

One respondent warned against performance-based funding for higher education and excessive government regulation. At the same time, some respondents thought more federal and state funding was warranted.

Summary

The preliminary assessment of the results reported above indicates the difficulty of finding the right balance for higher education in Virginia. On one hand, respondents are proud of higher education in the Commonwealth and believe it is of high quality. That quality needs to be protected as a cornerstone value to the state.

At the same time, there is deep concern about affordability. It is evident that keeping college affordable is an important consideration, but this belief is balanced by the ambivalence among participants about raising taxes to allow more students to afford college.

Based on the indications contained in these responses, Virginia's colleges and universities need to show that they are making efforts to improve operations and save money and not just asking for increased support from the government. Finding ways to define higher education excellence and quality in some other way than prestige or rankings would help substantiate the need for funding.

A strong message is the belief that higher education should contribute to preparing students broadly for employment. Respondents believe that colleges and universities are doing this now and identify it as an important mission. This goal suggests that Virginians value more than just narrow occupational skills, but also attach great importance broader skills that will prepare students for a successful lifetime.

Appendix A. Copy of data collection instrument

#	Question
1.	In what Virginia county or city do you reside? {Drop down list of VA counties/cities plus Do Not Reside in VA}
2.	What is your current employment status? <input type="checkbox"/> Not working {Go to 3} <input type="checkbox"/> College student {Go to 2b} <input type="checkbox"/> Employed in Virginia higher education {Go to 2c} <input type="checkbox"/> Employed in for-profit sector {Go to 3} <input type="checkbox"/> Employed in non-profit sector {Go to 2d} <input type="checkbox"/> Employed by government (any level) {Go to 3} <input type="checkbox"/> Self employed {Go to 3} <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ {Go to 3}
2b.	If you answered “b. College Student” to Question 2, what type of institution do you attend? <input type="checkbox"/> 2-year public <input type="checkbox"/> 4-year public, undergraduate <input type="checkbox"/> 4-year public, graduate <input type="checkbox"/> 4-year private, undergraduate <input type="checkbox"/> 4-year private, graduate <input type="checkbox"/> Private, for-profit
2c.	If you answered “c. Employed in Virginia higher education” to Question 2, please answer the following: In what type of institution are you employed? <input type="checkbox"/> Public, 2 year <input type="checkbox"/> Public, 4 year <input type="checkbox"/> Private, not-for-profit <input type="checkbox"/> Private, for-profit What is your role within the institution? <input type="checkbox"/> Executive <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty or research <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative <input type="checkbox"/> Board member <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

#	Question
2d.	<p>If you answered “3. Employed in non-profit sector” to Question 2, please answer the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> My non-profit employer is focused primarily on higher education issues. <input type="checkbox"/> My non-profit employer is not focused primarily on higher education issues.
3.	<p>Have you, or has someone in your immediate family (parent, sibling, spouse, child), attended a college or university in Virginia?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes {go to 3b} <input type="checkbox"/> No {go to 4}
3b.	<p>If you answered “Yes” to Question 3, what type of institution did you/he/she attend? <i>Please check the type of institution that you attended most recently or, if you have not attended, the type most recently attended by an immediate family member.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Public 4-year college or university <input type="checkbox"/> Public 2-year community college <input type="checkbox"/> Private, not-for-profit, any level <input type="checkbox"/> Private, for-profit any level <p>Did you/he/she attend courses primarily:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> On campus <input type="checkbox"/> Online <input type="checkbox"/> By correspondence, other than online
4.	<p>How do you feel about the economic prospects for Virginia citizens in the next 5 to 10 years?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> I believe that most Virginians will prosper while some will struggle. <input type="checkbox"/> I believe that about the same number of Virginians will prosper as will struggle. <input type="checkbox"/> I believe that most Virginians will struggle, while some will prosper.
<p>When answering the following questions, please think about higher education in Virginia generally, including public 4-year, public 2-year, non-profit and for-profit colleges, universities, and higher education centers.</p>	
5.	<p>To what degree does higher education in the Commonwealth contribute to improving Virginia’s economic future?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Higher education is one of the most important contributors, along with other factors. <input type="checkbox"/> Higher education is about as important as other factors. <input type="checkbox"/> Higher education is not as important as other factors.

#	Question
6.	What is your impression of the current quality of higher education in Virginia? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
6a.	Please let us know why this is your impression:_____
7.	With which of the following statements about graduates from Virginia colleges and universities do you most strongly agree? <p>I believe most graduates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Have the skills they need to step into a meaningful job right out of college. <input type="checkbox"/> Have some of the skills they need to step into a meaningful job, but cannot perform the job satisfactorily without additional on-the-job training. <input type="checkbox"/> Do not have the skills they need to step into a meaningful job right out of college.
8.	With which of the following statements about higher educational opportunities in Virginia do you most strongly agree? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Anyone who wants to go to college has the opportunity in Virginia. <input type="checkbox"/> The price of attending college in Virginia keeps some deserving students from enrolling in college. <input type="checkbox"/> Other factors, such as inadequate academic preparation, keep some deserving students from enrolling in college.
8a.	Please explain why you agree most strongly with this statement:_____
9.	The current level of state financial support for higher education in Virginia is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Excessive <input type="checkbox"/> About right <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate
10.	With which of the following statements about state financial support for higher education do you most strongly agree? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> I would pay higher taxes if I knew that the money would help more students attend colleges and universities in the state. <input type="checkbox"/> Taxes are high enough and colleges should find other ways to help students afford college. <input type="checkbox"/> Taxes should be reduced even if that meant students and their families have to take more responsibility for paying for college.

#	Question
11.	<p>What do you think are the biggest challenges facing higher education in Virginia in the next ten years?</p> <p><i>Please check the three biggest challenges.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Keeping up with new technology <input type="checkbox"/> Improving efficiency and productivity <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of academic preparation of incoming students <input type="checkbox"/> Keeping college affordable <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting the changing needs of employers <input type="checkbox"/> Providing a meaningful education to an increasingly diverse student body <input type="checkbox"/> Hiring and retaining qualified faculty <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
12.	<p>What events or trends do you believe have the greatest possibility of requiring new approaches to higher education in Virginia?</p> <p><i>Please check the three most critical.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Increasingly diverse state population <input type="checkbox"/> Demand for technical skills in new and emerging industries <input type="checkbox"/> New options for delivering education services online <input type="checkbox"/> Reductions in federal spending on military and civilian projects in the state <input type="checkbox"/> Eroding public support for colleges and universities in the state <input type="checkbox"/> Competition from colleges and universities outside the state <input type="checkbox"/> Declining number of high school graduates in the state <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
13.	<p>What do you think are the three most critical attributes that should be protected in Virginia higher education?</p> <p><i>Please check the three most critical.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of educational programs <input type="checkbox"/> Affordability for all who are prepared to attend <input type="checkbox"/> Diversity of educational offerings <input type="checkbox"/> Institutional freedom from governmental control <input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining a positive reputation for higher education nationally and internationally <input type="checkbox"/> Making sure the curriculum provides a balance between occupationally oriented courses and those that enhance the quality of life and citizenship <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

#	Question
14.	<p>What do you think the top three priorities for higher education in Virginia should be over the next 5 to 10 years?</p> <p><i>Please put 1 by the highest priority, 2 by the second highest priority, and 3 by the third highest priority.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Making the opportunity to attend college available for more Virginia citizens <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing the percentage of students who successfully complete their program <input type="checkbox"/> Reducing the cost of attending a college or university in the state <input type="checkbox"/> Engaging with employers and other outside groups to make sure graduates have the skills necessary to succeed in their occupations <input type="checkbox"/> Working with high schools to make sure entering students are prepared to succeed in college <input type="checkbox"/> Measuring the degree to which colleges and universities in the state contribute to the welfare of Virginia
15.	<p>Please provide any additional comments or feedback on this survey or the statewide strategic plan for higher education:</p>

Gathering Input for Statewide Strategic Plan Notes from Regional Interviews and Focus Groups

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Summary of Events to Gather Input throughout the Commonwealth

May 20-29 – CENTRAL (Charlottesville, Richmond) and EASTERN/ HAMPTON ROADS (Norfolk, Virginia Beach)

- High School Students (2 groups)
- High School Administrators (2 groups)
- College Students
- Business Leaders
- HE Leaders
- Individual Interviews (11 individuals)

June 11-13 – WEST CENTRAL/SOUTH-WEST/SOUTH (Roanoke, Wytheville, Danville)

- Business Leaders (2)
- College Student Affairs Officers
- HE Leaders (2)
- Individual Interviews (4)

June 30-July 1 – VALLEY (Lexington)

- HE Presidents
- Individual Interviews (6)

July 10-11 – NORTHERN (Fairfax, Annandale)

- HE Leaders
- College Leaders
- Business Leaders
- Community Service Leaders
- Individual Interviews (2)

July and August – TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

- Individual Interviews (5 to date)

Note: The regional designations are based on the eight regions defined by Virginia Performs, <http://vaperforms.virginia.gov/Regions/regionsMap.php>.

To date (08/07/2014), **129 individuals** participated in either an in-person interview, focus group, or telephone interview

Another **50 individuals** participated in the private data collection instrument online

Summary of Value from the Regional Visits and Focus Groups

The regional visits and focus groups are valuable to the strategic planning process in the following ways:

- They provided a qualitative understanding of the differences between the regions of the Commonwealth to complement the quantitative comparison that was provided by the JBLA data team.
- The visits enabled us to assemble and engage a wide range of stakeholders in individual conversations, group discussions, and formal focus groups:
 - High school students
 - High school leaders and administrators
 - College students
 - College leaders and administrators
 - Business leaders
 - Higher education (HE) experts (not currently working for HE)
 - Policy makers and legislative staff
- These conversations enabled us to probe issues in depth and discover “big ideas” for higher education and the strategic plan.

In addition, we utilized the Regional Meetings, Focus Groups, and Interviews to use our Futuring Framework to “Plan from the Future Backward” by asking four questions to selected participants:

- Today, what is the condition of higher education in the Commonwealth of Virginia? What are our greatest challenges moving into the future?
- Five years from now, how will these challenges have changed and what forces will be shaping higher education in the Commonwealth?
- Five years from now, will learners, families, employers, policy makers, and citizens have different expectations of higher education in the Commonwealth of Virginia?
- How should these future forces, challenges, conditions, and expectations shape our Strategic Plan for Higher Education in the Commonwealth of Virginia?

What follows is a sampling of comments and perspectives that emerged from the interviews and focus groups; it is a sampling of what people actually told us about conditions, challenges and concerns pertaining to higher education. The first section is organized by participant group, as in High School Students, College Students, etc. (keeping in mind that some people speak from more than one perspective). The second section is organized by common and recurring themes: affordability/ cost, access, STEM, preparedness/ remediation, systems, and other.

Again, each of the points below represents something that an individual or group told us was a concern or challenge from their perspective. We have made no attempt in this document to validate or fact-check these statements because it is valuable to understand these varied perspectives as we move forward with the planning process, and later, as we communicate about our plan to a diverse audience.

Sampling of What People Said: Conditions, Challenges, and Concerns

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS	COLLEGE STUDENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Confusion with the paper work including: FAFSA (privacy issues also arose with this) and the common app ▪ Confusing incentives ▪ Unsure of how to pick and please both themselves and their parents ▪ Started the process late and without support makes it more difficult ▪ Would like the opportunity to shadow professionals in fields they are interested in, no way to know if they will like the program they choose ▪ Taking AP and dual enrollment, the opportunities and cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wonder how they can apply their learning ▪ Challenge identifying the right fit for them (living in dorms, or not, etc.) and funding (grants, etc.)
HIGH SCHOOL LEADERS AND ADMINISTRATORS	COLLEGE LEADERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Debt is the major concern ▪ For some, private aid makes private schools a cheaper option ▪ AVID¹ program ▪ Increased focus of college as job preparation ▪ HS/ college is not for everyone ▪ College presidents making too much money ▪ 1st generation college students are at a disadvantage ▪ Need for better college advisors ▪ Increased pressure on middle school and high school students ▪ Concerned about the students in the middle and the bottom ▪ Principal's/ administrators job descriptions do not allow for collaboration with higher education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Balancing decrease in funding with student need, so far there has been an unwillingness to address this ▪ Shortened programs work better with more adult students ▪ High schools are teaching to test and not preparing them for college ▪ Students will major in what they want ▪ Even those who could graduate in 3 years often won't do it because friends don't and they're having fun ▪ Want to keep surplus state money if they realize savings and productivity cuts annually to set up funds instead of being forced to spend it within the fiscal year (or returning the funds to be controlled by the state) ▪ The way SCHEV counts transfer students and graduation rates (specifically from NOVA) may not result in accurate or fair reporting

¹ AVID is a global nonprofit organization dedicated to closing the achievement gap by preparing all students for college and other postsecondary opportunities. Established more than 30 years ago with one teacher in one classroom, AVID today impacts more than 700,000 students in 45 states and 16 other countries/territories. Source: <http://www.avid.org/>.

BUSINESS LEADERS	HIGHER EDUCATION EXPERTS (NOT CURRENTLY WORKING DIRECTLY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Now hiring people with degrees into positions that did not previously require a BA/BS ▪ Graduates are prepared but not loyal ▪ Academics are too theoretical and have a hard time applying themselves to workforce issues ▪ Community colleges do a better job with the application of knowledge ▪ Newport News Shipyard Apprentice school could be a model for higher education that is not a four-year degree ▪ Remediation should take place in K-12 not in college ▪ Change the amenities and infrastructure to make it more affordable ▪ Want graduates with analytical skills ▪ Want skilled workers—whether it's degrees or credentials or other ▪ Minerva model² ▪ Think we should make academic content available to others ▪ Pooling services together ▪ Global competition in manufacturing is a big challenge and makes it hard for hiring ▪ In affluent places where parents went to college, parents encourage their kids to do 4-year not community/technical colleges ▪ Need creative/ critical thinkers in knowledge economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No incentives for higher education institutions to collaborate with each other ▪ Want to see online learning addressed in the strategic plan, and hybrid may make sense ▪ Local governments are working on community development/ brain drain/ education in rural areas ▪ In-state students who can't get into state schools because of enrollment limitations are crushed ▪ Lack of understanding in General Assembly of what HE can do in Virginia ▪ GA spends too much on K-12 and not enough on HE ▪ Philanthropy is an avenue to fund HE ▪ Nothing will change without great leadership ▪ Question the data on affordability/neediness/student debt—the conversation is inflated ▪ Transportation is an issue for HE, across the state and in/out of airports ▪ If families can afford it, they should pay it

² Minerva Schools at KGI offers a unique undergraduate program that is based on the science of learning and comprised of four-years of global cultural immersion. It was “established in 2012 to provide an extraordinary liberal arts and sciences education to the brightest, most motivated students in the world. We believe that preparing such students to become the next generation of global leaders and innovators will positively impact our collective future.” See <http://www.minervaproject.com/>.

POLICYMAKERS/ LEGISLATURE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some think that tuition rates should be low for all ▪ High tuition model will be hard to maintain ▪ There was a crisis wasted in 2008, schools need to reform but they haven't and are still doing things the same way and continuing to grow campuses ▪ Make sure the community colleges and HBCUs have financial commitments ▪ Community colleges are doing well ▪ The pool of money in the general fund is not going to drastically increase in the next few years ▪ State institutions are prohibited from advertising which may harm them (private and for profit institutions are able to advertise) ▪ K-12 is the priority for funding because it is a Constitutional mandate ▪ Looking forward, the money available for construction will decline ▪ For the academic side, it is hard to evolve and be nimble and creative to adapt to the outside working world ▪ Centralization would be helpful when it comes to resources and administrations (i.e. statewide online program) ▪ Need a repository of best practices to share ▪ AP and dual enrollment are not getting students out the door any faster ▪ K-12 and higher education not working together adequately across the Commonwealth ▪ Money should be allocated for specific reasons and not just doled out to everyone ▪ The concept of "if you build it, they will come" has not worked in S/SW Virginia ▪ Institutions do not open their books enough; they're like free-agents ▪ The impetus for the 6-year plans was to understand where the money is going and why in some cases, state is paying for 100 kids to go to college but only 50 are coming out with degrees; and also the 6-year plans were to help understand and address the differences in regions 	

Varied Perspectives on the Common Themes

AFFORDABILITY / COST	ACCESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Often cost influences where a student decides to go to school ▪ Underemployment and debt (this concern was not expressed by the current students) ▪ Some schools are better at raising money than others ▪ Possible to have incentive programs with the state for funding ▪ Administrative costs at the institutional level are too high ▪ Administration of students loans are too complex for parents/students (not that they aren't affordable, but they're confusing) ▪ Challenging to get across the full scope of expenses/cost (books, tuition, and housing, etc.) ▪ Graduated tuition plan ▪ Because of cost of college, people are not able to buy the other things in life (houses, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students in the middle have programs to help them including Access, Upward Bound, and AVID ▪ Changing demographics, how will we help more 1st generation students? ▪ Demographics refer to more than race, they refer to different backgrounds, returners, veterans, first generation ▪ Veterans should be able to get credit for service/classes ▪ These different demographics of people will also need more assistance to go to school ▪ Challenge of building a community with the changing demographics ▪ Cost of test prep is leaving some at a disadvantage ▪ There are too many out of state and students can't get into the schools especially from Northern Virginia ▪ College is not for everyone and perhaps we're putting too much pressure on individuals to go ▪ In rural areas, WIFI/ Internet/ Fiber is a major barrier to online learning, etc. ▪ Some 4-year institutions don't take all community college transfer credits, which leads to higher cost for student ▪ Financial Aid should go to Dreamers

SYSTEM-WIDE	PREPAREDNESS/ REMEDIATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Like that schools have autonomy ▪ Most did not like that SCHEV was starting to track higher education as an ROI and comparing major with salary after graduation ▪ Books need to be more open ▪ Satellite campus possibility ▪ Uneven declining enrollment ▪ Is the Sentara hospital model (internal training/certification of nurses) feasible? ▪ Do we let institutions award credentials that do not meet employer requirements? ▪ Productivity of the institution tied to state funds ▪ HBCUs need to have their place in the system defined ▪ Pooling services together ▪ Do we need all of these institutions? ▪ Mandatory summer school to avoid building more buildings ▪ Liberal arts is important but not for everyone ▪ There's no traditional route or path anymore—how can we let people know any options are okay ▪ Institutions want more data on courses, transfers, graduations—from community college through a 4-year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some see the benefit in a gap year ▪ Transfer students tend to do better ▪ Test prep is an issue ▪ Student success programs in the colleges are too high of a cost ▪ Who should be responsible for remediation? Community college? High schools? ▪ Coordinate higher education with K-12 ▪ Possible online remediation for the academics ▪ Growth in budgets are in remediation; is that where we should be growing?
STEM	OTHER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Too much focus on STEM ▪ Concern that universities increased STEM programs to increase funding for their schools ▪ This also lead to issues of duplication ▪ These disciplines do not produce people with thinking, writing, and creative skills ▪ Higher education cannot force STEM on students ▪ If you major in STEM, it's easier to get financial aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Duplication with programs is a concern ▪ Each college should pick what they are good at and focus on those programs (i.e. small liberal arts institution doesn't need a full blown research center) ▪ Liberal Arts colleges do not need to be research institutions ▪ Tobacco Commission funded certain initiatives in the South/Southwest regions but the money could have been spent better