

**STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA  
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING  
AUGUST 31, 2015  
MINUTES**

Mr. Minor called the meeting to order at 9:55 a.m. in Capital B conference room, Owens and Minor, Mechanicsville, Virginia. Council members present: Gil Bland, Martin Briley (joined the meeting at 11:45), Marge Connelly, Heywood Fralin, Gene Lockhart, G. Gilmer Minor, III, Pamela Moran, William Murray, Gary Nakamoto, Carlyle Ramsey, Minnis Ridenour, and Katharine Webb.

**Henry Light participated by phone.**

Stacia Aylward from Zelos Corporation facilitated the meeting. Susan Wood was also in attendance.

Staff members present: Peter Blake, Beverly Covington, Joe DeFilippo, Alan Edwards, Paula Fisher, Dan Hix, Wendy Kang, Kirsten Nelson, Tod Massa, and Lee Ann Rung

**REVIEW OF THE VIRGINIA PLAN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

Mr. Minor reminded members of the progress to date on the Plan and asked for input from Dr. Murray and Mr. Fralin, as they represented the Council and worked with staff between the Council meetings to prepare the documents that were brought forward for discussion.

**UPDATE FROM DESIGNATED COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Dr. Murray explained that these are different times in higher education, particularly with regard to funding. He stressed that the Council must decide if it wants to remain a first tier state and explained that traditional actions won't continue to work. Dr. Murray urged that something dramatic and out of box should be considered. The state's commitment to higher education has been lacking in recent years, which is not sustainable long-term. Dr. Murray stressed that the current reputation that Virginia's system of higher education enjoys will not continue without additional funding.

Mr. Fralin congratulated staff for taking the information presented to the small group of members and formatting it to what was sent to Council for this discussion. He said that members of the General Assembly understand that economic development is dependent on a strong system of higher education. Mr. Fralin stated that SCHEV would have champions in the General Assembly if the Council could make a strong case. He suggested that Council work with candidates during the campaign to make this case.

Mr. Minor requested input from other members. Comments included:

- Stress the importance of higher education's return on investment while keeping the message easily understandable to the general public.
- Consider two questions: does an investment in higher education generate a broad return for taxpayer dollars, and does a larger investment in our higher education system generate a positive return.
- Consider that legislators still question how prudently the higher education dollars are used.
- SCHEV must be a catalyst for improving or demonstrating efficiencies and effectiveness in graduating students with competencies in key areas.
- Change the message when speaking with legislators. There is a perception that colleges could do more to realize cost savings. SCHEV needs to prove that there is value in higher education and that we understand our responsibility to control costs. Prudent spending and outcomes is the way to go.
- If the Council decides to take a bold and aggressive approach, a good communication system that is easily understood is needed.
- Focus on things to help us prepare a well-educated workforce; citizens who understand the world in which they work and live and what research can do to drive economic development.
- Identify a handful of significant goals, e.g. faculty salaries (if this is key to high class teaching) and consider ways to do this with limited resources.
- Set goals working with colleges and find ways to measure those goals and give universities the freedom to achieve the goals.
- Put together a process to audit and evaluate institutions to make them accountable to their board, the Governor, General Assembly, and SCHEV and work with them on a plan to achieve it if they fall short.

Mr. Blake thanked members for exchanging ideas. He introduced Ms. Aylward who worked with Council and staff on the strategic plan over the last year. Ms. Aylward served as facilitator at the meeting. Mr. Blake also introduced and thanked Dr. Susan Wood and the SCHEV staff who worked on the plan.

Ms. Aylward reminded members of the four goals and shared the statewide measures that the Council approved in July. She led a discussion of the initiatives, which is the next stage in the process. This also will be the focus of discussion at the joint meeting with presidents in September.

In response to a question from Ms. Webb regarding feedback from stakeholders, Mr. Blake indicated that he reviewed the list of initiatives with college presidents at the August meeting. The concept of proposing a constitutional amendment for higher education to receive legislative protection was raised at the meeting with presidents and was received well by some presidents and viewed with caution by others.

Ms. Aylward led a discussion on ways in which the Plan could be executed. In addition to the list of initiatives, other items discussed were:

- Team approach (collaborate) working with other parties involved in the plan.
- Need channels of influence

- Involvement of broader community and means of measuring goals and effective communications process.
- “Force-field analysis”: Look at the helping forces as well as the hindering forces.
- Getting college presidents to think more broadly (often tempting for them to go for short-term thinking).
- Need broad buy-in from employers.
- Find someone who is a change agent to act as an early adopter that others will look up to.
- Decide what we can do and the amount of resources it will take to make the change occur.
- Important to convey to legislators cost efficiencies in the system
- Link higher education to K12 and demonstrate ways in which they fit together

Ms. Aylward read the list of characteristics for initiatives:

- Best interest of the Commonwealth
- Long-term impact
- Competitive advantage to Virginia
- Positive public publicity
- Alignment with *The Virginia Plan*
- Alignment with the other major initiatives
- Actionable (now)
- Policy levers
- Can be achieved in our decentralized system

Ms. Kang distributed the results of the survey ranking the initiatives that members completed prior to the meeting. Members requested that staff provide a copy of the JLARC study on the return on investment for restructuring and Mr. Blake agreed to send it to members.

Mr. Blake suggested that the Council not take action on the resolution that was provided with the agenda materials. Staff will continue to wordsmith the items that were discussed and Mr. Blake will share the Council’s input with stakeholders. Staff will send members a draft copy asking that they provide additional feedback directly to Mr. Blake.

A final draft will be discussed with presidents at the joint meeting on September 21 and Council will take action on the resolution at its September 22 meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

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Marge Connelly  
Council Secretary

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Lee Ann Rung  
Director, Executive and Board Affairs