

Academic Affairs Committee #I.D – Action on New Degree Program Approval Policy

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**STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER
EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA**

Original Charge from Scott Fleming

- enhance nimbleness in bringing new degree programs to Council for decision;
- lower threshold for approval of new degree programs; and
- raise threshold for post-approval evaluation of degree programs (program productivity).

Consultations

- **Academic Affairs Committee:** October 2024
- **Public Institution Chief Academic Officers:** September 2024, November 2024, January 2025, and March 2025
- **Secretary of Education:** February and March 2024
- **Virginia Office of Education Economics (VOEE):** throughout 2024

Outcome: New Guidance Document

- “*New Degree Program Approval Guidance Document*”
 - The Guidance Document constitutes a self-contained policy for institutions proposing new degree programs.
 - The reforms embodied in the document are focused on the two green-highlighted bullets above.

Reforms – 1

- **Elimination of Program Announcement**
- **Elimination/reduction of specific information requirements:**
 - Learning Outcomes (eliminated)
 - Job ads (eliminated)
 - Duplication (reduced)
 - Labor Market information: VOOE data report substitutes for Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and Virginia Employment Commission (VEC)

Reforms – 2

- **Additions:**
 - Proposed new degree programs must be included in most recent six-year plan
 - Return on Investment
- **Process truncation: SCHEV staff substantive review will have one stage (no back and forth)**