

**STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA  
JOINT SCHEV/PRIVATE COLLEGE ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
May 12, 2025**

**MINUTES**

Ms. Miles called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. in the Dollar Tree room of the Brock Commons at Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, Virginia.

Council members present: Walter Curt, Micah Edmond, Lindsay Fryer, Delceno Miles, Jennie O'Holleran, Cheryl Oldham, John Olsen and Steven Taylor.

Council members participating virtually: Jason El Koubi, Carlyle Ramsey and Doug Straley.

Council members absent: William Harvey, John Jumper

Staff members present: Lee Andes, Grace Covello Khattar, Joseph DeFilippo, Alan Edwards, Tod Massa, Laura Osberger, Paula Robinson, Emily Salmon, Bob Spieldenner and Kristin Whelan.

Notable attendees: Deb Love, Senior Assistant Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General; Zach Jacobs, Deputy Secretary of Education; the Honorable Chris Peace, President, Council of Independent Colleges in Virginia; and Sabena Moretz, Director of Government Relations and Member Services, Council of Independent Colleges in Virginia. Secretary of Education Aimee Guidera participated virtually. See the list at the end of this document of CICV Presidents who attended.

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

On behalf of the Council, Council Vice Chair Delceno Miles welcomed the presidents of the private and nonprofit institutions.

Ms. Miles introduced Dr. Mary Dane Hinton, chair of the Private College Advisory Board (PCAB), whose opening remarks highlighted the unique contributions of private institutions to the higher education landscape in Virginia.

Mr. Scott Fleming, director of the State Council of Higher Education, welcomed everyone.

President of the Council of Independent Colleges in Virginia (CICV), Chris Peace, welcomed the group and provided an overview of the CICV and the private institutions in the state. He discussed the various ways that the CICV supports independent institutions in Virginia.

**PRIVATE COLLEGE, PUBLIC IMPACT: A NATIONAL AND VIRGINIA PERSPECTIVE**

Mr. Peace and Ms. Moretz presented the contributions of private colleges in Virginia.

According to the presentation, private colleges in Virginia provide, directly or indirectly, over 28,000 jobs and deliver \$2 billion in wages and benefits to the state. They produce

\$4.6 billion in economic output while generating \$157 million in state and local tax revenue.

Private colleges serve proportionally more very low-income students from underrepresented backgrounds than public four-year colleges. Enrollment in private colleges represents a larger portion of the student population than expected.

The national outlook for private institutions is not as strong as the outlook in Virginia. Mr. Peace pointed out that while several private colleges nationwide have closed recently, none in Virginia have. The private colleges in Virginia support the healthcare workforce through BSN programs at 14 CICV schools. Health professions programs are costly, and CICV programs are privately funded. Mr. Peace also pointed out that, despite enrolling only 33% of the Commonwealth's undergraduate students, they routinely produce about the same number of new teachers as public institutions.

Mr. Peace concluded his presentation with a plea for greater state funding contributions to private institutions. He presented the minimal investment currently made in private colleges and described how many more students could be helped with an increase in the Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant (VTAG). He also asked that SCHEV continue to advance and recognize policies that will strengthen the relationship between the state and private colleges.

Council members inquired about the struggles faced by the financial aid offices during the challenging FAFSA rollout in 2024. They also asked questions about the impact of tuition resets. Several presidents answered that it is too soon to determine the effect of the resets. Council members also asked about student access at the institutions. The presidents pointed out that the privates are doing the heavy lifting of social mobility that some of the larger public institutions are no longer able to do.

### **REMARKS FROM SECRETARY GUIDERA**

Secretary Guidera joined the meeting to encourage the PCAB presidents to consider working to differentiate their institutions. She stressed that educational outcomes, as measured by all higher education institutions, should be the primary focus in the future while continuing to consider access, affordability and attracting students. She also spoke about the institution's responsibility to the students to ensure that once they enter college, they can complete their degree in a reasonable amount of time with less or no debt.

Secretary Guidera spoke about the need for institutions to affirm their compliance with Title VI. Many institutions have already adopted resolutions focusing on civil rights, and she encouraged all of them to do so.

### **VTAG AT A GLANCE: MAXIMIZING IMPACT, ENSURING SUSTAINABILITY**

Mr. Andes drew the meeting participant's attention to a handout that illustrated the state of the Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant program. He described the participation in the TAG program in the last 10 years. Undergraduate participation in the TAG program increased significantly in 2024, with a 10% overall increase. Eleven institutions reported an increase of over 10%, and five institutions reported a growth of over 30%. The

graduate program represents over seven percent of total TAG recipients and has remained below a two percent annual growth for five of the last six years.

Council members asked how the per-student award limit is determined.

### **PARTNERSHIP FOR PROGRESS: SCHEV AND PRIVATE COLLEGES ENSURING INSTITUTIONAL VIABILITY**

Mr. Bryant from McGuire Woods Consulting shared a presentation about the capital planning process for private institutions. Private colleges are dealing with aging and decaying buildings, many of which are hundreds of years old. For the most part, private colleges make repairs and update buildings using funds raised privately. Through the Virginia College Building Authority, the Small Business Financing Authority and the Virginia Resources Authority, private colleges can access a limited amount of capital funding assistance. Mr. Bryant reviewed some of the steps that the General Assembly has taken to assist private institutions further. Other states, such as North Carolina and Maryland, offer a range of financing and grant mechanisms that provide capital to private, nonprofit institutions within their borders.

Mr. Bryant concluded his presentation with recommendations, including the following:

- Clarify the Virginia code to allow VCBA refinancing.
- Expand the VRA Authority to permit direct capital loans.
- Permit Virginia College Building Authority (VCBA) Credit bonds for private colleges.
- Establish a targeted capital grant program.
- Establish a VCBA program to grant-fund private capital needs.

Mr. Bryant also suggested ways to approach the General Assembly to allocate more capital funding to private institutions. He concluded by encouraging SCHEV staff to continue to work collaboratively to explore and identify other funding opportunities.

Mr. Curt requested clarification on funding for capital projects at private institutions. Mr. Bryant deferred to the PCAB president, as funding is institution specific. His concerns were that once the private institutions were able to use credit to build, paying back loans at high interest rates would remain a challenge.

### **LEADERSHIP REFLECTIONS: RESPONSES AND OBSERVATIONS FROM PRESIDENTS AND COUNCIL**

The members of the Private College Presidents each provided final reflections on the topics of discussion and expressed their gratitude for the work that SCHEV does on behalf of higher education.

President Hinton expressed her gratitude and emphasized the importance of VTAG for private college students. Other presidents also insisted on the importance of VTAG, stressing that it is not only an investment in the student but also an investment in the state's economy.

## **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Ms. Miles adjourned the meeting at 5:25 p.m.

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Delceno Miles  
Council Vice Chair

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Kristin Whelan  
Coordinator of Board and Executive Operations

### **Private College President Attendees**

Dixie Tooke-Rawlins, Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine  
Lou Fincher, Emory & Henry University  
Mirta Martin, Ferrum College  
Larry Stimpert, Hampden-Sydney College  
Darrell K. Williams, Hampton University  
Mary Dana Hinton, Hollins University  
Kenny Craig (on behalf of Dondi Costin), Liberty University  
Robert Lindgren, Randolph-Macon College  
Stephen Bruce (on behalf of Carlos Campo), Regent University  
Frank Shushok, Jr., Roanoke College  
Tracy Fitzsimmons, Shenandoah University  
Bonnie Cordon, Southern Virginia University  
Mary Pope Hutson, Sweet Briar College  
Alison Morrison-Sheltar, University of Lynchburg  
Hakim Lucas, Virginia Union University