

**STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA  
COUNCIL MEETING  
OCTOBER 30, 2025**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

General Jumper called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. in the main conference room of the offices of the State Council of Higher Education in Richmond.

Council members present: Walter Curt, Delceno Miles, Jason El Koubi (virtual) Lindsay Fryer, John Jumper, Cheryl Oldham, Douglas Straley and Steven Taylor.

Council members absent: Eric Chewning, William Harvey, Charlie King and Jennifer Montague.

Staff members present: Lee Andes, Taylor Clark, Grace Covello Khattar, Joe DeFilippo, Alan Edwards, Scott Fleming, Sandra Freeman, Alexis Gravely, Scott Kemp, Tod Massa, Laura Osberger, Kirstin Pantazis, Paula Robinson, Emily Salmon, Barry Simmons, Bob Spieldenner, and Kristin Whelan.

Notable Guests: VCCS Chancellor David Doré, Ambria Wood from the Office of the Attorney General, Christian Dobson Santiago, Policy Assistant, Office of the Governor and Deputy Secretary of Education, Zach Jacobs.

**EDUCATION SESSION: JLARC COMMUNITY COLLEGE REPORT**

General Jumper introduced Stephanie Papps and Justin Brown from the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC). They shared a presentation reviewing their study of how the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) is adapting to changes in the higher education landscape.

Ms. Papps provided a brief history of the VCCS. She shared how enrollment has changed over the last decade, with a drop in core traditional student groups. She highlighted how growth in FastForward and dual enrollment have mitigated the impact of the drop in traditional student enrollment.

Council members asked for further details on the student population and the enrollment decline. Ms. Papps described the elements of the study.

**Online learning**

Ms. Papps described the types of online learning that VCCS currently offers. Overall, the VCCS is teaching fewer courses and fewer courses in person. The largest portion of online learning is asynchronous. A large and growing portion of students take all their courses online. Success rates for asynchronous classes are lower than in-person classes. The study also found that students who retaken a course asynchronously fared worse than on their first try.

***Online Learning Recommendations***

The State Board for Community Colleges should periodically evaluate asynchronous learning to determine the appropriate balance between asynchronous and other course

formats, and to establish guidelines for community colleges' use of various formats to minimize less successful outcomes. Council members expressed concern about students being moved to asynchronous formats after signing up for in-person classes. They also asked about faculty qualifications.

#### Career and Technical Programs Enrollment (CTE)

CTE enrollment has grown by 8% over the past decade, largely through FastForward. Much of the growth has occurred in high-demand areas. Credit CTE programs on the high-demand list include Nursing, Computer and Information Systems, and Allied Health Professions—the three programs most in demand and with the highest enrollment. Ms. Oldham asked who determines which occupations belong on the high-demand list.

The FastForward completers generally experience wage gains, but only for one-person households; median wages fall below the living wage threshold for adult-plus-one-child households.

#### *Career and Technical Programs Recommendations*

VCCS should improve the FastForward program by evaluating whether completers obtain and keep jobs in the field in which they were trained. VCCS should adopt strategies to achieve higher student credential rates and determine whether employers value the credentials. VCCS should also track the wage increases three and five years after program completion.

#### Dual Enrollment

Dual enrollment is the fastest growing portion of VCCS enrollment. Respondents to a SCHEV student survey stated that they took dual enrollment classes to save money, explore college classes and boost their GPA. The 2024 General Assembly enacted the College and Career Readiness Virginia (CCRV) Act to expand access to and opportunities for dual enrollment. CCRV requires that the colleges eliminate tuition charges for dual enrollment students and set standards for parental notification, advising, data collection and planning for eventual CTE courses in the program.

#### *Dual Enrollment Recommendations*

VCCS needs to prioritize data collection to understand dual enrollment. Coordination between VCCS, VDOE and school divisions needs to improve.

Mr. Curt asked about the competition between AP, IB and dual enrollment. Ms. Oldham noted that parental education around dual enrollment is lacking.

#### Revenue and Efficiency

Lower enrollment, greater reliance on online learning and changes in enrollment composition are impacting the community college system.

The VCCS seeks to maintain efficiency by instituting a periodic review of individual colleges, using a shared services center and reducing budgets of colleges facing revenue declines.

#### *Recommendations for Revenue and Efficiency*

The VCCS should conduct a strategic review of how the system can efficiently and effectively deliver services to the rural areas.

Chancellor Doré from the VCCS joined the meeting to comment on the report. He thanked JLARC for their engagement and review. Dr. Doré stated that the VCCS is committed to access for all Virginians, improving efficiency and strengthening its commitment to providing high-quality education. He noted that he agrees with all of the JLARC recommendations.

Dr. Doré noted that the VCCS strategic plan is outcomes and metrics driven with a focus on a one-system strategy that improves efficiency.

The Chancellor highlighted current initiatives to improve efficiency, including publishing outcomes for greater transparency, improving funding and resource allocations, and streamlining instructor pathways, particularly for dual enrollment. He noted that online courses are not the preferred option for dual enrollment students, and quality advising is necessary to guide students.

Dr. Doré sees growth potential for high-flex courses—in-person courses that also can be taken online when necessary. He also stated that he seeks further shared services opportunities between the smaller colleges to reduce costs.

Council members asked Dr. Doré about strengthening community colleges and the four-year college partnership to broaden opportunities and attract more students through bundled, subsidized tuition. Dr. Doré highlighted the recent agreements developed between VCU and Reynolds Community College.

Ms. Fryer asked Dr. Doré to name the most pressing issue for the VCCS. Dr. Doré said that funding for FastForward is most critical to meeting the Commonwealth's job market demands. General Jumper suggested SCHEV meet with VCCS to discuss workforce alignment and the spending formula.

The Council strayed from the agenda to vote to allow Mr. El Koubi to participate remotely. Mr. El Koubi stated that he is absent due to a personal matter. After reading the resolution allowing remote participation, General Jumper called for a motion; Ms. Miles moved, Dr. Taylor seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

At 11:08, General Jumper called the committee of the whole to order. He recalled Dr. Ramsey's service to the Commonwealth and noted his passing earlier in October.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

On a motion by Ms. Miles, seconded by Dr. Taylor, the minutes from the September 15, 2025, Academic Affairs Committee meeting were approved unanimously.

### **ACTION ON PROPOSAL TO IMPROVE TRANSFER GRANT**

Mr. Andes and Dr. Smith joined the meeting to discuss a proposal to amend the two-year transfer grant program.

Mr. Andes discussed the work previously done and the elements of the new proposal. He presented it as an opportunity for the Council to discuss or act on the amendment. Council members asked for clarification on several points.

The Council questioned how the grant is awarded and whether students who take more than four years to complete receive it for multiple years. Mr. Andes detailed that the yearly grant is available once for each of the students' junior and senior years.

Mr. Andes described one impact of the transfer grant, in addition to reducing student costs, as incentivizing students to attend one of the four schools with lower enrollments. Ms. Fryer asked about the incentivization for the four years. The four, four-year institutions chosen are incentivized to maintain and increase enrollment.

**BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia approves amendment of the Two-Year College Transfer Grant program, to include a bonus award for students enrolling into institutions with declining enrollment, and directs staff to work with state policymakers as necessary to effect changes consistent with the recommendations in this item.**

After reading the resolution, General Jumper asked for a motion. Ms. Oldham motioned, Ms. Miles seconded, and the resolution was approved unanimously.

### **ACTION ON A PROPOSED PROGRAM AT A PUBLIC INSTITUTION**

Dr. DeFilippo described the degree program at the University of Mary Washington (UMW) and presented it for approval. He noted that this is the first new degree program presented since the Council approved the updated process earlier this year. Council members questioned staff from UMW about the program. General Jumper asked how UMW works to keep the high-level nursing graduates in our region. UMW recruits from within the region, and employers offer competitive pay and rewarding opportunities.

**BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia grants approval to the University of Mary Washington to initiate a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree program in Nursing (CIP code: 51.3818), effective fall 2026.**

After reading the resolution, General Jumper asked for a motion. Dr. Taylor moved, Ms. Miles seconded, and the resolution was approved unanimously.

### **UPDATE ON ROI OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

Mr. Massa briefed the Council on the return-on-investment model for academic programs. He described the updates made to the considerations in creating the ROI formula. Dr. Taylor further explained what the model seeks to measure. Ms. Fryer concurred with the need to look at the ROI for masters' programs.

Dr. Taylor suggested that Mr. Massa confer with Preston Cooper, a member of the GMU board of visitors, and return with an update in January.

## **UPDATE ON REVISED ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS**

Mr. Massa shared that he followed through with institutions to have them redo their enrollment projections. He shared that as of October 30, two public and nine private institutions' reports are still missing. He stated that much of the data received still needed to be cleaned up.

The projections now isolate high student enrollment and entirely online students. General Jumper asked whether there is any data on students who leave Virginia for higher education.

Mr. Massa expressed concerns that the institutions are not considering the changes to student lending seriously enough. Mr. Curt asked about the impact of the loss of the international students (F-1 visa students). Mr. Massa stated that it impacts graduate programs more than undergraduate programs. General Jumper asked Mr. Massa if Council should schedule a separate meeting to discuss and act on the final data.

## **UPDATE ON PELL INITIATIVE FOR VIRGINIA REPORT 2025**

Dr. Simmons updated the Council on the activities of the Pell Initiative for Virginia (PIV). The PIV, as administered by SCHEV, seeks to boost the enrollment and graduation rates of Pell-eligible students at publicly funded institutions. Dr. Simmons highlighted the Pell incentive program at Christopher Newport University which partners with Peninsula Community College. He described it as especially robust. He also described programs at other institutions.

Dr. Simmons described the shift in the PIV focus to streamline the application process for the grants. Council members asked if there is a list of the common barriers the institutions face and a list of activities or interventions that institutions can do to qualify for the grants. Dr. Simmons pointed out that the institutions are unique, so that their interventions are tailored to their particular student body and region.

Mr. Andes briefly described the difference between the federally funded Pell grants and the state Pell initiative grants.

## **UPDATE FROM FINANCE POLICY & INNOVATION**

Mr. Andes updated the Council on staff activities.

Mr. Andes described the work on the Tuition and Fees report. Tuition increased 2.1%, the lowest increase since 2022. The fees increased 3.9%. Council members asked what these mandatory fees cover. General Jumper asked for more information on the fees at a future meeting. The full report is available on the SCHEV website.

Mr. Andes next introduced Mr. Kemp, who discussed the activities of the Reimagining and Improving Student Education (RISE) committee. This committee addresses concerns arising from the student loan changes resulting from the Big Beautiful Bill. Mr. Kemp was chosen to serve on the committee and joined the Council to discuss the activities. Starting on July 1, 2026, the following limits on student borrowing will be enacted.

- Eliminates Graduate PLUS loans.
- Limits on Parent PLUS loans and aggregate student loans.
- Caps on the amount of loans for graduate and professional programs.
- Permits institutions to limit loans based on the program.

In addition, the committee is considering limiting the loan by prorating based on hours enrolled or by instituting institution-based limitations. The committee also seeks to simplify repayment plans.

## **COUNCIL MEETING**

### **REMARKS FROM JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT, JAMES SCHMIDT**

Dr. Schmidt presented an update on James Madison University. He shared the vision for JMU including the following:

- Prioritize the exceptional student experience.
- Build upon successful partnerships to create new opportunities.
- Market JMU's unique value and attract additional funding.
- Accelerate and support innovation.
- Advance the pursuit of national prominence.

Ms. Miles thanked Dr. Schmidt for his work and offered SCHEV's support. Council members asked Dr. Schmidt about creating partnerships with community colleges.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Ms. Miles noted a mistake in the minutes. SCHEV staff corrected the error before the vote.

General Jumper asked for a motion to approve the September 15 Council of Presidents' minutes and the September 16 Council meeting minutes. On a motion from Dr. Taylor and seconded by Mr. Straley, the corrected minutes were approved unanimously.

## **DISCUSSION OF DRAFT STATEWIDE STRATEGIC PLAN**

Ms. Salmon proposed a new vision statement based on council discussion from the last two meetings. The Council discussed the vision statement. Ms. Salmon identified other areas of the strategic plan that have been updated in response to Council feedback. The Council members discussed the fine details of the report and made suggestions for updates.

## **RECEIPT OF REPORT FROM THE AGENCY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Mr. Fleming highlighted VTOP's work and the new round of innovative impact grants. He also mentioned that, given conflicting views of higher education, we need to reestablish its value proposition.

Mr. Fleming recognized Dr. DeFilippo and his long career at SCHEV. He noted that Dr. Edwards would assume the responsibilities of Academic Affairs after Dr. DeFilippo's retirement, effective January 1, 2026.

The Executive Director's report is available on page 65 of the Agenda Book.

**RECEIPT OF ITEMS DELEGATED TO STAFF**

Included at the end of this document.

**OLD BUSINESS**

No old business.

**NEW BUSINESS**

No new business.

**RECEIPT OF PUBLIC COMMENT**

No comment reported.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

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John Jumper  
Council Chair

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Kristin Whelan  
SCHEV Staff

Items Delegated to Executive Director/Staff

Pursuant to the Code of Virginia, § 23.1-203 and Council's "*Policies and*

*Procedures for Program Approval and Changes,”* the following items approved/not approved as delegated to staff:

**Academic Program Actions**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Degree/Program/CIP</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
George Mason University	<b>CIP Code Change Approved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Master of Science (MS) degree program in Accounting from 52.0301 to 52.1399</li> </ul>	Spring 2026
Old Dominion University	<b>Program Modification Approved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modify the credit hours of the Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree program in Business Administration (52.0201) with 43 credit hours to 30-43 credit hours</li> </ul>	Spring 2026
University of Virginia	<b>Graduate Certificate Program Approved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accounting (52.0301)</li> </ul>	Spring 2026
Virginia Commonwealth University	<b>CIP Code Change Not Approved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Master of Accountancy (MAcc) degree program from 52.0301 to 27.0305</li> </ul>	October 2, 2025
Virginia Commonwealth University	<b>Facilitated Staff Approval:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Master of Science (MS) degree program in Cardiovascular Perfusion (51.0906)</li> </ul>	Spring 2026
Virginia Commonwealth University	<b>Facilitated Staff Approval:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) degree program in Nursing (51.3801)</li> </ul>	Fall 2026
Virginia Commonwealth University	<b>Graduate Certificate Program Approved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental Health (44.0799)</li> </ul>	Spring 2026
Virginia Commonwealth University	<b>CIP Code Change Not Approved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree program in Social and Behavioral Sciences from 51.2207 to 30.1701</li> </ul>	September 12, 2025

Pursuant to the Code of Virginia, § 23.1-203 and Council's "*Policies and Procedures for Program Approval and Changes*," the following item approved and reported:

**Program Discontinued**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Degree/Program/CIP</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
University of Virginia	<b>Program Discontinuance Approved:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Accounting (52.0301)</li> </ul>	Spring 2026