

The **Student Advisory Committee** is a student council consisting of one full-time student from all 4-year public colleges and universities in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and four students representing the Virginia Community College System. The committee assembles at least twice annually to advise the council on systemwide issues of concern to Virginia's college students.

The **State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV)** is the Commonwealth's coordinating body for higher education. SCHEV was established by the Governor and General Assembly in 1956. Then as now, our mission, which is outlined in the Code of Virginia, is "to promote the development of an educationally and economically sound, vigorous, progressive, and coordinated system of higher education" in Virginia.

To fulfill our mission, SCHEV makes higher education public policy recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly in such areas as capital and operating budget planning, enrollment projections, institutional technology needs, and student financial aid. SCHEV administers a variety of educational programs that benefit students, faculty, parents, and taxpayers. SCHEV serves as a catalyst to promote greater access, quality, affordability, and accountability throughout the system. SCHEV also helps policymakers, college administrators, and other concerned leaders work cooperatively and constructively to advance educational excellence.

Student Advisory Committee (SAC)

*A State Council of Higher Education
for Virginia (SCHEV) Advisory Committee
representing Virginia's College
and University Students*



State Council of
Higher Education for Virginia

James Monroe Building, 101 N. 14TH St.

Richmond, VA 23219

Tel: (804) 225-2600

Fax: (804) 225-2604

SAC members have chosen to speak with you about the importance of affordability in Virginia higher education. We feel it is extremely relevant given recent events, especially the economic downturn the nation is currently experiencing. In Virginia, this economic downturn means that students and their families will find it harder to afford tuition costs that will ultimately have to be increased as state funding for higher education is reduced.

1. SAC supports the Governor’s proposal for nearly \$26 million in additional funding for need-based student financial aid.

A. The proposed 15% budget cuts at public four-year colleges (10% at Richard Bland and the 23 community colleges) will almost certainly require Virginia colleges and universities to increase tuition.

B. The recent Measuring Up 2008 report from the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education noted that poor and working-class families in the Commonwealth must devote 31% of their income, even after receiving aid, to pay the costs of a two-year public college.

2. SAC appreciates legislators’ support of the Higher Education Equipment Trust Fund (HEETF).

A. This program, which provides funding for nearly \$60 million in equipment each year through the issuance of bonds, has proven helpful in attracting and retaining faculty—even when salary increases aren’t available—by providing funding for state-of-the-art labs.

B. SAC members would be grateful for continued support of the HEETF program.

3. SAC opposes several bills which place further limits on the number of out-of-state students allowed to attend Virginia institutions.

A. In light of the recent budget restrictions, Virginia institutions need the revenue generated by out-of-state tuition more than ever to continue providing the high quality academic instruction and support services students expect from Commonwealth colleges and universities.

B. Out-of-state students provide diversity of experience and interest that is a valuable part of the campus community.

C. SAC believes that admissions decisions should not be legislated at the state level, but should instead be the purview of institutional boards of visitors with guidance from administrators. Allowing institutional autonomy throughout the process will help Virginia institutions fulfill and maintain their unique identities and missions.

The viewpoints above were endorsed by a majority of SAC members representing 19 public two- and four-year colleges across Virginia.

2008-09 SAC Members

Christopher Newport University
Benjamin Heath

College of William and Mary
Thomas Fitzpatrick

Eastern Shore Community College
Ellin Early-McFord

George Mason University
Nicole Kukuruda

James Madison University
Larson Thune

Longwood University
Tara Coney

Norfolk State University
Khadijah Peak

Old Dominion University
Jeremy Hollenbeck

Patrick Henry Community College
Ursula Penn

Radford University
Jordan Draper

Richard Bland College
Whitney Petticolos

Southside Virginia Community College
Byron Morgan

Tidewater Community College
Jason Elliott (Chair)

University of Mary Washington
Sean O’Brien

University of Virginia
Matt Fifer (Vice Chair)

University of Virginia’s College at Wise
Travis Brannon

Virginia Commonwealth University
Fajir Amin

Virginia Military Institute
Robert Fendly

Virginia State University
Ricardo Rowle