

Distance Education in 21st Century Virginia: Charting the State's Policy



Purpose

The evolution of higher education to a more market-oriented and consumer-focused environment—in concert with rapid technological shifts—presents significant challenges and opportunities for policy makers and institutions. Distance education figures prominently in this landscape of change—capturing media attention, creating new educational markets, and offering a chance for both pedagogical innovation and expanded access.

The Council of Higher Education believes the time is right for the Commonwealth to assess its planning and policies for distance education and to explore whether new approaches are needed. The purpose of this Forum is to bring together those who should have a voice in the development of state policy on distance education to discuss two critical issues: the ways in which the state can foster collaboration and help manage competition, and how the state can help ensure that consumers are well-served in this new learning environment.

The Forum speakers will challenge conference participants to think creatively and critically about how the Commonwealth can best serve its citizens in developing distance learning policy. The discussions will assist the Council's development of policies, guidelines, and incentives to support distance education in Virginia.



Competition and Collaboration?

As our Commonwealth contemplates the landscape of 21st Century higher education, we see distance learning as an increasingly important part of the state's higher educational mix. States have approached distance learning with a variety of perspectives so far, from leaving the whole area to the forces of the free market to enacting strong central control. As Virginia prepares to consider appropriate policy, decision makers are faced with similar questions.

Where on the spectrum between total free market and strongly encouraging coordination and collaboration should the Commonwealth set its policy anchor?

What type and amount of state funding will distance learning consequently require once this major policy position is adopted?

What can state government do to facilitate collaboration among the public and private institutions in the development of distance learning services?



Consumer Issues

As technology facilitates the growth of distance learning, several important issues related to the consumers of distance learning services arise.

How can consumers trust that the programs or courses they select represent valid educational enterprises?

How can the state ensure that consumers are well informed about the nature of distance learning opportunities?

What policies should the state adopt related to the pricing of public distance learning efforts, and to the provision of financial aid for those taking distance learning courses or programs?



Schedule

Monday, June 1st

4:00-4:30 pm Welcome; overview and objectives of program
State Council of Higher Education

4:30-6:00 pm "Distance Education: Setting the Context in Virginia"

6:00-7:00 pm Reception-Cash Bar
Dinner on your own

Tuesday, June 2nd

7:30 am Coffee and continental breakfast available

8:00-9:00 am Keynote Speaker
"Distance Education: The Emerging Global Landscape"

William Durden
Sylvan Learning Systems

9:00-11:30 am Panel Presentation and Participant Discussion
"Competition and Collaboration"

Moderator:
Bruce Chaloux
Southern Regional Electronic Campus

Panelists:
James Davis
Shenandoah University
James Koch
Old Dominion University
Anne-Marie McCartan
Virginia Community College System



Schedule

Tuesday, June 2nd continued

11:30-1:00 pm Luncheon Speakers
"Distanceless Education: Mapping the Technology Terrain"

Earving Blythe,
Virginia Tech
Anne Moore
Virginia Tech

1:00-3:30 pm Panel Presentation and Participant Discussion
"Consumer Issues: A New Look at the Familiar Issues of Access, Quality, and Cost"

Moderator:
Bruce Chaloux
Southern Regional Electronic Campus

Panelists:
Maureen McLaughlin
U.S. Department of Education
David Potter
George Mason University
Karen Spahn
University of Phoenix

3:30-5:00 pm Reports of the discussion sessions and planning for "Next Steps."



The Speakers

Dr. William G. Durden

Dr. Durden currently serves as President of the Sylvan Academy of Sylvan Learning Systems, Inc. and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Caliber Learning Network, a joint distance learning venture of Sylvan and MCI corporation. He also serves as a Senior Fellow of the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute.

Mr. Earving L. Blythe

Mr. Blythe is the Vice President for Information Systems at Virginia Tech. Mr. Blythe also has been the Associate Director of Computing, and Director of Virginia Tech's extensive communications facilities.

Dr. Bruce Chaloux

Dr. Chaloux joined the staff of the Southern Regional Education Board in March, 1998 as the Director of the 15-state Southern Regional Electronic Campus Initiative. He was formerly Associate Dean for Extended Campus Programs at Virginia Tech.

Dr. James A. Davis

Dr. Davis has served as President of Shenandoah University in Winchester, Virginia since 1982. From 1968 to 1982 he held a number of positions on the faculty and in the administration of Ferrum College.

Dr. James V. Koch

Dr. Koch has been President of Old Dominion University since 1990. He was formerly President of the University of Montana from 1986 to 1990.

Dr. Anne-Marie McCartan

Dr. McCartan is Vice Chancellor for Academic Services and Research for the Virginia Community College System. She was formerly the Acting President of Rappahannock Community College.

Ms. Maureen McLaughlin

Ms. McLaughlin is the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Planning, and Innovation in the Office of Postsecondary Education of the U.S. Department of Education. She formerly held a variety of senior positions in the U.S. Department of Education.

Dr. Anne H. Moore

Dr. Moore is the Director of Information Technology Initiatives at Virginia Tech. Prior to working at Virginia Tech, Dr. Moore was Associate Director for Administration at the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

Dr. David L. Potter

Dr. Potter is the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost at George Mason University. Prior to joining George Mason, he served in several capacities at the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

Dr. Karen Spahn

Dr. Spahn is Executive Director of Institutional Research at the University of Phoenix. She was formerly the Manager of Planning for Information Systems for the Arizona Board of Regents.



The Logistics

The Forum will be held at the Richmond Hyatt, which is located in Richmond's West End at the intersection of Interstate 64 and US 250 (Broad Street). The address is 6624 West Broad Street. The dates and times of specific events are contained in the Schedule section of this program. Hotel costs and reservations are the responsibility of the participants (the reservation phone number of the Hyatt is 804-285-1234). A special rate for participants is available; please request the "SCHEV" rate for the Forum.

A cash bar will be available at the Reception on Monday, June 1st. Coffee and a continental breakfast will be available the morning of the 2nd. Lunch will be served on the 2nd. All other meal costs are the responsibility of the participant. There is no charge to attend the Forum.



To Register

Three approaches are available for registering for the Forum. First, by Internet. Please access the Council's web-site at the following address: **www.schev.edu**

After clicking on the item concerning the Forum on the opening page of SCHEV's website, click on the "To Register" item and then fill in the requested information. Background reading materials will also be available at the site.

Second, you may e-mail Carol Pfeiffer at Pfeiffer@schev.edu. Or third, you may use regular mail, providing your name, title, organization, address, telephone, fax, and e-mail address. Please send mail registrations to SCHEV, 9th Floor, 101 N. 14th Street, Richmond, Virginia, 23219, ATTN: Carol Pfeiffer.

Because attendance is limited to 100 participants, all registrants may not be able to attend. The Council will notify registrants by May 22nd on the status of their participation. Registration for the Forum closes on Friday, May 15th.



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