Ad Hoc Committee on Data and Policy

Location: SCHEV Offices, Main Conference Room
June, 19 2019, 1:00p.m. – 3p.m.
Ad Hoc Committee on Data and Policy

Tuesday, June 19, 2018
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

SCHEV Conference Room
James Monroe Building, 9th Floor
101 N. 14th Street
Richmond, VA 23219

1:00 - 1:10  1. Call to order, welcome, introductions

1:10 – 1:15  2. Approval of May 7, 2018, minutes

      • Ms. Marina Moschos

1:25 – 2:55  4. Discussion of role, values, audiences and priorities at SCHEV related to data and policy
      • Mr. Tod Massa and Ms. Wendy Kang

2:55 – 3:00  5. Discussion of next steps and timeline
      • Ms. Wendy Kang

Committee Members
Ken Ampy
Marge Connelly
Stephen Moret
Tom Slater

Notes:
Materials accompanying this agenda are intended for consideration of the Ad Hoc Committee on Data and Policy at this meeting (dated above), and may not reflect final Committee action. For a final version of any item contained in these material, please visit the SCHEV website at http://www.schev.edu/index/agency-info/council-information/agenda-books.

Next meeting: August 16 at 1:00 p.m.
Mr. Slater called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. in the SCHEV 9th floor conference room, 101 N. 14th Street, Richmond, Virginia. Committee members present: Ken Ampy, Marge Connolly, Stephen Moret, Tom Slater.

Committee members absent: None.

Staff members present: Pamela Currey, Wendy Kang, Tod Massa, Marina Moschos, Lee Ann Rung, Kristin Whelan and Tyler Williams.

Also in attendance was Dr. Elizabeth Carter, of the Virginia Department of Health Professions and partner in the Virginia Longitudinal Data System.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion by Mr. Ampy and seconded by Mr. Moret, the minutes from the February 2, 2018, meeting were approved unanimously.

REVIEW OF SURVEY RESPONSES

Ms. Currey noted that the majority of responses received on the recent data survey were from SCHEV’s current users, with institutional researchers making up the largest group of respondents. Ms. Currey noted that representation from business, students and parents was minimal. Mr. Massa pointed out that the survey was designed to provide information on general themes and should not be viewed as a statistically sound sampling. The goal of the survey was to gain insight from outside stakeholders about the current state of SCHEV’s website. Ms. Currey noted that about 130 individuals responded to the survey. In addition, individual input was received from twelve “influencers” (defined as council members, legislative and governor’s staff).

Ms. Currey walked through the basic themes from the responses. Those themes indicated significant interest in: student success (enrollment, completion, retention, graduation); value of higher education (ROI, cost vs. income potential of degrees, affordability); state funding trends; post-graduation (gainful employment, relevancy of educational programs to work and life, earning potential by major); equity/diversity (closing gaps, impact of investment in programs, increasing access); student debt (levels, default rates, borrowing trends).

In the area of suggestions to improve the website and reports, respondents gave high marks to the abundant availability of data, overall content, reliability, and objectivity of the current website and reporting. “User experience” was the area respondents noted as needing improvement. Respondents suggested better communication of the data to potential audiences through widely disseminated newsletters, emails, and other social media mechanisms. Respondents also recommended providing easier “access” to the
occasional user, noting that regular users know what they are looking for and can get it but, while that needs to be maintained, efforts should be made to take a more “layered” approach to the presentation.

Discussion by committee members indicated a decision should be made as to what the audiences are for SCHEV’s data. Once that is determined, it will be easier to determine how to increase use by those audiences. There was discussion of the possibility of launching a new website aimed specifically at students and parents.

**PRESENTATION: DEMONSTRATION OF CURRENT WEBSITE AND CONTEXT**

Mr. Massa gave an overview of the current SCHEV/Research website and the background for the inclusion of various reports, blogs and twitter communications. Mr. Massa referenced student debt and illustrated how people use data from the website. He walked committee members through the Institutional Profiles section of the site, noting that information is available for every public and private institution. Mr. Moret talked about the difficulty in communicating the nuances of institutional performance data – specifically the difficulty in determining the value added by the institution when comparing an open access institution with a 44% six-year graduation rate to an “elite” institution with a 93% six-year graduation rate. Mr. Massa discussed a new project he and Dr. Feng Raoking are working on with other states to predict student outcomes by institution based on student characteristics at entry and conclusion of the first term of enrollment.

Ms. Connelly asked if any qualified in-state students fail to get into a Virginia university. Committee members and staff discussed the approach students typically take to college applications, the cost of applying to multiple institutions, and the most recent successful college application week aimed at providing application assistance to students who qualify for 50% or more free and reduced priced lunch. Committee members discussed ways to encourage students to apply to multiple in-state institutions.

**PRESENTATION: REVIEW OF COMPARABLE STATE AGENCY WEBSITES**

Mr. Williams reviewed comparable state agencies’ websites, noting that several major themes appear on the differences and similarities to SCHEV’s data. Mr. Williams organized the major comparisons around data presentation, data accessibility, and reported data.

In reviewing how other state agencies present their data, Mr. Williams noted a majority of state higher education agencies produce static reports on key higher education statistics. The reports are typically presented as an annual comprehensive look at the entire state or on specific higher education topic (e.g. enrollment, financial aid). The reports are intended to be a digest of information that would be printed and attempt to provide a user a comprehensive look at all aspects of higher education in a state.

Some states publish data in a manner similar to SCHEV’s reports as data visualizations. States, such as Kentucky, Minnesota, Mississippi, and Colorado provide content through interactive data visualizations that allow the user to pick a topic of interest and gain
insight by filtering the data to a certain view. Many of these visualizations operate using a data visualization tool, such as Tableau. The visualizations, similar to SCHEV’s, guide the user into exploring an organized topic, and then provide the user with the flexibility to explore information on the entire topic or on a smaller subset of the data.

Mr. Williams noted that accessibility of higher education data varies widely based on the presentation the state agency uses. Since most states report the state’s data in a format intended for a printed format, a major concern identified is the ability to quickly find information or extract relevant information from a few limited reports. These static reports require a user to at least understand the content available within a report or invest significant resources to learn about the content available. These concerns are diminished with richer data visualization products that allow a user to find information more easily; however, these data visualizations tools employ certain filters and data layouts that may present new issues around accessibility individuals.

The committee discussed the Indiana, Alabama, Kentucky and Mississippi sites. Mr. Williams noted that many states struggle with how they communicate and place information on their websites. Data reported by many states is done via snapshots around specific issues. Oregon’s “Statewide Higher Education Snapshots” site was displayed as an example of a site that is very graphic, but not a lot of contextual insight is provided by the graphics. The trend to create reports or data visualizations on a selected few statistics has allowed states to publish infographics that attempt to provide a compact picture of higher education. These snapshot views often provide little contextual information, and limit the understanding of what additional information could help in decision-making. Further, they can implicitly push specific messages.

Mr. Williams noted that the variance in reported data is due mainly to the individual data collection systems or reliance on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) for data. SCHEV’s data collection breadth is significantly different from most other states. States, such as Colorado and Minnesota are reporting on the outcomes and wages of graduates similar to Virginia; however, the states reviewed rarely report as in depth as SCHEV’s data especially on graduate debt and wage outcomes.

Mr. Williams noted that audience is also something that varies for reported data among states and by tool. Colorado explicitly states that their graduate earnings outcomes tool is intended to inform parents and students. Most other states reviewed either do not clarify their intended audience or explain their intended audience as anyone in the state with interest in higher education data. The committee discussed SCHEV’s multiple audiences and noted this is an opportunity for the Council to say what audience they are trying to address.

**PRESENTATION: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS**

Mr. Massa previewed the new Policy Analytics website that is in production now. He walked the members through the pages on the site. Mr. Slater asked Mr. Massa if we could share this with the rest of the Council and asked how long it would be to be able to go live with the site. Mr. Slater asked if six months would be sufficient. He noted that the site was very helpful in getting at what he believes SCHEV should be providing.
Committee members asked about how comparisons could be done. Further discussion led to the question as to whether Mr. Massa could create a tool to compare some of the top data elements that users would want to compare – Mr. Massa said that tools can be built that will allow comparisons. Mr. Massa displayed the Economic Outcomes website infographic and guided the committee through the new wage-reporting site. Mr. Slater noted how helpful this was.

There was discussion of the new work Mr. Williams has done by program, aimed at refining information about what people who graduate with particular degrees do, providing information on occupations, what they do, projected need out to 2024. Provides the number of jobs that are from new jobs versus how many are from retirements. This will also provide information regionally. Mr. Slater said he thinks this is helpful for SCHEV’s constituencies and reiterated that this goes back to the question of who SCHEV’s audience is. Mr. Slater stated his view that we need to continue to serve policy makers, but we need to serve students and parents, as well. Mr. Ampy asked how we get the people to the data. There was a discussion of the need to have an advertising/messaging campaign to inform potential beneficiaries of the availability of this information. Ms. Kang noted the existence of the Virginia Wizard website (https://www.vawizard.org/wizard/home) and the need to coordinate any efforts by SCHEV with the managers of that site – to avoid duplication.

For the next meeting committee members indicated there should be information on other state education website efforts. They asked staff to work on providing that for a continuation of the discussion.

**NEXT STEPS – KEY PRIORITIES**

For the May 22 SCHEV meeting, Mr. Slater indicated he would like to show Council an abbreviated version of what was done at the meeting today. Mr. Ampy would like to have some discussion with Council on what some other states are doing – snapshot versus interactive. Members also would like to put the need to advertise to the full Council. They indicated that we can’t be the best educated state without people knowing where to get information on how to obtain high quality post-secondary credentials and degrees. The members also noted they would like to have the full Council discuss who the appropriate audiences are for the SCHEV website. Mr. Massa indicated focusing on some audiences might require investment in additional resources, e.g., mobile applications. There was discussion about how to gain peoples’ attention and help them get to the data they need. What is it that gets people interested enough to keep people drilling down to what they need? Ms. Kang indicated some user-friendly static information would be a helpful start for users.
Mr. Slater adjourned the meeting at 11:25 a.m.

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Thomas Slater
Ad Hoc Committee Chair

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Pamela Currey
SCHEV Staff
State Council of Higher Education for Virginia
Agenda Item

Item: Ad Hoc Committee on Data and Policy – #3 Summary of Strengths & Gaps

Date of Meeting: June 19, 2018

Presenter: Marina Moschos, Assistant Director for Policy Analytics
MarinaMoschos@schev.edu

Most Recent Review/Action:
☐ No previous Council review/action
☒ Previous review/action
  Date: May 7, 2018
  Action: Ad Hoc Committee meeting

Background Information/Summary of Major Elements:

The Ad Hoc Committee on Data and Policy met on February 2, 2018, and approved a mission and preliminary timeline for the Committee. State Council was updated on the Committee’s activities at its March 20, 2018, meeting.

On May 7, the Ad Hoc Committee met and reviewed responses to a survey of stakeholders and interviews with influencers (i.e., council members, governor’s staff, and legislative staff). Presentations were made on SCHEV’s current research website as well as comparable state websites in other states. The context for websites was discussed. An overview of a new Policy Analytics website for SCHEV (currently in production) was provided. State Council was updated on the Committee’s activities at its May 22, 2018 meeting.

The survey and interviews were conducted to learn the strengths and gaps of the way SCHEV currently provides data. In addition, we asked for insight into what SCHEV should be reporting. We would define the terms as follows:

- **Strengths**: What are the special elements of SCHEV’s data collections and reporting? What do people perceive as being well done?

- **Gaps**: What areas need improvement? What gaps do other people perceive?

It became clear that people’s perceptions of SCHEV’s data strengths and gaps correlated highly with the role of the stakeholder. Survey respondents, which included institutional researchers, institutional administrators in the areas of financial aid and admissions, and president’s and provost’s office staff, as well as SCHEV staff, generally found strength in the objectivity, reliability, timeliness, relevance, and clarity of the data provided. In terms of gaps, survey respondents noted the need to “update” the website or find other ways of conveying data, e.g. via dashboards, graphics, easier navigation.
There were also suggestions to provide more top-level analysis, such as noting trends and relationships in the data.

The strengths identified by the influencers (council members, legislative staff, governor’s staff) were that the quantity and type of data provided were among the best in the nation. Gaps were associated with a departure from the traditional purpose and audience for SCHEV data. Influencers want the data to be used to succinctly convey specific information, e.g. the return on investment for the educational dollars spent (for the individual through post-graduation attainment, the Commonwealth, the economy and society), helping students and families navigate a path through postsecondary education (and how to pay for it), answering “big” questions, informing policy.

In response to what data SCHEV needed to be reporting on, both survey respondents and influencers suggested a need for data on:

- Student success – access, enrollment, retention, graduation, completion, awards
- Value – return on investment for the individual and the state
- Post-graduation success – employment, wages, quality of life
- Student debt – as related to program of study and future wages
- Equity and diversity
- Cost of education – to the student/family and state support
- Availability of and access to financial aid

**Materials Provided:** None.

**Financial Impact:** To be determined.

**Timetable for Further Review/Action:** A report will be made for the Ad Hoc Committee to the State Council meeting on July 17, 2018. The next Ad Hoc Committee meeting is schedule for August 16, 2018.

**Resolution:** N/A
State Council of Higher Education for Virginia
Agenda Item

Item: Ad Hoc Committee on Data and Policy #4 – Discussion of Audience, Priority Areas and Direction

Date of Meeting: June 19, 2018

Presenter: Tod Massa, Director of Policy Analytics
todmassa@schev.edu

Wendy Kang, Director of Higher Education Innovation
wendykang@schev.edu

Most Recent Review/Action:
☒ No previous Council review/action
☐ Previous review/action

Date: 
Action: 

Background Information/Summary of Major Elements:

The following background provides information related to SCHEV’s role, values and proposed priority areas of improvement related to data and policy.

Current role of data and policy at SCHEV

The primary theme among SCHEV’s 30 duties in the State Code of Virginia is the focus on higher education policy, regulation and administration of programs. Some examples of these responsibilities include SCHEV’s role to certify private institutions, create state financial aid and domicile guidelines, develop annual budget recommendations and approve new academic programs.

The two areas of responsibility specifically related to data include the following:

9. Develop a uniform, comprehensive data information system designed to gather all information necessary to the performance of the Council’s duties. The system shall include information on admissions, enrollment, self-identified students with documented disabilities, personnel, programs, financing, space inventory, facilities, and such other areas as the Council deems appropriate. When consistent with the Government Data Collection and Dissemination Practices Act (§ 2.2-3800 et seq.), the Virginia Unemployment Compensation Act (§ 60.2-100 et seq.), and applicable federal law, the Council, acting solely or in partnership with the Virginia Department of Education or the Virginia Employment Commission, may contract with private entities to create de-identified student records in which all personally identifiable information has been removed for the purpose of assessing the performance of institutions and specific programs relative to the workforce needs of the Commonwealth.
30. Administer the Virginia Longitudinal Data System as a multiagency partnership for the purposes of developing educational, health, social service, and employment outcome data; improving the efficacy of state services; and aiding decision making.

The interviews with general assembly and Governor’s office staff indicate that SCHEV should keep and support the level of data provided. In addition, the survey responses indicated that SCHEV’s data ranks high in its reliability and consistency.

Based on these responsibilities and stakeholder feedback SCHEV staff members identified that the organizations’ primary role is to provide consistent and reliable data to policy makers and their staff.

**SCHEV’s Values Related to Data**

SCHEV staff members discussed the importance of creating a core set a values regarding data as it expands its role related to data and policy through this process. From this discussion, staff identified values that all data and policy resources should include.

SCHEV data and policy resources should be:
- Objective
- Protective of an individual’s privacy rights
- Clear in its presentation
- Equitable and inclusive of all groups
- Accessible to all audiences
- Responsive to policy

**Current Audiences**

In prior meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee, there have been recurring themes about priorities and audience. For example, the SCHEV Policy Analytics website (research.schev.edu) was built predominantly for users who are policy-oriented or “policymaker-adjacent,” (the staff that support policy makers) and institutional researchers. The site has also served as the vehicle for mandatory reporting to the public, such as the reports on Post-Completion Outcomes. Essentially, it has focused on these three audiences.

Policymakers, such as elected officials and agency leaders, are an obvious and easily understandable audience. SCHEV provides the “policymaker adjacent” group with a large variety of data to meet their needs. In many cases, reports on the website that are not required by statute are built to respond to specific needs or questions raised by this group.

Institutional researchers are professionals at colleges and universities who engage in research that is primarily conducted within an institution to provide information which supports institutional planning, policy formation and decision making. SCHEV staff has a direct relationship with this audience since many of them act as our data providers and informal advisory group (when needed). While positioning of these staff may vary
dramatically by institution, their need for data and their need or desire for a return on the investment of submitting data to SCHEV is significant.

Audiences to Consider

**Students and families:** Prospective students and their families are a frequent audience mentioned in discussions. SCHEV’s duties and organizational structure do not presume this to be one of its audiences. If prospective students & families are to become an audience, SCHEV likely would need to pursue additional resources or redirect additional resources as outreach and publication to this group is highly specialized. One of the challenges SCHEV would face is to find the right balance between helping prospective students make informed choices about their postsecondary pathways and not appearing to advocate too heavily about the value of any one particular path in higher education.

**College access organizations:** Student access and college success organizations, like the Virginia College Access Network, are on the front lines of working with students. SCHEV already works with some of these organizations and expanding our footprint here might be more efficient than targeting prospective students directly. SCHEV should be guided by existing information from other sources that is available and of value to prospective students and parents.

**School staff:** Teachers and counselors in K-12 are another potential audience. They work with students daily, but may be unaware of what SCHEV does, or the information resources it has available. Further development of materials for teachers and counselors would likely be similar to those developed for student access and college success organizations.

**Business and industry leaders:** These groups also have use for SCHEV’s data. It is not clear how much this might vary from the structures we use for policymakers, so that would need to be explored. However, this audience does have significant need for data on the production of graduates in a variety of places and their distribution across the state.

Proposed Priority Areas

SCHEV staff identified several areas that should be a primary priority moving forward:

- **Improve the presentation of existing data and reports:** SCHEV produces several reports throughout the year to policy makers. This includes reports on tuition and fees, enrollments, awards and the annual report on The Virginia Plan. Improvements to these reports will focus on linking interactive data on research.schev.edu to the full written report, providing downloadable images for use in the media and in presentations, and developing short summary documents targeted to policymakers and their staff to support the longer report and interactive data.
- **Improve existing reports or create new reports based on the key areas identified through the stakeholder input process.** The survey feedback identified an interest to focus on the areas related to student success, value, post-graduation
success, student debt, equity and diversity, cost of education (to students, the state and institutions) and financial aid. SCHEV staff will develop strategies to align these areas of focus with existing reports or develop new reports to address this area of need.

- **Create better pathways (front doors) to existing data:** At the prior committee meeting and at the May Council meeting, SCHEV staff demonstrated improvements to the existing research.schev.edu website that make it easier for users to navigate the website.
- **Identify and propose a governance process to prioritize data requests and policy projects:** An objective of the Ad Hoc Committee on Data and Policy is to develop a work plan and prioritization of projects. A process should be developed to support ongoing review and prioritization moving forward.
- **Leverage SCHEV’s partnerships with pre-K-12, college access providers and community organizations to create resources and professional development opportunities to support students and families in their college decision making process using data:** To meet the stakeholder interest to reach out to students and parents, SCHEV staff plans to work closely with these partners to develop and disseminate resources to better support students and parents.

**Discussion**

During the meeting, SCHEV staff will facilitate a discussion based on the following questions:

1. Given the current duties of SCHEV, do committee member agree that the role is focused primarily on informing policy?
2. Do the priority areas identified above align with committee members’ expectations on how SCHEV data could be improved? Are there modifications to the proposed priorities or new priorities that should be added?
3. Do the proposed priorities align with The Virginia Plan for Higher Education?

**Materials Provided:** None.

**Financial Impact:** No financial impact is expected at this time.

**Timetable for Further Review/Action:** An update on the work of the Committee will be provided to the State Council at its July 17 meeting. The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for August 16.

**Resolution:** No resolution is expected at this time.
State Council of Higher Education for Virginia
Agenda Item

Item: Ad Hoc Committee on Data and Policy – #5 Discussion of Next Steps and Timeline

Date of Meeting: June 19, 2018

Presenter: Wendy Kang
wendykang@schev.edu

Most Recent Review/Action:
☑ Previous review/action
  Date: May 7, 2018
  Action: Ad Hoc Committee meeting

Background Information/Summary of Major Elements:

Materials Provided: Timeline.

Financial Impact: To be determined.

Timetable for Further Review/Action: A report will be made for the Ad Hoc Committee to the State Council meeting on July 17, 2018. The next Ad Hoc Committee meeting is schedule for August 16, 2018.

Resolution: N/A
### Timeline with meeting dates for data and policy project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks/Process</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Deliverable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify committee charge, project objectives, and stakeholders</td>
<td>2/02/18</td>
<td>Ad hoc committee meets and establishes mission to develop a blueprint to guide the use of data and data systems maintained by SCHEV as strategic assets in transforming the lives of Virginians</td>
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<td>Gather stakeholder input (surveys, meetings or other methods); form key</td>
<td>02/15 – 04/15/18</td>
<td>Develop and administer survey, interview Council members, influencers (Tony, April, Fran, Michael)</td>
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<td>stakeholder group to advise the committee</td>
<td>03/19/18</td>
<td>Update at SCHEV council meeting on activities of the Committee</td>
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<td>04/09/18</td>
<td>Conference call with UT System (Stephanie Huie, David Troutman)</td>
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<td>04/12/18</td>
<td>Meeting with Virginia Public Access Project (David Poole, Katie Webb)</td>
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<td>04/16/18</td>
<td>Meeting with Urban Institute and key policy makers on data and metrics</td>
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<td>Review progress</td>
<td>05/07/18</td>
<td>Demonstration of current website and context, review findings from survey, council and influencer interviews, and receive update on current activities</td>
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<td>Development of draft strategies, options, and timelines</td>
<td>05/09/18</td>
<td>Staff meets to clarify priorities and next steps per direction from committee</td>
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<td>Review progress</td>
<td>05/22/18</td>
<td>Information item to Council on committee work</td>
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<td>Development of draft strategies, options, and timelines</td>
<td>Week of 06/04/18</td>
<td>Staff meets to finalize direction, next steps; begins to develop specific strategies, timelines, resource needs to address priority areas</td>
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<td>Establish priority areas</td>
<td>06/19/18</td>
<td>Considers appropriate role, values and audiences of SCHEV’s data and policy and establishes policy areas and direction</td>
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<td>Confirma progress and direction</td>
<td>07/17/18</td>
<td>Information item with status update on priority areas and direction. Ensure mission, focus, and policy direction are in keeping with Council direction.</td>
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<td>Review full data strategies, timeline and costs.</td>
<td>08/16/18</td>
<td>Prepares recommendations for action for full Council. Draft blueprint framework that includes key priorities, strategies, timelines and estimated costs. Updated draft for presentation to Council at September meeting.</td>
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<td>Continuous feedback with stakeholders; refinement of draft strategies,</td>
<td>08/27/18</td>
<td>Staff updates general professional advisory committee; requests feedback</td>
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<td>09/07/18</td>
<td>Staff updates instructional programs advisory committee; requests feedback</td>
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<td>09/12/18</td>
<td>Staff updates finance advisory committee; requests feedback</td>
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<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Responsible Party</td>
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<td>Final review of strategies, timelines and costs prior to budget development</td>
<td>SCHEV meeting</td>
<td>09/17/18</td>
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<td>Refinement of costs</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Month of September</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approve strategies, timeline, and costs</td>
<td>SCHEV meeting</td>
<td>10/29/18</td>
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