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*Annual Report on The Virginia Plan for  
Higher Education*



**State Council of Higher Education for Virginia**

*Advancing Virginia through Higher Education*

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## Overview

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Virginia faces a future in which higher education will play an increasingly important role. Virginians will need deeper and broader knowledge and skills to be engaged, productive participants in our evolving Commonwealth and its economy. At the same time, the demographics of the emerging generation are changing, as an increasing share of our youth will come from populations which historically have been underrepresented in both higher education and the highly-educated sectors of our workforce. These changes transpire at a time when the price of attending Virginia colleges and universities has increased at unsustainable rates.

The Virginia Plan for Higher Education is designed to identify trends that the Commonwealth must address if it is to prosper and succeed in the future. Through input by higher education partners, The Virginia Plan is intended to help guide a vision for Virginia's future through a common framework. This framework is built on the premise that all partners in higher education must work together to help Virginia, its citizens and its regions.

The first edition of the Annual Report provides an overview of The Virginia Plan for Higher Education, including its objective, goals, activities in 2015, baseline measures and targets, findings and recommendations for 2016.

## Objective: Be the Best-Educated State by 2030

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Industry Certifications | State Licensures | Registered Apprenticeships | Certificates |  
Associate Degrees | Bachelor Degrees | Master Degrees and Above

Becoming the best-educated state supports the future prosperity of Virginia, its citizens and its regions. An educated population and well-trained workforce increase economic competitiveness, improve the lives of individuals and support greater community engagement. The best-educated state means that Virginia supports higher education at all levels. This spectrum includes workforce credentials, such as industry certifications, state licensures, apprenticeships, and certificates, as well as traditional degrees.

## Goals in Support of The Virginia Plan

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To become the best-educated state by 2030, the Council developed four goals to guide activities and provide a common framework for its work. The four goals focus on affordability and access, student success, change and improvement and economic and cultural prosperity.

### Provide Affordable Access for All

- Expand outreach to PK-12 and traditionally underserved populations
  - Improve the college readiness of all students
  - Cultivate affordable postsecondary education pathways for traditional, non- traditional and returning students
  - Align state appropriations, financial aid and tuition and fees such that students have broader access to postsecondary education opportunities regardless of their ability to pay
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### Optimize Student Success for Work and Life

- Strengthen curricular options to ensure that graduates are prepared with the competencies necessary for employment and civic engagement
  - Provide effective academic and student services infrastructures focused on persistence and completion
  - Increase on-time completion of certificates and degrees
  - Engage adults and veterans in certificate and degree completion and lifelong learning
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### Drive Change and Improvement through Investment and Innovation

- Identify and implement public funding strategies to sustain long-term planning and responsiveness
  - Cultivate innovations that enrich quality, promote collaboration and improve efficiency
  - Foster faculty excellence, scholarship and diversity
  - Enhance higher education leadership, governance and accountability
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### Advance the Economic and Cultural Prosperity of the Commonwealth and its Regions

- Build a competitive, future-ready workforce for all regions
- Be a catalyst for entrepreneurship and a model for business incubation
- Target funding, resources and partnerships to support research and development
- Expand participation and engagement in public and institutional service to the community
- Demonstrate the impact of higher education on state and regional economic development

## 2015 Activities to Support The Virginia Plan

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Upon passage of The Virginia Plan, SCHEV began to align its work with the goals. The following is a summary of key activities in 2015 that support The Virginia Plan as it relates to access, affordability, student success, change and improvement and economic and cultural prosperity. Below is a sample of significant activities undertaken in 2015 to support The Virginia Plan.

Secured [need-based aid](#) for attainment of industry credentials through [non-credit instruction](#) to make [postsecondary education more affordable](#). In fall 2014, Council members recommended funding to support need-based funding for non-credit to provide greater access to students who may not seek a traditional degree. The Governor and General Assembly approved \$1.075 million during the 2015 session for Virginia's community colleges for non-credit training to support industry-based credentials. This initiative is the first-time Virginia has provided funding for this type of training.

Joined the [Complete College America](#) initiative to focus on improving [on-time completion](#) and [student success](#). Virginia joined Complete College America, which focuses on improving completion rates for students. SCHEV, in partnership with the Governor's office, will be working with institutions to pursue strategies highlighted by the initiative. Incorporating these strategies and using the data metrics proposed to track success will support the Virginia Plan goal to increase student success and help Virginia close the gaps in completion rates for underrepresented populations. Information on the Complete College America is available at <http://completecollege.org/>.

Secured a Lumina Foundation [grant](#) to support The Virginia Plan initiatives related to [student success](#) and [underrepresented populations](#). In June, Virginia received a Lumina grant of \$50,000 to focus on efforts that support increased student success and access opportunities for underrepresented populations. Activities of the grant include: further identification of access and success programs at institutions, use of data to identify factors impacting student success and identification of policies to improve success and completion.

Established the [Sexual Assault Advisory Committee](#) to support [campus safety](#) and [promote promising practices](#). In December, SCHEV convened the first meeting of its new campus sexual assault advisory committee. The committee membership represents various roles in campus safety, including law enforcement, legal counsel and Title IX coordination for the public two- and four-year institutions as well as several private institutions. It will identify priority focus areas for the coming year in the spring.

Recognized [faculty excellence](#) through the [Outstanding Faculty Award \(OFA\)](#) program. Each year, SCHEV, through support of Dominion, awards faculty for their contributions to students, institution and the Commonwealth. Thirteen faculty members at public and private institutions across the state received the award. OFA awardees attended a luncheon and were recognized on the floor of the General Assembly.

Organized a [summit](#) focused [on quality](#) in higher education. In partnership with the Virginia Assessment Group, SCHEV hosted a one-day summit on quality in Virginia's system of higher education. Over 200

participants from public and private, two-year and four-year institutions; board members; businesspeople; and leaders from government agencies and advocacy groups attended the event.

Aligned education and **training** of newly appointed members of public institutions' **boards of visitors** to raise **awareness** of issues facing **higher education**. SCHEV coordinated the annual boards of visitors orientation. The sessions focused on the national and state level higher education landscape, including a focus on the areas of access, affordability, innovation, governance and economic prosperity aligned with the goals of The Virginia Plan.

Signed an agreement to **increase collaborations** between **economic development** and **higher education**. In February, all Public Institutions Presidents, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, the Center for Innovative Technology and SCHEV renewed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) focused on improving collaborations between higher education and economic development.

**Recommended funding** to support **high-priority research** through a **pooled bond authorization fund**. In October, the Council recommended a pooled bond authorization of \$50 million in FY 2017 and \$100 million in FY 2018 to improve research competitiveness via financing of new or renovated research facilities and equipment. This fund also would allow greater flexibility of recruitment and retention of research faculty.

Conducted a follow-up **review** of college **access services and resources** statewide. In partnership with Virginia529, SCHEV undertook a follow-up review to a 2009 study focused on availability of access services. The report updates the progress made in several areas, including early awareness, computer skills training, preparation for college entrance exams, financial literacy work, parental engagement, and postsecondary transition and college success. It also includes recommendations in the areas of defining postsecondary to include workforce credential options and not just degrees, balancing the breadth of services with limited resources, increased availability of data on outcomes and supporting structures for access providers to adapt to the changing higher education landscape. A copy of this study is available on the SCHEV reports page at <http://www.schev.edu/reports/reportsindex.asp>.

Initiated research on development of a **cooperative degree program** to provide greater **access** and **affordable opportunities** for students. As part of HB2320, SCHEV reviewed the development of a cooperative degree program at a cost of \$4,000 or a cost that is achievable. The initial review found that the most cost-effective path to a baccalaureate degree is attendance at a community college and transfer to a four-year institution, which can be accomplished for less than \$26,000 total (less than \$6,500 per academic year), particularly if dual enrollment courses and standardized tests (Advanced Placement/AP; International Baccalaureate/IB) are also used. This same path is possible via online delivery from many community colleges and some four-year institutions. A copy of the report is available at the SCHEV reports page at <http://www.schev.edu/reports/reportsindex.asp>.

Continued Support of the 1,2,3 GO! initiative to **increase access** for **underrepresented populations**. In partnership with Education Credit Management Corporation (ECMC), the Governor's office and the Council of Independent Colleges in Virginia and participating high schools, SCHEV continued the 1,2,3

Go! initiative that focuses on having more students: (1) explore options for education through College Nights across Virginia that provide, (2) apply to postsecondary institutions through Virginia College Application Week and (3) finance their education through the Super FAFSA project. Learn more about 1,2,3 Go! at <http://www.schev.edu/123Go.asp>.

Increased **opportunities for completion** through **transfer of general education courses** in participating states by joining the *Interstate Passport* initiative. The initiative is designed to improve graduation rates, shorten time to degrees and save students' money through development of agreed upon standards for general education across institutions based on learning outcomes. Developing common standards allows for greater transferability across institutions within Virginia and in other states. Information about the initiative is available at <http://www.wiche.edu/passport/home>.

Identified the **impact** of **rising costs** of higher education related to **student success**. SCHEV partnered with a national organization to review the impact of cost on higher education. ITHAKA S+K used Virginia data to produce, "The Effects of Rising Student Costs in Higher Education: Evidence from Public Institutions in Virginia." The report finds that when state funding for higher education erodes, the impact on retention and completion is most severe on economically disadvantaged students. A copy of the report is available at the SCHEV reports page at <http://www.schev.edu/reports/reportsindex.asp>.

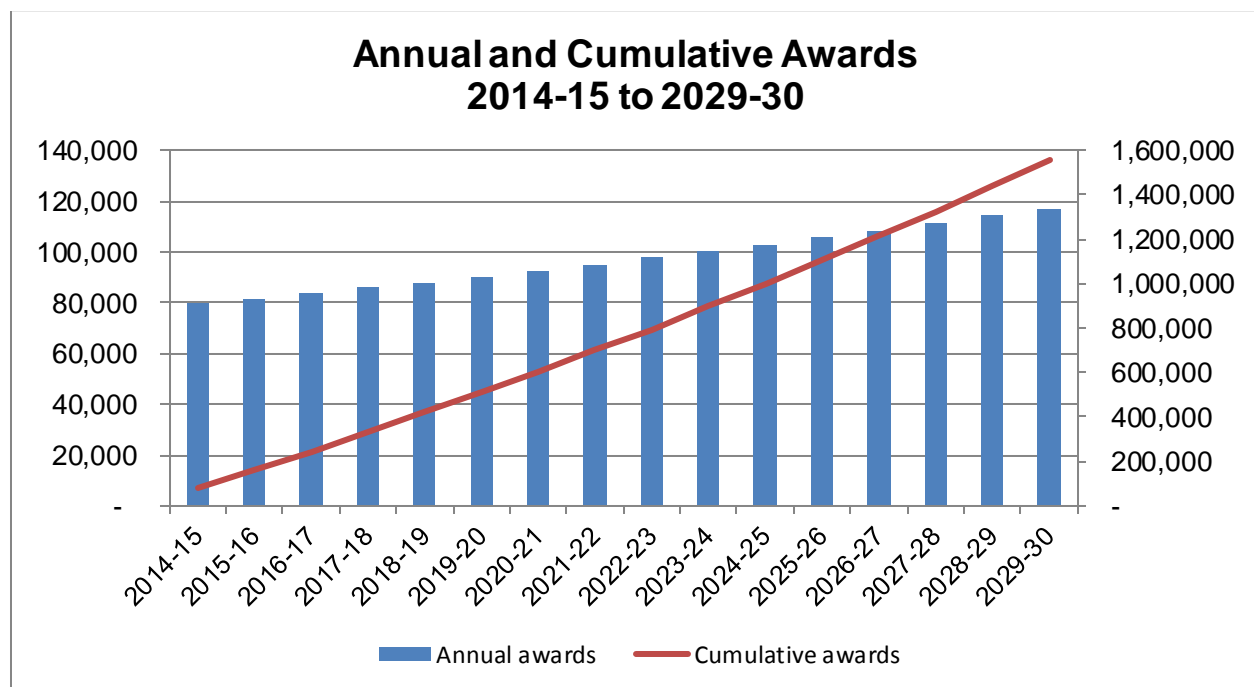


## Measures and Targets: Baseline Data

To track progress toward becoming the best-educated state, the Council developed six measures and targets that align with the goals and strategies of the plan. These measures serve as a baseline for future reports as data are available. Detailed background on each measure is available on The Virginia Plan for Higher Education page under the measures section <http://schev.edu/schev/StrategicPlan.asp>.

### Awards: Grant 1.5 million awards by 2030, including those that close the gap in unfilled jobs

Award completion is a primary measure to becoming the best-educated state. Current estimates include awards for associate degrees, bachelor degrees and certificates. SCHEV staff continue to monitor graduate level degree production and, as data become available, expect to add industry certifications and state licensures related to postsecondary training. In addition, SCHEV will work with partners, including the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and the Virginia Board for Workforce Development to track how awards are eliminating gaps in unfilled jobs through the development of a common methodology to measure demand.



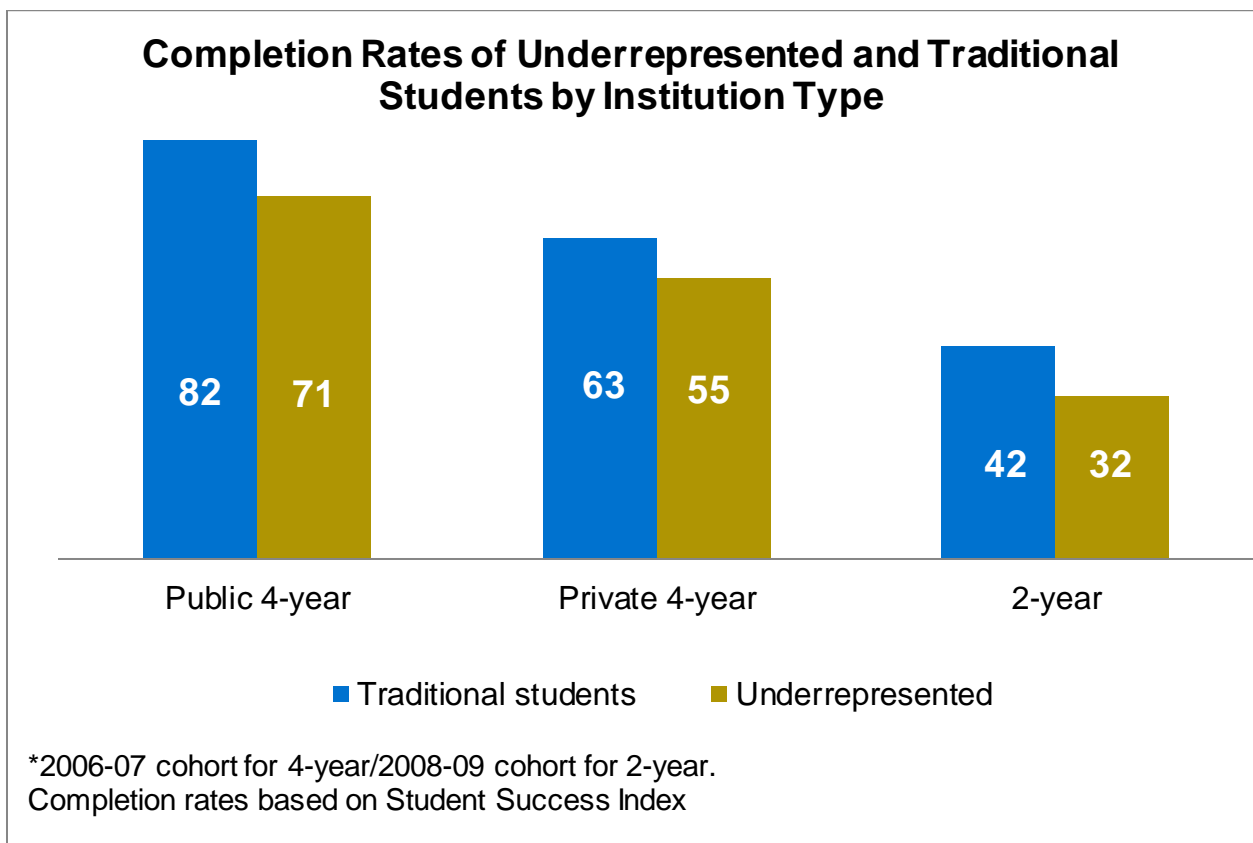
Additional data related to awards are available through various awards reports on the SCHEV research website at <http://research.schev.edu/apps/info/Reports.Guide-to-the-Degrees-Awarded-Reports.ashx>



## Success: Annually improve completion rates that close the gap between underrepresented populations and traditional students by 2030

While Virginia ranks higher than average in graduation rates compared to other states (based on the College Completion report published by the *Chronicle of Higher Education*), gaps remain in completion rates of underrepresented students and traditional students. Underrepresented students are those who are of minority race or ethnicity, receive Pell grant funding, are age 25 or older, or represent regions of the state with the lower education-attainment rates. These gaps in completions average about 10% among public and private two- and four-year institutions and are illustrated in the figure below.

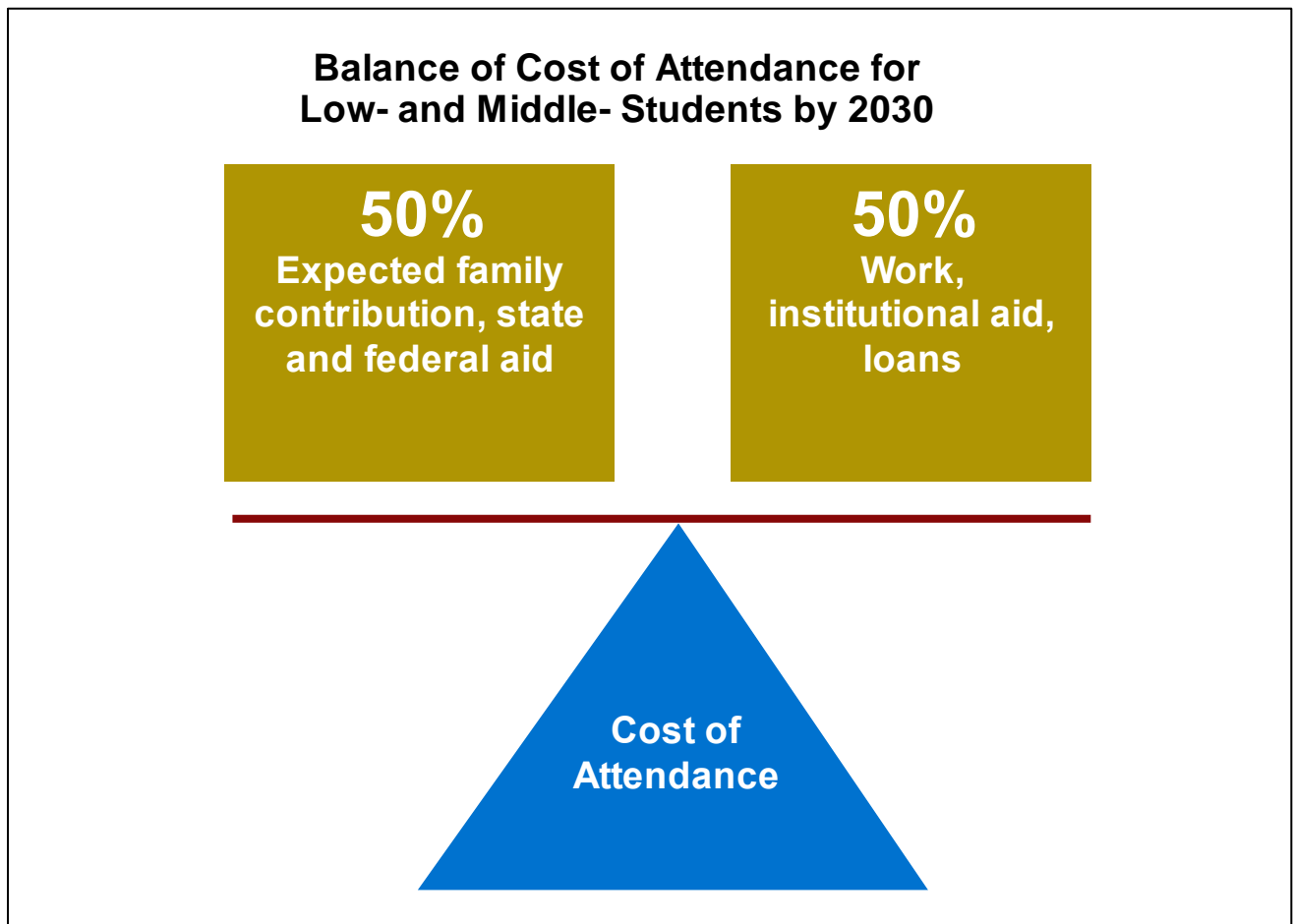
In order for Virginia to continue to produce the awards needed to be the best-educated state objective, a focus area must be to close the gaps in educational attainment.



SCHEV has developed reports to provide enrollment and completion trends for underrepresented populations by institution. These reports are available [http://research.schev.edu/enrollment/DistUnder\\_RepPop.asp](http://research.schev.edu/enrollment/DistUnder_RepPop.asp).

## Affordability: Meet half of the cost of attendance for low- and middle-income students through expected family contribution and state and federal grant aid by 2030

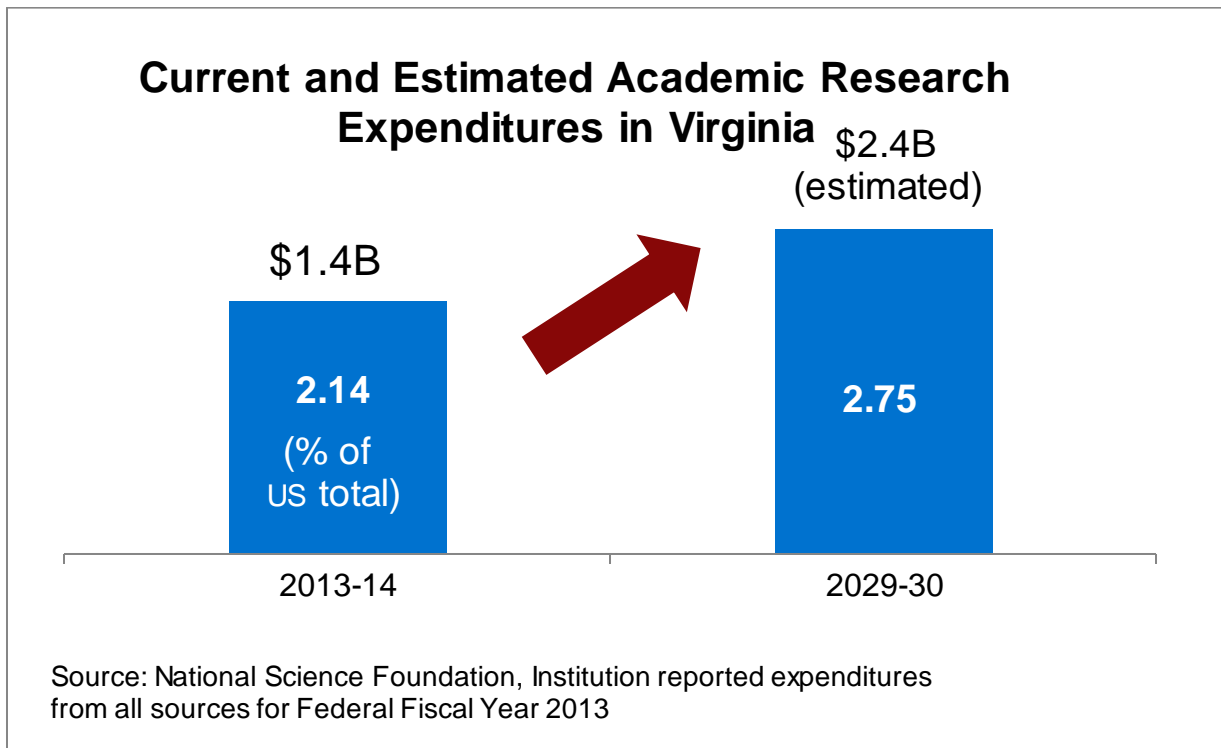
In order to maintain affordability and accessibility of higher education, the costs to attend college for low- and middle-income students and families need to be kept within reach. One way to mitigate the cost of attendance is to strike a balance between family contribution, state and federal gift aid, student employment, institutional aid and loans that will support affordability. Currently, only 38% of the cost is met through expected family contribution, state and federal gift aid. Efforts to maintain of this balance can be achieved through a variety of initiatives, including ongoing support of education and general programs, implementation of cost savings through efficiencies and support for state and federal gift aid.



Information on current tuition and fees by institution is available through the institutional profile report on the SCHEV research site <http://research.schev.edu/iprofile.asp> and through the annual tuition and fees report available at <http://www.schev.edu/reports/reportsindex.asp>.

## Research: Increase Virginia's research expenditures as a percent of national totals by 30 percent by 2030

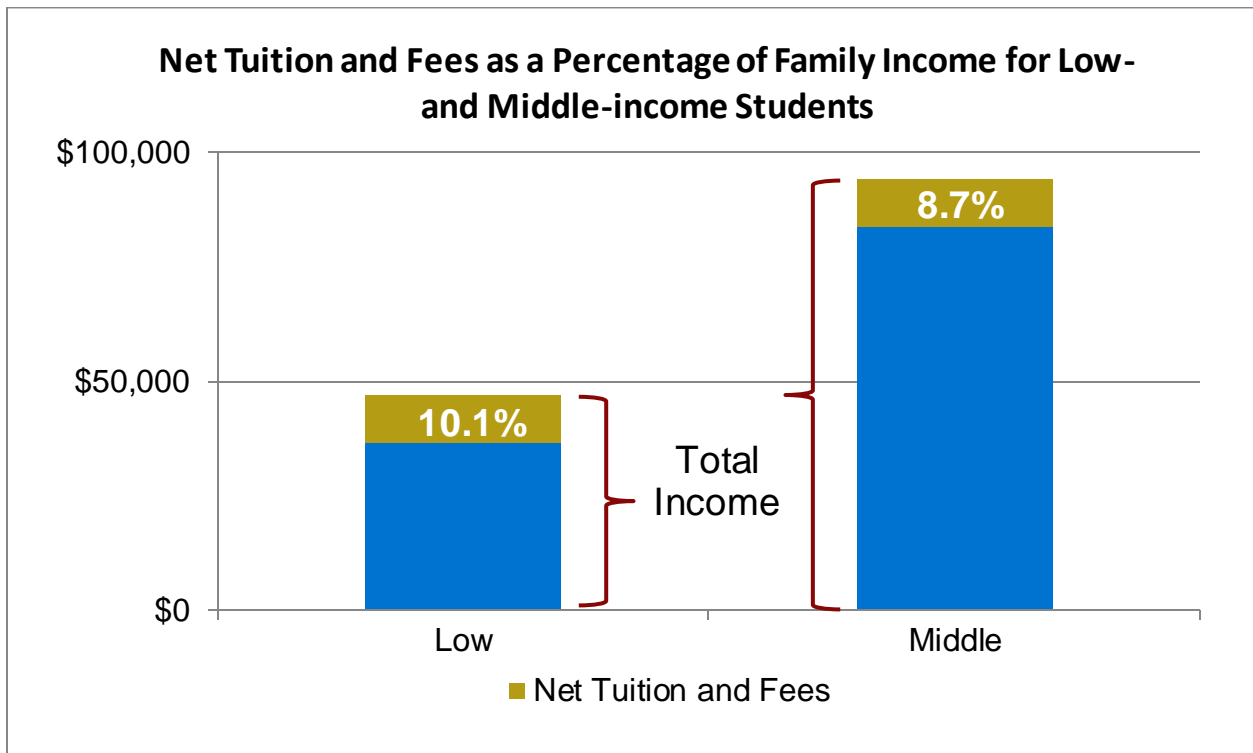
Increases in academic research and development have meaningful consequences for the health and well-being of states' citizens and economies. Public investment in research at colleges and universities spurs development of scientific and medical discoveries, new medicines and treatments, and all types of innovations and inventions, which lead to patents, licenses and the commercialization of results. In federal fiscal year 2013, Virginia ranked 14th nationally in annual expenditures on research and development in higher education; this position has remained relatively unchanged since the mid-2000s even as the total dollar amount has doubled. While federal funding for research has remained relatively flat in recent years, this goal focuses on increasing the total share of research funding compared to other states.



The National Science Foundation annually updates data reported by institutions on all research expenditures (federal, state, private, institution, etc). This information is available at <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/herd/>.

## Price: Keep undergraduate net tuition and fees as a percentage of family income lower the national average and less than 10% of low- and middle-income students

Keeping undergraduate tuition and fees affordable for all families provides greater access to higher education. Measuring how Virginia compares as a percentage of the national average and based on low- and middle-income students allows the Commonwealth to track how tuition and fees may impact potential students. It also recognizes that Virginia families, on average, have higher incomes and can afford higher-than-average tuition and fees.

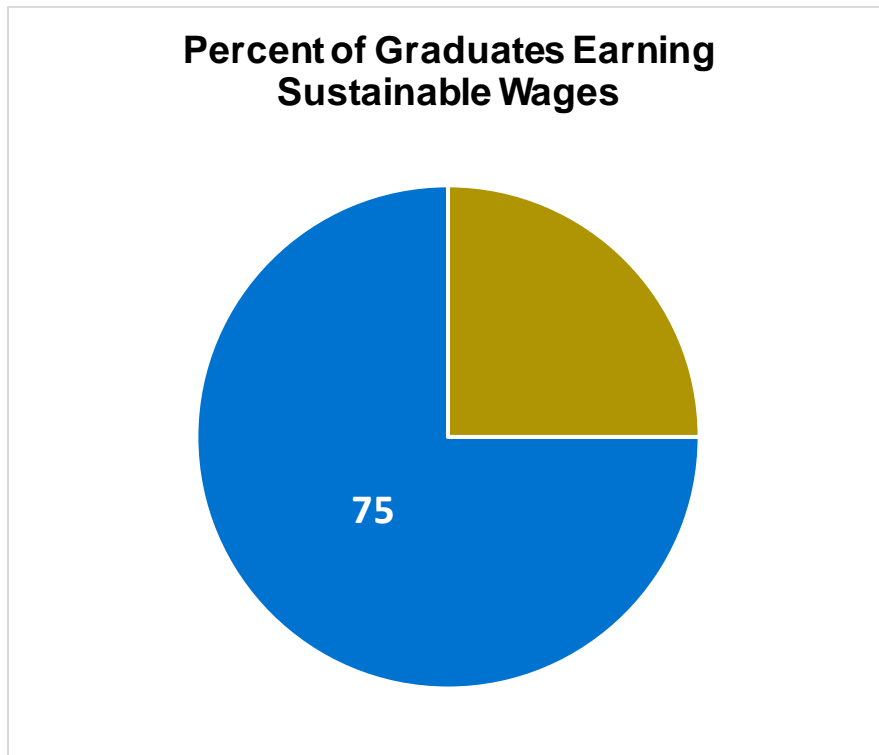


Additional data on tuition and fees, how Virginia ranks compared to other states and the changes in funding are available through the SCHEV tuition and fees report

<http://www.schev.edu/reports/reportsindex.asp>.

## Economic Prosperity: Ensure that 75% of graduates earn sustainable wages three years after graduation

While attaining a credential has shown to improve an individual's earning over his/her lifetime an important aspect of graduating is ensuring that graduates earn sustainable wages. This amount is currently estimated to be \$24,000 per year. This estimate includes all graduates of associate's and bachelor's programs.



SCHEV has many reports that provide wages of graduates over time by institution, degree type and program. These reports are available at <http://research.schev.edu/apps/info/Reports.Guide-to-the-Post-Completion-Wages-of-Graduates.ashx>.

## Findings and Recommendations: Initiatives for 2016

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A role of The Virginia Plan for Higher Education Annual Report is to provide an opportunity to identify findings and provide recommendations for the coming year. In the initial year of The Virginia Plan, the findings are based primarily on the initial analysis completed to develop the plan. These findings were based on extensive input from stakeholders, a review of Virginia and national data, a policy review and a gap analysis of supply and demand. The findings from these reviews are available on The Virginia Plan for Higher Education web page under the *Developing the Plan* section at <http://www.schev.edu/schev/StrategicPlan.asp>. The findings from this analysis informed the development of the goals, measures and targets of The Virginia Plan.

In October 2015, the Council submitted comprehensive budget recommendations aligned with The Virginia Plan. The recommendations provide a framework that aligns state appropriations, financial aid and tuition and fees in ways that begin to meet the goals of The Virginia Plan.

The Council also approved six initiatives that serve as recommendations to guide the Council's work in the coming year. SCHEV will work collaboratively with institutions, Governor's staff, General Assembly members and staff, business leaders, secondary education and community leaders to develop activities to support the initiatives in 2016.

### Initiatives for 2016

1. Coordinate the development and implementation of programs that align resources from PK12, colleges, universities and other public sources to ensure affordable, efficient and effective pathways for students in all parts of the state.
2. Seek legislative changes that support stable and sustainable public funding for higher education, such as a constitutional amendment, a dedicated funding source, and a revenue stabilization fund.
3. Review and recommend potential initiatives for further restructuring and shared services that enhance institutional and administrative flexibility and improve quality and efficiency.
4. Collaborate with institutions to measure the quality of undergraduate education, including civic engagement of graduates and relevance to demand occupations across regions of the state.
5. Launch a communications strategy to address public knowledge and benefits of higher education, through Council reports, traditional media, social media and other means.
6. Promote economic development for the Commonwealth by implementing a long-term plan that supports recruitment and retention of research faculty, provides matches to federal and private research grants and enhances commercialization of higher education research.