

# Discussion of Potential Priority Initiatives in Support of the Statewide Strategic Plan

**SCHEV Council**

March 17, 2026

Scott Fleming, SCHEV Executive Director

Emily Salmon, Assistant Director of Strategic Planning and Policy Studies



**STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER  
EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA**

# Objectives for Today

---

- 1. Summarize the purpose of priority initiatives in the context of Plan implementation.**
- 2. Identify potential priority initiatives developed from prior Council and stakeholder input.**
- 3. Receive Council's feedback on and suggested modifications to the potential initiatives.**
- 4. Outline the next steps.**

# Developing Tomorrow's Talent – Framework

## Developing Tomorrow's Talent



*Top state for talent – learning to leading*

# Plan Framework – Endorsed in 2025

**GOALS** = What, in broad terms, Virginia should strategically seek to achieve in and via higher education to advance/thrive over the next six years.

**OBJECTIVES** = Why the goals are important to Virginia and on what critical foci the goals should strategically target.

**STRATEGIES** = How, in specific terms, Virginia should proceed to meet the plan's objectives and ultimately achieve its overarching theme and goals.



# Plan Implementation – Priority Initiatives

---

## WHAT

Focused, short-term (approximately two-year) efforts to operationalize the Plan/approved strategies and to lead by SCHEV example.

## WHO

SCHEV staff will undertake at the direction of Council in addition to SCHEV's core responsibilities.

## WHY

Strategies outline broad approaches to achieving the plan's goals. Their generalized nature means that they are not inherently actionable in and of themselves.

## HOW

The proposed initiatives are intended to translate the plan's strategies into concrete SCHEV action and statewide results/impacts.

## WHEN

Once the slate of priority initiatives has been approved by Council (target – May 2026). Initiatives will span approximately two years.

# Priority Initiatives – Goal One

## Goal 1: Ready – Prepare students to learn, work, contribute and lead

### Council-Approved Supporting Strategies

**1.1.** Establish formal partnerships between VDOE, SCHEV and institutions to align exit and entry standards regarding college readiness. Topics include academic skills, soft skills, life skills, career exploration and SOL alignment to work/careers.

**1.2.** Increase collaboration and commitments between Virginia K-12, post-secondary institutions and employers to improve pathways alignment and enhance career readiness via career-focused education and work-based learning (e.g., certifications in high-demand fields, apprenticeships and internships).

**1.3.** Incorporate civic knowledge, civil discourse, service-learning opportunities and leadership development into the Virginia college experience - what it means to be part of a community and what it means to lead in an environment of diverse perspectives.

### Potential Initiatives (PI) for Council's Feedback (numbers correspond to approved strategies)

**PI 1 (1.2.)** Launch a comprehensive Early Career and Industry Engagement Initiative that embeds job shadowing and short-term applied experiences into existing and new programs, scales industry-led campus work-based learning, and establishes a public-private pilot fund (e.g., through V-TOP) to support faculty and staff externships and reciprocal employer partnerships.

**PI 2 (1.3.)** Strengthen existing efforts to promote civil discourse on campuses, reinforcing Virginia's position as a national leader in this area and leveraging activities associated with the US 250<sup>th</sup>.

# Priority Initiatives – Goal Two

## Goal 2: Responsive – Align to the needs of students, industry, labor markets, regional economies and Virginians

### Council-Approved Supporting Strategies

- 2.1 Expand mental health training and services as well as basic need supports to students, faculty and staff.
- 2.2.a. Foster sustainable industry partnerships and commitments to co-develop training, re-skilling, work-based learning and credentialing programs. Integrate technological literacy and ethics, especially regarding AI and other advancing technologies, into the college experience.
- 2.2.b. Encourage development of agile, responsive, student-centered curriculum policies for faster adaptation to industry and technological shifts.

### Potential Initiatives (PI) for Council's Feedback (numbers correspond to approved strategies)

- PI 3 (2.2.a.) Form a SCHEV-led statewide industry advisory committee/think tank to engage with SCHEV and VA IHEs broadly to inform curriculum, address program capacity as well as research needs, share trends and identify industry needs.

# Priority Initiatives – Goal Two cont'd.

## Goal 2: Responsive – Align to the needs of students, industry, labor markets, regional economies and Virginians

### Council-Approved Supporting Strategies

**2.3.a.** Champion innovative funding strategies and efficiencies (e.g., enrollment and infrastructure management) that support affordable access to public higher education.

**2.3.b.** Increase outreach and supports to engage and retain non-traditional students (e.g., adult learners, military, incarcerated).

**2.4.** Establish new and strengthen existing innovation ecosystems around research conducted by Virginia universities to commercialize research discoveries that address societal needs and advance entrepreneurship and startup formation.

### Potential Initiatives (PI) for Council's Feedback (numbers correspond to approved strategies)

**PI 4 (2.3.a.)** Advocate for legislation authorizing institutions with a high in-state student population and enrollment capacity the ability to offer reduced tuition to out-of-state students as a talent recruitment and retention strategy (e.g., NC promise model).

**PI 5 (2.3.b.)** Leverage resources such as workforce Pell and Virginia Pell as well as cross-sector collaboration to support access for specific non-traditional or specialized populations in Virginia to include indigenous nations, incarcerated learners, veterans, parents, and adult learners.

# Priority Initiatives – Goal Three

## Goal 3: Relevant – Articulate and emphasize the value of higher education

### Council-Approved Supporting Strategies

**3.1.** Implement a cross-sector communication campaign on the value of Virginia higher ed that links existing resources; expand access programming (including FAFSA completion, college advising and career coaches for K-12 and college students), as well as enhance the college application process for Virginians.

**3.2.a.** Improve transparency to students and families: Provide cost transparency and more consistent financial aid and scholarship information earlier in the college decision-making process.

**3.2.b.** Promote non-traditional pathways toward credential completion: Credit for prior learning/experience; stackable credentials as package toward completion; consider three-year degree pathways and transfer agreements for high school dual enrollment and advanced placement courses.

**3.3.** Improve transparency to Virginians on institutions' outcomes and return on investment including graduate employment rates, and their economic impact

### Potential Initiatives (PI) for Council's Feedback (numbers correspond to approved strategies)

**PI 6 (3.1.)** Develop and launch, in conjunction with other relevant state agencies, a student- and family-facing portal (My Virginia Pathway, or MVP) that facilitates academic and career exploration, self-reflection as well as direct admissions to Virginia's public and private institutions of higher education.

**PI 7 (3.1.)** Coordinate with other state agencies to ensure defined benefit surplus funds are used to support access initiatives for Virginia students.

**PI 8 (3.2.a.)** Through Level Up Virginia, identify and publish avenues for students and families to explore scholarship opportunities, particularly for those opportunities that go unused.

**PI 9 (3.3.)** Produce an annual report on transfer outcomes and student mobility.

# Next Steps

---

## **Staff will:**

- 1. Make modifications to the priority initiatives, incorporating Council's feedback.**
- 2. Prepare the revised slate of initiatives for Council's review and potential endorsement at the May meeting.**