



Agenda Book

March 16-17, 2026

Location:

Norfolk State University



March 16-17, 2026, Council Meeting Schedule of Events

Norfolk State University
Norfolk, VA 23504

March 16, 2026

2:00 – 3:45 Committee of the Whole
NSU Student Center, Room 300 (3rd Floor)
[Section I on the agenda](#)

4:00 – 4:45 NSU Highlights Tour
Leave on buses from the Student Center entrance

5:00 – 5:45 Reception
L. Douglas Wilder Performing Arts Center

5:45 – 7:15 Dinner
L. Douglas Wilder Performing Arts Center

March 17, 2026

9:00 – 12:45 Council Meeting
NSU Student Center, Room 300 (3rd Floor)
[Section III on the agenda](#)

NEXT MEETING: May 11-12, 2026
Hampden-Sydney College



March 16-17, 2026, Council Meetings

Agenda

Norfolk State University

Item	Time		Page
Cover Page			
Schedule of Events			2
Agenda			3
I. Committee of the Whole Monday, March 16, 2026 NSU Student Center, Room 300 (3rd floor)			
I.A. Call to Order	2:00 p.m.	Gen. Jumper	
I.B. Action on Remote Participation of Council Member	2:05 p.m.	Gen. Jumper	
I.C. Action on Proposals for New Degree Programs at Public Institutions	2:15 p.m.	Dr. Edwards	5
I.D. Action on Degree-Program Productivity Policy	2:45 p.m.	Dr. Edwards	42
I.E. Update on the 2026 Legislative Session	3:00 p.m.	Mr. Andes/Dr. Khattar	71
I.F. Update on Workforce Credential Grant	3:30 p.m.	Ms. Thompson	73
II.G. Motion to Adjourn	3:45 p.m.	Gen. Jumper	
II. NSU Highlights Tour Monday, March 16, 2026 Leave on buses from Student Center entrance	4:00 p.m.		
III. Council Meeting Tuesday, March 17, 2026 NSU Student Center Boardroom, Room 300 (3rd floor)			
III.A. Call to Order	9:00 a.m.	Gen. Jumper	
III.B. Action on Remote Participation of Council Member	9:05 a.m.	Gen. Jumper	
III.C. Approval of Minutes from January 13, 2026, Council Meeting	9:10 a.m.	Gen. Jumper	75
III.D. Remarks from Javaune Adams-Gaston, President, Norfolk State University	9:15 a.m.	Dr. Adams-Gaston	89
III.E. Welcome and Remarks from Virginia Secretary of Education, Dr. Jeffery Smith	9:35 a.m.	Dr. Smith	92
III.F. Conversation with Student Advisory Committee: Critical Issues Impacting Students	9:55 a.m.	Ms. Robinson, Ms. Lowe and Student Representatives	93
BREAK	10:40 a.m.		
III.G. Discussion of Potential Priority Initiatives in Support of the Statewide Strategic Plan	10:50 a.m.	Ms. Salmon	95

III.H. Update from the Council Workgroup on IPS and Full Cost	11:15 a.m.	Ms. Miles/Mr. King	101
III.I. Report of the Committee of the Whole	11:30 a.m.	Gen. Jumper	
III.J. Report from the Agency Executive Director	11:45 a.m.	Mr. Fleming	127
III.K. Receipt of Items Delegated to Staff	11:50 a.m.	Mr. Fleming	130
III.L. Old Business	11:55 a.m.	Gen. Jumper	
III.M. New Business	12:00 p.m.	Gen. Jumper	
III.N. Receipt of Public Comment	12:05 p.m.	Gen. Jumper	
III.O. Motion to Adjourn	12:10 p.m.	Gen. Jumper	
<u>NEXT MEETING:</u> May 11-12, 2026, Hampden-Sydney College (Hampden Sydney, VA) (Joint Meeting with Private College Advisory Board)			

*Use of courtesy titles is based on the expressed preference of the individual

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia Agenda Item

Item: I.C – Committee of the Whole – Action on Proposals for New Degree Programs at Public Institutions

Date of Meeting: March 16, 2026

Presenter: Dr. Alan Edwards
Director of Academic Affairs and Strategic Planning
alanedwards@schev.edu

Most Recent Review/Action:

- No previous Council review/action
 Previous review/action

Date: N/A

Action: N/A

Purpose of the Agenda Item:

The purpose of this item is to present for Council consideration and action information regarding four degree programs proposed by three public institutions, in accord with Council's duty to "review and approve or disapprove all new undergraduate or graduate academic programs that any public institution of higher education proposes" (*Code of Virginia* § 23.1-203.5).

Background Information/Summary of Major Elements:

The following proposed degree programs are presented for Council action. Program Summaries are presented separately behind these cover pages.

- Old Dominion University, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Cybersecurity (CIP: 11.1003)
- The College of William and Mary, Master of Science (MS) in Data Science (CIP: 30.7001)
- The College of William and Mary, Master of Science (MS) in Computational Operations Research (CIP: 27.0304)
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Master of Science (MS) in Water Science (CIP 40.0605)

The ODU proposal was submitted under Council's prior degree-program-approval policy; therefore, that proposal and the program summary provided below both adhere to that policy. The three other proposals and associated program summaries below follow Council's current degree-program-approval policy and process.

Financial Impact: See Program Summaries below.

Timetable for Further Review/Action: N/A

Relationship to the Goals of *The Virginia Plan for Higher Education*:

Council's consideration of this agenda item supports all three goals – student readiness; institutional responsiveness; and postsecondary relevance – as outlined in *Developing Tomorrow's Talent: The Virginia Plan for Higher Education*.

Resolutions: Resolutions for Council action on the proposals appear at the end of each of the four Program Summaries below.

Old Dominion University
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Cybersecurity
(CIP: 11.1003)

Program Description

Old Dominion University (ODU) is proposing the creation of a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree program in Cybersecurity to be initiated fall 2026. The proposed program would be located in ODU's Center for Cybersecurity Education and Research.

In the proposal document, the faculty wrote that

...the purpose of the proposed PhD degree program in Cybersecurity is to educate students in different aspects of cybersecurity in a diversity of current and emerging technologies. The program will provide students with an understanding of cybersecurity concepts, fundamentals, and challenges, and the ability to address ever evolving challenges in cybersecurity. Students will develop skills and competencies to conduct cybersecurity research to build scientific understanding about various cybersecurity topics.

The core curriculum will include courses in cybersecurity techniques and operations, moral reasoning for emerging technologies, seminar, and a practicum. Coursework in research methods in cybersecurity will be required. "All graduates will be able to:" 1) conduct original research studies focused on cybersecurity; 2) design, test, and evaluate novel approaches to securing systems in cyber space; and 3) plan, develop, and teach undergraduate and graduate courses in the field of cybersecurity geology courses. ODU developed five new courses for the degree program, which includes the four core courses and the one required course.

The PhD in Cybersecurity would require 48 to 78 credit hours. The program would require 78 credit hours beyond the Bachelor's degree: 12 credit hours of core coursework; 15 credits of foundation courses; three (3) credit hours for research methods; 15 credit hours of restricted foundational electives; 15 credits for advanced electives; and 18 credit hours for dissertation.

The program would require 48 credit hours beyond the Master's degree: 12 credit hours of core coursework; three (3) credit hours for research methods; 15 credits for advanced electives; and 18 credit hours for dissertation.

Students entering with a bachelor's degree would be required to attend full-time. Students would take nine (9) to 12 credits per semester and complete the proposed degree program in five (5) years. Students entering with a master's degree would attend full-time or part-time. Students attending full-time would complete the proposed degree program in three (3) years; students attending part-time would complete the degree program in four years.

Justification for the Proposed Program

Response to Current Needs (Specific Demand)

Old Dominion University provided the following information for justification. According to ODU's proposal:

The proposed PhD degree program in Cybersecurity addresses the need in Virginia and the nation for a skilled workforce of faculty and researchers with doctoral level education and training to support the growing workforce needs in Cybersecurity. The current needs include 1) a market demand for highly educated cybersecurity professionals needed to train the significant number of cybersecurity practitioners required, and 2) advancing cybersecurity research to offer improved methods and techniques to protect the ever-changing cyber space.

Higher Education Workforce Gap

While conversations typically focus on how academic programs are needed to develop the cybersecurity talent pipeline for the hundreds of thousands of job vacancies, often missing from these conversations is the fact that higher education also has a workforce gap when it comes to cybersecurity professors. Indeed, some scholars have concluded that “To help educate future cybersecurity students, a strong cybersecurity Ph.D. program is needed” (A Cybersecurity Educated Community. <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/9468330>). A review of technology-related doctoral programs by another author led the authors to conclude that “The challenge of meeting the cybersecurity workforce shortage through degree programs is intensified by the reality of the limited number of cybersecurity and engineering faculty at colleges and universities” (Innovative doctorate programs in cybersecurity, engineering, and technology in the USA and UK that can be completed by professionals around the world without relocation. https://annals-csis.org/Volume_24/drp/34.html).

Further, according to ODU's proposal:

...traditional cybersecurity approaches, which have often been focused on technical solutions, are insufficient for addressing the multifaceted threats of today's cyber space, and addressing the complex challenges of modern cybersecurity requires more than just a deep technical understanding. A PhD in Cybersecurity program with interdisciplinary training is essential to cultivate leaders and researchers who can bridge the gaps between technology, human behavior, public policy, and business strategy to develop more robust and holistic security solutions that consider the legal, ethical, psychological, and policy dimensions of cyber threats. PhD level researchers with interdisciplinary training are uniquely positioned to develop holistic security solutions that consider the interconnected nature of cyber threats.

Justification by the External Reviewers

In May 2025, Council's Academic Affairs Committee approved the proposed PhD in Cybersecurity degree program to advance to a review by a team of external experts. The external-review site visit was conducted at ODU on August 18, 2025. The external review team provided a final report and responses to the Academic Affairs Committee questionnaire document to SCHEV staff on January 27, and January 29, 2026, respectively. During the site visit, the external review team concluded that the original degree-program proposal was problematic and warranted revision. The review team asked for the proposal to be rewritten to address why the degree program was/is

needed, and why ODU should offer the proposed degree program. To further explain the need for the proposed degree program, ODU responded that the

... university has made significant investment in the cybersecurity degree programs and research over the last decade. It has established a Center for Cybersecurity Education and Research that offers cutting-edge educational experiences to students and professionals in the field of cybersecurity, and develops high-impact, cross-disciplinary research initiatives that center on cybersecurity. ... ODU offers a supportive structure, faculty knowledge and interest in cybersecurity, and ample resources to offer a standalone PhD in Cybersecurity.

External Reviewer Report. In the report, the reviewers noted that “the proposed PhD in Cybersecurity fills a critical gap by creating a dedicated doctoral pathway that focuses explicitly on cybersecurity, rather than treating the field as a concentration within adjacent disciplines.” The reviewers wrote that the proposed degree program “directly addresses” an “ongoing need for advanced cybersecurity expertise, particularly with federal research organizations, defense laboratories, and academic institutions.” One strength noted was the curriculum’s “strong interdisciplinary framing that reflects the realities of modern cybersecurity challenges.”

The external reviewers noted concern about the degree program being offered initially face-to-face and fully online. ODU addressed the concern by responding that the degree program would be initiated utilizing a face-to-face delivery format “for a least the first few years,” if approved by Council. The review team also noted that, given ODU’s experience with online education, an online delivery format could be added “once the faculty are comfortable that the in-person program has stabilized.”

The reviewers also indicated that student enrollment should be monitored “to ensure it does not greatly exceed [student projections]. ... For the PhD degree program to be of high quality, faculty should not be burdened with supervising an excessive number of PhD students in the proposed PhD in Cybersecurity degree program.” The reviewers wrote, “while careful attention should be paid to student enrollment management and coordination among faculty from multiple contributing disciplines, these considerations do not outweigh the degree program’s substantial strengths. Overall, the external reviewers recommend approval” of the proposed PhD in Cybersecurity degree program.

Academic Affairs Committee Questionnaire. In a response to the Committee’s questionnaire, the external reviewers indicated that data should be collected about the proposed degree program. Specifically, the reviewers agreed that, if Council acts to fully or conditionally approve the proposed PhD in Cybersecurity, then that action should include a requirement that the program director track three (3) graduating classes for both post-bachelor’s and post-master’s graduates. The information collected should indicate: (i) whether graduates’ jobs require a PhD in Cybersecurity; (ii) the amount of time between graduation and employment; and (iii) for those graduates employed in faculty positions, whether the positions are with Research 1 (R1) universities.

Student Demand

In spring 2024, the faculty surveyed juniors and seniors in the bachelor's degree in cybersecurity and students enrolled in the master's degree in cybersecurity degree program. The faculty asked students if the proposed degree program was offered, "would they enroll?" Of the nine (9) juniors and 18 seniors, seven (7) (approximately 26%) indicated they "definitely" would enroll and six (6) (approximately 22%) indicated they would "very likely" enroll in the proposed degree program.

Of the 52 respondents enrolled in the master's degree program, 21 (approximately 40%) indicated they would "definitely" enroll and 16 (approximately 31%) indicated they would "likely enroll" in the proposed degree program.

Enrollment projections predict a headcount (HDCT) of 10 in the program's first year, rising to a HDCT of 50 by the target year. Enrollment projections predict a full-time equated student enrollment (FTES) of 7.0 in the program's first year (2026-27). The projections continue as follows: FTES 2027-28, 14.0; 2028-29, 21.0; 2029-30, 28.0; and 2030-31, 35. GMU anticipates seven (7) graduates each year beginning in 2030-31. If the student enrollment and graduation projections are met by the target year, then the degree program will meet Council's productivity/viability standards within five years, as required.

Market/Employer Demand

As noted in the proposal, graduates of the proposed degree program "will be qualified to serve as faculty members in academia and researchers in the field of Cybersecurity." The proposal included only nine (9) of the 10 job announcements that were required by the SCHEV policy in effect at the time of the proposal. All nine were for faculty positions, of which six (6) were in Virginia. Of the six announcements for Virginia, three (3) included cybersecurity as one of the degree program discipline areas.

Data specific to future employment demand was not available as the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and the Department of Workforce Development and Advancement (Virginia Works) do not have a job category for cybersecurity faculty or researchers in the field of cybersecurity. However, data are available for postsecondary teachers overall. The BLS projects that between 2024 and 2034 overall employment of postsecondary teachers is expected to grow 7% or "much faster than the average for all occupations" (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/Education-Training-and-Library/Postsecondary-teachers.htm#tab-6>). The BLS indicates that "the number of people attending postsecondary institutions is expected to grow over the projections decade. Students will continue to seek higher education to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to meet their career goals. As more people enter colleges and universities, more postsecondary teachers will be needed to serve these additional students. Colleges and universities are likely to hire more part-time teachers to meet this demand. In all disciplines, there is expected to be a limited number of full-time nontenure and full-time tenure positions."

The BLS projects that between 2024 and 2034 employment of “computer science” postsecondary teachers is expected to grow “5%” (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/education-training-and-library/postsecondary-teachers.htm#tab-6>).

Data from Virginia Works, Labor Market Information, for long-term occupational projections indicate that between 2022 and 2032 employment of postsecondary computer science teachers is expected to increase 4.73%, or seven (7) positions, annually (<https://viriniaworks.gov/im-an-employer/plan/view-labor-market-information/long-and-short-term-occupational-projections/>).

Issues of Duplication

Old Dominion University would be the first public institution in Virginia to offer a PhD degree program in Cybersecurity. No public institution offers a similar or related degree program.

As noted in the proposal document, two (2) public institutions (GMU and Virginia Tech) offer doctoral degree programs with a sub area in cybersecurity. George Mason University (GMU) offers a PhD in Information Technology with a concentration in Cyber Security Engineering. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) offers “a PhD in Computer Science or Electrical and computer Engineering with a Cybersecurity Track.”

Relation to Existing ODU Degree Programs

Old Dominion University offers one degree program related to the proposed degree program: a Doctor of Philosophy and Doctor of Engineering (PhD/DEng) degree program in Engineering. The DEng degree designation program has a concentration in cybersecurity. The DEng degree designation program is located in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. The proposed degree program would not be located in the same department as the existing DEng degree designation program.

The concentration in cybersecurity requires 18 credit hours of core coursework and 18 credit hours of coursework in a concentration area. No specific courses are required for core courses or concentration coursework. The curriculum requires a 12-credit applied project. As indicated in the proposal, “the main” difference between the existing Deng program and proposed degree program is that “the DEng requires a project whereas the PhD program focuses on foundational research, aiming to advance knowledge and potentially create new methodologies for the field.” Further, graduates of the Deng program “will not have the same knowledge and skills” as graduates of the proposed degree program. Graduates of the proposed degree program “will possess the knowledge, and skills required to conduct research.”

In the proposal, ODU notes that “the DEng program will continue to be available for students if the proposed degree program is approved.”

Projected Resource Needs

The proposed degree program will be funded through the reallocation of resources in the Office of the Provost and ODU's Center for Cybersecurity Education.

The provost has committed resources to hire four (4) new faculty to teach in the proposed degree program. The faculty would dedicate "50% of their teaching load to the proposed degree program" by the target year, 2030-2031. The cost for two (2) faculty at the rank of Research Assistant Professor would be \$267,400 to \$294,140. The cost for two faculty at the rank of tenure track Associate Professor or Full Professor would be \$347,620 to 481,320. "The cost for the new hires will be funded by the annual budget for [ODU's] Center for Cybersecurity Education and Research."

For the proposed degree program, 20 graduate assistantships will be provided. Graduate assistants will assist faculty with course preparation and instruction, grading, and supporting undergraduate students' projects master's students' projects. In the initial year, the proposed program will support four graduate assistants. Graduate assistants are paid an annual stipend of \$26,000. The total cost for four (4) graduate assistants in the initial year will be \$104,000. By the target year, a total of 20 graduate assistants will be supported at a total cost of \$520,000 annually. The cost for the graduate assistants "will be funded by the Coastal Virginia Center for Cyber Innovation" which is supported by the Commonwealth Cyber Initiative and funded through the Commonwealth of Virginia."

ODU's provost affirms the institution will have adequate resources to support proposed degree program. The "reallocation of resources to support the degree program will not negatively impact" existing degree programs at the university. "No degree programs will close as a result of the initiation and operation of the proposed degree program." "The institution will not seek additional state resources to initiate and sustain the degree program."

Board Approval

The ODU Board of Visitors approved the proposed degree program on April 19, 2024. ODU formally submitted a proposal on April 23, 2025. Council's Academic Affairs Committee approved the proposed degree program to advance to an external review on May 12, 2025.

Committee Action/Resolution

Regarding the proposed degree program, the Committee possesses four (4) options: (i) act to approve, (ii) act to approve with condition(s), (iii) act to disapprove, or (iv) take no action and/or table for future action.

If approved, adopt the following resolution and transmit it to Council:

BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia grants approval to Old Dominion University to initiate a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree program in Cybersecurity (CIP code: 11.1003), effective fall 2026.

If approved with condition(s), amend the resolution above to include the condition(s), adopt the amended resolution, and transmit it to Council.

If not approved, adopt the following resolution and transmit it to Council:

BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia does not grant approval to Old Dominion University to initiate a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree program in Cybersecurity (CIP code: 11.1003).

If tabled for future action, instruct that the Minutes reflect the Committee's invoking of its prerogative/option to take no action at this meeting and/or to defer action until a future meeting.

The College of William and Mary in Virginia
Master of Science (MS) in Data Science
(CIP: 30.7001)

Degree Program Description

The College of William and Mary in Virginia is proposing the creation of a Master of Science (MS) degree program in Data Science to be initiated fall 2026. The proposed degree program would be located in the Department of Data Science, School of Computing, Data Sciences, and Physics.

The proposed MS in Data Science would require 30-36 credit hours. The degree program would require 18 credit hours of core coursework and nine (9) credit hours of restricted electives. Students would be required to complete either a capstone project or a thesis-based capstone. Students selecting the capstone project would be required to complete three (3) credit hours for a capstone course. Students selecting the thesis-based capstone would be required to complete six (6) credit hours of scientific writing coursework and three (3) credit hours for a master's thesis course.

William & Mary provided the following information for the degree program description. According to William and Mary's proposal:

The purpose of the proposed MS degree program in Data Science is to equip students with the advanced technical skills and applied knowledge to solve real-world problems using data and artificial intelligence (AI). It focuses heavily on the integration of AI into data science, reflecting the substantive shift of data science over the last few years as AI has become central to its methods, workflows, and professional identity.¹ Academic organizations echo this shift; the premier academic organization for Data Science rebranded this year to the "Alliance for Data Science and AI" to "better reflect the evolving landscape of its field and the needs of the community."²

The program will provide students with the knowledge and skills to analyze large and complex datasets with AI. The program will educate students in computer programming, statistical reasoning, machine learning and AI, data management, and scientific communication. Graduates of the proposed program will be able to design and implement advanced data pipelines, build and refine predictive models, evaluate algorithmic performance, and communicate actionable insights to multiple stakeholder groups to assist with data-informed decision making. Graduates of the proposed program will be prepared for roles such as data scientist, data engineer, policy analyst, and applied researcher in organizations that rely on data and AI-driven systems to improve operations, forecast future outcomes, or guide strategic planning.

¹ Spector, A. (2024). Data science and AI in context. *Harvard Data Science Review*, 6(3).
<https://hdsr.mitpress.mit.edu/pub/xyeriy3y/release/2>

² Alliance for Data Science and AI (2025). Academic Data Science Alliance Rebrands as Alliance for Data Science and AI. <https://www.hpcwire.com/off-the-wire/academic-data-science-alliance-rebrands-as-alliance-for-data-science-and-ai/>

Justification for the Proposed Degree Program

Response to Current Needs (Specific Demand)

William & Mary provided the following information for justification. According to William and Mary's proposal:

With greater access to larger and more complex datasets becoming standard, there is an increasing awareness among industry, government, and nonprofit leaders of the critical importance of professionals with data science and artificial intelligence (AI) skills to identify, evaluate, and make decisions from vast amounts of data. Businesses and the public sector increasingly seek professionals with graduate-level data science training to operationalize artificial intelligence, manage complex data pipelines, and interpret high-dimensional information flows.

The proposed M.S. in Data Science responds to current needs in Virginia for professionals with an advanced degree in the field. The current needs in Virginia and nationally include: 1) industry demand for professionals who can deploy data science and AI in dynamic real-world contexts, and 2) public sector demand for professionals with advanced data science and AI skills to develop and lead initiatives that result in more efficient and effective decisions.

Industry Demand for Data Science and AI Skills

With the advent of big data and automation, data science and artificial intelligence have become linked multidisciplinary fields with applications across many sectors of the economy.³ Data Science and AI are becoming embedded in nearly every industry, from logistics and finance to climate resilience and biomedical research, resulting in an urgent demand for professionals who can synthesize statistical modeling, machine learning, and scalable systems engineering.⁴ Julia Liuson, President of Microsoft's Developer Division, has argued that "using AI is no longer optional — it's core to every role."⁵ This is true in Virginia as much as it is true for industry. According to a recent report prepared by the Virginia Office of Education Economics (VOEE) analyzing data science occupations:

The advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is having a profound impact on higher education programming and the labor market at large. AI-related skills are becoming increasingly important for all occupations, including those related to data science...In February 2025, AI skills were mentioned in nearly 24 times as many job postings as in February 2015. Between February 2024 and February 2025, postings increased [in Virginia] by over 75%.⁶

The increased demand for these skills includes an increased demand for master's-level trained professionals who can lead data science and AI projects and produce

³ Costa, C. J., & Aparicio, M. (2023). Applications of data science and artificial intelligence. *Applied Sciences*, 13, 9015. <https://doi.org/10.3390/app13159015>

⁴ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2018). *Data science for undergraduates: Opportunities and options*. The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/25104>.

⁵ Liuson, J. (2025). 'AI is no longer optional' at Microsoft. *Business Insider*. <https://www.businessinsider.com/microsoft-internal-memo-using-ai-no-longer-optional-github-copilot-2025-6>.

⁶ Virginia Office of Education Economics. (2025). *An Analysis of Data Science Occupations, Skills Demand, and Graduate Outcomes in Virginia*. <https://voee.org/an-analysis-of-data-science-occupations-skills-demand-and-graduate-outcomes-in-virginia/> (p. 12).

recommendations to decision-makers across a range of industries. Supply for such graduates is far lower than demand. An “AI Talent Report” produced in January 2025 by the Council of Economic Advisors highlights this imbalance:

Growth in the supply of AI talent appears to lag growth in demand. In the AI software sector, the number of job postings for AI software-related positions grew at an average annual rate of 31.7 percent from 2015 to 2022. By contrast, the average annual growth rate of AI software-relevant degrees over the same period was only 8.2 percent for bachelor’s degrees, 8.5 percent for master’s degrees, and 2.9 percent for PhDs.⁷

Across Virginia, companies are scaling up artificial intelligence, cloud-native platforms, and secure analytics pipelines. These efforts require professionals with advanced training to collect and analyze and large datasets with AI. The recent VOEE report on data science indicates that, “Compared to the national average, most data-science related occupations are highly concentrated in Virginia, both in terms of employment and job postings.”⁸ The Virginia Economic Development Partnership reiterates that “the need for qualified data science professionals is considerable”⁹ to meet demand. The proposed degree program will provide students with advanced knowledge in data science and artificial intelligence knowledge and skills to address the need for master’s level trained graduates in a range of industries in Virginia.

Public Sector Demand

In addition to industry demand for graduate-trained professionals, federal and state government agencies are embedding data science and AI into their operational frameworks to support everything from infrastructure resilience to national security. Organizations such as the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility (Jefferson Lab), the Port of Virginia, and the Norfolk Naval Shipyard now rely on AI-enhanced decision systems and data-intensive modeling workflows. These agencies require technically proficient personnel who can translate raw data into actionable intelligence, align with policy goals, and ensure systems remain robust and transparent.

Public agencies are undergoing transformations similar to those in the private sector as they integrate data science and AI into infrastructure, logistics, and policy development. The Norfolk Naval Shipyard’s analytics initiative exemplifies how federal operations are embedding data-driven practices into mission execution. For example, the Department of the Navy notes, “We’re a team whose purpose is to help the shipyard think differently from the practices of old and using data to determine a more efficient, predictive, and proactive operation.”¹⁰ The U.S. Navy and related defense contractors in Virginia are actively recruiting master’s-level data science and AI professionals across multiple commands with formal role descriptions specifying graduate-level credentials and responsibilities including complex data pipeline design, predictive analytics, and

⁷Council of Economic Advisors. (2025). AI Talent Report. Executive Office of the President. <https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/cea/written-materials/2025/01/14/ai-talent-report/>

⁸ Virginia Office of Education Economics. (2025). An Analysis of Data Science Occupations, Skills Demand, and Graduate Outcomes in Virginia. <https://voee.org/an-analysis-of-data-science-occupations-skills-demand-and-graduate-outcomes-in-virginia/> (p. 12).

⁹ Virginia Economic Development Partnership. (2021). Virginia Universities Prepare to Meet Tomorrow’s Data Science Needs. <https://www.vedp.org/news/virginia-universities-prepare-meet-tomorrows-data-science-needs> (p. 1)

¹⁰ Department of the Navy Chief Information Officer. (2020, November 17). Data analytics team transforming the Navy's four public shipyards. DONCIO. <https://www.doncio.navy.mil/CHIPS/ArticleDetails.aspx?ID=13743> .

data governance. The Port of Virginia has been hiring expertise in this area and demonstrates a commitment to using AI technologies to improve logistics.¹¹ The Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility has launched a dedicated data science division to support experimental physics, cybersecurity, and regional environmental forecasting.¹²

At the federal level, agencies are expanding data-driven capacity through strategic hiring of graduate-trained data scientists. Today, the federal government continues to hire data scientists across a wide range of fields, with the OPM noting that “In the Federal Government, data scientists are needed in many sectors: from Agriculture, Climate, Consumer, and Defense, to Economics, Ecosystems, Education, and more.”¹³ A recent toolkit was developed “to bring more data scientists into the federal workforce.”¹⁴ Efforts to bring AI into the workforce have recently been accelerated by the White House. As stated by the White House, “Winning the AI race is non-negotiable. America must continue to be the dominant force in artificial intelligence to promote prosperity and protect our economic and national security.”¹⁵ The investment in jobs for professionals with AI-ready skills is reflected in policy across the federal government, including in direct funding mandates to the National Science Foundation to improve education for workforce development in AI.¹⁶

These actions reflect a policy-level commitment to recruiting professionals with advanced training in areas like AI, statistical modeling, and scalable system design. The proposed MS degree program in Data Science is needed to address public sector demand for expertise in data science and AI by providing both a strong foundation in core concepts and hands-on experience in deploying and applying these models in real-world contexts.

Employment Demand

Information about employment demand for occupations aligned to the proposed degree program is provided by the Virginia Office of Education Economics (VOEE) “Degree Program Labor Market Profile” report.

Tables A and B provide five-year workforce projections for all occupations most closely aligned to the proposed Master of Science (MS) in Data Science degree program. In Table A, the first column indicates the aligned occupations. The second column indicates the number of individuals employed in the occupation in 2024. The third column indicates the number of individuals projected to be employed in the occupation

¹¹ United States Government Accountability Office. (2024). U.S. ports have adopted some automation technologies, but challenges to broader adoption remain (GAO-24-106498). <https://www.gao.gov/assets/d24106498.pdf>.

¹² Jefferson Lab. (n.d.). Data science. Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility. Retrieved August 19, 2025, from <https://www.jlab.org/IT/datascience>

¹³ U.S. Office of Personnel Management. (2025). Find your next job in data science in the Federal Government. USAJOBS data science. <https://data-science.usajobs.gov/>

¹⁴ Shaw Bransford & Roth P.C. (2024, November 12). New Data Scientist Hiring Toolkit, amid calls to revamp Fed data job series. FedManager. <https://www.fedmanager.com/news/new-data-scientist-hiring-toolkit-amid-calls-to-revamp-fed-data-job-series>

¹⁵ The White House. (2025, July 23). White House unveils America’s AI action plan. Retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/articles/2025/07/white-house-unveils-americas-ai-action-plan/>

¹⁶ The White House. (2025, April 23). Fact sheet: President Donald J. Trump advances AI education for American youth. Retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/04/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-advances-ai-education-for-american-youth/>

in 2029. The fourth column indicates the number of individuals projected to be added to the workforce by 2029 in comparison to the 2024 workforce.

Table B is specific to the institution’s Growth and Opportunity (GO) Virginia region. The localities in the GO Virginia region include the cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and Williamsburg, and the counties of Accomack, Isle of Wight, James City, Northampton, Southampton, and York.

A) State Labor Market Information for Aligned Occupations

Occupation	Workforce (2024)	Workforce (2029 projection)	Workforce Change (2024 to 2029 projection)	Workforce % Change (2024 to 2029 projection)
Computer and Information Research Scientists	3,331	3,630	299	9.0%
Statisticians	970	1,122	153	15.7%
Computer and Information Systems Managers	19,461	21,205	1,744	9.0%
Natural Science Managers	1,719	1,826	107	6.2%
Database Architects	6,877	6,993	116	1.7%
Software Developers	84,919	94,003	9,084	10.7%
Data Scientists	6,490	7,745	1,255	19.3%

B) Regional (GO Virginia) Labor Market Information for Aligned Occupations

Occupation	Workforce (2024)	Workforce (2029 projection)	Workforce Change (2024 to 2029 projection)	Workforce % Change (2024 to 2029 projection)
Computer and Information Research Scientists	597	647	49	8.3%
Statisticians	88	98	10	10.9%
Computer and Information Systems Managers	1,869	1,972	104	5.5%
Natural Science Managers	221	237	16	7.4%
Database Architects	286	287	1	0.4%
Software Developers	6,971	7,531	560	8.0%
Data Scientists	634	733	99	15.5%

Return on Investment

Return on investment (ROI) information is provided by a calculation of ROI for graduate degree programs conducted by The Foundation for Research on Equal Opportunity. The data used in the ROI calculation classifies degree programs at the four-digit CIP code level (CIP code: 30.70). The return-on-investment analysis was originally published in October 2021, and the data have not been updated.

No return-on-investment data were available for the proposed MS in Data Science.

Student Demand

The summary of projected student enrollments for the proposed degree program predicts a headcount (HDCT) of 10 in the program’s first year, 2026-2027, rising to a HDCT of 40 by the target year, 2030-2031. Enrollment projections predict a full-time equated student enrollment (FTES) of nine (9) in the degree program’s first year. The projections continue as follows: FTES 2027-28, 21; 2028-29, 26; and 2029-30, 32. William & Mary anticipates 36 graduates per year beginning in 2030-31. If projections are met, then the proposed degree program will meet Council’s productivity/viability standards within five years, as required.

William & Mary indicates the assumptions for the projected student enrollment are: Retention rate: 95%; Full-time students: 85%. Part-time students: 15%. Summer enrollment will not be required.

The Sample Plans of Study shows full-time students who take non-thesis coursework will be required to take 15 credit hours per semester to graduate in one (1) year. Part-time students will be required to take six (6) credit hours per semester to graduate in 2.5 years. Full-time students who take thesis coursework will be required to take 12 credit hours per semester to graduate in 1.5 years. Part-time students will be required to take six (6) credits per semester to graduate in three (3) years.

William & Mary provided the following information on student demand. According to the university's proposal:

The proposed MS in Data Science degree program will be marketed to three groups of students: (1) current students enrolled in the BS in Data Science degree program who seek to continue at William & Mary for a master's degree to gain deeper expertise in AI methodologies within a data science framework; (2) professionals in related fields who wish to re-skill in modern data science and artificial intelligence techniques; and (3) students planning to pursue a doctoral degree who seek rigorous preparation in the research methods required for advanced professional roles in data science and artificial intelligence.

Evidence of student demand comes from two sources: 1) a survey of demand among William & Mary undergraduate students, and 2) data on enrollment in data science and AI courses.

Student Survey

In the fall 2025, the Department of Data Science conducted a survey of undergraduate students at William & Mary. The survey was sent to undergraduate students who were enrolled in the Bachelor of Science (BS) in Data Science degree program. A total of 224 students were sent an invitation via email to complete the online survey. All surveyed students were at least sophomores, juniors, or seniors. Thirty-nine (39) students completed the survey. Thirty-six (36) students indicated they would be interested in applying to the proposed degree program if approved. Most students surveyed would be qualified to enroll in the proposed degree program in the next two years.

Course Enrollment

In the fall 2025, the Department of Data Science evaluated undergraduate enrollment patterns for students enrolled in the BS in Data Science who also were registered for courses specifically focused on AI-related skills. Of the 225 undergraduates enrolled in the BS in Data Science degree program, 113 students were enrolled in AI-focused courses.

Duplication

Four (4) public institutions in Virginia offer a similar degree program: Old Dominion University (ODU), the University of Virginia (UVA), Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech). A fifth public institution, George Mason University (GMU), offers a related degree program.

ODU offers a Master of Science (MS) in Data Science and Analytics.

UVA offers a Master of Science (MS) in Data Science.

VCU offers a Master of Science (MS) in Data Science.

Virginia Tech offers a Master of Science (MS) in Data Science.

GMU offers a Master of Science (MS) in Data Analytics Engineering.

William & Mary provided information for student enrollment and completion data for existing degree programs at public institutions in Virginia with the same CIP code or similar name and/or curriculum requirements as the proposed degree program.

Enrollments and Degrees Awarded at Comparable Degree Programs in Virginia

Enrollment	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024
George Mason University	527	602	727	780	687
Old Dominion University			29	36	54
University of Virginia		258	199	185	221
Virginia Commonwealth University					1
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University					
Degrees Awarded	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
George Mason University	222	153	319	346	402
Old Dominion University		4	4	8	16
University of Virginia		139	158	123	143
Virginia Commonwealth University					
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University		174	173	158	138

***Staff note.** In William & Mary’s original New Degree Program form, Duplication section, information was not included for a related, existing degree program offered by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech). In SCHEV staff’s feedback to the institution, the missing information was noted. In the final proposal, William & Mary added Virginia Tech’s Master of Science (MS) in Data Science and data for the degree program. However, the numbers shown in the duplication table for degrees awarded, as indicated in William & Mary’s final document, were not correct. The numbers provided were for Virginia Tech’s Bachelor of Science (BS) in Data Science degree program and not the Master’s degree in Data Science. Virginia Tech’s degree program was initiated fall 2025 and no students have graduated from the degree program.

Projected Resources Needs for the Proposed Degree Program

Projected revenue from tuition and educational and general fees (E&G) would support the proposed degree program. William & Mary's provost affirms the institution will not seek additional state resources to initiate and sustain the degree program.

Board Approval

The William & Mary Board of Visitors approved the proposed degree program on September 26, 2025.

Staff Feedback

In the final proposal, William & Mary did not fully address all feedback provided by staff regarding the original submission.

- Staff indicated that the content of the core coursework in the proposed degree program is not fully aligned with a degree program in data science. The curriculum combines data science and artificial intelligence, which is not reflected in the degree program name or Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code. Each discipline is classified under a separate CIP code: data science is 30.7001 and artificial intelligence is 11.0102. As indicated in the Harvard Data Science Review article cited in the proposal, "data science and AI have much in common;" however, the two are distinct fields with "a need for each to learn from the other." William & Mary's proposal does not reflect the distinction.
- The proposal references the recent change of the name of an academic organization for data science to become the "Alliance for Data Science and AI" as evidence of the incorporation of artificial intelligence into data science. The name of the organization clearly indicates that the two distinct disciplines have been combined. The combination has not similarly been reflected in the proposed degree program's name and selected CIP code.
- Staff feedback on the original submission indicated that the proposal did not include objective, cited evidence of the need in Virginia or in industry, specifically for a master's-level degree in the proposed discipline. Evidence of the need specifically for a master's level degree was not provided by William & Mary in the final proposal.
- The text in the Response to Current Needs (Specific Demand) section includes a quote from an article by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership indicating the "considerable" demand for data science professionals in Virginia. The article is specifically about the "Tech Talent Investment Program." And, in fact, Virginia's Tech Talent Investment Program deliberately does not include data science as a degree program prioritized for expansion by the Commonwealth. The article quoted is not an acceptable source to justify specific demand for a degree program in data science.
- Staff provided feedback regarding the original submission's content in the Response to Current Needs (Specific Demand) section. William and Mary added new information in the Specific Demand section for the final proposal. The text indicates: "At the federal level, agencies are expanding data-driven capacity through strategic hiring of graduate-trained data scientists." However, how – and how well -- the sources and new information support the statement is unclear. Moreover, the subsequent sources provided do not support the assertion that

the federal government is currently hiring data scientists with master's degrees in data science.

- Information quoted from USAJobs is employment demand, rather than specific demand for masters-level trained professionals with a degree in data science. Although USAJobs indicates “data scientists are needed in many sectors,” the preceding sentence notes the positions “require sector-specific domain knowledge,” which is not a part of the proposed degree program. Further, the inclusion of the information conflicts with the indicated purpose and focus of the proposed degree program. The issue of whether the degree program is only data science, or data science and artificial intelligence remains unclear.
- The referenced toolkit to “bring more data scientists into the federal workforce” was published in November 2024. No information was provided to indicate that the purpose of the toolkit was to increase the number of masters-level trained data scientists. Further, the information in the proposal does not provide evidence that the toolkit is currently being used, or that, at this time, the federal government is seeking masters-level trained professionals with data science degrees.
- William & Mary quoted in the proposal: “Winning the AI race is non-negotiable. America must continue to be the dominant force in artificial intelligence to promote prosperity and protect our economic and national security.” The quote is in reference to the report “Winning the AI Race: America’s AI Action Plan” published July 2025 by the Office of Science and Technology Policy in the Executive Office of the President. The AI Action Plan does not indicate a need to train or hire individuals with masters-level degrees in artificial intelligence or data science.
- In the proposal document, the information states: “The investment in jobs for professionals with AI-ready skills is reflected in policy across the federal government, including in direct funding mandates to the National Science Foundation to improve education for workforce development in AI.”¹⁷ The direct funding mandates to the National Science Foundation are not to improve education for workforce development in AI. The source indicates the funding is to be used to “prioritize research on the use of AI in education.” The information appears to refer to how artificial intelligence can be used **in** an education setting. The information does not indicate that professionals with master’s degrees in data science are needed.

Overall, the information provided in the proposal does not support the claim that demand exists in Virginia for professionals with a master’s degree in data science.

- The student demand survey is not valid for demonstrating student demand for the proposed degree program. One of the key survey questions was not phrased accurately. Prospective students should have been asked if they “would enroll” in the proposed degree program if William & Mary offered the degree program rather than, if they “would be interested in enrolling” which is a statement of preference inconsequential to a plan to act. Being interested in a degree program is not synonymous with the intention to actually enroll in the degree program if the degree program is available. Further, the student pool surveyed included sophomore students, whose responses are traditionally not included as

¹⁷ The White House. (2025, April 23). Fact sheet: President Donald J. Trump advances AI education for American youth. Retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/04/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-advances-ai-education-for-american-youth/>

evidence of student demand because sophomores would not be able to enroll in the proposed degree program for at least three more years. Seniors and juniors are customarily the ranks of undergraduate students who can provide reliable responses to a survey for a masters-level degree program.

- For the final proposal, information was added to the Student Demand section about students in the Bachelor of Science (BS) in Data Science degree program enrolling in baccalaureate-level artificial intelligence courses. Enrollment in bachelors-level artificial intelligence courses does not guarantee or even indicate students' interest or future enrollment in the proposed MS in Data Science degree program.
- According to William & Mary's assumptions, 85% of students would be enrolled full-time and 15% of students would be enrolled part-time. William & Mary indicated the degree program would be "marketed to professionals in related fields who wish to re-skill." Given: (i) the plan that 85% of students would be full-time; (ii) the excessive number of credit hours for graduate-level students; and (iii) a target population of working professionals, it is not clear that William & Mary has considered how working professionals would be able to work full-time and matriculate in the proposed degree program full-time and/or the effects of these assumptions on projected student enrollment.

Staff Observation

- According to SCHEV degree-award data for 2021 through 2025, a total of 2,037 degrees were granted for master's degree programs in data science and closely related degree programs. It appears Virginia's four-year public institutions are already producing a high number of masters-level trained graduates with degrees in data science or data analytics. What Virginia's need is, or that Virginia has a need for additional masters-level trained graduates with a degree in data science, is not adequately evidenced in William & Mary's proposal.

Committee Action/Resolution

Regarding the proposed degree program, the Committee possesses four (4) options: (i) act to approve, (ii) act to approve with condition(s), (iii) act to disapprove, or (iv) take no action and/or table for future action.

If approved, adopt the following resolution and transmit it to Council:

BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia grants approval to The College of William and Mary in Virginia to initiate a Master of Science (MS) degree program in Data Science (CIP code: 30.7001), effective fall 2026.

If approved with condition(s), amend the resolution above to include the condition(s), adopt the amended resolution, and transmit it to Council.

If not approved, adopt the following resolution and transmit it to Council:

BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia does not grant approval to The College of William and Mary in Virginia to initiate a Master of Science (MS) degree program in Data Science (CIP code: 30.7001).

If tabled for future action, instruct that the Minutes reflect the Committee's invoking of its prerogative/option to take no action at this meeting and/or to defer action until a future meeting.

**The College of William and Mary in Virginia
Master of Science (MS) in Computational Operations Research
(CIP: 27.0304)**

Degree Program Description

The College of William and Mary in Virginia is proposing the creation of a Master of Science (MS) degree program in Computational Operations Research to be initiated fall 2026. The proposed degree program would be located in the College of Arts and Sciences, Office of the Dean.

The proposed MS in Computational Operations Research would require 30 credit hours. The degree program would require 15 credit hours of core coursework and 15 credit hours of restricted electives.

William & Mary provided the following information for the degree program description. According to William & Mary's proposal:

The purpose of the proposed MS degree program in Computational Operations Research is to prepare students to identify, analyze, and solve real-world problems through an interdisciplinary approach combining computational methods with mathematical modeling, applied statistics, and domain knowledge. The proposed program will provide students with knowledge and skills to identify problems that can be solved with operations research techniques (e.g. linear programming, integer programming, simulation, machine learning, and queuing theory), to formulate these problems mathematically, and then to implement the appropriate algorithms to find solutions. Students will learn how to select and apply appropriate methods for problem formulation and solution. Students will master software tools that enable them to evaluate and make predictions from large, complex, and dynamic datasets. Graduates of the proposed program will be able to apply operations research skills to a variety of problems encountered in industry. Graduates of the proposed program will be prepared to serve as consultants and operations research professionals in sectors such as manufacturing, healthcare, the defense industry, insurance, financial services, banking, and transportation.

Operations research is defined as “the scientific process of transforming data into insights to make better decisions.”¹⁸ The proposed MS in Computational Operations Research degree program is an operations research degree with an additional emphasis on computing methods, including computational optimization, the use of multiple programming and modeling languages, and machine learning/artificial intelligence (ML/AI). The term “computational” emphasizes the addition of computational methods in operations research.”

¹⁸ What are operations research and analytics? (n.d.) INFORMS. <https://www.informs.org/Explore/Operations-Research-Analytics>

Justification for the Proposed Degree Program

Response to Current Needs (Specific Demand)

William & Mary provided the following information for justification. According to William & Mary's proposal:

The field of operations research applies advanced analytical techniques from mathematics, statistics, and computing to solve complex problems in planning, decision-making, and resource optimization. Operations research is referred to as the “science of better”¹⁹ because it applies proven analytical approaches to improve decision-making processes in various fields, including healthcare, defense, manufacturing, financial services, and government. A need exists in Virginia and the nation for professionals with graduate level training in operations research to meet ever-increasing demands for optimization and efficiency. According to a recent report by the Virginia Office of Education Economics, operations research is ranked 8th among science and engineering occupations with the highest projected job growth in Virginia.²⁰ Sokanu's Career Explorer, the Internet's Largest Career Advancement Platform serving over 10 million people per year, lists Virginia as the third largest operations research job market in the United States, after California and Texas.²¹

The proposed MS in Computational Operations Research is an operations research degree with the additional emphasis on computational methods to ensure that graduates are prepared with the necessary computational and AI skills to meet a rapidly changing workforce. The proposed degree program will respond to current needs by preparing professionals who are equipped to design and lead operations research projects that support informed decision-making in industry and the public sector. The current needs in Virginia include demand for professionals with graduate-level training to: 1) help model and solve complex and emerging problems in the public sector domains of government and defense; and 2) provide optimization and efficiencies in private sector fields such as healthcare.

Operations Research in Manufacturing, Government, and Defense Industry

Operations research professionals model and solve complex problems in areas such as logistics, supply chain optimization, transportation, resource allocation, scheduling, and systems performance. Labeling Virginia as the “East Coast Logistics Hub,” the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) indicates that “Virginia's diverse ecosystem of distribution and supply chain operations is made up of more than 4,600 supply chain companies, spanning warehousing and storage, road, rail, air, and maritime freight transport.”²² As home to a number of defense planning centers, Virginia is a locus of demand for operations researchers who work alongside data scientists and statisticians to solve dynamic, complex problems related to national defense. As an example, the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) headquartered at Ft. Belvoir houses the Analytics Center of Excellence (ACE), whose services include “operations research, statistical methods, data mining, machine

¹⁹ *What Operations Research Is* (n.d.) OR: The Science of Better. <http://www.scienceofbetter.org/what/>

²⁰ *Proposed new STEM Workforce Profile for the Commonwealth of Virginia* (2022). Virginia Office of Education Economics. https://issuu.com/vedpvirginia/docs/proposed_new_stem_workforce_profile_d05bd0da16202c Page 15.

²¹ *The Job Market for Operations Research Analysts in the United States* (n.d.). Career Explorer by Sokanu. <https://www.careerexplorer.com/careers/operations-research-analyst/job-market/>

²² *America's East Coast Logistics Hub* (n.d.) Virginia Economic Development Partnership. <https://www.vedp.org/industry/supply-chain-managemen> t

learning and artificial intelligence, modeling and simulation, and war game support.”²³ The purpose of ACE is to “appl[y] the science of rational decision making and the study, design and integration of complex processes and systems with the goal of predicting behavior and improving or optimizing performance.”²⁴ The critical work conducted by ACE and other public agencies and offices is necessarily supported by operations research analysts on their teams.

There is a need for graduate-trained operations research professionals in Virginia and the nation who can respond to government and defense needs for efficiency and optimization. According to guidance from operations research experts Drs. Laura Albert and Elena Gerstmann in a recent analysis for the Federal News Network concerning the recently established Department of Government Efficiency, “If we are serious about making the government work better, we draw more heavily on a powerful resource that’s been delivering results for decades – operations research.”²⁵ The proposed program will respond to the need for graduate-trained professionals who can develop and use models to simulate real-world systems and forecast outcomes; conduct cost-benefit analyses, risk assessments, and performance evaluations; and support decision-making by providing data-driven insights to decision-makers in government agencies, defense, and other vital domains of the public sector.

Operations Research to Solve Private Sector Problems: Example in Healthcare

In addition to demand for operations researchers in the public sector, private industries in Virginia and the nation are increasingly investing in operations research skills to solve critical problems related to cost containment and effective delivery of products and services. One example of an industry engaged in deploying operations research analyses in its services and operations, and one that will benefit from an increased use of operations research in the foreseeable future, is the healthcare industry. The healthcare industry is a vital industry for Virginia, but the state also suffers from significant healthcare challenges, especially with regard to the scheduling and delivery of primary care services, responding to nurse staffing shortages, and delivering effective behavioral health services.²⁶ In *Application of Operations Research to Healthcare*, operations research expert Jia Guo argues:

Operations research plays a critical role in healthcare...especially when the medical resources are limited and the patient demand is high. Operations research techniques could be applied to optimize the use of medical resources, significantly improve service quality and reduce operations cost.²⁷

²³ *Analytics Center for Excellence* (n.d.) Defense Logistics Agency: The Nation’s Logistics Combat Support Agency. (n.d.) <https://www.dla.mil/Information-Operations/Analytics/>

²⁴ *Analytics Center for Excellence* (n.d.) Defense Logistics Agency: The Nation’s Logistics Combat Support Agency. (n.d.) <https://www.dla.mil/Information-Operations/Analytics/>

²⁵ Albert, L. and Gerstman, E. (2025, June 27). The government wants efficiency. Operations research already knows how. *Federal News Network*. <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/commentary/2025/06/the-government-wants-efficiency-operations-research-already-knows-how/>

²⁶ Andrew, M., Briscoe, B., Vardavas, R., Wolters, N., Qureshi, N., Nham, W., and Abir, M. (2024, March 4). Identifying strategies for strengthening the health care workforce in the Commonwealth of Virginia. *Rand Health Quarterly*. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10911755/>

²⁷ Guo, J. (2023). Application of operations research to healthcare. *IntechOpen*. Doi: 10.5772/intechopen.109919, section 2.1

Multiple recent studies, including a National Institutes of Health review of operational research in healthcare coordination in disaster management²⁸ and a study conducted by the Columbia Business School on the use of operations research to reduce delays for healthcare,²⁹ demonstrate the value of operations research techniques to solve critical healthcare problems.

While healthcare is one example of an industry that will benefit from the skills of operations research analysts, these professionals add value to project teams in a range of private sector industries, including financial services, banking, transportation and storage, scientific research, product design, and other sectors that benefit from optimization and efficiency. Such professionals are primarily trained at the graduate level. According to a recent analysis reported by Forbes, the modal degree for operations research analysts is the master's degree, while the second most common degree earned is a doctorate (40%).³⁰ The proposed program will respond to the need for graduate-level trained professionals who possess skills in logistics, optimization, and dynamic problem-solving to respond to pressing operational challenges related to quality service delivery and cost containment.

Employment Demand

Information about employment demand for occupations aligned to the proposed degree program is provided by the Virginia Office of Education Economics (VOEE) "Degree Program Labor Market Profile" report.

Tables A and B below provide five-year workforce projections for the occupations most closely aligned to the proposed Master of Science (MS) in Computational Operations Research degree program. In both tables, the first column indicates the aligned occupations. The second column indicates the number of individuals employed in the occupation in 2024. The third column indicates the number of individuals projected to be employed in the occupation in 2029. The fourth column indicates the number of individuals projected to be added to the workforce by 2029 in comparison to the 2024 workforce.

Table B is specific to the institution's Growth and Opportunity (GO) Virginia region. The localities in the GO Virginia region include the cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and Williamsburg, and the counties of Accomack, Isle of Wight, James City, Northampton, Southampton, and York.

²⁸ Tippong, D., Petrovic, S., and Akbari, V. (2021, October 28). A review of applications of operational research in healthcare coordination in disaster management. *European Journal of Operations Research*. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8552591/>

²⁹ Green, L. (2008). Using operations research to reduce delays for healthcare. INFORMS. https://business.columbia.edu/sites/default/files-efs/pubfiles/3874/OR%20in%20Healthcare_LindaGreen.pdf

³⁰ Rothberg, E. (2021, April 21). Operations research analyst: The fastest growing job you've never heard of. *Forbes Technology Council*. <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbestechcouncil/2021/12/20/operations-research-analyst-the-fastest-growing-job-youve-never-heard-of/>

A) State Labor Market Information for Aligned Occupations

Occupation	Workforce (2024)	Workforce (2029 projection)	Workforce Change (2024 to 2029 projection)	Workforce % Change (2024 to 2029 projection)
Mathematicians	462	474	12	2.7%
Statisticians	969	1,027	58	6.0%
Natural Science Managers	1,763	1,877	115	6.5%
Actuaries	911	1,038	127	13.9%
Data Scientists	6,555	7,887	1,331	20.3%
Mathematical Science Occupations, All Other	268	278	10	3.9%

B) Regional (GO Virginia) Labor Market Information for Aligned Occupations

Occupation	Workforce (2024)	Workforce (2029 projection)	Workforce Change (2024 to 2029 projection)	Workforce % Change (2024 to 2029 projection)
Mathematicians	76	74	-2	-2.9%
Statisticians	88	92	4	4.5%
Natural Science Managers	226	239	13	5.7%
Actuaries	35	48	13	38.6%
Data Scientists	635	738	103	16.1%
Mathematical Science Occupations, All Other	53	54	2	3.0%
Mathematicians	76	74	-2	-2.9%

Return on Investment

Return on investment (ROI) information is provided by a calculation of ROI for graduate degree programs conducted by The Foundation for Research on Equal Opportunity. The data used in the ROI calculation classified degree programs at the four-digit CIP code level (for the proposed degree program, CIP code: 27.03). The ROI analysis was originally published in October 2021, and the data has not been updated.

No return-on-investment data were available under the proposed CIP code for the MS in Computational Operations Research.

Student Demand

The summary of projected student enrollments for the proposed degree program predicts a headcount (HDCT) of 9 in the program's first year (2026-2027), rising to a HDCT of 24 by the target year, 2030-2031. Enrollment projections predict a full-time equated student enrollment (FTES) of 8 in the degree program's first year. The

projections continue as follows: FTES 2027-28, 17; 2028-29, 17; and 2029-30, 23. William & Mary anticipates 10 graduates per year beginning in 2030-31. If projections are met, then the proposed degree program will meet Council's existing productivity/viability standards within five years, as required.

William & Mary indicates the assumptions for the projected student enrollment are: Retention rate: 95%; Full-time students: 95%. Part-time students: 5%. Full-time students graduate in 2 years. Part-time students graduate in 3 years. Summer enrollment will not be required.

William & Mary provided the following information to demonstrate student demand for the proposed degree program. According to William & Mary's proposal:

The proposed MS in Computational Operations Research degree program will be marketed to three groups of students: (1) current students enrolled in the BS in Computational and Applied Mathematics and Statistics degree program who seek to continue at William & Mary for a master's degree to gain deeper expertise with computational methods and operations research analysis; (2) early career professionals with a background in mathematics, statistics, and programming who wish to specialize in operations research for specific career paths; and (3) members of the military who seek advanced training in operations research.

Evidence of student demand comes from two sources: (1) enrollment and graduation figures for master's students in the existing concentration in computational operations research within the MS in Computer Science; and (2) a survey of demand among William & Mary undergraduate students.

Computational Operations Research Concentration Enrollment

Computational operations research exists as a sub area, or concentration, within the MS in Computer Science degree program. Current enrollment includes a five-year average of 20 students in the existing concentration.”

Student Survey

In fall 2025, faculty in “the Department of Mathematics conducted a survey of undergraduate students at William & Mary. A survey was administered on September 22, 2025 to current William & Mary juniors registered for MATH 323 Operations Research: Deterministic Models, which is an appropriate upper division undergraduate course to gauge interest in the proposed MS in Computational Operations Research degree program. The survey was administered on paper during the first five minutes of the class time. 19 students completed the survey. Six (6) students indicated that they would apply for the MS in Computational Operations Research.”

Duplication

Two (2) public institutions in Virginia offer a related degree program: George Mason University (GMU) and Old Dominion University (ODU).

GMU offers a Master of Science (MS) in Operations Research.

ODU offers a Master of Science (MS) in Computational and Applied Mathematics.

William & Mary provided student enrollment and completion data for public institutions in Virginia that currently offer degree programs with the same CIP code, or names and/or curriculum requirements that are similar or related to the proposed degree program.

Enrollments and Degrees Awarded at Comparable Degree Programs in Virginia

Enrollment	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024
George Mason University	28	25	24	16	17
Old Dominion University	4	6	5	4	5
Degrees Awarded	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
George Mason University	12	11	10	9	4
Old Dominion University	6	9	7	12	8

***Staff note.** In William & Mary’s original New Degree Program form, Duplication section, information was not included for a related, existing degree program offered by Old Dominion University. In SCHEV staff’s feedback to the institution, the missing information was noted. In the final proposal, William & Mary added ODU’s Master of Science (MS) in Computational and Applied Mathematics and data for the degree program. However, the numbers shown above for the ODU program’s “Degrees Awarded,” as indicated in William & Mary’s final document, were not correct. In W&M’s table above, the degrees-awarded number shown for the ODU program in each year is the total degrees awarded for masters-level and doctoral-level completions. The correct number of masters-only degrees awarded for ODU’s MS in Computational and Applied Mathematics are: 2021, 4; 2022, 3; 2023, 3; 2024, 10; and 2025, 2.

Projected Resources Needs for the Proposed Degree Program

Projected revenue from tuition and educational and general fees (E&G) would support the proposed degree program. William & Mary’s provost affirms the institution will not seek additional state resources to initiate and sustain the degree program.

Board Approval

The William & Mary Board of Visitors approved the proposed degree program on September 26, 2025.

Staff Feedback

In the final proposal, William & Mary did not fully address all feedback provided by staff regarding the original submission.

- In the original proposal, William & Mary selected the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code for the proposed degree program to be 27.0304. In the feedback to the institution, staff noted a misalignment between the selected CIP code, the chosen degree program name, and the stated purpose and focus of the proposed degree program. In the final proposal, the

misalignment issue was not addressed. The proposal indicates the focus of the proposed degree program is to “provide students with knowledge and skills to identify problems that can be solved with operations research techniques.” Further, graduates of the proposed degree program would “be prepared to serve as... operations research professionals.” The CIP code for operations research is 14.3701 and is assigned to degree programs that focus on “the development and application of complex mathematical or simulation models to solve problems involving operational systems” (<https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/cipdetail.aspx?y=56&cip=14.3701>). William & Mary is choosing the 27.0304 CIP code, which is in the Mathematics and Statistics CIP category. Based on William & Mary’s proposal, graduates of the proposed degree program would not be academically trained as mathematicians or statisticians. Moreover, data about degree programs, including graduates, is reported to the National Center for Education (NCES), Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). The proposed CIP code could result in improper data being reported to IPEDS.

- The Response to Current Needs (Specific Demand) section focuses on information about operations research as a field. The information provided does not indicate the need in Virginia for individuals with a master’s degree in operations research. No information is provided to address computational operations research—the name of the proposed degree program—or a need for professionals with such a degree. Evidence was not provided to indicate a need for operations researchers with an “additional emphasis on computing methods,” which the proposal indicates would be the focus of the curriculum in the proposed degree program. The information in the Response to Current Needs (Specific Demand) section also does not address mathematics and statistics, computational and applied mathematics, which is the selected Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code group for the degree program. As proposed, the information in the Response to Current Needs (Specific Demand) section, the degree program name, the CIP Code, and curriculum do not align.
- In the original proposal, William & Mary did not provide information in the Student Demand section. In the final proposal, William & Mary added two (2) sources for student demand. The student demand survey is not valid for demonstrating student demand for the proposed degree program.
 - William & Mary wrote in the Student Demand section, “Six (6) students indicated that they would apply for the MS in Computational Operations Research.” The student demand survey did not ask students whether they would apply for the proposed degree program. The survey asked students whether they “would ... be interested in enrolling.” Prospective students should have been asked whether they “would enroll” in the proposed degree program if William & Mary offered the degree program rather than, whether they “would ... be interested in enrolling,” which is a statement of preference inconsequential to a plan to act. Being interested in a degree program is not synonymous with the intention to actually enroll in the degree program if the degree program is available.
 - In the final proposal, information was added to the Student Demand section about student enrollment in the Master of Science (MS) in Computer Science, Computational Operations Research sub area. William & Mary provided a five-year average of enrollment in the sub area. Use of a five-year average, rather than the actual number of students enrolled in each of the five years, does not reflect increases or decreases in student enrollment over the selected time frame. Information for student enrollment in an existing sub area should be provided in a format to show annual enrollment;

data for annual enrollment demonstrates consistency or a lack thereof of student enrollment and thus, accurately reflects whether student demand exists for a proposed degree program.

Staff Observations

- In the Response to Current Needs (Specific Demand) section, the text refers to an analysis reported by Forbes indicating “the modal degree for operations research analysts is the master’s degree, while the second most common degree earned is a doctorate (40%).” The analysis referenced is unpublished. As such, staff could not verify the validity and reliability of the information provided.
- According to the information in the Degree Program Description section, “graduates of the proposed program will be prepared to serve as consultants and operations research professionals.” Employment demand for operations researchers has not been provided in the Degree Program Labor Market Profile report from the Virginia Office of Education Economics (VOEE), because William & Mary’s chosen Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code of 27.0304 is not aligned to the operations research occupation. The CIP code for a degree program preparing graduates to be operations researchers is 14.3701.

Committee Action/Resolution

Regarding the proposed degree program, the Committee possesses four (4) options: (i) act to approve, (ii) act to approve with condition(s), (iii) act to disapprove, or (iv) take no action and table for future action.

If approved, adopt the following resolution and transmit it to Council:

BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia grants approval to The College of William and Mary in Virginia to initiate a Master of Science (MS) degree program in Computational Operations Research (CIP code: 27.0304), effective fall 2026.

If approved with condition(s), amend the resolution above to include the condition(s), adopt the amended resolution and transmit it to Council.

If not approved, adopt the following resolution and transmit it to Council:

BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia does not grant approval to The College of William and Mary in Virginia to initiate a Master of Science (MS) degree program in Computational Operations Research (CIP code: 27.0304).

If tabled for future action, instruct that the Minutes reflect the Committee’s invoking of its prerogative/option to take no action at this meeting and/or to defer action until a future meeting.

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Master of Science (MS) in Water Resources
(CIP: 40.0605)

Degree Program Description

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) is proposing the creation of a Master of Science (MS) degree program in Water Resources to be initiated fall 2026. The proposed degree program would be located in the Graduate School.

The proposed MS in Water Resources would require 30 credit hours. The degree would require 15 credit hours of core coursework and 6-12 credit hours of electives. Students would be required to complete thesis coursework or non-thesis coursework. Students selecting to complete the thesis coursework would be required to complete 6-9 credit hours of research and a thesis. Students selecting to complete the non-thesis coursework would be required to complete 3-6 credit hours for a project and report.

Virginia Tech provided the following information for the degree program description. According to Virginia Tech's proposal:

The purpose of the proposed M.S. in Water Resources is to prepare students to lead efforts in managing, analyzing, and improving water quality, watershed ecosystems, and water resources. The degree program will provide students with a comprehensive understanding of water resources, including [the] social, environmental, and ecological dimensions. Students will learn to conduct water risk assessments using advanced computer modeling techniques to support informed decision-making in watershed management. Students will learn to use and validate computational models to integrate, synthesize, and interpret hydrologic data, including physical, chemical, biological, and human-influenced factors affecting water quality and quantity. The proposed degree program will equip students with knowledge “to take leadership roles in addressing water resource challenges, such as clean water access and the multidimensional impacts of floods and droughts.” The proposed degree program “will produce graduates equipped to guide teams in applying principles and concepts of water science and water resources management to solve complex water resources challenges.

Justification for the Proposed Degree Program

Response to Current Needs (Specific Demand)

Virginia Tech provided the following information for justification. According to Virginia Tech's proposal:

Water is Earth's most precious resource, and it has no substitutes. Water resources include “lakes, streams, ground water, coastal waters, wetlands, and other waters; their associated ecosystems; and the human uses they support (e.g., drinking water, recreation, and fish consumption). The *extent* of water resources (their amount and distribution) and their *condition* (physical, chemical, and biological attributes) are critical to ecosystems, human uses, and the overall function and sustainability of the hydrologic cycle.”³¹

³¹ United States Environmental Protection Agency. (2025, February 5). *Water*. <https://www.epa.gov/report-environment/water> p. 1

In 2024, “2.2 billion people still live without access to safely managed drinking water, and 3.5 billion lack access to safely managed sanitation.”³² These inequities have significant economic and health consequences. The U.S. Geological Survey notes that “as we experience increased stress on our Nation’s water resources, the need to understand and protect them will require highly trained and skilled individuals in the fields of water resources and water management.”³³

Virginia faces particularly urgent challenges. A 2015 Joint Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) report³⁴ found that Eastern Virginia lacks sufficient groundwater to meet demand, and the state’s water plan lacks clear strategies. These pressures are intensified by shifting climate patterns, which increase the frequency of droughts, flooding, and saltwater intrusion, which undermine drinking water security, agriculture, and infrastructure. In response, Virginia has taken steps to strengthen statewide water planning. The first State Water Resources Plan was developed in 2015. The 2020 update to that plan emphasized the need for alternative water supply sources.³⁵ That same year, the Virginia General Assembly established the Community Flood Preparedness Fund to support flood planning and mitigation efforts across the Commonwealth³⁶ and enacted legislation “requiring the State Water Control Board to adopt regulations [effective 2024] creating regional water supply planning areas based primarily on river basins.”³⁷ These initiatives underscore Virginia’s commitment to data-driven water management and the need for professionals who can integrate hydrologic science, modeling, and policy analysis to lead effective planning and implementation. Such interdisciplinary integration requires advanced analytical, quantitative, and policy competencies to connect and interpret complex environmental, social, and technical systems. These are skills that extend beyond the technical foundations typically provided at the baccalaureate level.

The proposed M.S. in Water Resources responds to demand for expertise in two complementary areas: 1) water science and technology and 2) water resources management.

Advancing the Science and Technology of Water Resources Management

Water systems are shaped by both natural variability and human activity. “As changing climate patterns, biological and chemical contaminants, and aging water infrastructure systems threaten availability and quality, communities and ecosystems will increasingly rely on advances in science and technology for resilience.”³⁸ Virginia’s 2020 State Water

³² United Nations. (2024, March 22.). *Water crises threaten world peace (report)*.

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2024/03/un-world-water-development-report/> p. 1.

³³ U.S. Geological Survey. (2024, January). *The U.S. geological survey water resources research act program—meeting local, state, and national needs for water resources science and training*.

<https://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2023/3031/fs20233031.pdf> p. 3.

³⁴ *Effectiveness of Virginia’s water resource planning and management*. (2016). Joint Audit and Review Commission. <https://jlarc.virginia.gov/water-2016.asp> p. 2.

³⁵ Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. (2022, January). *Virginia state water resources plan: A report of Virginia’s water resources*.

<https://www.deq.virginia.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/16134/637991887436000000>, p. xxxvii.

³⁶ Virginia General Assembly. (2020). § 10.1-1330. *Clean energy and community flood preparedness*. Code of Virginia. <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title10.1/chapter13/section10.1-1330/>, p. 1.

³⁷ Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. (n.d.). *Virginia state water resources plan*. <https://www.deq.virginia.gov/water/water-quantity/water-supply-planning/virginia-water-resources-plan> p. 1.

³⁸ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (2025, January 16). *Water research*. <https://www.epa.gov/water-research> p. 1.

Resources Plan emphasizes that, “the science and data that drives [water] resource management decision making must remain current and relevant.”³⁹ At the same time, the water sector is undergoing a digital transformation.

Emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, smart sensors, and remote monitoring, are transforming how water systems are observed, analyzed, and managed.⁴⁰ These technologies enable predictive modeling of floods and droughts, contamination detection, and infrastructure optimization, while introducing new resource demands (e.g., water use for cooling AI data centers or wastewater management for chip manufacturing). Such advances shift water management from reactive monitoring to data-driven decision-making, requiring professionals who can interpret large datasets, model hydrologic systems, and apply scientific insights within policy and regulatory frameworks. Graduate-level education provides the methodological rigor and research experience necessary to integrate these emerging technologies into practical solutions for complex water systems. Modern water management requires advanced computational methods, multi-scale spatial analysis, machine learning, and uncertainty quantification. The proposed M.S. in Water Resources integrates scientific research, advanced data analytics, and policy analysis. Graduates will be prepared to leverage data and technology to guide management decisions, enhance water quality and watershed resilience, and advance sustainable solutions for communities and ecosystems.

Water Resource Management: Balancing Competing Demands

Ensuring access to clean, reliable water requires not only scientific insight but also effective governance and management. Water management is defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as “the control and movement of water resources to minimize damage to life and property and to maximize efficient beneficial use.”⁴¹ In practice, this means balancing competing demands,⁴² such as economic productivity vs. environmental sustainability, or local vs. system-wide needs.⁴³ For example, flooding and sea-level rise threaten coastal communities, while drought and groundwater depletion strain agricultural and municipal supplies.

In Virginia, the Department of Environmental Quality is developing models to simulate complex water systems and make trade-offs among uses more transparent.⁴⁴ This, as well as initiatives such as the Community Flood Preparedness Fund administered by the Virginia

³⁹ Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. (2022, January). *Virginia state water resources plan: A report of Virginia’s water resources*.
<https://www.deq.virginia.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/16134/637991887436000000>, p. 112.

⁴⁰ Expósito, A., & Díez Cebollero, E. (2025). How the digital revolution is reshaping water management and policy: A focus on Spain. *Utilities Policy*, 96, 102020. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jup.2025.102020> p. 2.

⁴¹ United States Department of Agriculture. (n.d.). *Water Management*. Natural Resources Conservation Service. <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/water-management> p. 2.

⁴² RTI International. (2023, August 18). *Water resources management*. <https://www.rti.org/focus-area/water-resources-management> p. 2.

⁴³ EnvironmentalScience.org. (n.d.). *What is an integrated water resources manager?*
<https://www.environmentalscience.org/career/integrated-water-resources-manager> p. 1.

⁴⁴ Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. (2022, January). *Virginia state water resources plan: A report of Virginia’s water resources*.
<https://www.deq.virginia.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/16134/637991887436000000>, p. xl.

Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).⁴⁵ and Virginia’s climate adaptation and coastal resilience plans.⁴⁶ demonstrate the need for water professionals who can integrate scientific, technical, and policy knowledge to design and evaluate data-driven solutions. These leadership and analytical roles demand the depth of expertise and independent research capacity characteristic of graduate-level training. The proposed M.S. in Water Resources prepares graduates to translate science into strategies that balance economic productivity, environmental integrity, and community resilience. Graduates of the proposed program will be trained to work with stakeholders and policymakers to develop practical, science-based solutions to challenges involving water resources management.

Employment Demand

Information about employment demand for occupations aligned to the proposed degree program is provided by the Virginia Office of Education Economics (VOEE) “Degree Program Labor Market Profile” report.

Tables A and B below provide five-year workforce projections for the occupations most closely aligned to the proposed Master of Science (MS) in Water Resources degree program. In both tables, the first column indicates the aligned occupations. The second column indicates the number of individuals employed in the occupation in 2024. The third column indicates the number of individuals projected to be employed in the occupation in 2029. The fourth column indicates the number of individuals projected to be added to the workforce by 2029 in comparison to the 2024 workforce.

Table B is specific to the institution’s Growth and Opportunity (GO) Virginia region. The localities in the GO Virginia region include the cities of Covington, Lynchburg, Radford, Roanoke, and Salem, and the counties of Allegheny, Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Botetourt, Campbell, Craig, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski, and Roanoke.

C) State Labor Market Information for Aligned Occupations

Occupation	Workforce (2024)	Workforce (2029 projection)	Workforce Change (2024 to 2029 projection)	Workforce % Change (2024 to 2029 projection)
Natural Sciences Managers	1,719	1,826	107	6.2%
Hydrologists	287	295	8	2.8%

D) Regional (GO Virginia) Labor Market Information for Aligned Occupations

Occupation	Workforce (2024)	Workforce (2029 projection)	Workforce Change (2024 to 2029 projection)	Workforce % Change (2024 to 2029 projection)
-------------------	-------------------------	------------------------------------	---	---

⁴⁵ Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. (n.d.). *Community flood preparedness fund grants and loans*. <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/dam-safety-and-floodplains/dsfpm-cfpf> p. 1.

⁴⁶ Virginia Office of Resilience & Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources. (2025, July). *Resilience in the Commonwealth of Virginia: Status update*. Commonwealth of Virginia. <https://rga.lis.virginia.gov/Published/2025/RD375/PDF> p. 3-4.

Natural Sciences Managers	96	101	4	4.4%
Hydrologists	2	2	0	17.4%

Return on Investment

Return on investment (ROI) information is provided by a calculation of ROI for graduate-degree programs conducted by The Foundation for Research on Equal Opportunity. The data used in the ROI calculation classified degree programs at the four-digit CIP code level (for the proposed degree program, CIP code: 40.06). The return-on-investment analysis was originally published in October 2021, and the data have not been updated.

No return-on-investment data were available under the proposed CIP code for the proposed MS in Water Resources.

Student Demand

The summary of projected student enrollments for the proposed degree program predicts headcount (HDCT) of 10 in the degree program's first year, 2026-2027, rising to a HDCT of 16 by the target year, 2030-2031. Enrollment projections predict a full-time equated student enrollment (FTES) of 10 in the degree program's first year. The projections continue as follows: FTES 2027-28, 10; 2028-29, 16; and 2029-30, 16. Virginia Tech anticipates 12 graduates per year beginning in 2030-31. If projections are met, then the proposed degree program will meet Council's existing productivity/viability standards within five years, as required.

Virginia Tech indicates the assumptions for the projected student enrollment are: Retention rate: 75%; Full-time students: 100%; and Part-time students: 0%. Full-time students graduate in 1.5 years. Summer enrollment will not be required.

Virginia Tech provided the following information to demonstrate student demand for the proposed degree program. According to Virginia Tech's proposal:

The institution will market the proposed M.S. in Water Resources degree program to both current undergraduate students in related fields and individuals who hold a bachelor's degree in disciplines such as water resources, policy, and management, conservation biology, environmental policy, and other relevant areas. This includes recent graduates and early-career professionals seeking to advance their knowledge or careers in water resources.

To assess potential student interest, faculty in the College of Natural Resources and Environment conducted a survey in November 2024. The survey was distributed electronically and anonymously to undergraduate students in the following degree programs: Biological Sciences, Computational Modeling and Data Analytics, Environmental Science, Fish and Wildlife Conservation, Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation, Landscape Architecture, Geosciences, and Water: Resources Policy and Management. The survey remained open for 2.5 weeks.

A total of 53 undergraduate students responded to the survey. Of the 53 participants, 41 were seniors, 11 were juniors, and 1 was a sophomore.

When asked whether they would enroll in a proposed M.S. in Water Resources degree program if Virginia Tech offered it, seven (7) senior students selected “strongly agree” and 11 senior students selected “agree.” Two (2) junior students selected “strongly agree” and three (3) junior students selected “agree” in response to the question.

Duplication

Four (4) public institutions in Virginia offer a related degree program: Christopher Newport University (CNU), George Mason University (GMU), the University of Virginia (UVA), and Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU).

CNU offers a Master of Science (MS) in Environmental Science.

GMU offers a Master of Science (MS) in Environmental Science and Policy.

UVA offers a Master of Arts/Master of Science (MA/MS) in Environmental Sciences.

VCU offers a Master of Science/Master of Environmental Studies (MS/MES) in Environmental Studies.

Virginia Tech provided student enrollment and completion data for public institutions in Virginia that currently offer degree programs with the same CIP code, or names and/or curriculum requirements that are similar or related to the proposed degree program.

Enrollments and Degrees Awarded at Comparable Degree Programs in Virginia

Enrollment	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024
Christopher Newport University	22	28	26	21	19
George Mason University	55	56	51	41	40
University of Virginia	18	30	21	21	23
Virginia Commonwealth University	25	23	14	17	20
Degrees Awarded	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Christopher Newport University	8	14	13	9	10
George Mason University	14	9	13	13	12
University of Virginia	7	7	11	9	6
Virginia Commonwealth University	13	10	10	5	8

Projected Resources Needs for the Proposed Degree Program

Projected revenue from tuition and educational and general fees (E&G) would support the proposed degree program. Virginia Tech’s provost affirms the institution will not seek additional state resources to initiate and sustain the degree program.

Board Approval

The Virginia Tech Board of Visitors approved the proposed degree program on November 19, 2024.

Staff Feedback

In the final proposal, Virginia Tech did not address all feedback provided by staff regarding the original submission.

- In Virginia Tech's original proposal, the projected full-time equated student (FTES) enrollment for the target year, 2030-2031, and subsequent years is 16 FTES. In the feedback provided to the institution, staff noted that the number indicated for FTES (16) is exactly the minimum standard for Council's degree-program-productivity standard. In the final proposal, Virginia Tech did not change the number of FTES for the proposed degree program. Therefore, if in any year student enrollment decreases, then the proposed degree program may be in jeopardy of not meeting Council's minimum standard for degree-program productivity.

Committee Action/Resolution

Regarding the proposed degree program, the Committee possesses four (4) options: (i) act to approve, (ii) act to approve with condition(s), (iii) act to disapprove, or (iv) take no action and/or table for future action.

If approved, adopt the following resolution and transmit it to Council:

BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia grants approval to Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University to initiate a Master of Science (MS) degree program in Water Resources (CIP code: 40.0605), effective fall 2026.

If approved with condition(s), amend the resolution above to include the condition(s), adopt the amended resolution, and transmit it to Council.

If not approved, adopt the following resolution and transmit it to Council:

BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia does not grant approval to Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University to initiate a Master of Science (MS) degree program in Water Resources (CIP code: 40.0605).

If tabled for future action, instruct that the Minutes reflect the Committee's invoking of its prerogative/option to take no action at this meeting and/or to defer action until a future meeting.

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia Agenda Item

Item: I.D – Committee of the Whole – Action on the Degree-Program Productivity Policy

Date of Meeting: March 16, 2026

Presenters: Dr. Alan Edwards
Director of Academic Affairs and Strategic Planning
alanedwards@schev.edu

Mr. Tod Massa
Director of Policy Analytics
todmassa@schev.edu

Most Recent Review/Action:

- No previous Council review/action
 Previous review/action

Date: January 13, 2026

Action: Council continued its discussion of potential revisions to its policy for assessment of the productivity and viability of degree programs at public institutions, with specific focus on the addition of a return-on-investment (ROI) measure, derived from Virginia-specific data.

Purpose of the Agenda Item:

The purpose of this item is to provide for Council discussion and action a revised policy for assessing the productivity and viability of degree programs at public institutions.

Background Information/Summary of Major Elements:

As articulated in the *Code of Virginia* ([§ 23.1-203.6](#)), Council's sixth statutory duty is to:

Review and require the discontinuance of any undergraduate or graduate academic program that is presently offered by any public institution of higher education when the Council determines that such academic program is (i) nonproductive in terms of the number of degrees granted, the number of students served by the program, the program's effectiveness, and budgetary considerations or (ii) supported by state funds and unnecessarily duplicative of academic programs offered at other public institutions of higher education.

To guide public institutions and SCHEV staff in the administration of this duty, Council has adopted policies and procedures, the most recent of which were enacted in October 2019 as the "Virginia Public Higher Education Policy on Program Productivity," which is accessible [here](#).

At Council's July 2025 meeting, the Academic Affairs Committee requested from staff a model for measuring the return on investment (ROI) of degree programs at public institutions. Staff presented an outline and draft of such a measure at the September and October 2025 meetings and the January 2026 meeting; see the September Minutes [here](#); the October Minutes [here](#); and the draft January Minutes, which appears as Item III.C in this Agenda Book.

The proposed ROI model/measure presented herein as Document #1 reflects input from Council at its October 2025 and January 2026 meetings, consultation by staff with external experts, input from public-institution academic officers at the January 2026 meeting of the Instructional Programs Advisory Committee, and additional subsequent modification by staff. The primary differences between the enclosed ROI document and the document presented/discussed in January are: (i) refinement of the methodology and the articulation thereof; and (iii) addition of a statement on the limitations of the model and/or its underlying data.

Behind the proposed ROI model, staff provides as Document #2 a summary of the modifications proposed for Council's new degree-program-productivity policy. This summary details: (i) staff's recommended changes to the current policy (and process); (ii) staff's recommended retentions in (non-changes to) the current policy/process; and (iii) eight additional staff-recommended refinements to the policy.

The proposed degree-program-productivity policy presented herein for Council action as Document #3 incorporates the changes and refinements detailed in Document #2, and it includes return on investment, calculated per Document #1, as a factor that a public institution would be required to address when seeking to justify the continuation of a degree program that has been flagged for review due to low enrollment and degree productivity.

Materials Provided:

- Document #1: Proposed SCHEV Return on Investment (ROI) Model
- Document #2: Summary of Proposed Changes to the Degree-Program Productivity and Viability Policy
- Document #3: Proposed Revised Policy: "Degree Program Productivity and Viability at Public Institutions: Policies and Procedures"

Financial Impact:

For SCHEV (Council and agency), action to approve and implementation of this item will not entail additional financial impacts. For institutions and the Commonwealth, discontinuances of degree programs are intended to contribute to improved efficiencies by reducing resources dedicated to low-productivity, low-need programs, and by reducing the number of degree programs assessed as unnecessarily duplicative of existing degree programs at public institutions.

Relationship to Goals of The Virginia Plan for Higher Education:

Council's consideration of this agenda item supports all three goals – student readiness; institutional responsiveness; and postsecondary relevance – as outlined in *Developing Tomorrow's Talent: The Virginia Plan for Higher Education*.

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

This item is presented for Council action at this meeting. If Council deems the proposed policy in need for further revision, then Council may defer action until a subsequent meeting by.

Resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia approves its revised “Degree-Program Productivity and Viability at Public Institutions: Policy and Procedures,” as agreed to on March 17, 2026, and effective on that date; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council delegates authority to the Executive Director to modify and update the policy’s procedures (processes and forms) as future circumstances necessitate, as long as such updates do not materially alter the effect of the policy itself.

DOCUMENT #1

Proposed SCHEV Return on Investment (ROI) Model

Methodology

SCHEV's Return on Investment (ROI) Model relates four estimates to compare the cost of a given degree program with its expected return. First, the model compares an estimate of lifetime earnings for holders of that college degree to an estimate of the average expected earnings for holders of a high school diploma. Then the model scales that result with the cost of that degree, which is defined as the sum of student loans and net price. How those values are calculated appears below.

The model starts with constructing a lifetime wage projection model using person-level wage data spanning 25 years, via these five steps:

1. Adjust for inflation: Wage data of graduates from 1995-96 to 2019-20 are adjusted to 2023 values, by each year post-completion for which wages are available, for at least three quarters of the calendar year.
2. Smooth for year-to-year noise: To minimize the impact of random and short-term fluctuations, seven-year moving averages are calculated using median wages per program level and "program area" of instructional program (i.e., two-digit CIP code).
3. Model starting wage and growth: A linear regression model is constructed for each program area at each program level based on historic performance of wages from 1995-96 to 2019-20. For each program level, we limit records to only graduates whose highest degree earned is at the same level.
4. Constrain population: Graduates who have earned both Bachelor's and Master's degrees are not included in the construction of the model for Bachelor's level wage projection.
5. Extrapolate: The model assumes wage changes follow the same pattern beyond 2019-20 in each program area and at each program level and then project a lifetime wage income for graduates individually, using their fourth-year postgraduation wages as an anchor.

Estimating lifetime earnings: Using the 2018-19 Bachelor's graduating cohort as the study population: Individuals with valid wage data in 2023, and no higher level of degree, are included in the analysis. Assuming these individuals continue to work until age 67 when they reach full retirement under Social Security, the regression model is applied on a by-graduate basis, and their lifetime wage income from 2020 is calculated, until the year they turn 67. In other words, individuals have varying numbers of working years based on their age at graduation, which in turn is based on age at entry and the time spent completing their degree. The longer a student stays in school, typically the lower their lifetime earnings.

Comparison to no college: In parallel, the model constructs a counterfactual lifetime wage projection for the same population where the individuals never entered college, via these three steps:

1. Adjust for inflation: Census Bureau's ACS 5-year estimates of wages for high school (HS) graduates in Virginia from 2010 to 2023 are adjusted to 2023 values.
2. Estimate start and growth: Linear regression coefficients are calculated based on the above ACS estimates. HS level wages beyond 2023 are projected based on the historic pattern of change in the past 14 years.
3. Extrapolate: Assuming each individual included in the analysis would enter the workforce upon HS graduation, earning HS level wage each year up to age 67, we calculate their HS lifetime wage income. This eliminates the opportunity cost of time in college.

Cost of college: The total cost of a Bachelor's degree is calculated for each student as the sum of total student loans and net price charged to each student (i.e., institutional budget minus all gift aid in each semester enrolled in a Bachelor's program). Net prices are adjusted to 2023 equivalents.

- The projected Bachelor's lifetime wage represents the total gain from earning a Bachelor's degree.
- The sum of projected high school graduate-level lifetime wages represents the counterfactual comparison.
- The total cost of earning a Bachelor's degree and years delayed entering the workforce full-time combined represent the real and opportunity costs of earning a Bachelor's degree.

Contrast gain with loss: The model then contrasts the total gain and total loss. The ROI estimates are represented in two different calculations:

- **Net Lifetime Difference**=[Projected Bachelor's Lifetime Wages]-[Projected HS Lifetime Wages]-[Student Debt]-[Net Price]
 - This is the estimated difference in dollars between college and no college (for this program), subtracting the cost of college.
- **ROI ratio**=[Projected Bachelor's Lifetime Wages]/([Projected HS Lifetime Wage]+[Student Debt]+[Net Price])
 - This is the estimated lifetime wages, but divided by or scaled by the comparison of projected HS lifetime wages and college costs.

A positive Net Lifetime Difference shows a net gain from earning a Bachelor's degree, the same as an ROI ratio greater than one.

Limitations

SCHEV's Return on Investment Model is subject to four limitations:

1. **Exclusions:** Data are limited to individuals employed in Virginia and in jobs covered by the Commonwealth's Unemployment Insurance program. Certain populations are excluded:
 - Independent Contractors and Gig Workers: Individuals classified as independent contractors rather than employees.
 - Agricultural Laborers: Specific types of farm labor, except where specifically covered.
 - Domestic Service Workers: Individuals working in private homes, local college clubs, or local chapters of fraternities/sororities, unless meeting specific criteria.
 - Religious and Non-Profit Employees: Employees of certain non-profit organizations or religious organizations.
 - Real Estate/Insurance Agents: Agents working solely on commission.
 - Government Officials: Elected officials.
 - Federal Employees: Generally, federal workers are covered under a separate federal system (UCFE), not state UI, including military personnel.
 - Railroad Employees: Covered under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act.
2. **Underrepresentation:** In many programs, graduate or professional study beyond the bachelor's degree is the primary goal. If students from a certain bachelor's degree program tend to seek postgraduate degrees in large numbers, the ROI estimates from that degree program will exclude them. This focus on bachelor's-only may misrepresent the value to those considering the value of that degree if they are considering adding on to it with future postgraduate education. The four-year bachelor's degree serves a variety of purposes. A degree at this level is designed to demonstrate that the graduate has a broad and general education, combined with a focus on a subject of interest. In the liberal arts and sciences, the area of focus serves to engage the student's interest while sharpening their skills of analysis, inquiry, and communication (among others) while providing a background for further study.
3. **Past performance does not guarantee future results:** These estimates are based on labor market and wage trends from 1995-2020. This period was marked by the Great Recession of 2007-2009 as well as technological

disruption and an expansion of higher education as the proportion of workers with at least a Bachelor's degree increased from 27% in 2000 to 40% by 2020. These data do not include either the COVID recession or the era of artificial intelligence, which have affected some fields more than others. Using past data to plan one's future is better than nothing at all, but with the understanding that this history is likely to be not just wrong, but to have certain biases derived from the historical baseline used.

4. **Individual characteristics:** An individual's outcome and earnings may be affected as much by characteristics of the individual or where they live and work as much or more than as by the degree earned. People tend to live near where they grew up. For example, nearly six in 10 young adults live within 10 miles of where they grew up, and eight in 10 live within 100 miles (Census). Students in Virginia travel a median of 97 miles for college. Upon graduation, some students may have less choice between staying near family or high paying jobs. Further, wage inequalities persist between groups, and some degrees have overrepresentation of some groups and underrepresentation of others.

**DOCUMENT #2:
Summary of Proposed Changes to the Degree-Program Productivity and
Viability Policy**

The proposed policy that appears as Document #3 reflects and contains modifications to the current policy that derive from the following staff recommendations, which Council has reviewed during multiple meetings:

- Shorten the cycle of productivity review from every five years to every three years.
- Reorient staff approach from an emphasis on finding justifications not to discontinue “flagged” (low-productivity) degree programs to placing the burden on institutions to document the economic value of flagged degree programs.
 - Criteria for requesting the continuation of targeted degree programs defined more closely. New information elements have been introduced:
 - Duplication
 - Labor market data
 - Return on investment data
 - Outcomes in comparison to original proposal (for programs less than 20 years old)
 - Criteria that must be documented for a degree program not to be recommended for discontinuance are stated:
 - that the targeted degree program is not unnecessarily duplicative;
 - that the targeted degree program fulfills a state and/or national need; and
 - that the targeted degree program provides substantial employment value for graduates.
- A provision has been added to prohibit degree programs that are discontinued through the productivity review from either (a) being reintroduced as a standalone degree program or (b) being incorporated as a sub-area of another degree program unless specifically approved by the Executive Director.
- Retain from the current policy:
 - existing quantitative standards, in order to preserve continuity with longstanding expectations to which degree programs have been held.
 - the basic logistical process wherein programs are first “flagged” via quantitative standards of degrees awarded and FTE enrollment, and flagged programs are then subject to review for discontinuance, continuance, or exemption.

In addition to conforming the proposed policy to current agency format standards, staff have made the following revisions and refinements to the policy and procedures:

1. Policy statements (goals), including return on investment (Section II), are articulated overtly and in conformity with standard SCHEV policy formatting.

2. The formula used to generate the policy's quantitative standards (Section IV) is described more fully.
3. Text excluding certain transfer associate-degree programs from productivity review (Section IV) has been added in accord with Council's "Framework for Transfer Associate Degree Programs at Virginia's Community Colleges" (approved in January 2023).
4. Council's prerogative to defer action on a flagged degree program (Section V) is stated more explicitly.
5. The policy's post-discontinuance provisions (Section VI) have been modified; these revised provisions allow discontinued degree programs (i) to be moved under other degree programs only when such curricular incorporation has been included in the "Plan-to-Discontinue (Teach-Out Plan) Form;" and (ii) to be re-proposed only upon the written permission of the Executive Director.
6. The procedures regarding institutions' submissions of documentation (Appendix) have been streamlined.
7. In the "Request-to-Continue Form" (Appendix):
 - a) additional text has been added to the Return on Investment section to stipulate that SCHEV data on ROI are to be used; and
 - b) an additional line of reasoning/argument for requesting continuance of a flagged degree program has been added to the Institutional Justification section to allow an institution to demonstrate the importance of the flagged degree program to the general-education curriculum and/or to its mission-central/-critical degree programs.
8. Throughout the document, where the current policy uses the words "close" and "closure," the proposed policy uses "discontinue" and "discontinuance," in accord with the statutory language (ie, "require the discontinuance of any ... academic program"). Similarly, the phrase "targeted degree program" is replaced with "flagged degree program," and the word/phrase "defend/action to defend" is replaced with "request/request to continue."

DOCUMENT #3:
Proposed Revised Policy: “Degree-Program Productivity and Viability at Public Institutions: Policy and Procedures”

(begins on the following page)

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia
**DEGREE PROGRAM PRODUCTIVITY AND VIABILITY AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS:
POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

Effective: March 17, 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Statutory Obligations Related to Degree-Program Productivity at Public Institutions
 - A. The Council of Higher Education’s Responsibility, Authority and Duty
 - B. Public Institutions’ Responsibility and Duty

- II. Policy Statements on Degree-Program Productivity and Viability (Four Goals)
 - Quantitative Standards
 - Resources
 - Return on Investment
 - Degree Program Discontinuance – Other Factors

- III. Procedures for Degree-Program Productivity Review (Six Stages)

- IV. Quantitative Standards for Degree-Program Productivity Review
 - A. Formula for Graduates
 - B. Formula for Full-time Equated Student Enrollment
 - C. Four-Year Institution Quantitative Standards by Discipline and Level Chart
 - D. Two -Year Institution Quantitative Standards
 - 1. General Standards for Associate Degree Programs
 - 2. Specific Standards for the Virginia Community College System
 - E. Process for Utilization of Quantitative Standards

- V. SCHEV Council Action

- VI. Post-Discontinuance of Flagged Degree Programs

- APPENDIX: Procedures for Submission of Documentation for Degree-Program Productivity Review
 - A. General Guidelines
 - B. Specific Guidelines
 - C. Instructions for Documents and Forms
 - D. Cover Sheet and Applicable Forms

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia
**DEGREE PROGRAM PRODUCTIVITY AND VIABILITY AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS:
POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

Effective: March 17, 2026

I. Statutory Obligations Related to Degree-Program Productivity at Public Institutions

A. The Council of Higher Education’s Responsibility, Authority and Duty

- “Review and require the discontinuance of any undergraduate or graduate academic program that is presently offered by any public institution of higher education when the Council determines that such academic program is (i) nonproductive in terms of the number of degrees granted, the number of students served by the program, the program’s effectiveness, and budgetary considerations or (ii) supported by state funds and unnecessarily duplicative of academic programs offered at other public institutions of higher education. The Council shall make a report to the Governor and the General Assembly with respect to the discontinuance of any such academic program. No such discontinuance shall become effective until 30 days after the adjournment of the session of the General Assembly next following the filing of such report.” (Code of Virginia, §23.1-203(6))
- “Adopt such policies and regulations as the Council deems necessary to implement its duties established by state law.” (Code of Virginia, §23.1-203(15))
- “Serve as the coordinating council for public institutions of higher education.” (Code of Virginia, §23.1-203(24))
- “Insofar as practicable, preserve the individuality, traditions, and sense of responsibility of each public institution of higher education in carrying out its duties.” (Code of Virginia, §23.1-203 (27))
- “Insofar as practicable, seek the assistance and advice of each public institution of higher education in fulfilling its duties and responsibilities.” (Code of Virginia, §23.1-203 (28))

The Council has established the following policies and procedures for degree program productivity and viability review at public institutions as part of its obligation “to promote the development and operation of an educationally and economically sound, vigorous, progressive, and coordinated system of higher education in the Commonwealth....” (Code of Virginia, §23.1-200)

B. Public Institutions’ Responsibility and Duty

[Upon the Council adopting “such policies and regulations as the Council deems necessary to implement its duties established by state law”]

“Each public institution of higher education shall comply with such policies and regulations. (Code of Virginia, §23.1-203(15))

II. Policy Statements on Degree-Program Productivity and Viability (Four Goals)

Council executes its duty to review the productivity and viability of academic degree programs in furtherance of its general responsibility. Accordingly, via this policy and associated processes, the Council seeks to accomplish four goals.

1. Quantitative Standards
 - a. Establish minimal quantitative standards for degree program productivity and viability in terms of student enrollment and degrees granted.
 - b. Prompt the rigorous institutional review of degree program productivity and viability in terms of the SCHEV quantitative standard.
2. Resources

Utilize the degree-program productivity and viability review to promote the efficient use of resources, including minimizing unnecessary duplication of academic degree programs at public institutions.
3. Return on Investment (ROI)

Highlight, and when applicable, prioritize discontinuance of degree programs that do not provide a substantial return on investment – documented by objective labor market and/or employment data – for graduates; and
4. Degree Program Discontinuance – Other Factors

Consider other relevant information related to degree program effectiveness and budgetary factors in deciding whether discontinuance of a degree program is warranted.

III. Procedures for Degree-Program Productivity Review (Six Stages)

SCHEV will conduct a review of the productivity of academic degree programs at public institutions once every three years. The degree program productivity review will encompass all academic degree programs at all public institutions of higher education in Virginia. For purposes of the review, Certificates of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS) and Educational Specialist (EdS) degrees will be treated as academic degree programs subject to review. Degree program “sub-areas” (such as: concentration, emphasis area, focus area, major, option, specialization, or track) will not be subject to review individually or separate from the flagged degree program.

The degree program productivity review process will be conducted in five stages.

Stage 1 Following completion of the prior academic year’s enrollment data collection, SCHEV staff will provide official notice to four-year public institutions and Richard Bland College of academic degree programs that fail to meet quantitative standards for full-time equated student enrollment (FTES) and numbers of graduates (“flagged” degree programs).

Note. The specified Associate degree standards are also applicable to relevant degree programs at Richard Bland College.

Stage 2 Institutions will notify SCHEV staff (by a specified deadline) of any data corrections. Once any corrections have been made, SCHEV staff will

acknowledge any resulting differences in the institution's list of flagged degree programs.

Stage 3 Each four-year institution and Richard Bland College will submit completed degree program productivity documentation to include i) a signed cover letter; and ii) a SCHEV Degree Program Productivity Cover Sheet for each flagged degree program. The SCHEV Cover Sheet will indicate whether the institution (a) requests exemption of the degree program from the productivity review; (b) will discontinue the flagged degree program; or (c) seeks continuation of the degree program. If (a) is selected, information will be submitted in the "Exempt-from-Review Form." If (b) is selected, information will be submitted in the "Plan-to-Discontinue (Teach-Out Plan) Form." If (c) is selected, information will be submitted in the "Request-to-Continue Form," and this information will be used to evaluate the justification(s) for continuance.

Note. The Virginia Community College System will report, by a specified deadline, the results of the degree program productivity reviews since the last degree program productivity review. SCHEV staff will inform the VCCS staff of the deadline to submit the results. SCHEV staff will evaluate the report and request any supplemental information before making a report to Council.

Stage 4 SCHEV staff evaluates information submitted via the degree program productivity and viability forms. Staff will request any additional information that may be necessary to arrive at a recommendation of discontinuance or continuance of the flagged degree program. Once the evaluation of an institution's information is complete, staff will inform the institutional representative of the recommendation. Staff will also inform the representative of the Council meeting at which the recommendation will be reported and discussed.

Stage 5 SCHEV staff will give an informational report of the recommendations for discontinuance and continuance of flagged degree programs at a Council meeting. Degree-program discontinuances and continuances will be presented for final action at a subsequent Council meeting. An opportunity will be given for institutional representatives to present information at one or both of the meetings, as determined by the Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee.

Stage 6 Following the meeting at which the Council takes action, SCHEV staff will submit a report to the Governor and General Assembly, as per Code of Virginia §23.1-203 (6).

IV. Quantitative Standards for Degree-Program Productivity Review

The quantitative standards below utilize student-faculty ratios from the state's "base adequacy" funding formula, in conjunction with a presumed faculty staffing level of 2.0 for each degree program. Time-to-degree is related to the degree level (bachelor: 4 years; master: 3 years; doctoral: 4 years; professional degree in law: 3 years). Illustrative calculations are provided to show how the standards are established for each degree program. In general, the student-faculty ratio for a program in that discipline/level is multiplied by 2 (the presumed faculty staffing), then divided by time-to-degree. This calculation generates a minimal number of graduates per year for a viable degree program,

to which the actual graduates (as a five-year average) in each degree program are compared. The formula for full-time equated student (FTES) enrollment simply multiplies the student faculty ratio by 2.

A degree program that appears as a “flagged” degree program in the SCHEV productivity tool is one for which its numbers of both graduates and five-year enrollment averages are below the standards for that degree program.

A. Formula for Graduates

$([\text{Student/faculty ratio}] \times [\text{number of FTEF=2}]) \div (\text{number of years to complete the degree}) = \text{minimum \# of graduates per year.}$

Variables:

Student/faculty ratio – derived from the base adequacy policy

Number of FTEF – two faculty FTE assumed per degree program

Number of years to complete the degree – baccalaureate (4); masters/professional (3); doctoral (5)

Illustrative Calculations:

Bachelor’s degree in Business: $24 \text{ Students/Faculty} \times 2 \text{ FTEF} \div 4 \text{ years} = 12$ graduates per year

Master’s degree in Business: $11 \text{ Students/Faculty} \times 2 \text{ FTEF} \div 3 \text{ years} = 7$ graduates per year

Doctorate in Business: $9 \text{ Students/Faculty} \times 2 \text{ FTEF} \div 5 \text{ years} = 4$ graduates per year

Professional degree in Law: $17 \text{ Students/Faculty} \times 2 \text{ FTEF} \div 3 \text{ years} = 11$ graduates per year

B. Formula for Full-time Equated (FTE) student enrollment

$([\text{Student/faculty ratio}] \times [\text{number of FTEF=2}]) = \text{FTE enrollment.}$

(REMAINDER OF PAGE LEFT BLANK FOR FORMATTING PURPOSES)

C. Four-Year Institution Quantitative Standards by Discipline and Level

Discipline Groupings (as per Base Adequacy)	Baccalaureate		Masters/Prof		Doctoral	
	FTE	Grads	FTE	Grads	FTE	Grads
Group 1	48	12	22	7	18	4
Area Studies						
Business & Management						
Interdisciplinary Studies						
Library Science						
Military Science						
Public Affairs						
Social Sciences						
Study Abroad						
Group 2	40	10	20	7	16	3
Communications						
Education						
Home Economics						
Letters						
Mathematics						
Psychology						
Group 3a	36	9	18	6	14	3
Agriculture & Nat Resources						
Architecture & Env Design						
Computer/Information Sys						
Fine & Applied Arts						
Foreign Languages						
Group 3b	36	9	16	5	12	2
Biological Sciences						
Engineering						
Physical Sciences						
Group 4	24	6	14	5	10	2
Health Professions ¹						
Pharmacy	-	-	12	4	-	-
Other	-	-	34	11	-	-
Law						

¹ Excludes medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine

D. Two-Year Institution Quantitative Standards

1. General Standards for Associate Degree Programs

Quantitative standards applicable to associate degree programs are provided in the table below. The specified associate degree standards are applicable to all degree programs at Richard Bland College and to certain degree programs offered by the Virginia Community College System, as explained in Subsection 2 below.

Quantitative Standards for Associate Degree Programs

Institutional Size	Degree Program							
	Transfer (AA, AS, AA&S)		AAS Agriculture & Natural Resources, Business, Arts & Design, Public Service Technologies		AAS Engineering, Mechanical, and Industrial Technologies		AAS Health Technologies	
FTES ¹	FTES	Grads	FTES	Grads	FTES	Grads	FTES	Grads
Less than 1800	17	12	13	8	9	6	7	5
1800-4999	22	15	16	11	12	8	9	6
5000 or greater ¹	24	17	18	12	13	9	10	7

¹ To determine number of FTES and graduates, a factor of .7 was used for institutions under 1800 and .9 was used for institutions with 1800-4999 FTES (VCCS efficiency ratio).

2. Specific Standards for the Virginia Community College System

The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) systematically reviews degree programs for all 23 community colleges. The Council of Higher Education has delegated to the State Board for Community Colleges (SBCC) the functional responsibility to review and discontinue any nonproductive community college associate degree programs.

The following transfer associate degree programs, which were approved for all community colleges by Council action in January 2023, are not included in the SCHEV degree-program productivity and viability review process. All other VCCS-college associate degree programs are included in the SCHEV degree program productivity and viability review.

Associate of Arts (AA)

Liberal Arts (CIP 24.0103)

Associate of Science (AS)

General Studies (CIP 24.0102)

Business Administration (CIP 52.0201)

Computer Science (CIP 11.0701)

Education (CIP 13.0101)

Engineering (CIP 14.0101)

Health Sciences (CIP 51.000)

Information Technology (CIP 11.0103)

Science (CIP 30.0101)

Social Sciences (CIP 45.0101)

The SBCC will review and discontinue associate degree programs that are nonproductive based on selected criteria.

Review Process for Community Colleges

- a. Through existing campus-based processes, each community college will systematically review each degree program at least once every three years.
- b. Based on the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code and standards congruent with SCHEV's minimum standards for degree program productivity, the VCCS will systematically monitor full-time equated student enrollments (FTES) and numbers of graduates for all approved associate degree programs.
- c. For any degree program that does not meet degree program productivity standards, the community colleges will submit to the VCCS:
 - (i) a plan discontinue the degree program and to teach-out its students;
 - (ii) justification (defense) for continuing the degree program; or
 - (iii) strategies to enhance the degree program's productivity.
- d. Consistent with SCHEV's procedures for degree program productivity review, the VCCS will report to SCHEV at least once every three years the results of the degree program productivity review and describe any proposed changes to the VCCS policies and procedures.

E. Process for Utilization of Quantitative Standards

Notification and Institutional Review

Stage 1 of the degree program productivity review consists of SCHEV staff notifying institutions as to which degree programs ("flagged" degree programs) have not satisfied both applicable standards for full-time equated students (FTE) and graduates (Grads) as specified in the tables above.

Upon receiving the SCHEV notice, each institution must promptly review the information for the flagged degree programs at <https://research.schev.edu/Productivity/>. If a data correction results in a degree program satisfying a previously failed quantitative standard, the degree program will be removed from the degree program productivity review.

Discontinuance of Flagged Degree Programs

Institutions may elect to discontinue a flagged degree program. The institutional representative must complete the "Plan-to-Discontinue (Teach-Out Plan) Form." The institution must inform all students of the impending discontinuance.

Exemption from Review of Flagged Degree Programs

Institutions may request exemptions for flagged degree programs to be removed from the productivity review. The institutional representative will complete an "Exempt-from-Review Form" to indicate the reason the flagged degree program should be exempt (removed) from further productivity review. An exemption may be granted for the following reasons:

- **Aggregating Data for Programs at Two Degree Levels.** For degree programs with the same CIP code that are offered at two degree levels (bachelor + master or master + doctoral or bachelor + doctoral), data on enrollment and graduates may be combined to meet the applicable productivity standards. In such cases, aggregated data for the combined degree programs must satisfy the *aggregated productivity standards* for the degree programs in question. Aggregation must be requested by the institution.
- **Five-Year Exemption.** Any degree program that has been in existence for five or fewer years (with the last year of data counting as the fifth year) may be exempt from productivity review, at request of the institution.

Continuance of Flagged Degree Programs

If a flagged degree program is not eligible for an exemption, and the institution intends to request continuation of the degree program, the institutional representative must submit a completed “Request-to-Continue Form.”

Information provided in the “Request-to-Continue Form” must present objective data to support all three of the following conclusions:

- the flagged degree program is not unnecessarily duplicative;
- the flagged degree program fulfills a regional or state need; and
- the flagged degree program provides substantial employment value for graduates.

V. SCHEV Council Action

Following evaluation of the institution’s submitted information for flagged degree programs, SCHEV staff will notify the institution of the Council meeting at which staff intends to report recommendations for discussion. Council action will occur at a subsequent meeting. Council action will generally be to continue or to discontinue any given flagged degree program. Council may also defer action on a given degree program to a future cycle of productivity review, or allow a flagged degree program to continue with restrictions or conditions, including (but not limited to) requiring the submission of additional information.

VI. Post-Discontinuance of Flagged Degree Programs

Council hereby establishes two requirements for degree programs discontinued as a result of the degree-program productivity and viability review process. Once a degree program has been discontinued as a result of the SCHEV degree-program productivity review:

1. the discontinued degree program may not be incorporated as a sub-area (such as: concentration, emphasis area, focus area, major, option, specialization, or track) under another approved degree program unless such incorporation has been included in the “Plan-to-Teach-Out (Discontinue) Form;” and

2. the discontinued degree program may not be proposed again as a standalone degree program unless permission to do so has been conferred in writing by the Executive Director of SCHEV or his delegate.

DRAFT

APPENDIX

Procedures for Submission of Documentation for Degree-Program Productivity Review

A. General Guidelines

1. All documentation for degree program productivity review process must be submitted to SCHEV. All voluntary discontinuances of degree programs must have approval from the institution's governing board. Board approval should be secured within six months of submitting the discontinuance to SCHEV.
2. The termination date for reporting data on flagged degree programs to be discontinued should not exceed seven (7) years beyond the last date for reporting new student enrollment.
3. Documentation must be submitted via the SCHEV degree-program productivity and viability forms, which are provided below. Documentation to discontinue a flagged degree program must include the "Plan-to-Discontinue (Teach-Out Plan) Form;" documentation to continue a flagged degree program must include the "Request-to-Continue Form;" justification for documentation to exempt (remove from consideration) a flagged degree program must include the "Exempt-from-Review Form."
4. SCHEV staff reserves the right to request additional information in connection with any submission made to SCHEV as part of the degree-program productivity review.

B. Specific Guidelines

1. Documentation submitted by the institution must include three components:
 - (i) At least one cover letter signed by the chief academic officer. (see Section B.2 below)
 - (ii) For each flagged degree program, a completed Degree Program Productivity and Viability Cover Sheet. (See Part D below)
 - (iii) Based on each flagged-program Cover Sheet's "Institution Action" – discontinue/teach-out; continue/preserve; claim exemption/exempt from review, a completed form corresponding to that institutional action. (See Part D below)

When applicable, an appendix containing all support documentation (e.g., charts or cited documents) should be included as a fourth component.

2. Regarding the letter(s) referenced in Subsection 1(i) above, the chief academic officer should sign a letter or letters that:
 - identifies and lists the flagged degree program(s), either via one letter that addresses all of the institution's flagged degree programs, or one letter per each type of institution action (discontinue; request to continue; claim exemption); or one letter per flagged degree program;
 - summarizes the institution's action regarding each flagged program; and

- describes (in terms of resources – financial, personnel, etc) the impacts and implications of the institution’s action.
3. If a flagged degree program is offered jointly/collaboratively with one or more institutions, then the chief academic officer/s of this/these institution/s must also submit degree-program productivity documentation, including a cover letter on the institution’s letterhead, an original signature, and any associated contracts and/or Memoranda of Agreement/Understanding.

C. Instructions for Documents and Forms

1. Preparation of Documentation

- Use only SCHEV official forms – edited SCHEV forms will not be accepted.
- Use Microsoft Word Times New Roman (TNR) 12 Font for all text including cover letters, and appendix pages and page numbers, if applicable. At minimum, footnotes should be in TNR 10 Font. All footnote citations must utilize current APA format.
- Use one-inch margins; single space, 0 pt “before and after” between narrative text.
- Include support documentation (e.g., quoted documents) in a labeled appendix; use page numbering separate from the main document (e.g., A-1, B-1).
 - All non-Word and original documents (e.g., reports, accreditor requirements, needs assessment) should be included behind a titled cover page and retain the original document’s pagination.
 - No edits or revisions should be made to original documents.
 - Documents should be sized-adjusted for readability, if needed.
 - No images/screenshots of original documents should be cut and pasted into Word documents.
 - For electronic submissions, original documents should be scanned for inclusion in the appendix of the PDF electronic copy.

2. Submission of Documentation

All documentation should be submitted to SCHEV’s Academic Affairs Support Specialist, Karen Banks (karenbanks@schev.edu). [A mailing address for hard-copy documentation will be provided after SCHEV’s offices have been relocated in Richmond.]

D. Cover Sheet and Applicable Forms

STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA
Cover Sheet: Degree-Program Productivity and Viability

1. Institution (complete legal name)	2. Degree program productivity review time frame (semester/year)				
3. Institution action (select one) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Institution will discontinue the flagged degree program (complete the Plan-to-Discontinue (Teach-Out Plan form) <input type="checkbox"/> Institution seeks to continue the flagged degree program (complete the Request-to-Continue form) <input type="checkbox"/> Institution seeks an exemption for the flagged degree program (complete the Exempt-from-Review form) 					
4. Degree designation (spell out designation, include parenthetical abbreviation for degree programs)					
5. Degree program name	6. CIP code				
7. Degree program approval date by Council _____					
8. Semester and year beyond which no new enrollments will be accepted:	9. Teach-out time frame (semester/year) to (semester/year)				
10. Termination time for reporting degrees (semester and year)	11. Date approved by Board of Visitors or State Board for Community Colleges (e.g., May 1, 2016)				
12. For Critical Shortage Area Only. Check all that apply. <table style="width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Lack of student demand</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Lack of market demand</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Lack of institutional resources</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other</td> </tr> </table>		<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of student demand	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of market demand	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of institutional resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of student demand	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of market demand				
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of institutional resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Other				
13. List of constituents impacted by action.					
14. If a collaborative or joint degree program, identify the collaborating institution(s). Note: Each collaborating institution must submit separate productivity and viability documentation.					
15. Location of academic program within the institution (complete for every level, as appropriate and <u>specify</u> the unit from the choices). Department(s) or division of _____ School(s) or college(s) of _____ Campus(es) or off-campus site(s) _____					
16. Name, title, telephone number(s), and email address of person(s) other than the institution's chief academic officer who may be contacted by or may be expected to contact Council staff regarding the program.					

STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA
Exempt-from-Review Form: Degree-Program Productivity and Viability

Date:

1. Institution (complete legal name)	
2. Degree/certificate designation (spell out designation, include parenthetical abbreviation for degree programs)	
3. Degree program name	4. CIP code

An institution seeking to request an exemption for a flagged degree program must provide the reason for the degree program to be exempt from review. A separate form must be submitted for each flagged degree program.

- I. When was the flagged degree program approved by SCHEV? (e.g., July 9, 2022)

- II. When did the institution enroll the first students? (semester/year)

- III. What is the reason that the flagged degree program should be exempt (removed) from the degree-program productivity review? (100 words max)

INSERT TEXT

The reasons a flagged degree program may be considered for exemption include:

- **Aggregating Data for Degree Programs at Two Degree Designation Levels.** For degree programs with the same Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code that are offered at two degree designation levels (bachelor + master or master + doctoral or bachelor + doctoral), data on student enrollment and graduates may be combined to meet the applicable degree program productivity standards. In such cases, aggregated data for the combined degree programs must satisfy the *aggregated degree program productivity standards* for the degree programs in question. Aggregation of data must be requested by the institution.

- **Five-Year Exemption.** Any degree program that has been in existence for five or fewer years (with the last year of data counting as the fifth year) may be exempt from degree program productivity review, at request of the institution.

STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA
Request-to-Continue Form: Degree-Program Productivity and Viability

Date:

1. Institution (complete legal name)	
2. Degree/certificate designation (spell out designation, include parenthetical abbreviation for degree programs)	
3. Degree program name	4. CIP code

An institution that requests that a flagged degree program not be discontinued must provide justification (a defense) for the degree program to continue. A separate form must be submitted for each flagged degree program.

I. Duplication

For each Virginia-public-institution degree program at the designation level and with the same CIP code as the flagged degree program, provide information for student enrollment and degrees awarded for the past five (5) years. If no degree programs are duplicative, then leave the table blank.

Note. Only data from SCHEV Policy Analytics may be used.

Student enrollment: https://research.schev.edu/enrollment/E16_Report.asp

Student completions: https://research.schev.edu/Completions/C1Level2_Report.asp

Institution	Student Enrollment				
	Fall 20__	Fall 20__	Fall 20__	Fall 20__	Fall 20__

(Expand the table as needed)

Institution	Degrees Awarded				
	Year 20__- 20__	Year 20__- 20__	Year 20__- 20__	Year 20__- 20__	Year 20__- 20__

(Expand the table as needed)

II. Labor Market Information

Provide information from the Virginia Office of Education Economics (VOEE). If VOEE employment data are not available, information from other reputable sources (such as but not necessarily, limited to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and Virginia Works, Labor Market Information Long-term Employment Projections may be provided.

Information should be related to occupations that are directly related to the subject and degree level of the flagged degree program. If no data exist for the occupations directly related to both the degree program designation level and discipline of the flagged degree program, then leave blank. (300 words max.)

INSERT TEXT

III. Return on Investment (ROI)

Cite return-on-investment data on the flagged program from SCHEV's Return on Investment Tool. Explain whether the cited data support a conclusion that the underenrolled degree program provides substantial employment value for graduates. If data for the flagged degree program are not available on the SCHEV tool, then ROI data from other sources may be cited. (300 words max.)

INSERT TEXT

IV. Outcomes Since Approval by Council

If the degree program was established in the last 20 years (with the last year of data counting as the twentieth year), cite specific factors from the original proposal submitted to SCHEV to establish state needs for the flagged degree program. Explain whether the flagged degree program has achieved attested outcomes. For example: if the original degree program proposal stated that the degree program was necessary for employment in a specific field in Virginia, provide data regarding the number and proportion of graduates who have been employed in that field in Virginia. If data are not available, then leave blank; do not substitute anecdotes for data. (300 words max.)

INSERT TEXT

V. Institutional Justification

Provide information below as relevant to the flagged degree program. An institution's justification(s)/reasoning(s) for continuance of a given flagged degree program need not address all the following criteria. Any topics that are not applicable should be left blank.

- A. Access for an Underserved Geographical Area. *Cite data to demonstrate that without the flagged degree program a specific underserved region will be disadvantaged. (300 words max.)*

INSERT TEXT

- B. Access for an Underserved Population. *Cite data to demonstrate that without the flagged degree program a specific underserved population will be disadvantaged. (300 words max.)*

INSERT TEXT

C. Degree Program meets Unique Need(s) in Virginia. *Cite data to demonstrate that the flagged degree program is uniquely suited to fulfill one or more specific, urgent, or critical needs in the institution's region or at the state level. (300 words max.)*

INSERT TEXT

D. Essential for Research Funding or Intellectual Property Generation. *Cite data on research expenditures and/or intellectual property revenue directly associated with the flagged degree program in the last three years (with the last year of data counting as the third year). This criterion will normally be applicable to PhD degree programs only. (300 words max.)*

INSERT TEXT

E. Centrality to Institutional Mission. *Explain how the institution will not be able to fulfill its mission without the flagged degree program, including reference to the average number of graduates produced by the program over the last five years. (300 words max.)*

INSERT TEXT

F. Degree Program plays Important Role(s) Within the Institution. *Explain how the flagged degree program's coursework supports the institution's general-education curriculum and/or its mission-central/-critical degree programs. (300 words max.)*

INSERT TEXT

G. Actions Taken to Bolster the Degree Program. *Explain specific actions taken -- within the past five years for a flagged undergraduate program and within the past three years for a flagged graduate program -- to increase student enrollment, degree production, and/or return on investment for the degree program. Cite data to demonstrate how the actions are bolstering the flagged degree program. If such actions were taken more recently than the time frame specified above for the flagged program's degree level (i.e., actions were too recent for data to be available yet), then explain the rationale for the actions taken and validate the improvements expected. (300 words max.)*

INSERT TEXT

STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA

Plan-to-Discontinue (Teach-Out Plan) Form: Degree-Program Productivity and Viability

Institution (complete legal name)	Click or tap here to enter text.
Degree designation (spell out designation, include parenthetical abbreviation for degree programs)	Click or tap here to enter text.
Degree program name	Click or tap here to enter text.
Degree program productivity review time frame (semester/year)	Click or tap here to enter text.

Teach-Out Plan

Are any students currently enrolled in the degree program?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, indicate how many students are enrolled in the degree.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Indicate the expected graduation semester and year for all enrolled students Include a separate sentence for each semester/year and indicate the number of expected graduates.	
Click or tap here to enter text.	

When is the last semester and year a student will be able to complete the degree program? For example, Fall 2026.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Are any students currently enrolled in the degree program?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has the discontinuation time frame (semester/year) been extended beyond the last semester expected for all students to graduate?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, indicate such and the time frame for the extension.	
Click or tap here to enter text.	
If no, indicate such and why.	
Click or tap here to enter text.	

Describe the support services that will be provided to students through the teach-out timeframe. Include how currently enrolled students will be contacted about the degree program discontinuance, advising services available, and the availability of required coursework in the degree program.
Click or tap here to enter text.

Have all faculty teaching core and required coursework been notified of the impending degree program discontinuance?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Will any faculty be terminated as a result of the degree program discontinuance?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If faculty position(s) would be terminated, will the institution maintain appropriate faculty resources until the end of the teach-out plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If no, explain how the institution plans to provide sufficient faculty resources until the end of the teach-out plan.	
Click or tap here to enter text.	

“Stopped Out” Students

Do institutional records show any “stopped out” students?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, how many students are “stopped-out”?	Enter Number.
Indicate how “stopped-out” students will be contacted about the degree-program discontinuance.	
Click or tap here to enter text.	

Indicate what will be done to ensure “stopped-out” students will be afforded opportunity to complete the degree program.
Click or tap here to enter text.

Incorporating the Discontinued Degree Program as a Sub-area

If the discontinued degree program will be incorporated as a sub-area (major, concentration, track, etc.) into another degree program, provide a detailed description of how this will be done.
Click or tap here to enter text.

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia Agenda Item

Item: I.E. – Committee of the Whole – Update on the 2026 Legislative Session

Date of Meeting: March 16, 2026

Presenter: Lee Andes
Director of Finance Policy & Innovation
leeandes@schev.edu

Dr. Grace Khattar
Assistant Director of Government Relations and Finance Policy
gracekhattar@schev.edu

Most Recent Review/Action:

No previous Council review/action

Previous review/action

Date: January 13, 2026

Action: Council reviewed the Governor's introduced budget for higher education in the 2026-28 biennium and received a briefing on relevant legislation.

Purpose of the Agenda Item:

The purpose of this item is to update the Committee on the Virginia General Assembly's actions related to relevant 2026 legislation, including the chambers' budget amendments and new tasks that SCHEV would receive via successful legislation.

Background Information/Summary of Major Elements:

The 2026 Virginia General Assembly reviewed the budget bill introduced on December 17, 2025 by Governor Youngkin. On February 22, 2026, the House and Senate released their committee budget amendments. As of this writing (early March), the House and Senate were scheduled to convene and appoint budget conferees by March 4 with a final unified conference budget anticipated by end of session, March 14.

As of this writing (early March), the Senate and House committee-approved budgets were available, but the conference-committee budget was not yet available. Staff will continue to monitor the status of a conference-approved budget.

Calendar of events:

- The 2026 Virginia General Assembly convened on January 14.
- Chamber-approved legislation "crossed over" on February 18.

- Session was scheduled to adjourn on March 14.
- Legislature is scheduled to reconvene on April 22 to consider any items vetoed or amended by Governor Spanberger.
- Approved legislation becomes law upon signature by the Governor, which is expected within seven days of adjournment of the Reconvened Session, or absent signature by the Governor.
- The biennial budget and new statutes, once signed, take effect on July 1 (unless otherwise stipulated in the legislation).

Materials Provided:

A summary of the committee-approved budget reports appears behind this cover sheet. At the meeting, staff will provide an updated list of higher education legislation and new tasks assigned to the agency.

Financial Impact: TBD

Relationship to the Goals of *The Virginia Plan for Higher Education*: N/A

Timetable for Further Review/Action: Staff will update Council at its May meeting; Director Fleming may communicate any major changes electronically in the interim.

Resolution: N/A

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia Agenda Item

Item: I.F. – Committee of the Whole – Update on the New Economy Workforce Credential Grant (WGC)

Date of Meeting: March 16, 2026

Presenter: Theresa Thompson, MS CTE
Senior Research Associate, Policy Analytics
Workforce Credential Grant Program Manager
theresathompson@schev.edu

Most Recent Review/Action:

Previous review/action

Date: May 12, 2025

Review: The committee reviewed the annual report for FY24.

Purpose of the Agenda Item:

The purpose of this item is to provide an update to Council on the New Economy Workforce Credential Grant (WCG) program, which SCHEV administers. The *Code of Virginia* requires reports on the program annually; this report is for activities related to fiscal year 2025.

Background Information/Summary of Major Elements:

The legislature and governor established the New Economy Workforce Grant (WCG) program in 2016. SCHEV serves as the grant administrator and reports annually on the progress of the program.

The WCG program employs a pay-for-performance model, whereby grants are offered by community colleges, the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center, and New College Institute to students to fund noncredit workforce training that leads to an industry-based credential in a high demand field.

The grant carries a requirement that the student must complete their training to avoid paying additional costs. If a student completes the training and earns a credential, then that student pays only one-third (1/3) of the cost of the program, up to \$2,000. In addition, institutions are reimbursed for up to two-thirds of the cost for each student completion and credential earned.

The full report, including disaggregated data on enrollment, completion, certifications and costs, is being posted publicly on the Reports and Publications section of the SCHEV website and will be available with all other statutorily-required reports on the Reports to the General Assembly section of the Legislative Information System website.

Materials Provided: See the Background/Summary section above. At the meeting, staff will provide a slideshow presentation that summarizes the FY2025 report.

Financial Impact: N/A

Relationship to the Goals of *The Virginia Plan for Higher Education*:

The WCG program supports the strategic plan's goal related to students' readiness.

Timetable for Further Review/Action: N/A

Resolution: N/A

**STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA
COUNCIL MEETING
January 13, 2026**

DRAFT MINUTES

General Jumper called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in the Byrd room of the Reynolds Leadership Center in the Virginia Museum of History & Culture in Richmond, Virginia. General Jumper thanked the museum for hosting the meeting and shared information about the current exhibits.

Council members present: Eric Chewning, Walter Curt, William Harvey, Delceno Miles, Charlie King, Jason El Koubi, Lindsay Fryer, John Jumper, Jennifer Montague, Cheryl Oldham, Douglas Straley and Steven Taylor.

Staff members present: Lee Andes, Taylor Clark, Sarabeth Dreis, Grace Covello Khattar, Alan Edwards, Scott Fleming, Alexis Gravely, Tod Massa, Todd McDonald, Jessica Minnis-McCann, Laura Osberger, Monica Osei, Kirstin Pantazis, Emily Salmon, Juanita Sherman, Barry Simmons, Paul Smith, Bob Spieldenner, Kristin Whelan and Yan Zheng.

Notable Guests: Aimee Guidera, Secretary of Education, Zach Jackson, Senior Researcher, Projection Manager, Weldon Cooper; (virtual)Tom Keily, Policy Director, ECS; and Ambria Wood from the Office of the Attorney General.

EDUCATION SESSION: NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON ENROLLMENT

General Jumper introduced the presenters from the Education Commission of the States (ECS) and from the Weldon Cooper Center.

Mr. Fleming introduced Tom Keily from ECS, who presented national perspectives on postsecondary enrollment.

Mr. Keily presented an overview of national enrollment trends. He highlighted programs from across the country that focus on the following:

- Student support strategies.
- Aligning programs and resources to meet student and labor market needs.
- Establishing resources that support data-driven enrollment strategies.
- Enrollment and reenrollment campaigns.
- Direct admissions.

Mr. Keily noted that much of this alignment work is taking place at two-year institutions.

General Jumper asked for further details on the student success programs. Mr. Keily offered to send additional information on some of the programs. Mr. Curt asked about male enrollment data and how it has changed over time. Mr. Keily concurred with Mr. Curt that there has been a decline, but in the data presented, there is no breakdown by gender. Mr. Keily promised to get in touch with Mr. Curt with additional data. Mr. Curt also asked how the Common App changes the direct admissions process. Mr. Curt

suggested that the use of the Common App could impact data on the exclusivity of institutions.

Mr. El Koubi expressed surprise that an enrollment decline has not yet occurred. Mr. Keily suggested that state efforts to bolster enrollment have been successful, and he also noted a rebound from the steep declines recorded during the pandemic. Ms. Fryer asked about retention rates, and she requested that we follow up with a retention discussion. Mr. Keily stated that states are shifting their success programs to attend to student retention.

Ms. Fryer asked if there are types of higher education institutions that SCHEV should be worried about. Mr. Chewing asked about state-level policymaking to support enrollment efforts. Mr. Keily suggested examining the policy Colorado has enacted as an example. He also noted the partnership in eastern Virginia supporting Naval shipbuilding.

Mr. Fleming introduced the Senior Researcher in charge of Enrollment Projection Management at the Weldon Cooper Center, Zach Jackson. Mr. Jackson presented data on enrollment trends and projections in Virginia. He noted that the data presented at the meeting are preliminary, and final projections will be released in late February. Mr. Olsen asked whether today's projections are worse than those from August 2024. Is the rate of decline faster now? Mr. Jackson noted that although the rate of decline has increased, it is not dramatic. General Jumper asked how SCHEV can account for the volatility in retention. General Jumper asked whether Mr. Jackson feels the weight of the negative enrollment projections data the way the Council does. Mr. Jackson suggested that the trends are of interest to him, but the state-level data doesn't capture it definitively.

Mr. Jackson noted that, up until 2019, public k12 enrollment was expected to drop in 2023. The pandemic caused the decline to occur earlier and more steeply. The birthrate began falling after 2008, and kindergarten enrollment began declining in 2013. The pandemic impacted each observed grade band differently. The largest pandemic enrollment drop impacted the K-5 grades. Ms. Montague asked where these students went. Mr. Jackson said that it is difficult to say definitively because homeschool data relies on self-reporting, and private school reporting is not current. Mr. Fleming shared that the Virginia Department of Education has data suggesting that home schooling has increased by nearly 50%. The enrollment declined more slowly and stabilized after 2022. With current trends, after 2023, the class sizes for 9-12 grades have decreased, lagging the kindergarten decline from 12 years ago.

For the next two decades, 12th-grade class enrollment is expected to decline. The drop is predicted to be a 12% drop over 20 years. Mr. Chewing asked about the implied immigration rate in the data. Mr. Jackson says it is difficult to predict. Mr. Olsen asked if the Virginia projections are similar to those of other states.

Mr. Jackson provided the following key takeaways from his examination of the preliminary data:

- Declining births continue to impact the Virginia K-12 enrollments.

- The steady recovery in enrollments post-pandemic has helped stabilize enrollment in the short term, and smaller classes continue to enter Virginia schools.
- 12th-grade classes will begin to decline in the fall of 2026 as the cohorts from the peak birth year graduate.

Mr. Curt asked whether Weldon Cooper looks at projections of the percentage of men graduating from high school who go on to college. Mr. Curt stated that male college acceptance is declining. He suggested another way to address the decline in enrollment would be to incentivize young men to continue on to higher education after high school.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

General Jumper asked for approval of the minutes. Ms. Miles pointed out two errors in the December minutes.

On a motion by Mr. El Koubi, seconded by Dr. Taylor, the minutes with corrections from October 30, 2025, Council meeting and December 15, 2025, special Council Meeting were approved unanimously.

ACTION ON ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS AND THE 2025 DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES AWARDED

Mr. Massa shared the latest data on the enrollment projections and awards as reported by the institutions.

Mr. Curt asked whether the suit filed to prevent the state from granting in-state tuition to undocumented students will further decrease enrollment. Mr. Curt pointed out that the institutions are reporting they will experience no enrollment losses over the next three years and questioned this assumption. Mr. Olsen suggested that the Council is aware of the flaws in the data, not in the collection. General Jumper suggested that the institutions should know how to project more accurately. Mr. Curt suggested that the growth of the flagship schools impacts the other institutions. Dr. King pointed out that the state has not supported enrollment growth in the last twenty years. Increases in state funding have helped stabilize tuition rates.

General Jumper stated that the Council does not generally agree with the reported numbers. He asked for Mr. Fleming's advice on how the Council can make the most impact in the General Assembly. Mr. Fleming suggested that the pool of potential enrollment candidates is larger, as a sizeable percentage of enrollment is made up of untraditional students. Mr. Fleming recommended that the Council continue to work on enrollment strategies. The Council has already endorsed a direct-admit scheme and reenrollment initiatives.

Mr. Massa stated that the decline in enrollment projections will result in the projections from 2023, which were even more unrealistic, being used as the baseline. This is the requirement under statute.

General Jumper suggested that the Council approve the projections but send a letter to each of the Boards of Visitors describing the Council's concerns and some of the ways that SCHEV is changing the Institutional Performance Standards (IPS). Mr.

Fleming also suggested communicating this to the OpSix group. Mr. Olsen asked if there is a linkage between the projections and the budgets. General Jumper suggested that changes in the IPS could address this.

Dr. King asked for clarification on the overall enrollment decline projection on page 133 of the agenda book. Mr. Harvey asked for clarification as to SCHEV's charge regarding the projections. Dr. Harvey expressed concern over the futility of the process. Mr. Fleming stated that SCHEV staff are poorly positioned to make projections on behalf of institutions that with larger staff. Mr. Fleming suggested that they discuss enrollment strategies but also decide what their goals are for the institutions. Mr. Curt suggested getting input from the universities to close the disconnect. General Jumper suggested that, as a coordinating body, SCHEV's role is to facilitate these discussions. Dr. Taylor suggested that some institutions may need to right-size. General Jumper suggested that the Council also formally address the General Assembly with a letter about the projection shortfalls and the strategies for addressing the issues. Mr. Olsen suggested that the decentralized nature of the Virginia system contributes to the problem. Mr. Fleming summarized that the conversation in saying that if the Council's goals are to influence the future of higher education in Virginia, enrollment projections are not the best lever. He noted that SCHEV can express concerns about projections, but it would be better to present their suggestions for improvement to the system.

The Council discussed how to re-word the resolution to incorporate the changes.

ACTION ON A PROPOSED DEGREE PROGRAMS AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Dr. Edwards introduced the Cyber Security PhD program as proposed by George Mason University (GMU). He noted that representatives from GMU were available to answer questions and described the actions the Council could take. General Jumper asked Dr. Edwards whether SCHEV staff have any concerns about the proposal. General Jumper asked for the fundamental difference between the current offering and the proposed program. GMU summarized the changes and growth in the field. General Jumper also asked how AI education will be incorporated into this degree program. Mr. Curt asked how many instructors GMU must teach at the PhD level in this discipline. Mr. Curt also asked how the program stays current in such a fast-changing field. Ms. Fryer asked about the necessity of PhDs in this discipline. GMU representatives provided supporting arguments for the program. General Jumper noted the importance of staying ahead in the field and suggested that GMU emphasize the AI element of the program. Mr. Chewing suggested that the purpose of a PhD in cybersecurity is to best train the BA and MS students in the cybersecurity discipline.

General Jumper emphasized the need to include the artificial intelligence component, and Mr. Curt emphasized the need to continually refresh the program to align with labor needs. SCHEV staff agreed to update the language of the resolution for the Council to vote on later in the meeting.

REMARKS FROM RADFORD UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT, BRET DANILOWICZ

President Danilowicz shared a presentation about Radford University's current initiatives and goals. RU has created a partnership with 8 community colleges, leaning into the concept of regionalism.

He discussed momentum on campus and highlighted the following achievements:

- Stabilized enrollment.
- Increased retention and progression rates.’
- Established Tartan Transfer.
- Enhanced experiential and applied learning.
- Increased career placement.
- Expanded Nursing enrollment and visibility.

He outlined the Radford Bold Commitments:

- Guaranteeing experiential learning for students and supporting workforce needs.
- Building and fostering a culture of care
- Becoming a premier destination for healthcare, education and talent in southwest Virginia.

Dr. Danilowicz asked for discussion and questions. General Jumper asked for further details about Radford’s partnerships with community colleges. Mr. El Koubi asked about what RU recognizes as experiential learning, the percentage that takes the form of paid internships, and what the state can do to help. Dr. Taylor asked for clarification on the culture of care goal. Dr. Taylor also asked how Radford managed right-sizing.

ACTION ON MISSION STATEMENT CHANGE AT A PUBLIC INSTITUTION

Dr. Edwards read an official update to the GMU Cyber Security PhD program approval resolution, and the Council voted on the following updated resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia authorizes the Ph.D. degree program in Cybersecurity (CIP code: 11.1003) proposed by George Mason University to move forward to an external site review by a team of experts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the approval herein is conditional upon the university including in the external review and in its revision to its program proposals: i. a curricular core or required coursework related to Artificial Intelligence; ii. focus on research in the creation of doctorly prepared researchers; iii. a connection to private sector and public sector employers, including the US military.

On a motion from Ms. Miles, seconded by Mr. El Koubi, the updated resolution was passed unanimously.

Dr. Edwards introduced the proposed mission statement change from Radford University. He stated that staff presents Radford University’s mission statement change for Council action. Council may vote to approve, disapprove, approve with conditions, or table for future action.

BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia approves the proposed statement of mission for Radford University:

Radford University: Empower Brighter Futures, Build Stronger Communities

Radford University empowers lifelong success through inclusive education, innovation and collaboration. We foster personal growth, professional development and community impact while building strong partnerships and addressing societal needs in Southwest Virginia and the Commonwealth.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education directs its staff to report this approval to the Governor and General Assembly in accord with statutory requirements.

On a motion by Ms. Miles and seconded by Dr. Taylor, the resolution was passed unanimously as written.

ACTION ON PASSPORT AND UNIFORM CERTIFICATE POLICY

Dr. Edwards introduced the proposal to update the policy to include a disability statement. Dr. Smith joined the meeting to provide background on the policy.

BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, in accordance with its duties in the *Code of Virginia*, approves and requires the inclusion of the following statement on disability accommodation in “Virginia Public Higher Education Policy on Passport and Uniform Certificate of General Studies Programs,” effective immediately:

Students with a documented disability and institutionally approved accommodation requiring a course substitution, where the substituted course is not on the approved list of Passport and UCGS courses, can earn the Passport or UCGS by substituting a course as determined by disability accommodation and in accordance with institutional disability policy. Students earning a Passport or UCGS under this provision will receive all benefits afforded under this policy upon transfer to a four-year institution. Four-year institutions will evaluate the substituted course based on alignment with institutional graduation or major.

Ms. Miles motioned for the approval, and Dr. Taylor seconded. The resolution was approved unanimously.

DISCUSSION OF PROGRAM PRODUCTIVITY POLICY

Dr. Edwards introduced the item and described the proposal to update the program productivity policy to include a return on investment (ROI) metric. Mr. Massa discussed the changes since the last discussion in October.

Dr. Taylor suggested that the definition of ROI in this context should be explained, as ROI does not necessarily imply that the program has less value. Mr. Curt cautioned that the volume of students moving through a program doesn't necessarily determine its value.

Council members discussed the value of this proposed measurement addition

DISCUSSION OF GOVERNOR'S INTRODUCED BUDGET

General Jumper asked Secretary Guidera to comment on the budget process. Secretary Guidera stated that she attended the Council meeting to thank everyone for their work during the Youngkin administration. General Jumper thanked Secretary Guidera and her team for their guidance and friendship.

Mr. Andes spoke to the Council about the Governor's introduced budget. He reviewed the budget recommendation process by the institutions, SCHEV staff, and the administration. He highlighted the higher education items in the budget. Overall, the proposed budget includes \$180 million in general funds, two-thirds of which is in the first year. The proposed budget also includes \$175 million in nongeneral funds. The budget, as pertains to higher education, can be broken down into three themes: student affordability, nursing and healthcare workforce development, and overall workforce development. Mr. Andes noted that many of the spending recommendations are only for the first year of the biennial budget.

General Jumper asked if SCHEV has any authority to make recommendations on the 529 funds. Mr. Andes stated that this is outside of SCHEV's scope.

DISCUSSION OF THE 2026 GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION

Dr. Khattar distributed a list of current higher education bills being introduced to the 2026 General Assembly. She described the work that SCHEV does to follow, summarize, and coordinate the fiscal impact statements. Dr. Khattar also described how SCHEV staff work with the administration and the Department of Management and Budget.

Dr. Khattar shared a list of bills introduced to the General Assembly. She noted that since she printed the list the morning of the meeting, over 150 additional bills were introduced. She explained the resources members could use to keep up with bills moving through the General Assembly. She highlighted bills pertaining to VEMSDEP, the Institutional Boards of Visitors and financial aid.

UPDATE ON PELL INITIATIVE

Mr. Andes updated the Council on the findings of the institution-wide barriers to Pell review.

The summary of the barrier review identified three major themes:

- Internal fragmentation of systems, policies and communication.
- Affordability concerns: insufficient aid for known indirect costs and unexpected incidental and micro-costs.
- Faculty development in working with low-income students.

Mr. Andes provided the Council with a preliminary summary from each institution describing the specific challenges they identified in their review of Pell enrollment.

General Jumper stated that he would like to discuss strategies to retain Pell money at a future meeting. He suggested that SCHEV publish a list of best practices for the institutions.

RECEIPT OF REPORT FROM AGENCY DIRECTOR

Mr. Fleming highlighted that Virginia is leading the way in recognizing the value of higher education nationwide.

The General Jumper read the new language for the enrollment resolution from the beginning of the meeting.

BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia approves the FY2025 - FY2029 institutional enrollment projections and degree estimates for the purposes of budgetary and fiscal planning and performance measurement. Staff is directed to make the detailed enrollment targets and degree estimates available to the public via the SCHEV website, with full detail.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that approval of these institutional enrollment targets does not constitute either implicit or explicit approval of any new degree program, instructional site, higher education center or campus determined by an institution as necessary to achieve these targets. Further, approval of these projections does not provide assurance or guarantee of future funding for additional enrollment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Council directs staff to communicate the Council concerns with the General Assembly, the OpSix, the Boards of Visitors and the general public via a letter to be approved by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Council.

On a motion by Mr. El Koubi, seconded by Ms. Miles, the updated resolution was passed 9-2, with Mr. Curt voting no and Dr. Taylor abstaining.

Mr. Curt asked about the progress on hiring the Deputy Agency Director. Mr. Olsen asked about the Board of Visitors orientation and whether the board members walk away with the necessary knowledge. General Jumper shared a summary of the discussions.

Mr. Olsen asked for a brief description of the board of visitors orientation that SCHEV provides. Mr. Fleming described the statutory requirements and the logistical elements. He noted that the Council members are all invited to attend.

RECEIPT OF ITEMS DELEGATED TO STAFF

Included at the end of this document.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

RECEIPT OF PUBLIC COMMENT

No comment reported.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 2:36 p.m.

John Jumper
Council Chair

Kristin Whelan
SCHEV Staff

Items Delegated to Director/Staff

Pursuant to the Code of Virginia, § 23.1-203 and Council’s “*Policies and Procedures for Program Approval and Changes*,” the following items are approved/not approved as delegated to staff:

Academic Program Actions

Institution	Degree/Program/CIP	Effective Date
Old Dominion University	Certificate Programs Approved: <u>Undergraduate</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artificial Intelligence (11.0102) <u>Graduate</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artificial Intelligence in Business Strategy and Operations (52.0299) 	Spring 2026

Institution	Degree/Program/CIP	Effective Date
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artificial Intelligence in Education and Learning Technologies (13.0501) 	
Old Dominion University	<p>Program Name Change Not Approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change the name of the Master of Library Studies (MLIS) degree program in Library and Information Studies (25.0101) to a Master of Library Studies (MLIS) degree program in Library and Information Sciences (25.0101) 	November 25, 2025
Virginia Commonwealth University	<p>Program Modifications Approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change from two delivery formats, 1) face-to-face and 2) fully online, to one delivery format: fully online for the Graduate Certificate in Aging Studies (30.1101) Change from two delivery formats, 1) face-to-face and 2) fully online, to one delivery format: fully online for the Master of Science (MS) degree program in Gerontology (19.0702) 	Fall 2026
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	<p>Facilitated Approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science (BA/BS) degree program in Geography (45.0701) 	Spring 2026

Pursuant to the Code of Virginia, § 23.1-203 and Council’s “*Policies and Procedures for Program Approval and Changes*,” the following items are approved and reported:

Programs Discontinued

Institution	Degree/Program/CIP	Effective Date
Old Dominion University	Graduate Certificate Program Discontinuance Approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modeling and Simulation: Health Sciences (51.9999) 	Spring 2026
Old Dominion University	Post-Professional Certificate Program Discontinuances Approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult-Gerontology Clinical Nurse Practitioner (51.3821) Family Nurse Practitioner (51.3805) Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (51.3810) 	Spring 2026
Old Dominion University (offered jointly with Norfolk State University)	Program Discontinuance Approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree program in Clinical Psychology (42.2801) [Council Approval Date: May 2, 1978] 	Spring 2026

Pursuant to the Code of Virginia, Section § 23.1-211 and Council’s “*Commonwealth of Virginia Policy on the Reciprocal Authorization of Distance Education and Related Activities*,” the following items approved as delegated to staff:

National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) Approvals

Institution	Effective Date
Hampton University	November 13, 2025
Piedmont Virginia Community College	November 13, 2025

Pursuant to the Code of Virginia, § 23.1-203 and Council’s “*Policies and Procedures for Internal and Off-Campus Organizational Changes*,” the following items approved as delegated to staff:

Internal and Off-Campus Organizational Changes

Institution	Change/Site	Effective Date
George Mason University	Rename the Department of Atmospheric, Oceanic, and Earth Sciences to the J. Shukla Department of Atmospheric, Oceanic, and Earth Sciences . The department has been renamed to recognize Dr. Shukla’s “leadership of the department as the “founding chairperson” and leadership	February 1, 2026

Institution	Change/Site	Effective Date
	<p>in the academic studies of climate and earth sciences at the university. The department name change also acknowledges “the donation of \$800,000 to create the “Jagadish and Anastasia Shukla Atmospheric, Oceanic, and Earth Sciences Fellowship Endowment.” The “intent of the endowment is to support” students attending full time and enrolled in the Ph.D. in Climate Dynamics degree program administered by the department. The naming of the department will also fulfill the gift agreement which stipulates: “In the event the AOES department is merged with another department, or otherwise reorganized, it is fully expected that the J. Shukla naming of the department shall be adopted by the newly created academic unit housing climate research and teaching. Should the AOES department be merged with another department, the Donors, or Sonia Shukla if the Donors are no longer living, shall be consulted regarding the naming of any subsequent department.”</p>	
Radford University	<p>Rename the College of Business and Economics to the Sandra C. Davis and William C. Davis College of Business and Economics. The college has been renamed to recognize the \$8 million gift from the Davis family. The financial gift is to provide scholarships exclusively to incoming freshman and transfer “students in the College of Business and Economics” and the “College of Visual and Performing Arts.” The university will be responsible for fulfilling the gift agreement, which stipulates: “The scholarship awards shall be allocated between the two colleges utilizing the following calculation: two-thirds to the Sandra C. and William C. Davis College of Business and Economics and one-third to the College of Visual and Performing Arts. Scholarships shall be awarded consistent with the calculation.”</p>	December 1, 2025
University of Virginia	<p>Close the off-campus instructional site located at: Valo Park, 7950 Jones Branch Drive, McLean, VA 22102</p>	December 1, 2025

Institution	Change/Site	Effective Date
Virginia Commonwealth University	Reorganize and close the Departments of Craft and Material Studies, Painting and Printmaking, and Sculpture and Extended Media to establish the Department of Fine Arts . The Department will be located in the School of Art. The establishment of one academic unit “is needed to streamline administrative processes and maximize shared resources between the three (3) departments.” The organizational change will result in a cost savings of a minimum of “\$20,000” and ensure “responsible stewardship of university resources.” No new resources will be requested from the state to establish or sustain the new department.	December 1, 2025
Virginia Commonwealth University	Reorganize and close the Departments of Theatre and of Dance and Choreography to establish the Department of Theatre and Dance . The Department will be located in the School of Art. The establishment of one academic unit will allow the School to “unify operations needed for both theatre and dance academic programs, faculty, and productions.” The organizational change will result in a cost savings of a minimum of “\$10,000” and ensure “responsible stewardship of university resources.” No new resources will be requested from the state to establish or sustain the new department.	December 1, 2025
Virginia Commonwealth University	Rename the Department of Urology to the Dorothy A. Pauley Department of Urology . The department has been renamed to recognize donations of \$10 million and \$20 million from an anonymous donor. The financial gift is to support “six initiatives” in the department to include: “the provision of quality clinical care,” “the recruitment and retention of faculty,” an endowed faculty position, and “new quasi-endowments in alignment with the Foundation’s vision.” The naming of the department will also honor the donor’s request to name the department. The university will be responsible for fulfilling the gift agreement which stipulates: the university “shall not change the name of the Dorothy A. Pauley Department of Urology	December 4, 2025

Institution	Change/Site	Effective Date
	without the written consent of the Foundation.”	

Pursuant to the Code of Virginia § 23.1-213 to 230 and 8VAC-40-31-90 of the Virginia Administrative Code, the following items were approved as delegated to staff:

Postsecondary, Non-Degree Institutions Certified to Operate in the Commonwealth of Virginia

Institution	Location	Effective Date
Accelerated Academy - Chesapeake	Chesapeake, VA	September 4, 2025
Accelerated Academy - Danville	Danville, VA	September 4, 2025
Career First Institute	Sterling, VA	November 20, 2025
CyberNow Labs Institute	Sterling, VA	September 4, 2025
Giles County Technology Center - Practical Nursing Program	Perisburg, VA	October 28, 2025
H&S School of Massage	Richmond, VA	September 12, 2025



Dr. Javaune Adams-Gaston is the seventh President of Norfolk State University. She began her tenure on June 24, 2019. As President, she is committed to ensuring that Norfolk State University fulfills its mission as an HBCU for the modern world, a university grounded by its heritage, focused on the future, and deeply committed to student success. Her vision is student success, opportunity, access, affordability, growth, and sustainability. A strong advocate for collaboration and developing strategic partnerships with local, regional, state, national, and international stakeholders, Dr. Adams-Gaston is committed to cultivating strong connections with alumni and the community.

During her first year as President at Norfolk State University, the COVID-19 pandemic created multiple challenges for the nation and the world. President Adams-Gaston collaborated with her team to move the institution forward despite the issues created as a result of the pandemic. This led to the university achieving multiple successes. Under President Adams-Gaston's leadership, Norfolk State University has successfully achieved the status of a U.S. News and World Report 2020, 2021, and 2022 as a Top 20 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) designation. Attained 10-year reaffirmation of accreditation by its major accrediting body, The Southern Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). This reaffirmation underscores the University's strength, stability, and forward momentum. Enrollment increased to a six-year high in 2019, to 5,600 students. This included the largest freshmen class in many years, 1,200 freshmen students (FY20). For Fall 2022 the new freshmen class included 1,300 students enrolled and a total population of 5,785 students. The university has realized record operating revenues, 104% above projection, the highest in the history of Norfolk State. A new 740-bed state of the art residence complex was opened. And Dr. Adams-Gaston has been successful in acquiring multiple donations including a transformational gift of over \$40 million from Mackenzie Scott, the largest single donor gift in the history of NSU and a generous donation of support from Landmark Foundation of \$5 million.

A nationally recognized higher education leader, President Adams-Gaston has been asked to regularly serve on multiple boards. In these roles she has provided her unambiguous perspectives to HBCUs, Research I institutions, public universities, and independent colleges. Her appointments include: President Biden's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, NCAA Board of Governors, NCAA Constitution Revision Committee, NCAA Division I Transformation Committee, NCAA Academic Committee, Board of Directors – Association of Public Land Grant Universities (APLU), numerous SACSCOC Review and Reaffirmation committees, Executive Board- Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce, Virginia Chamber Board of Directors, Board of Directors- American Red Cross, NASPA Foundation Board Member Chair, Board of Governors- Children's Miracle Network, Greater Norfolk Corporation Board, Board of Trustees – The University of Dubuque Board (Elected Member), Diamond Honoree -American College Personnel

Association, Chair- NASPA Pillar of the Profession, and Chair - NASPA National Conference.

Since President Adams-Gaston's arrival, Norfolk State University has also expanded its online academic program curriculums to include a master's degree in Cybersecurity and has been recognized nationally and been designated as a Department of Defense Center of Excellence in Cybersecurity and Department of Energy Cybersecurity Consortium Leader and named one of the Top School for Online Healthcare Administration. Under her leadership, the online master's degree in Cyber Psychology launched in Fall 2020 in connection with Academic Partnerships, is the first of its kind in the nation. The University also opened the NSU Innovation Center in Downtown Norfolk, a learning space that integrates pedagogy and technology to help grow and serve as a channel for minority entrepreneurs. Norfolk State University has developed the Center for African American Public Policy, a first of its kind in Virginia which "serves to educate the public at large, empower minority communities and assist lawmakers on alternative ideas of how to solve issues that impact communities of color."

An innovator and collaborator, President Adams-Gaston plays a critical role in developing outstanding opportunities for students. Transformative progress including a partnership with Eastern Virginia Medical School, Old Dominion University, and Norfolk State University to develop the ONE School of Public Health, focuses on addressing health disparities. At The Ohio State University, she was co-architect of the Second Year Transformational Program (STEP). This 2nd year living-learning 4000 bed residential student program incorporates faculty engagement with small cohorts of students and experienced learning opportunities. At the University of Maryland, Dr. Adams-Gaston co-authored the creation of the President's Promise to focus on all students engaging in experiential learning via internships, research, service learning, study abroad and leadership. All these programs continue and demonstrate the importance of connectivity between institutions for the development of students in higher education.

Norfolk State University has received national recognition and visibility for several initiatives including the International Cyber Psychology Conference, the Voice of America's 1619 Commemoration radio broadcast, hosting of a US Senatorial Debate and a recently signed Memorandum of Understanding to become a partner of the Commonwealth of Virginia's Tech Talent Pipeline initiative. Also, the Elephant in the Room Symposium was hosted on NSU campus in 2021 and participation in the Mighty Dream Forum sponsored by Pharrell Williams gained national attention. Dr. Adams-Gaston's leadership has also resulted in Norfolk State's participation in the Virginia College Affordability Network, providing a pathway for students with the Hampton Roads region to attend the university with full tuition scholarships. Additionally, the University has secured contributions of more than \$64 million for scholarships and financial support to enhance student success during her tenure. Her strategic planning has also helped to secure transformational partnerships with the Sentara Healthcare- Public Health Program, Appalachian School of Law 3+3 program, Academic Partnerships online learning platform, executed Memorandum of Understanding with University of West Indies Jamaica , London Metropolitan University, among other

international institutions, Netflix, 2U, Apple, Amazon, USAA, Dominion Energy, and the Black Ambition Prize and many others.

President Adams-Gaston is a higher education professional and scholar with more than 35 years of experience at nationally known research one universities. Prior to joining Norfolk State University, Dr. Adams-Gaston served as senior vice president at The Ohio State University and led forty departments in the Office of Student Life annually impacting over 66,000 students. With her selection in 2009, Dr. Adams-Gaston became The Ohio State's first female African American Vice President for Student Life. She came to The Ohio University State from the University of Maryland, where she served in administrative and faculty positions. Her experience includes serving at University of Maryland, College Park as associate dean of academic affairs, faculty member, executive director of the Career Center, equity administrator, psychologist and first UMCP African American female assistant athletic director (Division 1) and as an Athletic Certification Peer Reviewer for the NCAA. Trained as a psychologist, Dr. Adams-Gaston spent more than 25 years as a licensed psychologist in private practice. She also served as a member of the graduate faculty at the University of Maryland and Johns Hopkins University. She was an affiliate assistant professor at The Ohio State University.

Dr. Adams-Gaston earned a bachelor's degree in biology, psychology, and general science, at the University of Dubuque; a master's degree in psychology at Loras College; and a Ph.D. in psychology at Iowa State University. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. She considers her greatest achievement to be her family. She is married to Dmitri Gaston, MCRP, who served as a planner and management analyst in Washington, D.C. for over 25 years and as a planner, including creating diversity and inclusion education at The Ohio State University. He presently serves as a Planner/Grants Writer. They have three adult children, and they are extremely proud of them.



Dr. Jeffery O. Smith is an educator who has more than 32 years of service in public-school education. He spent 15 years as a superintendent, with eight years as superintendent in Hampton City Schools (HCS), and seven years as superintendent in the Town of West Point. Dr. Smith served as the assistant superintendent for instruction with Amelia County Public Schools, assistant superintendent for academic services with Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools and assistant superintendent for academic services with Newport News Public Schools. He has also served as a member of the

adjunct faculty at Old Dominion University and the College of William and Mary. Under his leadership, Hampton City Schools reached historic milestones: for the first time, all 29 schools earned full accreditation without conditions, graduation rates rose from 88% to nearly 98%, and dropout rates declined from 5.1% to less than 1%. The school division strengthened its dual enrollment program with the Virginia Peninsula Community College, which during his tenure as the superintendent, yielded students earning over 25,000 dual enrollment credits and several high school graduates earning an associate degree as a part of their high school educational pursuit. He co-chaired the nationally recognized Academies of Hampton, which expanded career pathways and positioned Hampton as Virginia's first Ford Next Generation Learning Community.

Currently, Dr. Smith is the Executive Director and CEO of the Virginia Air and Space Science Center in Hampton, Virginia. Additionally, he continues his over 40 years of pastoral leadership by serving a congregation in Richmond, Virginia.

Dr. Smith's leadership has been honored at local, state, and national levels. He was named the Region II Superintendent of the Year, the 2020 Virginia Superintendent of the Year, one of four finalists for AASA National Superintendent of the Year, and he received the Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE) Mary Peake Award for Education Equity. In 2020, the Virginia General Assembly recognized his dedicated service and the academic achievements realized by the students while serving as superintendent of Hampton City Schools.

Dr. Smith is married to an educator, Dr. Lorianne Smith, and they are the proud parents of two children.

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia Agenda Item

Item: III.F. – Council – Conversation with the Student Advisory Committee: Critical Issues Impacting Students

Date of Meeting: March 17, 2026

Presenters: Anne Lowe
Specialist, College Access Data Management
annelowe@schev.edu

Paula Fisher Robinson
Associate Director, Student Access, Success & Engagement
paularobinson@schev.edu

Representatives from the Student Advisory Committee

Most Recent Review/Action:

- No previous Council review/action
 Previous review/action

Purpose of the Agenda Item:

The purpose of this item is to afford Council an opportunity for dialogue with currently enrolled students who are members of the 2025-26 Student Advisory Committee (SAC) in the support of the development of relevant strategies and activities for the new statewide strategic plan and other Council business. Council will discuss with SAC representatives the critical issues impacting students. These issues will include student finances, student/workforce readiness and student engagement. Staff provides the information in the Background/Summary section below as context to facilitate discussion of these and other issues.

Background Information/Summary of Major Elements:

As authorized in the *Code of Virginia* (§ 23.1-201), the SCHEV director annually appoints a Student Advisory Committee (SAC), consisting of student leaders from two- and four-year public higher education institutions and accredited private institutions. Members are nominated by their institutions' presidents and confirmed by SCHEV staff. Throughout the year, the Committee is available to advise the agency director on system-wide issues of concern to Virginia students.

Through March 2026, the 2025-26 SAC met three times. Prior to the first meeting, members completed a survey to identify Virginia college student priorities. Results from

the survey informed the agendas of the Committee's future meetings and the formation of subcommittees.

During the first meeting, on September 19, 2025, SAC members elected their leadership, co-chairs Zayd Hamid (George Mason University) and Tobi Ojo (Virginia Commonwealth University). Members also organized themselves into three subcommittees, based upon their identified priority issues of concern: (i) finance; (ii) workforce readiness; and (iii) student engagement (originally titled belonging). Each subcommittee elected co-chairs and received support from relevant SCHEV staff. Subcommittee student chairs coordinated correspondence and meetings between SCHEV-coordinated meetings of the full Committee to narrow issues, share campus practices and develop recommendations to be shared with Council and campus leadership.

Materials Provided: None

Financial Impact: N/A

Relationship to the Goals of *The Virginia Plan for Higher Education*:

This agenda item reflects broad themes from the statewide strategic plan pertaining to positioning the Commonwealth to be the best state for talent from the student perspective. The student recommendations and experiences address issues facing Virginia and Virginia higher education, identified in the Strategic Plan, including “work-based learning”, “affordability”, “access”, “engagement” and “societal and cultural dynamics”.

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

Notwithstanding subsequent conversations with SAC representatives that Council might request, the outcomes of this conversation and Council's reflections thereon throughout the year may inform members' development of future budget and/or policy recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly.

Resolution: N/A

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia Agenda Item

Item: III.G – Discussion of Potential Priority Initiatives in Support of the Statewide Strategic Plan

Date of Meeting: March 17, 2026

Presenters: Scott Fleming
Executive Director
scottfleming@schev.edu

Emily Salmon
Assistant Director of Strategic Planning and Policy Studies
emilysalmon@schev.edu

Most Recent Review/Action:

No previous Council review/action

Previous review/action:

Date: December 15, 2025

Action: Council approved *Developing Tomorrow's Talent: The Virginia Plan for Higher Education*.

Purpose of the Agenda Item:

This item represents the first phase of a two-meeting process intended to result (in May) in a slate of Council-endorsed priority initiatives that SCHEV will undertake over the next two years in support of the new statewide strategic plan for higher education. This item provides opportunity for Council to provide feedback on and suggest modifications to an initial slate of nine potential priority initiatives.

Background Information/Summary of Major Elements:

On December 15, 2025, after a year-long planning process, Council approved *Developing Tomorrow's Talent: The Virginia Plan for Higher Education*, effective January 1, 2026. As the strategic plan for all higher education in the Commonwealth, it provides Virginia with a framework for state postsecondary policy, planning, and action for the next six years.

Developing Tomorrow's Talent



Top state for talent – learning to leading

The Plan defines a vision - **Virginia as the top state for talent - learning to leading** - along with three goals (Ready, Responsive, Relevant) and associated objectives, as well as 13 supporting strategies to guide statelevel/statewide efforts. While these strategies outline broad approaches to achieving the plan's goals, their generalized nature means that they are not inherently actionable in and of themselves.

To operationalize the strategies and to lead by SCHEV example the implementation thereof, staff developed for Council input the enclosed slate of draft priority initiatives. These nine potential SCHEV initiatives represent focused, short-term (approximately two-year) efforts that staff would undertake at the direction of Council in addition to SCHEV's core responsibilities. The proposed initiatives are intended to translate the plan's strategies into concrete SCHEV action and statewide results/impacts.

The proposed initiatives were informed by extensive input from Council and stakeholders during the 2025 planning process. Following iterative feedback and formal Council endorsement (ideally, in May), staff will align approved initiatives with any necessary budget and/or policy recommendations to advance implementation.

The nine initial/potential priority initiatives are:

1. 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.
2. 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 250th.
 3. 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.
 4. 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).
 5. 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.
 6. 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.
 7. Coordinate with other state agencies to ensure defined benefit surplus funds are used to support access initiatives for Virginia students.
 8. Through Level Up Virginia, identify and publish avenues for students and families to explore scholarship opportunities, particularly for those opportunities that go unused.
 9. Produce an annual report on transfer outcomes and student mobility.

Materials Provided:

The table that begins on the next page depicts each of the proposed priority initiatives in relation to and alignment with its associated Council-approved goal, objectives, and strategies in *Developing Tomorrow's Talent*.

Financial Impact: No estimated financial impact at this time

Timetable for Further Review/Action:


- May 2026: Review a slate of priority initiatives that reflect Council's March feedback. If acceptable, then act to approve a final slate of priority initiatives. If not acceptable (ie, significant revision are still required), then provide feedback to staff on further revisions to the priority initiatives, for review and action in July.

Relationship to the Goals of The Virginia Plan for Higher Education:

Council's priority initiatives reflect broad themes from the strategic planning process and include specific (short-term) actions to implement the plan's 13 strategies and achieve its three goals.

Resolution: No action at this meeting (discussion only)

The right column of this table enumerates potential short-term initiatives that, if endorsed by Council at its May meeting, SCHEV would implement over a ~two-year period in support of the strategies, objectives, and goals of the new statewide strategic plan, *Developing Tomorrow's Talent*. Staff seeks Council feedback on the potential initiatives at the March meeting.

Council-Approved Virginia Higher Ed Goals & Objectives	Council-Approved Supporting Strategies	Potential Initiatives (PI) for Council's Feedback (numbers correspond to approved strategies)
<p>Goal 1: Ready</p>  <p>Prepare students to learn, work, contribute and lead.</p> <p>Objectives related to <i>students' readiness</i>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To learn (postsecondary education readiness) 2. To work (employment/career readiness) 3. To contribute (civil discourse, civic knowledge) 4. To lead (civic leadership, workplace leadership, innovation) 	<p>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.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>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.</p>	<p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>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 250th.</i></p>

Goal 2: Responsive



Align to the needs of students, industry, labor markets, regional economies and Virginians.

Objectives related to *institutions'* responsiveness:

- 1. To student needs (mental health, basic supports, alternative pathways, etc.)**
- 2. To industry needs (technological and other innovations), alignment to labor market needs and regional economies**
- 3. To Virginians' needs (higher ed finance, demographic and enrollment changes)**
- 4. To societal and cultural needs (research and innovation, political polarization and declining confidence in institutions)**

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.

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.

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.

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.

Goal 3: Relevant



Articulate and emphasize the value of higher education.

Objectives related to *higher education's pertinence and value*:

- 1. To students – sense of belonging/access (males, low income and under-represented populations)**
- 2. To students/families (affordable and alternative pathways)**
- 3. To Virginians (the broad value of Virginia higher ed, its efficiency and effectiveness)**

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.

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.

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia Agenda Item

Item: III.H – Council – Update from the Council Workgroup on IPS and Full Cost

Date of Meeting: March 17, 2026

Presenter: Delceno Miles
Member, Council Workgroup on IPS and Full Cost
Vice Chair, SCHEV Council

Charlie King
Member, Council Workgroup on IPS and Full Cost
SCHEV Council

Most Recent Review/Action:

- No previous Council review/action
 Previous review/action

Date: December 15, 2025

Action: Council discussed potential institutional-performance standards to be considered.

Purpose of the Agenda Item:

In September 2025, Council formed a two-member workgroup to consider alternatives to the current requirements for public institutions to charge non-Virginians at least the full cost of their educations and to meet certain institutional performance standards (IPS). The purpose of this item is to update Council on the activities and progress of the workgroup.

Background Information/Summary of Major Elements:

The *Code of Virginia* and the *Act of Appropriation* (state budget) place various requirements on public institutions and task SCHEV with monitoring and reporting on satisfaction of many of those requirements. The measures used for these requirements may need to be reviewed periodically to ensure adherence to the Commonwealth's higher-education policy goals amid a shifting landscape.

In recent years, institutions have struggled to comply with two of these requirements -- (i) Institutional Performance Standards; and (ii) Full Cost Tuition calculation – while facing enrollment challenges amid a decline in high school graduates and increasing competition.

1. Institutional performance standards

Background - SCHEV has assessed institutional performance standards for nearly two decades, beginning with the *Higher Education Restructuring Act* in 2005, the *Virginia Higher Education Opportunity Act* of 2011 (Top Jobs Act or TJ21) and related statutory amendments. Chapter 725 of the *2025 Acts of Assembly* outlines the assessment process and identifies six education-related measures by which the Council shall base its assessment and certification.

Of the education-related measures, four assess the institution's ability to provide reliable enrollment, degree, and retention projections, not outcomes.

HEADCOUNT – Institution meets at least 95 percent of its State Council-approved biennial projections for in-state undergraduate headcount enrollment.

DEGREE AWARDS – Institution meets at least 95 percent of its State Council-approved biennial projections for the number of in-state associate and bachelor degree awards.

STEM-H DEGREE AWARDS – Institution meets at least 95 percent of its State Council-approved biennial projections for the number of in-state STEM-H (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Health professions) associate and bachelor degree awards.

PROGRESSION AND RETENTION – Institution meets at least 95 percent of its State Council-approved biennial projections for the number of in-state, upper level – sophomore level for two-year institutions and junior and senior level for four-year institutions – program-placed, full-time equivalent students.

The remaining two education measures review narrowly focused outcomes rather than overall institutional performance.

DEGREES FOR UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS – Maintain or increase the number of in-state associate and bachelor degrees awarded to students from underrepresented populations.

TWO-YEAR TRANSFERS – Maintain or increase the number of in-state two-year transfers to four-year institutions. Special Note: Virginia Military Institute (VMI) has an alternative measure, commissioning rate, for this performance measure.

Staff conduct the performance reviews every two years, with the next review scheduled for summer 2026.

Current Status - National enrollment trends have rendered full compliance with current performance measures challenging for some institutions. Just two institutions met full compliance in SCHEV's 2024 review, while ten institutions did not meet three or more of the six education-related measures. Institutions cited the ongoing impact of the pandemic, challenges in updating enrollment and degree projections within the current environment of uncertain enrollment and federal higher education policy changes, and a smaller pool of transfers from the Virginia Community College System among contributing factors.

Since the education-related performance measures were originally adopted twenty years ago, a reassessment of the relevancy of the measures could bring them into better alignment with Virginia’s current and future higher education goals. A realignment would also provide opportunity for the Council to bring greater attention to the limitations of the existing measures.

2. Full-cost calculations

Background - Since 1990, each *Act of Appropriation* has set forth a tuition policy regarding nonresident (out-of-state) students (Item 4-2.01.b.2). The most recent version directs SCHEV to calculate the average cost of education by institution and monitor whether tuition charges to out-of-state students meet the requirement to “cover at least 100 percent of the average cost of their education” annually.

b) The Boards of Visitors or other governing bodies of institutions of higher education may set tuition and fee charges at levels they deem to be appropriate for all nonresident student groups based on, but not limited to, competitive market rates, provided that: i) the tuition and mandatory educational and general fee rates for nonresident undergraduate and graduate students cover at least 100 percent of the average cost of their education, as calculated through base adequacy guidelines adopted, and periodically amended, by the Joint Subcommittee Studying Higher Education Funding Policies, and ii) the total revenue generated by the collection of tuition and fees from all students is within the nongeneral fund appropriation for educational and general programs provided in this act.

c) For institutions charging nonresident students less than 100 percent of the cost of education, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia may authorize a phased approach to meeting this requirement, when in its judgment, it would result in annual tuition and fee increases for nonresident students that would discourage their enrollment.

Budget language provides guidance on the methodology to calculate the cost of education based on an institution’s adjusted E&G funding, divided by projected FTE. Staff compares the resulting dividend to the institution’s weighted average nonresident tuition (accounting for undergraduate and graduate tuition rates). If the institution’s nonresident tuition charges are less than the calculated cost of education, the institution is deemed out of compliance.

Current status - Per current methodology, seven institutions – Norfolk State University, Radford University, University of Mary Washington, University of Virginia at Wise, Virginia State University, Richard Bland College, and Virginia Community College System – did not meet the full cost requirements in FY 2025. SCHEV staff notified these institutions and issued three follow-up questions:

- How/why did the institution fail to meet full cost requirements?

- How can the institution prevent the numbers declining further over the next year?
- What is a realistic time frame to get back to 100% compliance, and what are the obstacles to doing so?

For AY2025-26, these seven institutions continue to fall below the full cost standard. Reasons vary, but a common theme lies in an inadvertent challenge presented by recent increases in state support. While the General Assembly has recently provided an influx of E&G support, doing so amid stagnating or, in some cases, declining enrollments has the unintended effect of raising the average “cost to educate” per student. At the same time, heightened competition for out-of-state students limits the institutions’ ability to increase tuition and fees without undercutting admissions.

National enrollment projections show a trend in declining college enrollment through 2030, meaning a smaller pool of potential students will exist for institutions to recruit. While Virginia may experience a more limited impact than other states, the competition from out-of-state institutions for both Virginia students and out-of-state students will increase. Under current circumstances, it will be extremely difficult for several institutions to regain conformity with the full cost standard over the next biennium or even beyond.

The workgroup proceeds with the following goals:

- Review Virginia statutory and budget language, SCHEV policy, history, best practices, and any other relevant information on the Institutional Performance Standards.
- Provide an analysis of potential updates or changes to each respective program detailing the reason for proposing the update, the steps to accomplish change, and any other relevant information. The workgroup can consider legislative action and/or steps that Council can undertake unilaterally.
- Consider intermediate steps to bring a sharper focus on institutional performance standards that can be expedited by SCHEV without legislation.
- Review and recommend options to address the full cost requirement.

Materials Provided: N/A

Financial Impact: N/A

Relationship to the Goals of *The Virginia Plan for Higher Education*:

The workgroup’s efforts and results support the strategic plan’s goals and strategies related to the responsiveness of institutions of higher education to the needs of Virginia and Virginians.

Timetable for Further Review/Action: Committee recommendations may be presented at the May meeting with Council action scheduled for July 2026.

Resolution: N/A

Overview of the House and Senate Amendments to the 2026-28 Introductory Budget

All numbers are total general fund (GF) over introduced budget for the biennium, unless otherwise noted

March 9, 2026

House (HAC) recommendations:

- Major amendments include:
 - \$82.5 million over the biennium to maintain affordable access
 - \$30.0 million for the expansion of Career Technical Education programs
 - \$30.8 million for financial aid programs

Senate (SFAC) recommendations:

- Major amendments include:
 - \$72.5 million over the biennium to maintain affordable access
 - \$50.0 million to support need-based financial aid

SCHEV:

Tuition Assistance Grant -

- House \$9.6 million
- Senate \$17.3 million

New Economy Workforce Credential Grant Program -

- House \$18.9 million
- Senate \$12.1 million

Capital Outlay:

Construction Pool:

- **House** removed \$79.8 million GF and \$25.2 NGF in FY 2027
- **Senate** \$316.6 million GF & \$39.6 million NGF in FY 2027 for five construction projects

Language Differences:

House:

Six-Year Capital Outlay Plan

- This amendment authorizes the Six-Year Capital Outlay Plan Advisory Committee to take necessary actions when General Assembly authorized capital projects are not progressing in accordance with anticipated timelines.

House & Senate:

JLARC recommendations

- Adoption of Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission recommendations requiring DGS to collect facility condition assessments from state building managers and report to the Capital Outlay Plan Advisory Committee its findings and recommendations

Recommended amendment to HB29/SB29 - FY 2026

- **Salaries:** Both the House and Senate replaced the one-time FY 2026 2% salary bonus provided in the Chapter 725 budget with a \$1,500 bonus per state employee. The amended language allows the governing authorities of the state institutions of higher education to provide the one-time bonus at any point between June 16, 2026, and September 16, 2026.

Recommended amendments to the 2026-28 Introduced Budget

Detailed Itemized Amendments	HAC	SFAC
<i>Systemwide Institutional Funding</i>		
Maintain Affordable Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$82.5 million Funds <i>allocated directly</i> to individual institutions.	Item 243 #2s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$72.5 million Funds <i>transferred</i> to individual institutions.
Expansion of career technical education programs	Item 203#5h <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$30.0 million 	
Support for upgrades to academic, administrative, and financial systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$9.6 million NSU, UMW, & VSU	
Undergraduate need- based financial aid		Item 243 #1s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$50.0 million – FY 2028
Salaries	Maintain 2% salary increase from introduced budget	Item 469 #1s Raise salary increase to 3% each year
<i>SCHEV</i>		
Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant	Item 131 #1h <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$6.0 million 	Item 131 #3s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$17.3 million
Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant bonus for Hispanic Serving Institution	Item 131 #1h <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$3.6 million Extends program into 2026-28 biennium	
Provide awards for in-state undergraduate students at Virginia University of Lynchburg	Item 131 #1h <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$2.0 million 	

Detailed Itemized Amendments	HAC	SFAC
New Economy Workforce Credential Grant	Item 131 #1h <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$18.9 million 	Item 131 #2s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$12.1 million • (\$7.0 million) NGF
Virginia Space Grant Consortium	Item 131 #1h <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$300,000 	
Two-Year College Transfer Grant Pilot Program	Item 131 #1h <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to \$5.0 million from reappropriated balances 	
Mental Health Workforce Pilot	Item 133 #1h Defer expansion of pilot initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (\$500,000) 	
Offset for Chapter Six Tuition Waivers	Item 131 #1h <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (\$75.0 million) NGF 	Item 131 #2s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (\$75.0 million) NGF
Internship Initiative (Currently V-TOP, see language proposal below to change to InVA).	Item 133 #2h Transfer funds to Virginia Economic Development Partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (\$2.0 million) Transfer to DHRM for internship coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (\$350,448) 	
Medical Education Grant for Service Program		Item 131 #4s Medical Education Grant for service - pursuant to Senate Bill 625 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$3.3 million – FY 2027

Detailed Itemized Amendments	HAC	SFAC
<i>Institutions</i>		
CNU	Item 137 #1h Operation and Maintenance for Science and Engineering Research Center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1.7 million 	Item 137 #1s Operation and Maintenance for Science and Engineering Research Center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2.3 million
GMU	Item 148 #1h Operating Support & SBDC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$7.4 million Item 148 #4h Civics Pilot Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$250,000- FY 2027 Item 148 #5h AI Innovation Nexus Scaling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1.0 million- FY 2027 	Item 148 #1s Civics Pilot Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$100,000
JMU	Item 152 #1h Expand Undergraduate Nursing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1.0 million -FY 2028 Item 152 #2h O&M Carrier Library <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1.0 million 	Item 152 #1s Nursing Expansion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1.0 million
NSU	Item 160#1h Enterprise Resource Planning System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$4.2 million Item 160 #2h HBCU Collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$25.0 million 	Item 160 #1s Enterprise Resource Planning System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2.0 million -FY 2027
ODU	Item 164 #1h Operating Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$14.0 million 	

Detailed Itemized Amendments	HAC	SFAC
RU	Item 171 #1h Nursing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2.0 million- FY 2028 	
UMW	Item 179 #1h Nursing- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$740,000 Item 179 #2h Replace Enterprise Resource Planning System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$3.4 million Item 179 #4h UMW- Public-Private Partnership with Mary Washington Healthcare <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1.7 million 	
UVA	Item 186 #1h Foundations for the Humanities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$600,000 Item 186 #2h Blandy Farm State Arboretum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$400,000 Item 186 #4h Diabetes Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$250,000- FY 2027 	

Detailed Itemized Amendments	HAC	SFAC
UVA Wise	<p>Item 193 #1h Support Enrollment, Retention, and Tuition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1.0 million 	<p>Item 193 #1s Support Enrollment, Retention, and Tuition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1.5 million
VCU	<p>Item 197 #1h Supply Chain Management Critical Minerals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$250,000- FY 2027 <p>Item 197 #2h Virginia Memory Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$600,000 <p>Item 199 #1h Pauley Heart Center</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2.0 million <p>Item 197 #3h Repurpose Proposed Funding in the introduced budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (\$3.8 million)- in Governor’s budget for nursing/healthcare initiative 	

Detailed Itemized Amendments	HAC	SFAC
<p>VCCS</p>	<p>Item 203- 1h Blue Ridge CC Aviation Maintenance Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$500,000 <p>Item 203- 2h Radiologic Techs at Rappahannock CC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$700,000 <p>Item 203- 3h Automotive and Building Maintenance Skilled Trades</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$500,000 <p>Item 203 \$4h Aviation Maintenance Tech (AMT) at Blue Ridge CC & Danville CC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$3.2 million <p>Item 203 #5h Career Technical Education and Workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$30.0 million – FY 2027 <p>Item 206 #1h Transfer Philpott to NCI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (\$1.75 million) - FY 2027 • (\$1.75 million) - FY 2028 	

Detailed Itemized Amendments	HAC	SFAC
VT	<p>Item 214 #1h VT Med In state slots</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1.1 million <p>Item 214 #2h Increased enrollment at VT Carillion School of Medicine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$13.0 million <p>Item 214 #3h Repurpose budget initiative in introduced budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (\$3.8 million)- in Governor’s budget for nursing/healthcare initiative 	
VT- Extension		<p>Item 219 #1s Agribusiness Innovation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1.5 million
VSU	<p>Item 220 #2h Replace Enterprise Resource Planning System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2.0 million <p>Item 220 #1h HBCU Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$25.0 million 	
VSU Extension	<p>Item 224 #1h Operating Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1.0 million 	

Detailed Itemized Amendments	HAC	SFAC
<p style="text-align: center;">W&M</p>	<p>Item 141 #2h Community Law Clinic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$660,000 <p>Item 141 #1h Troops to Teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1.0 million <p>Item 141 #3h Office of Student Veteran Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$300,000 <p>Item 143.10 #1h James Monroe’s Highland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$800,000 	<p>Item 141 #1s Community Law Clinic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$654,000
<p>Virginia Institute of Marine Science</p>	<p>Item 145 #1h Sea Grant-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$900,000 <p>Item 145 #2h Atlantic Menhaden Research Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2.0 million <p>Item 145 #3h Operating Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$840,834 <p>Item 145 #4h Repurpose funding from introduced budget-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (\$1.59 million) 	<p>Item 145 #1s Defer Algal Blooms Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (\$716,609)

Detailed Itemized Amendments	HAC	SFAC
<i>Affiliates</i>		
Institute for Advanced Learning and Research	Item 238 #1h Initiative Expansion Source Correction (\$4.6 million) GF shift to NGF <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$4.6 million 	Item 238 #1s GO TEC Administrative Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (\$9.3 million)
New College Institute	Item 237 #1h Restore Base Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$3.2 million Item 237.10 #1h Transfer Philpott/Gen Edge to NCI from VCCS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$4.6 million 	Item 237 #1s Restore Base Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$3.2 million -FY 2028
Roanoke Higher Education Authority	Item 239 #1h Security Guard & Additional Contract Hours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$280,000 Item 239 #2h Porter Facilities Maintenance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$160,000 	Item 239 #1s Operations Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$600,000
Southern Virginia Higher Education Center	Item 240 #1h Instructors for High Demand Fields <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$500,000 	Item 240 #1s Instructors for High Demand Fields <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$944,000
Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center	Item 241 #1h Allied Health & Nursing Simulation Lab <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$400,000 	Item 241 #1s Simulation Laboratory Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$460,000

Detailed Itemized Amendments	HAC	SFAC
Virginia Innovation Partnership Authority -UVA	Item 115#1h Redirect funding from UVA’s Virginia Institute for Biotechnology in FY 2027 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (\$29.0 million) 	
Virginia Innovation Partnership Authority -VT	Item 115 #2h VT’s Patient Research Center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$6.0 million- FY 2027 	
Virginia Innovation Partnership Authority -VCU	Item 115 #3h VCU’s Medicines for All <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$3.0 million – FY 2027 	
Central Appropriations		
Technical Correction Institute for Advanced Learning and Research / Roanoke Higher Education Authority Salary	Item 469 #2h <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$515,276 	
Federal Uncertainty Contingency Fund	Item 471 #5h <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$200.0 million <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$75.0 million - FY 2027 ○ \$125.0 million - FY 2028 These monies will be used to address unanticipated reductions in federal funding that impact state programs and services.	

House and Senate Budget Amendment Language Changes for the FY 2026-28 Biennium

House Language Changes

Item 131 # 1h

VMSDEP Reporting

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Services (DVS) and public colleges and universities, shall collect and report by December 15 of each year data related to the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP).

Item 131 #1h

VTAG Supplements

Restrict HBCU bonus to no more than \$6.75 million

Out of this appropriation \$1,800,000 each year from the general fund is designated for an additional award of up to \$2,000 for all students eligible and receiving an award under this program and enrolled into a TAG-eligible private not-for-profit Virginia institution, whose Hispanic-identifying students represent a three-year average of at least 25 percent of total undergraduate enrollment, and accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

Item 131 #1h

Virginia University - Lynchburg (HBCU)

Out of this appropriation, \$1,000,000 each year from the general fund is designated to support grants to in-state undergraduate students attending Virginia University of Lynchburg to provide collegiate education and not to provide religious training or theological education.

Item 131#1h

Transfer Pilot Program

From any higher education student financial assistance balances reappropriated in the first year, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) is authorized to use up to \$2,500,000 each year for a pilot program in the Two-Year College Transfer Grant Program beginning with first time eligible students under § 23.1-623 through § 23.1-627, Code of Virginia as of fall 2026.

Item 131#1h

Portion of unspent Pell Initiative reverts to GF

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, on or before July 15, 2026, the Comptroller shall revert \$22,850,000 to the general fund representing unspent balances from this program

Item 133 #2h

V-TOP changes

Change Virginia Talent and Opportunity Partnership (V-TOP) to Internships Virginia (InVA)
Amendment makes technical changes to the internship program to align spending and goals with the VEDP Internship Virginia program and transfers a portion of the funding to support an internship coordinator at DHRM per House Bill 54.

Item 145 #2h

Menhaden Research Report

Out of this appropriation, \$1,000,000 each year from the general fund is designated for the establishment of an Atlantic menhaden research fund and report.

Item 148 #2h

George Mason University public-private partnership with Averett University

George Mason University is authorized to explore, negotiate, and if deemed appropriate, enter into a public-private partnership with Averett University or a successor entity for the purpose of meeting the demands of a rapidly growing economy in Southern Virginia, by increasing access to both undergraduate and graduate level higher education, enhancing workforce.

Item 148 #3h

George Mason University- State Climate Office

George Mason University is authorized to host the State Climate Office to develop and deliver data, analyses, assessments and expertise about Virginia's weather and climate related impacts, risks and risk management options to state and local government agencies, businesses, and communities of place or practice in the Commonwealth. The State Climate Office will serve as representative to national meteorological, climatological, and hydrological associations to better leverage federal agency partnerships and interstate collaboration to address real-time weather and climate challenges.

Item 160 #1h

HBCU- Collaboration

Expand the ongoing HBCU collaboration that includes Norfolk State University, Virginia State University, Hampton University, and Virginia Union University. The language also authorizes the creation of a pilot program to provide workforce credentials in the healthcare and trade sectors. The language also authorizes the creation of a pilot program to provide workforce credentials in the healthcare and trade sectors.

Item 179 #4h

University of Mary Washington

Public Private Partnership between the University of Mary Washington and Mary Washington Healthcare to create the Mary Washington College of Medicine.

Item 186 #4h

UVA- Diabetes Information

This amendment provides one-time funding for the Virginia Center for Diabetes Professional Education at the University of Virginia to develop and make available Type 1 diabetes information for parents and guardians of pupils.

Item 220 #1h

VSU - Public and Private HBCU Collaboration

Expand the ongoing HBCU collaboration that includes Norfolk State University, Virginia State University, Hampton University, and Virginia Union University. The language also authorizes the creation of a pilot program to provide workforce credentials in the healthcare and trade sectors. The language also authorizes the creation of a pilot program to provide workforce credentials in the healthcare and trade sectors.

Item 237#1h

New College Institute - restore funding

This amendment provides funding to restore the proposed elimination of the New College Institute.

Item 243 #1h

Proposed Language Removed – restore Chapter 725 funding

This amendment removes proposed language that is no longer required as separate items restore Chapter 725 funding that addresses tuition moderation, HBCU public-private partnerships, health care shortages, operating support supplements, workforce needs and financial aid.

Item 472 #1h

Tech Talent Investment Fund

This amendment stipulates distribution of the Tech Talent Investment Fund.

Item 481 #1 h

Commonwealth Savers

This amendment strikes a proposal in the Introduced Budget that would utilize VA529 balances to support tuition waiver costs.

Item 3-1.01 #9h

Transfer Nongeneral Fund Balances

On or before July 15, 2026, the State Comptroller shall transfer to the general fund \$10,295,000 from SCHEV’s program 11100.

Item 3-4.01 #1h

Auxiliary Enterprises and Sponsored Programs in Institutions of Higher Education

This amendment makes technical clarification to auxiliary indirect cost recovery language and suspends the recovery transfer of indirect cost of auxiliary enterprise for the 2026-28 biennium.

Item 3-4.01#2h

Statement of Revenues and Expenses of Intercollegiate Athletics Programs

This language amendment authorizes the Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) to bill higher education institutions for the cost of performing agreed-upon procedures engagements over intercollegiate athletics programs. This work performed by the APA has increased significantly in recent years due to changes in the procedures required by the NCAA.

Item 4-2.01 #2h

Out of State Tuition Flexibility

Talent Pipeline Out-of-State Tuition Authority

The requirements for § 4-2.01 b.2.b, as it pertains to nonresident undergraduate students, are waived for new nonresident undergraduate students enrolled at NSU, VSU, UVA-Wise and institutions of higher education with a current proportion of nonresident undergraduate of under 20 percent. This amendment provides flexible tuition authority to increase Virginia's talent pipeline. To attract out-of-state students into Virginia, the language would allow certain schools the ability to charge less than 100 percent of the average cost of education to out of state students but not less than the in-state cost.

Item 4-5.01 #1h

Technical Clarification Foster Care Student Grants

This language clarifies eligibility and process for grants provided under § 23.1-601, Code of Virginia.

The grants will cover tuition and mandatory education and general fees, except those fees established for the purpose of paying for course materials such as laboratory fees, and, if the student is enrolled on-campus into a baccalaureate public institution of higher education, on-campus housing and a standard meal plan.

Item 4-9.02 #1h

Higher Education Restructuring Level II Authority

This provides for a pilot program for Richard Bland College for additional higher education autonomy opportunities.

Item C-0#1h

Six-Year Capital Outlay Plan

This amendment authorizes the Six-Year Capital Outlay Plan Advisory Committee to take necessary actions when General Assembly authorized capital projects are not progressing in accordance with anticipated timelines.

Senate Language Changes

Item 131 #1s

Remove NGF Authorization

This amendment removes authorization for the use of nongeneral fund resources to support tuition waiver programs.

Item 131 #2s

SCHEV - Workforce Credential Grant Program

This amendment provides \$9.5 million GF the first year and \$2.7 million GF the second year for the New Economy Workforce Credential Grant (aka Fast Forward). Additional funding is needed to maintain the community colleges' current programs and begin addressing the backlog of high demand programs.

Item 133 #1s

SCHEV - International Student Enrollment Impact Study

This amendment directs a study and impact analysis of the decline in international student enrollment at four-year colleges and universities in the Commonwealth and the development of recommendations to address such impacts.

Item 133 #2s

Clarify Mental Health Workforce Program Status

This amendment clarifies that the mental health workforce program is ongoing by removing pilot language to program.

Item 203 #1s

VCCS - Adjust Balance Transfer

This amendment adjusts the transfer of cash balances to support the Workforce Credential Grant Program. A corresponding change is made to Item 131 G.

Item 471 #2s

Contingent Surplus

This amendment excludes \$500.0 million GF from the actual FY 2026 revenue when calculating any required deposits to the Revenue Reserve Fund and Water Quality Improvement Fund (WQIF) Part A. This general fund amount is assumed in the unreserved beginning balance for FY 2027 in Item 0 of this Act. Additionally, it reserves any remaining surplus up to \$535.0 million, after calculating the Revenue Stabilization Fund Deposit and WQIF Part A, to support the Pell Initiative at the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and to supplant a portion of tax-supported bonds authorized in Item C-29 of the Act.)

Item 3-1.01 #3s

Transfer Nongeneral Fund Balances

On or before June 30, the State Comptroller shall transfer an estimated \$10,122,094 the first year to the general fund from the College Partnership Laboratory School Fund (09063). The Comptroller shall transfer any additional interest accrued to the Fund in the first year.

Item 3-4.01 #1s

Auxiliary Enterprises and Sponsored Programs in Institutions of Higher Education

This amendment is technical in nature and clarifies existing budget language related to auxiliary enterprise programs.)

Item 3-4.01 #2s

Auxiliary Enterprise Investment Yields.

The Auditor of Public Accounts performs attestation services over each higher education institution's Statement of Revenues and Expenses of Intercollegiate Athletics Programs to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the National Collegiate Athletic Association and that the cost of such attestation services be borne by the intercollegiate athletics program at each institution.

Item 4 2.01#1s

College Athletics Language and Study

This language amendment makes changes to § [23.1-1309](#), Code of Virginia, which governs intercollegiate athletics programs, and it directs a study by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to determine whether the Code provisions should be amended permanently. The language further outlines the parameters of the study.

House and Senate Identical Language Changes

Item 131 #1h/ Item 131 #2s

New Economy Workforce Credential Grant Reporting

Institutions shall submit reimbursement requests within 60 days of program completion by the student; credential reimbursement shall be submitted within 90 days of program completion unless otherwise excepted by the Council. All annual data must be submitted by November 1 of the following fiscal year to ensure the annual report can be written and validated ahead of the start of the General Assembly session in January.

By August 1 of each year, the participating institutions shall each submit to SCHEV a projection plan for the awarding of program funds, including a list of new program offerings, which programs from the prior year will not be offered, and institution plans for instances where funds are projected to be exhausted prior to end of the fiscal year.

[Item 243 #1h/Item 243 #3s](#)

Tuition Cap Removed

House- This amendment removes proposed language that is no longer required as separate items restore Chapter 725 funding that addresses tuition moderation.

Senate- This amendment removes language related to a tuition cap included in the introduced budget.

[Item 481 #1h/ Item 481 #2s](#)

Commonwealth Savers

This amendment strikes a proposal in the Introduced Budget that would utilize VA529 balances to support tuition waiver costs.

[Item 3-4.01#1s/](#)

Auxiliary Enterprises and Sponsored Programs in Institutions of Higher Education

This amendment is technical in nature and clarifies existing budget language related to auxiliary enterprise programs.

[Item C- 0#2h/ Item C- 0#1s](#)

Adoption of JLARC Recommendations

This language amendment implements most of the recommendations from the October 2025 Capital Maintenance and Construction Report by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC).

Capital Outlay:

	HAC	SFAC
Capital Projects and Expenses in Education		
GMU deferred maintenance	Item C-2#1h <ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$15.0 million	Item C-2#1s <ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$10.0 million
UMW's Simpson Library Building to conduct a feasibility study for	Item C-7-#1h <ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$2.5 million	

	HAC	SFAC
remedying building deficiencies and to address modern needs		
VCCS RCC to construct a Career and Technical Education Facility on the Glenns Campus	Item C-11.10 #1h <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$2.0 million (NGF) 	
CNU deferred maintenance		Item C-1#1s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$5.5 million
VCCS - Property Acquisition Laurel Ridge Community College		Item C-11.1#1s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$3.5 million (NGF)
Capital Project Expenses - Central Appropriations		
Maintenance Reserve	Item C-28#1h <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shifted \$200 million in FY 2028 to FY 2027 	
Equipment Pool	Item C-7#1h <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$10.3 million in FY 2027 for NSU Science Building Replacement (18385) 	Item C-27 #1s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$10.0 million in FY 2027 for NSU Science Building Replacement (18385)
Planning Pool	Item C-28#1h <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (\$564,050) GF in FY 2027 Added UVAW project of Renovate Darden Hall (18760)	Item C-28#1s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$6.2 million GF in FY 2027 Added UMW project of Renovate Simpson Library VIMS project of Replace Fisheries Science Research Building

	HAC	SFAC
Construction Pool	<p>Item C-29#1h</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removed \$79.8 million GF and \$25.2 NGF in FY 2027 <p>Added LU project of Replace and Renovate Building Systems in Coyner Hall and RHEC project of Replace Windows</p>	<p>Item C-29#1s</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$316.6 million GF \$39.6 million NGF in FY 2027 <p>Added projects of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UVA Construct Center for the Arts (18602), VT Renovate Derring Hall (18674), JMU Expand College of Health and Behavioral Studies Building (18739) UVAW Renovate Darden Hall (18760) REHC Replace windows <p>Deferred VCU acquisition of the Altria Building</p>

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia Agenda Item

Item: III.I – Report of the Agency Executive Director

Date of Meeting: March 17, 2026

Presenter: A. Scott Fleming
Executive Director
scottfleming@schev.edu

Most Recent Review/Action:

- No previous Council review/action
 Previous review/action

Date:

Action:

Purpose of the Agenda Item:

The purpose of this item is to inform Council of recent and upcoming work in which staff is involved.

Background Information/Summary of Major Elements: N/A

Materials Provided: Director's Report.

Financial Impact: N/A

Timetable for Further Review/Action: N/A

Relationship to Goals of *The Virginia Plan for Higher Education*: N/A

Resolution: N/A

**Executive Director's Report
State Council of Higher Education
March 17, 2026**

Outstanding Faculty Awards: On March 3, Executive Director led the Outstanding Faculty Awards, the 39th year that the Commonwealth of Virginia has recognized extraordinary faculty members. This year's twelve recipients included nine faculty members representing six of Virginia's public four-year institutions, two faculty members from public two-year institutions, and one from a private four-year institution.

HBCU Caucus: On March 11, Executive Director Fleming presented to the General Assembly HBCU Caucus, led by Senator Locke and was attended by President Adams-Gaston from Norfolk State University and President Williams (Lt. Gen., Ret.) from Hampton University, as well as several other members of the General Assembly.

Institutional Events: Throughout the General Assembly session, Virginia's institutions host several evening receptions honoring alumni and other distinguished guests. Executive Director Fleming attended the George Mason University, Christopher Newport University, Radford University, the Virginia Sea Grant, Virginia Tech, University of Virginia, and James Madison University events. He also attended the Virginia Chamber of Commerce event in February.

Key Staff Hires: The agency made several key hires, filling vacant roles in the finance policy and financial aid section, and hiring a deputy director and chief of staff. The financial aid role, reporting to Lee Andes, had been open for some time after several unsuccessful searches. The deputy director post saw a familiar candidate to SCHEV, who had been offered a previous role and now joins the agency as part of the executive leadership team.

Virginia College Building Authority: Executive Director Fleming attended the March 4 meeting of the Virginia College Building Authority, the Commonwealth agency charged with providing financing for certain capital projects and educational equipment for state institutions of higher education, and providing a conduit financing mechanism for private, non-profit institutions of higher education in Virginia.

Virginia Health Workforce Development Authority: On March 12, Executive Director Fleming attended the board meeting of the VHWDA, the state agency charged conducting research to identify gaps and needs in the workforce, collaborating with educational institutions to create programs tailored to these needs, and partnering with various stakeholders to implement solutions.

Virginia Indigenous Nations in Higher Education (VINHE): On February 27, Executive Director Fleming spoke at the annual meeting of VINHE, held at the

College of William & Mary, in Williamsburg, VA. The meeting included representatives of Virginia's various federally recognized and state indigenous nations. SCHEV staff helped plan and execute the event.

Virginia Innovative Internship Program Stakeholder meeting: On March 11, Executive Director Fleming and SCHEV staff, including Dr. Alisha Bazemore and Dr. Alan Edwards attended and presented at the stakeholder meeting, with partners from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP), and VEDP's Virginia Office of Economic Education (VOEE).

Instructional Programs Advisory Committee (IPAC): On March 4, Executive Director made brief remarks at the IPAC meeting, led by Dr. Alan Edwards, and included presentations from Dr. Alisha Bazemore and other SCHEV staff.

Virginia Higher Education Executive Advisory Committee (VHEEAC): On January 26, Executive Director convened the VHEEAC meeting to discuss the statewide strategic plan, its measures, and to introduce the newly confirmed Secretary of Education, Dr. Jeffery Smith. The meeting also discussed pending legislative items introduced in the General Assembly.

Items Delegated to Director/Staff

Pursuant to the Code of Virginia, § 23.1-203 and Council’s “*Policies and Procedures for Program Approval and Changes*,” the following items approved/not approved as delegated to staff:

Academic Program Actions

Institution	Degree/Program/CIP	Effective Date
Mountain Empire Community College	Program Name Change Approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change the name of the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree in Police Science (43.0103) to Criminal Justice (43.0103) 	Spring 2026
Norfolk State University	Graduate Certificate Programs Approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cybersecurity (11.1003) Game Design and Development (11.0204) 	Summer 2026
Paul D. Camp Community College	Program Name Change Approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change the name of the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree in Administration of Justice (43.0103) to Criminal Justice (43.0103) 	Spring 2026
University of Mary Washington	Degree Designation Approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add the degree designation Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) to the existing Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree program in Performing Arts to create a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Fine Arts (BA/BFA) degree program in Performing Arts (50.0101) 	Fall 2026
Virginia Commonwealth University	Graduate Certificate Program Approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing (52.1401) 	Fall 2026

Pursuant to the Code of Virginia, § 23.1-203 and Council’s “*Policies and Procedures for Program Approval and Changes*,” the following items approved and reported:

Programs Discontinued

Institution	Degree/Program/CIP	Effective Date
George Mason University	Program Discontinuance Approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master of Science (MS) degree program in Taxation (52.1601) [Council Approval Date: April 3, 1991] 	Spring 2026

Institution	Degree/Program/CIP	Effective Date
James Madison University	Program Discontinuances Approved: <u>Undergraduate</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor of Science (BS) degree program in Athletic Training (51.0913) [Council Approval Date: December 23, 2003] <u>Graduate:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master of Science in Education (MSEd) degree program in Health Education (13.1307) [Council Approval Date: June 9, 1977] 	Summer 2026
University of Virginia	Graduate Certificate Program Discontinuance Approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applied Behavioral Analysis (42.2814) 	Summer 2026
Virginia Commonwealth University	Program Discontinuances Approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree program in Religious Studies (38.0201) [Council Approval Date: May 2, 1978] Bachelor of Science (BS) degree program in Financial Technology (52.0899) [Council Approval Date: November 15, 2022] 	Fall 2026

Pursuant to the Code of Virginia, Section § 23.1-211 and Council's "*Commonwealth of Virginia Policy on the Reciprocal Authorization of Distance Education and Related Activities*," the following items approved as delegated to staff:

**National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA)
Approvals**

Institution	Effective Date
Virginia University of Science & Technology	January 7, 2026

Pursuant to the Code of Virginia, § 23.1-203 and Council's "*Policies and Procedures for Internal and Off-Campus Organizational Changes*," the following item approved as delegated to staff:

Internal and Off-Campus Organizational Changes

Institution	Change/Site	Effective Date
Norfolk State University	Close the off-campus instructional site located at: Naval Station Norfolk , 9079 Hampton Boulevard, Norfolk, VA 23511	February 1, 2026

Pursuant to the Code of Virginia § 23.1-213 to 230 and 8VAC-40-31-90 of the Virginia Administrative Code, the following items were approved as delegated to staff:

Postsecondary, Non-Degree Institutions Certified to Operate in the Commonwealth of Virginia

Institution	Location	Effective Date
Back to Life Massage School	Virginia Beach, VA	February 6, 2026
Renovelle Institute of Esthetics	Winchester, VA	February 11, 2026
Roanoke Dental Assistant School	Roanoke, VA	February 11, 2026
TechCenture Academy	Fairfax, VA	January 15, 2026

COIA-Exception Policy Approvals

Institution	Policy	Effective Date
Virginia Commonwealth University	Research and Development Exception for the <i>Conflict of Interests Act</i>	November 3, 2025