

# Action on Priority Initiatives in Support of the Statewide Strategic Plan

**SCHEV Council**

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**STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER  
EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA**

# Objectives for Today

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- 1. Recap the purpose of priority initiatives in the context of Plan implementation.**
- 2. Identify changes made based on Council's feedback at the March meeting.**
- 3. Seek Council's endorsement of the priority initiatives.**

# Developing Tomorrow's Talent – Framework

## Developing Tomorrow's Talent



*Top state for talent – learning to leading*

# Plan Framework – Endorsed in 2025

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

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

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



# Plan Implementation – Priority Initiatives

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## WHAT

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

## WHO

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

## WHY

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

## HOW

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

## WHEN

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

# Priority Initiatives – Goal One

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

<u>Council-Approved Supporting Strategies</u>	<u>Potential Initiatives (PI) for Council's Feedback</u> (numbers correspond to approved strategies)
<p><b>1.1.</b> 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><b>1.2.</b> 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><b>1.3.</b> 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><b>PI 1 (1.2.)</b> Facilitate a comprehensive Career Awareness, Exploration and Industry Engagement Initiative that embeds career readiness competencies and short-term applied experiences into existing and new programs and scales work-integrated learning.</p> <p><b>PI 2 (1.3.)</b> Collaborate with IHEs to strengthen existing efforts that promote civil discourse on campuses, reinforcing Virginia's position as a national leader in this area, and leverage activities associated with the US 250 such as Civics Bees along with public square debates to enhance civic knowledge with a focus on the constitution, judicial review and civil liberties.</p> <p><b>PI 3 (1.3)</b> Consider modifications to reflect an emphasis on civic knowledge competencies as part of Council's broader effort to review and update SCHEV's Student Learning Assessment Policy.</p>

# Priority Initiatives – Goal Two

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

### Council-Approved Supporting Strategies

- 2.3.a. Champion innovative funding strategies and efficiencies (e.g., enrollment and infrastructure management) that support affordable access to public higher education.
- 2.3.b. Increase outreach and supports to engage and retain non-traditional students (e.g., adult learners, military, incarcerated).
- 2.4. Establish new and strengthen existing innovation ecosystems around research conducted by Virginia universities to commercialize research discoveries that address societal needs and advance entrepreneurship and startup formation.

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

- PI 4 (2.3.a.) Conduct an impact study on how Virginia IHEs compete with surrounding states for students (VA and non-VA) and strategies used to successfully recruit/retain students with recommendations for Council's consideration. The study will include further examination of the NC promise model and other programs.
- PI 5 (2.3.b.) Leverage resources such as workforce Pell and Virginia Pell as well as cross-sector collaboration to support access for specific non-traditional or specialized populations in Virginia to include indigenous nations, incarcerated learners, veterans, parents, and adult learners.

# Priority Initiatives – Goal Three

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

### Council-Approved Supporting Strategies

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Priority Initiatives – Goal Three cont'd

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

**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 (3.2 a.)** - Identify any substantial increases in auxiliary fees and their impact on tuition at specific institutions as part of SCHEV's annual tuition and fees report.

**PI 10 (3.3.)** Produce an annual report on transfer outcomes and student mobility.

# Next Steps for Further Review/Action

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**If Council acts to endorse the priority initiatives on May 12, 2026, then staff will take steps to begin planning and implementation.**

**If Council opts not to act to approve the priority initiatives on May 12, 2026, then staff will prepare a revised slate, reflective of further Council input, for Council review and action at its July 21, 2026, meeting.**

# Resolution

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**BE IT RESOLVED** that the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, in support of the statewide strategic plan for higher education, adopts the slate of priority initiatives as discussed and agreed upon by Council on May 12, 2026.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the State Council of Higher Education directs agency staff to begin implementation of the initiatives and to report annually to Council on progress.