



I look to the
diffusion of light and education
as the resource to be relied on...

Meeting the Challenges of Higher Education in Virginia

a report by the
American Council of Trustees and Alumni



ACTA
AMERICAN COUNCIL OF
TRUSTEES AND ALUMNI

Look to the diffusion of light and education as the resource to be relied on for ameliorating the condition, promoting the virtue, and advancing the happiness of man.

Thomas Jefferson
October 1822



the diffusion of light and education

Meeting the Challenges of Higher Education in Virginia

a report by the
American Council of Trustees and Alumni

January 2012

Acknowledgments

This report was prepared by the staff of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, primarily by Dr. Michael Poliakoff and Armand Alacbay, Esq. The report analyzes cost and quality issues at 39 of Virginia's public and private four-year colleges and universities, all 15 public and a representative group of 24 private institutions. ACTA thanks the Beazley Foundation and others for making this report possible.

The **Beazley Foundation, Inc.** was established in December 1948 with funds provided by the late Fred W. Beazley, his wife, Marie C. Beazley, and son, Fred W. Beazley, Jr., all of Portsmouth, Virginia. Today, Mr. Beazley's legacy continues with the enduring commitment of the Foundation and its Board of Trustees to a better quality of life for Virginia neighbors and greater opportunity for its children. The Foundation's funding priorities have been health care, housing, education, and programs serving southeastern Virginia. The Foundation makes programmatic grants to elementary and secondary schools and to colleges and universities, and funds a major college scholarship program. The Foundation is committed to the twin goals of increasing access to higher education and academic excellence. In a pathbreaking approach to higher education philanthropy, the Beazley Foundation commissioned ACTA's detailed research on the performance of the Virginia colleges and universities that it has funded.

The **American Council of Trustees and Alumni** (ACTA) is an independent non-profit dedicated to academic freedom, academic excellence, and accountability at America's colleges and universities. Since its founding in 1995, ACTA has counseled boards, educated the public, and published reports about such issues as good governance, historical literacy, core curricula, the free exchange of ideas, and accreditation. ACTA has previously published *Prepared in Mind and Resources?: A Report on Public Higher Education in South Carolina*; *Made in Maine: A State Report Card on Public Higher Education*; *Here We Have Idaho: A State Report Card on Public Higher Education*; *At a Crossroads: A Report Card on Public Higher Education in Minnesota*; *For the People: A Report Card on Public Higher Education in Illinois*; *Show Me: A Report Card on Public Higher Education in Missouri*; *Shining the Light: A Report Card on Georgia's System of Public Higher Education*; and *Governance in the Public Interest: A Case Study of the University of North Carolina System*, among other state-focused reports.

For further information, please contact:

American Council of Trustees and Alumni

1726 M Street, NW, Suite 802

Washington, DC 20036

Phone: 202.467.6787 • Fax: 202.467.6784

www.goacta.org

info@goacta.org

CONTENTS

Overview	1
What are students actually learning?	5
How much are students paying for college?	9
How do tuition rates compare to family income?	12
What are the colleges spending their money on?	15
Are freshmen returning?	21
Are students graduating and doing so on time?	24
What are the governance structures at Virginia institutions?	27
End Notes	30
Appendix A	
Selection Criteria for Core Courses	34
Appendix B	
School Evaluation Notes for Core Courses	36

Knowledge will forever govern ignorance: And a people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives....What spectacle can be more edifying or more seasonable, than that of Liberty & Learning, each leaning on the other for their mutual & surest support?

James Madison
August 1822

Overview

The Commonwealth of Virginia is blessed with an outstanding roster of colleges and universities, public and private. A number of America's founders and storied national statesmen studied in their halls and walked their grounds. The College of William & Mary was the alma mater of Thomas Jefferson, and his pride in founding the University of Virginia is commemorated on his tombstone. The Virginia Military Institute is the oldest state-supported military college in the nation, and the alma mater of the five-star World War II general and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate George C. Marshall. Classes at Hampden-Sydney College started shortly before the Declaration of Independence, and both James Madison and Patrick Henry served on the college's board of trustees.

Given that history, it is no wonder that the state's policymakers rightly understand that healthy institutions of higher education bear directly on the health of the Commonwealth and the country as a whole. In 2011, the legislature unanimously passed the state's Higher Education Opportunity Act, pledging 100,000 additional undergraduate degrees by 2025, and a new incentive funding plan focused on access, affordability, long-range planning, institutional resource sharing, effective utilization of existing infrastructure, and cost-effective use of technology. At the same time, policymakers emphasized the state's interest in strong education in the STEM fields—science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

In an address to trustees in the fall of 2011, Governor McDonnell stressed the importance of keeping tuitions low, while advancing quality and effectiveness. And he called upon his appointees to help preserve and enhance educational excellence, noting that existing institutional strength gave them room to be bold and innovative. He called on them to ask questions, examine short and long-term benefits, and ensure that Virginia's educational institutions prepared the best and brightest for the future.

Over the long term, Governor McDonnell has set for Virginia the ambitious but appropriate goal of becoming the most educated state in the nation. He has proposed significant increases in the state appropriation for higher education, which would make Virginia one of the few states in the nation whose public institutions would not suffer cutbacks this year.

This bold infusion of funding, however, is not an endorsement of the status quo. Rather, it imposes a tremendous responsibility on the leadership of public higher education to improve academic outcomes and cost-effectiveness. All undergraduate degrees must be high-quality degrees, and there must be metrics that show not merely more enrollments and diplomas, but rising levels of academic achievement. It is important that every dollar of public and private money invested be spent judiciously, whether it concerns a new building, an academic program, or spending on administration. Leaders in Virginia oversee institutions

with an impressive history of quality and affordability, yet changing times require thoughtful and innovative leadership. As this report shows, certain trends—if ignored—will erode the Commonwealth’s historic prominence in American higher education.

In a state whose history is central to the American Founding, it is distressing that only two of the schools surveyed (James Madison University and Regent University) require a survey of American government or history. Not a single college or university requires economics. It is to the credit of the institutions that nearly all require composition and natural science. Yet fewer than half of the schools surveyed require college-level foreign language at the intermediate level or a broad survey course in literature. Clearly, curricular improvement is in order to meet the educational needs of Virginia and fulfill the vision of the nation’s founders.

There is good reason to look carefully at the quality of the education students are receiving in Virginia and throughout the nation. The National Assessment of Adult Literacy shows us that most college graduates, after gaining a costly baccalaureate degree, are only at the intermediate level or below of prose, document, and quantitative literacy. That means they would have difficulty “comparing viewpoints in two editorials” or “computing and comparing the cost per ounce of food supplies.”¹ *Academically Adrift*, a new study by Richard Arum of New York University and Josipa Roksa of the University of Virginia, is a devastating indictment of the quality of American higher education. The authors observe, “on average, gains in critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing skills (i.e., general collegiate skills) are either exceedingly small or empirically non-existent for a large proportion of students.”² Specifically, their research found that 45 percent of students showed little or no evidence of learning gains in the first two years of college, and 36 percent failed to show significant intellectual growth in four years.³ Previous research revealed that students today spend little more than half as much time studying as they did 50 years ago,⁴ but the average student’s GPA has risen from 2.5 to 3.1 over approximately the same period.⁵ Even before the dramatic findings of *Academically Adrift*, outside evidence suggested that the reason for higher grades is not that students today are smarter and more efficient in their studies. On the contrary, a survey of employers found that less than a quarter call college graduates’ workforce preparation “excellent.”⁶ And a majority of these same employers said that the “very important” skills they were looking for included writing, reading comprehension, and mathematics. In other words, too many of America’s colleges and universities are giving students more credit for less learning without ensuring that students have mastered even the basics. None of this bodes well for our democracy—or our economy.

Equally troubling is the growing price tag. Thomas Jefferson’s vision included all capable minds, rich and poor, in college education: “we hope to avail the state of those talents which nature has sown as liberally among the poor as the rich, but which perish without use” (*Notes on the State of Virginia* XIV).

And yet, the cost of an education continues to rise. The simple solution to funding challenges has been: just raise tuition. That well is being tapped out. In 1980, an American family in the lowest 20 percent income bracket would have to spend 13 percent of its annual income for one child to afford tuition at a public four-year college. By 2000, that climbed to 25 percent and continues to rise.⁷ Although financial aid benefits a large number of students, many deserving students are squeezed out of college opportunities. College discount rates are also increasing, putting pressure on college student aid budgets. Increasingly, even public colleges and universities seek “full-pay” students.⁸ In recent years, increases in tuition and fees at Virginia institutions, public and private, typically exceed—and often far exceed—national averages, which are already too steep for many families to sustain. To pay for this increase, students and families borrow more and more money. But clearly there is a limit to how much the educational market will bear as the dream of access to higher education fades.

Likewise, the public suffers when institutions do not make student success their most urgent priority. There are graduation rates among the 39 schools studied here that are simply unacceptable. At 22 of these schools, less than half of full-time degree seekers will earn a degree in four years; at 11 schools, less than one-third have a diploma at the end of that time. The national average for six-year graduation rates is 54.9 percent for public institutions and 64.6 percent for private not-for-profit institutions.⁹ Slightly more than one-third of the colleges and universities in this study—and only four private institutions—exceed these depressingly low figures.¹⁰

In the wake of stock market volatility and the crash of the housing market, there has been increasing talk that higher education is also in a “bubble,” with the cost of a four-year degree possibly outstripping the benefits of acquiring one. Some in education insist that ever-increasing tuition is not a problem, since the benefits of a college education will also keep increasing in value. It is assumed that people will always pay for the advantages associated with being a college graduate.

But is that really so? Similar things were said in 2007 about the value of housing. And just as we experienced with the housing bubble, there are ample signs that not all is well. More than half of the respondents in a recent survey by Public Agenda said they think colleges could spend less and still maintain educational quality.¹¹ Increasingly, students and parents are asking whether or not a college degree is a good investment. A recent study conducted by *Businessweek* and Payscale.com raised consternation when it argued that the return on investment for a college degree can be less than that of the stock market.¹² Among the related findings of the *Academically Adrift* study is the grim economic situation of the class of 2009. Of the thousands of students surveyed, nearly one-third have moved back home with their parents; the majority now earns less than \$30,000 per year, and 9 percent are without jobs and actively looking for work.

In such an uncertain environment, it is imperative that leaders of colleges and universities ensure that money spent on higher education—whether that money comes from students, parents, donors, or taxpayers—is being invested wisely. How well do colleges and universities in the Commonwealth of Virginia live up to the public trust? How do they compare to each other? This study reflects a snapshot of those institutions in terms of key measures of quality and cost-effectiveness. It asks how much families are paying to attend these schools, how the schools are spending that money, and what students get in return. And it calls for the trustees who oversee Virginia’s institutions to ensure that students and families get the finest education at the lowest possible cost.

What are students actually learning?

“General education” or the “core curriculum” refers to required undergraduate courses outside the student’s specialization or major. These courses, usually completed within the first two years of a bachelor’s degree program, are intended to ensure a common intellectual background, exposure to a wide range of disciplines, a core of fundamental knowledge, and college-level skills in areas critical to good citizenship, workforce participation, and lifelong learning.

In these challenging economic times, a well-constructed and well-taught core curriculum offers both financial and academic advantages. Requiring standard classes in foundational subjects is a far more cost-effective model than offering a large list of narrow or trendy courses, and general surveys of essential fields give students a broader, more comprehensive education than do narrowly-focused classes. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, between the ages of 18 and 44, a person can anticipate changing jobs nearly 11 times.¹³ All graduates need a thorough foundation in the arts and sciences to give them the best chance for success in their careers and communities.

For this study, we assessed the state of general education at 39 Virginia colleges and universities, which includes all 15 public four-year institutions in the Commonwealth, in addition to a representative group of 24 private institutions.

Using the most recent course catalogs for the 2010-11 academic year, we examined whether these institutions require their students to take general education courses in seven key subjects: Composition, Literature, Foreign Language, U.S. Government or History, Economics, Mathematics, and Natural or Physical Science. Arguments can be made for requiring any number of additional topics, but a core curriculum that fails to require all or at least most of these seven key subjects will not address the fundamentals of general education.

Many colleges give the appearance of providing a core curriculum because they require students to take courses in several subject areas other than their major—often called “distribution requirements.” It is not uncommon for students to have dozens or even hundreds of “distributional” courses from which to choose—many of them on narrow or specialized topics. Therefore, to be counted for credit in this report, a course must be a true general education course—broad in scope, exposing the student to the rich array of material that exemplifies the subject. (For Foreign Language, credit is given for intermediate-level proficiency.) If a core course were an option among other courses that do not meet the qualifying criteria for a certain subject, the institution did not receive credit for the subject.

■ WHAT ARE STUDENTS ACTUALLY LEARNING?

As the charts on the following pages show, 19 had three or fewer requirements; and four required only one. Commendably, 34 of these institutions receive credit for Science and 32 for Composition. However, there were major gaps. Ten of the public institutions have three or fewer general education requirements, meaning students can graduate—on the taxpayer’s dime—with vast gaps in their education. The situation is even worse among private institutions. Although the list price is in the five figures at many of these institutions, students are essentially being asked to construct their own education. Indeed, at the seven private schools which require only one or two general education courses, the average tuition and fees are \$26,360.

Only 17 of the 39 schools evaluated receive credit for Literature, and only 15 do for Foreign Language. Not a single one receives credit for Economics, and only two receive any credit for U.S. Government or History. While nearly all schools offer students the option of studying these subjects, the number and variety of courses that satisfy existing distribution requirements make it easy for students to avoid them and still fulfill their graduation requirements.

This analysis uses the criteria of ACTA’s What Will They Learn?[™] project, available at www.WhatWillTheyLearn.com, which reviewed and rated the core curricula at over 1,000 schools. More information on the criteria and school evaluation notes can be found in Appendix A and Appendix B of this report. Among the more robust curricular models in Virginia are those at James Madison University, the only public institution to have a U.S. Government or History requirement, and at Hampden-Sydney College; both institutions require five of the seven core courses of all undergraduates in their liberal-arts degree programs. Nonetheless, it is discouraging that at this time, no Virginia school has achieved an “A” rating for requiring at least six of the seven What Will They Learn?[™] core subjects.

**GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS
AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS***

INSTITUTION	Comp	Lit	Lang	Gov/ Hist	Econ	Math	Sci
Christopher Newport University	•		•			•	•
College of William & Mary			•			•	•
George Mason University	•	•				•	•
James Madison University	•	•		•		•	•
Longwood University	•	•	•				
Norfolk State University	•						•
Old Dominion University	•	•					•
Radford University	•						•
University of Mary Washington			•				•
University of Virginia-Charlottesville			•				•
University of Virginia-Wise	•	•				•	•
Virginia Commonwealth University	•					•	•
Virginia Military Institute	•					•	•
Virginia Polytechnic Institute	•					•	•
Virginia State University	•	•				•	•

**See Appendix B for school evaluation notes on core courses.*

WHAT ARE STUDENTS ACTUALLY LEARNING?

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS AT PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS*

INSTITUTION	Comp	Lit	Lang	Gov/ Hist	Econ	Math	Sci
Averett University	•	•				•	•
Bluefield College	•	•				•	•
Bridgewater College	•						•
Christendom College		•	•			•	•
Eastern Mennonite University	•						
Emory & Henry College	•						
Ferrum College	•	•				•	•
Hampden-Sydney College	•	•	•			•	•
Hampton University	•	•				•	•
Hollins University	•						
Liberty University	•	•				•	•
Lynchburg College	•	•	•			•	
Mary Baldwin College	•						•
Marymount University	•						•
Randolph College							•
Randolph-Macon College	•		•			•	•
Regent University	•			•		•	•
Roanoke College			•			•	•
Shenandoah University	•		•			•	•
Sweet Briar College	•	•	•				•
University of Richmond			•			•	•
Virginia Intermont College	•	•				•	•
Virginia Wesleyan College	•	•	•				•
Washington & Lee University	•		•			•	•

*See Appendix B for school evaluation notes on core courses.

How much are students paying for college?

The cost of higher education has gone up all over the country, but it has exploded at colleges and universities in Virginia. Nationwide, during the six-year period ending in 2010-11, inflation-adjusted tuition and required fees at four-year public colleges increased by an average of 29 percent.¹⁴ At private institutions, they increased by 18.2 percent. The majority of the Virginia schools in this study, however, exceeded these percentages.

The charts on the following pages show the tuition and fees at the 39 Virginia institutions in this study for 2004-05 and 2010-11 in constant 2010 dollars, along with the percentage of change over those years. Old Dominion, Norfolk State, and Virginia State were the institutions with the lowest tuition and fees at the end of the six years studied, yet the growth of all three schools' tuition rates still greatly exceeded the rate of inflation. All of the other public institutions (except James Madison) exceeded the national average for tuition increases. And three schools increased tuition over 45 percent for the period between 2004-05 and 2010-11.

Regent University lowered inflation-adjusted tuition over a five-year period,¹⁵ although this was primarily the result of a large tuition decrease in 2006-07—which has been followed by tuition increases to the present day. Among the private institutions, tuition increases at eight—Averett, Hampton, Hollins, Lynchburg, Mary Baldwin, Randolph, Randolph-Macon, and Shenandoah—were below the national average, but all still showed significant increases during this time of recession. While those figures are high, there were other private institutions that showed even more dramatic escalation in price: Bluefield College increased its 2004-05 price of \$12,253 a full 53.4 percent to over \$18,000. Virginia Intermont College similarly spiked its tuition and fees 52.6 percent. Washington & Lee University went from an already high \$29,736 in 2004-05 to \$40,387, a 35.8 percent increase.

There does not seem to be a significant pattern to the increases, except, sadly, that the lower-priced private institutions are closing the gap between themselves and their more-costly peers. Private institutions that were already expensive still registered increases above the national average. Most—but not all—of the public institutions showed steep increases. This suggests that the increases cannot be attributed to larger trends beyond the institutions' control. Going forward, upward trends in tuition jeopardize access and affordability.

**TRENDS IN UNDERGRADUATE TUITION & FEES
AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS**

INSTITUTION	2004-05	2010-11	% Change
Christopher Newport University	\$6,134	\$9,250	50.8%
College of William & Mary	8,191	12,188	48.8
George Mason University	6,289	8,684	38.1
James Madison University	6,321	7,860	24.3
Longwood University	7,434	9,855	32.6
Norfolk State University	5,685	6,327	11.3
Old Dominion University	4,904	6,214	26.7
Radford University	5,497	7,694	40.0
University of Mary Washington	5,919	7,862	32.8
University of Virginia-Charlottesville	7,838	10,828	38.1
University of Virginia-Wise	5,520	7,194	30.3
Virginia Commonwealth University	6,072	8,817	45.2
Virginia Military Institute	9,297	12,328	32.6
Virginia Polytechnic Institute	6,739	9,459	40.4
Virginia State University	5,245	6,570	25.3

*Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).
Note: 2004-05 dollar amounts are expressed in 2010 inflation-adjusted numbers.*

**TRENDS IN UNDERGRADUATE TUITION & FEES
AT PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS**

INSTITUTION	2004-05	2010-11	% Change
Averett University*	\$20,120	\$22,956	14.1%
Averett University (Non-Traditional Programs)*	N/A	8,115	N/A
Bluefield College	12,253	18,800	53.4
Bridgewater College	20,767	25,500	22.8
Christendom College**	16,646	19,668	18.2
Eastern Mennonite University	20,979	25,200	20.1
Emory & Henry College	19,035	26,000	36.6
Ferrum College	19,474	24,945	28.1
Hampden-Sydney College	26,488	32,489	22.7
Hampton University	15,591	18,074	15.9
Hollins University	25,020	29,485	17.8
Liberty University	15,180	18,064	19.0
Lynchburg College	26,417	29,905	13.2
Mary Baldwin College	23,077	25,655	11.2
Marymount University	19,728	23,426	18.7
Randolph College	25,095	29,254	16.6
Randolph-Macon College	26,117	30,608	17.2
Regent University***	N/A	12,330	N/A
Roanoke College	25,521	31,214	22.3
Shenandoah University	22,210	26,080	17.4
Sweet Briar College	24,103	30,195	25.3
University of Richmond	30,613	41,610	35.9
Virginia Intermont College	16,738	25,542	52.6
Virginia Wesleyan College	23,604	28,556	21.0
Washington & Lee University	29,736	40,387	35.8

Source: IPEDS.

Note: 2004-05 dollar amounts are expressed in 2010 inflation-adjusted numbers.

* Averett University reported separate tuition rates for its non-traditional programs starting in 2009-10.

** Tuition and other data for Christendom College are not reported in IPEDS; calculations are based on tuition data provided by Christendom College staff.

*** Regent University did not admit first-time, full-time freshmen until 2005; inflation-adjusted tuition for 2005-06 was \$13,817.

How do tuition rates compare to family income?

Increases in college costs are paid for by families who, in many cases, are already straining to pay mortgages and put food on the table. The charts on the following pages illustrate this challenge by showing the rise in tuition and fees as a percentage of Virginia's inflation-adjusted median household income. Over the six-year period studied, undergraduate tuition and required fees at all of the colleges and universities in this study for which six-year data were available demanded a greater percentage of household income. Regent University, for the five-year period for which data were available, showed a net decrease. In the case of James Madison, Norfolk State, Old Dominion, the University of Virginia's College at Wise, and Virginia State, the increases were less than three percentage points.

At the University of Richmond, Virginia Intermont, and Washington & Lee, these increases ranged from 13.9 percent to 17.0 percentage points. **The result of this upward creep is that at 17 of these 39 schools, tuition and fees now represent more than 40 percent of the median household income. This is a marked increase over the number of institutions that topped the 40 percent mark in 2004-05, a jump from 10 schools to 17.**

The current rise in cost is simply not sustainable for families,¹⁶ despite the expansion of need-based grant programs. Nationwide, about one-third of full-time students do not qualify for grant assistance, and among those who do, grant aid has only increased by approximately \$441 per FTE within the past year.¹⁷

Governor McDonnell is committed to increased funding for public higher education. But even before the augmented budgets of 2011, Virginia's funding per full-time student in public higher education compared favorably with the funding levels in other states, exceeding that of such states as California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Minnesota, Ohio, and Washington, as reported in the State Higher Education Executive Officers' *State Higher Education Finance* report for 2010. The recession has created hard times throughout the nation, and colleges and universities—both public and private—need to look out for cost efficiencies that meet the demands of the economy's "new normal."

**UNDERGRADUATE TUITION & FEES AS A
PERCENTAGE OF MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS**

INSTITUTION	2004-05	2010-11	Change in % Points	% Change
Christopher Newport University	10.4%	15.3%	4.9%	47.5%
College of William & Mary	13.9	20.2	6.3	45.5
George Mason University	10.7	14.4	3.7	35.0
James Madison University	10.7	13.0	2.3	21.6
Longwood University	12.6	16.3	3.7	29.6
Norfolk State University	9.6	10.5	0.9	8.8
Old Dominion University	8.3	10.3	2.0	23.9
Radford University	9.3	12.7	3.4	36.9
University of Mary Washington	10.0	13.0	3.0	29.9
University of Virginia-Charlottesville	13.3	17.9	4.6	35.1
University of Virginia-Wise	9.4	11.9	2.5	27.5
Virginia Commonwealth University	10.3	14.6	4.3	42.0
Virginia Military Institute	15.7	20.4	4.7	29.7
Virginia Polytechnic Institute	11.4	15.7	4.3	37.3
Virginia State University	8.9	10.9	2.0	22.5

Source: IPEDS and U.S. Census Bureau

HOW DO TUITION RATES COMPARE TO FAMILY INCOME?

UNDERGRADUATE TUITION & FEES AS A PERCENTAGE OF MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME AT PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

INSTITUTION	2004-05	2010-11	Change in % Points	% Change
Averett University*	34.1%	38.0%	3.9%	11.6%
Averett University (Non-Traditional Programs)*	N/A	13.4	N/A	N/A
Bluefield College	20.8	31.1	10.3	50.1
Bridgewater College	35.2	42.2	7.0	20.1
Christendom College**	28.2	32.5	4.3	15.1
Eastern Mennonite University	35.5	41.7	6.2	17.5
Emory & Henry College	32.2	43.1	10.9	33.6
Ferrum College	33.0	41.3	8.3	25.3
Hampden-Sydney College	44.9	53.8	8.9	20.0
Hampton University	26.4	29.9	3.5	13.4
Hollins University	42.4	48.8	6.4	15.2
Liberty University	25.7	29.9	4.2	16.4
Lynchburg College	44.7	49.5	4.8	10.7
Mary Baldwin College	39.1	42.5	3.4	8.7
Marymount University	33.4	38.8	5.4	16.1
Randolph College	42.5	48.5	6.0	14.0
Randolph-Macon College	44.2	50.7	6.5	14.6
Regent University***	N/A	20.4	N/A	N/A
Roanoke College	43.2	51.7	8.5	19.6
Shenandoah University	37.6	43.2	5.6	14.8
Sweet Briar College	40.8	50.0	9.2	22.5
University of Richmond	51.9	68.9	17.0	32.9
Virginia Intermont College	28.4	42.3	13.9	49.2
Virginia Wesleyan College	40.0	47.3	7.3	18.3
Washington & Lee University	50.4	66.9	16.5	32.8

Source: IPEDS and U.S. Census Bureau

* Averett University reported separate tuition rates for its non-traditional programs starting in 2009-10.

** Data are reported from information provided by Christendom College staff.

*** Regent University did not admit first-time, full-time freshmen until 2005; tuition and fees in 2005-06 represented 23.8 percent of median household income.

What are the colleges spending their money on?

Increases in college costs might be defensible if they were going strictly to improve instructional quality, but that is hardly the case. Instead, a growing share of school funds is going to pay for layers and layers of administration. Some support staff are integral to the process of instruction. However, the long-term trend nationwide is very clear: from 1976-2005, the ratio of non-instructional staff to students in American colleges and universities more than doubled.¹⁸ A recent study of higher education costs at 198 leading colleges and universities showed a 39.3 percent increase in expenditures per student for instruction, a 37.8 percent increase for expenditures in research and service, but a 61.2 percent increase per student for administration from 1993-2007.¹⁹

Virginia is not immune to these disturbing trends, as is evident in the charts on the following pages, drawn from data the institutions submitted to the U.S. Department of Education. In the six-year period ending in 2008-09, all but one of the 15 public institutions in this study increased their spending on administration and did so by an average of 65.1 percent. At every public school except for Norfolk State, the University of Mary Washington, and Virginia Commonwealth, administrative expenditures grew at a faster rate than instructional expenditures. At two schools, administrative costs more than doubled: at Longwood, administrative spending increased by a staggering 131.5 percent (versus 57.6 percent growth in instructional costs), while at James Madison, the administrative growth was 125.3 percent while instructional costs grew by only 62 percent.

Norfolk State has had a ratio of administrative costs to instructional spending far higher than that of other Virginia public institutions. However, it has made progress in lowering its administrative expenditures by 27.7 percent at the same time it increased expenditures on instruction by 21.6 percent. Other schools have moved in the opposite direction, increasing administrative spending as a share of Educational and General (E&G) expenditures—a key indicator of how fast administrative spending is growing relative to the rest of the institution's budget. At the University of Virginia's College at Wise, the proportionate share of E&G devoted to administrative expenses increased by 38 percent, while at the Charlottesville campus, the same portion rose by 34.5 percent over six years. At Longwood, not only did the administrative share rise by 23.7 percent, its instructional share of E&G *decreased* by 15.8 percent; at Longwood, as with five other public institutions, instructional spending now constitutes less than half of all E&G expenditures.

■ WHAT ARE THE COLLEGES SPENDING THEIR MONEY ON?

Administrative costs grew among the private institutions in this study by an average of 49 percent over the six years of this study, as shown in the chart on page 19. Only eight of 23 private institutions—Hampden-Sydney, Hollins, Lynchburg, Mary Baldwin, Regent, Sweet Briar, Virginia Intermont, and Virginia Wesleyan—grew their instructional spending at a faster rate than their administrative costs. Christendom College also grew instructional spending faster than administrative spending for the period between 2003-04 and 2009-10. At Liberty University, administrative costs more than quadrupled—increasing by 322.5 percent over six years. However, this was accompanied by a 288.5 percent increase in instructional spending and a substantial growth in enrollment.²⁰ All of these institutions, even those whose trend lines show increasing investment in instruction, have high ratios of administrative costs to instructional spending.

Trustees, state legislators, and donors need to check carefully that existing facilities are used efficiently before investing in new campus buildings. Among Virginia public institutions, average weekly use of classroom facilities ranges from a low of 18.2 hours at Virginia Military Institute to 49.4 hours per week at George Mason University's main campus. Virginia Commonwealth and Old Dominion are strong in efficient use of space. Use of laboratory classrooms—typically the most expensive space on a college campus—ranges from 10.4 hours per week at VMI to 36.3 hours at George Mason University.²¹

There are far more examples of limited usage than examples of extensive weekly usage. After reviewing the standards in 20 states, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) concluded that the average expectation for classroom utilization is 40 hours per week and class lab utilization is 26 hours. SCHEV set its own standards close to that average—40 hours for classroom and 24 hours for lab usage. Twelve of the 15 Virginia public colleges and universities fail to meet those expectations for classroom use, and nine fail to meet expectations for lab use. At Longwood University, for example, classrooms are in use on average 28.7 hours per week and labs 14.3 hours; at the University of Virginia's College at Wise those figures are 28.3 and 13.2. By way of comparison, most all classrooms and laboratory facilities in Virginia would also fail to meet the guidelines of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, which stipulates 38 hours of weekly usage for classrooms and 25 hours per week for labs.²² Within those classrooms, the total number of seats or laboratory stations filled also often does not meet SCHEV's guidelines of 60 percent use of classroom spaces and 75 percent use of lab stations. Thus, it appears that Virginia public institutions show a widespread pattern of underutilization of teaching facilities. As Virginia public institutions, bolstered by the potential for more generous appropriations from the state, prepare to meet the target of 100,000 new degrees, they have the opportunity to expand access for higher education by making far better use of their existing facilities.

**INSTRUCTIONAL VS. ADMINISTRATIVE SPENDING
AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS***

INSTITUTION		2002-03 FY Expenditures	2008-09 FY Expenditures	\$ Change	% Change
Christopher Newport University	<i>Instruction</i>	\$21,310,042	\$31,580,695	\$10,270,653	48.2%
	<i>Administration</i>	4,133,821	7,358,385	3,224,564	78.0
College of William & Mary	<i>Instruction</i>	79,835,512	113,353,244	33,517,732	42.0
	<i>Administration</i>	12,437,729	20,002,034	7,564,305	60.8
George Mason University	<i>Instruction</i>	157,190,249	251,736,089	94,545,840	60.1
	<i>Administration</i>	23,249,957	41,784,250	18,534,293	79.7
James Madison University	<i>Instruction</i>	89,732,080	145,334,624	55,602,544	62.0
	<i>Administration</i>	10,837,539	24,417,245	13,579,706	125.3
Longwood University	<i>Instruction</i>	19,125,053	30,139,145	11,014,092	57.6
	<i>Administration</i>	4,766,712	11,032,978	6,266,266	131.5
Norfolk State University	<i>Instruction</i>	38,097,247	46,332,723	8,235,476	21.6
	<i>Administration</i>	15,769,142	11,398,463	-4,370,679	-27.7
Old Dominion University	<i>Instruction</i>	105,686,309	151,060,327	45,374,018	42.9
	<i>Administration</i>	16,210,940	26,491,045	10,280,105	63.4
Radford University	<i>Instruction</i>	43,958,809	60,985,024	17,026,215	38.7
	<i>Administration</i>	9,155,997	16,802,885	7,646,888	83.5
University of Mary Washington	<i>Instruction</i>	21,231,096	33,465,445	12,234,349	57.6
	<i>Administration</i>	5,750,979	8,134,956	2,383,977	41.5
University of Virginia-Charlottesville	<i>Instruction</i>	295,335,737	420,658,885	125,323,148	42.4
	<i>Administration</i>	48,860,850	82,507,440	33,646,590	68.9
University of Virginia-Wise	<i>Instruction</i>	8,426,530	12,027,063	3,600,533	42.7
	<i>Administration</i>	2,365,504	4,184,503	1,818,999	76.9
Virginia Commonwealth University	<i>Instruction</i>	219,429,947	352,411,081	132,981,134	60.6
	<i>Administration</i>	36,302,146	51,893,272	15,591,126	42.9
Virginia Military Institute	<i>Instruction</i>	16,739,238	21,125,373	4,386,135	26.2
	<i>Administration</i>	3,692,214	4,945,192	1,252,978	33.9
Virginia Polytechnic Institute	<i>Instruction</i>	246,422,350	315,797,453	69,375,103	28.2
	<i>Administration</i>	32,088,082	46,941,037	14,852,955	46.3
Virginia State University	<i>Instruction</i>	27,201,566	39,519,873	12,318,307	45.3
	<i>Administration</i>	7,689,463	13,179,358	5,489,895	71.4

Source: IPEDS

* Public institutions use the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) accounting standards. Education & General expenditures include personnel, operating, and maintenance costs for the institution but typically exclude capital projects, scholarships, and auxiliary enterprises.

WHAT ARE THE COLLEGES SPENDING THEIR MONEY ON?

INSTRUCTIONAL VS. ADMINISTRATIVE SPENDING AS A PERCENTAGE OF EDUCATIONAL & GENERAL EXPENDITURES AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS*

INSTITUTION		2002-03 FY as % of E&G	2008-09 FY as % of E&G	Change in % Points	% Change
Christopher Newport University	<i>Instruction</i>	56.0%	46.7%	-9.3	-16.6%
	<i>Administration</i>	10.9	10.9	0.0	0.1
College of William & Mary	<i>Instruction</i>	60.3	57.0	-3.3	-5.5
	<i>Administration</i>	9.4	10.1	0.7	7.1
George Mason University	<i>Instruction</i>	56.6	55.9	0.7	-1.3
	<i>Administration</i>	8.4	9.3	0.9	10.7
James Madison University	<i>Instruction</i>	59.6	57.9	-1.7	-2.8
	<i>Administration</i>	7.2	9.7	2.5	35.2
Longwood University	<i>Instruction</i>	54.8	46.1	-8.7	-15.8
	<i>Administration</i>	13.7	16.9	3.2	23.7
Norfolk State University	<i>Instruction</i>	48.5	59.6	11.1	22.9
	<i>Administration</i>	20.1	14.7	-5.4	-26.9
Old Dominion University	<i>Instruction</i>	74.1	61.8	-12.3	-16.6
	<i>Administration</i>	11.4	10.8	-0.6	-4.7
Radford University	<i>Instruction</i>	64.0	59.2	-4.8	-7.6
	<i>Administration</i>	13.3	16.3	3.0	22.2
University of Mary Washington	<i>Instruction</i>	56.0	57.7	1.7	3.0
	<i>Administration</i>	15.2	14.0	-1.2	-7.6
University of Virginia-Charlottesville	<i>Instruction</i>	39.3	44.6	5.3	13.4
	<i>Administration</i>	6.5	8.7	2.2	34.5
University of Virginia-Wise	<i>Instruction</i>	49.5	55.1	5.6	11.4
	<i>Administration</i>	13.9	19.2	5.3	38.0
Virginia Commonwealth University	<i>Instruction</i>	52.0	53.6	1.6	3.2
	<i>Administration</i>	8.6	7.9	-0.7	-8.1
Virginia Military Institute	<i>Instruction</i>	54.2	47.7	-6.5	-12.1
	<i>Administration</i>	12.0	11.2	-0.8	-6.7
Virginia Polytechnic Institute	<i>Instruction</i>	41.4	39.1	-2.3	-5.7
	<i>Administration</i>	5.4	5.8	0.4	7.6
Virginia State University	<i>Instruction</i>	45.3	46.9	1.6	3.4
	<i>Administration</i>	12.8	15.6	2.8	22.0

Source: IPEDS

* Public institutions use the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) accounting standards. Education & General expenditures include personnel, operating, and maintenance costs for the institution but typically exclude capital projects, scholarships, and auxiliary enterprises.

**INSTRUCTIONAL VS. ADMINISTRATIVE SPENDING
AT PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS***

INSTITUTION		2002-03 FY Expenditures	2008-09 FY Expenditures	\$ Change	% Change
Averett University	<i>Instruction</i>	\$9,996,442	\$6,957,734	-\$3,038,708	-30.4%
	<i>Administration</i>	3,752,727	3,029,120	-723,607	-19.3
Bluefield College	<i>Instruction</i>	2,645,719	3,540,571	894,852	33.8
	<i>Administration</i>	1,888,908	2,863,187	974,279	51.6
Bridgewater College	<i>Instruction</i>	7,702,488	10,800,870	3,098,382	40.2
	<i>Administration</i>	3,087,085	4,922,646	1,835,561	59.5
Christendom College**	<i>Instruction</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	<i>Administration</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Eastern Mennonite University	<i>Instruction</i>	12,537,697	14,862,877	2,325,180	18.5
	<i>Administration</i>	3,485,587	4,210,551	724,964	20.8
Emory & Henry College	<i>Instruction</i>	6,710,675	8,516,724	1,806,049	26.9
	<i>Administration</i>	2,290,002	3,119,152	829,150	36.2
Ferrum College	<i>Instruction</i>	5,370,765	7,588,461	2,217,696	41.3
	<i>Administration</i>	3,197,647	4,990,073	1,792,426	56.1
Hampden-Sydney College	<i>Instruction</i>	10,467,857	14,417,943	3,950,086	37.7
	<i>Administration</i>	5,020,699	6,351,664	1,330,965	26.5
Hampton University	<i>Instruction</i>	38,765,680	37,766,256	-999,424	-2.6
	<i>Administration</i>	13,593,070	18,632,663	5,039,593	37.1
Hollins University	<i>Instruction</i>	13,241,550	16,233,936	2,992,386	22.6
	<i>Administration</i>	5,547,894	5,699,282	151,388	2.7
Liberty University	<i>Instruction</i>	18,478,312	71,795,981	53,317,669	288.5
	<i>Administration</i>	13,510,595	57,087,634	43,577,039	322.5
Lynchburg College	<i>Instruction</i>	14,575,070	22,729,731	8,154,661	55.9
	<i>Administration</i>	5,590,078	8,301,918	2,711,840	48.5
Mary Baldwin College	<i>Instruction</i>	9,946,725	12,309,129	2,362,404	23.8
	<i>Administration</i>	4,588,854	5,653,482	1,064,628	23.2
Marymount University	<i>Instruction</i>	19,665,738	25,687,140	6,021,402	30.6
	<i>Administration</i>	7,642,703	10,705,964	3,063,261	40.1
Randolph College	<i>Instruction</i>	9,873,784	8,910,763	-963,021	-9.8
	<i>Administration</i>	5,135,214	5,524,541	389,327	7.6
Randolph-Macon College	<i>Instruction</i>	9,394,316	12,465,653	3,071,337	32.7
	<i>Administration</i>	5,111,066	8,900,193	3,789,127	74.1
Regent University	<i>Instruction</i>	29,087,000	47,752,888	18,665,888	64.2
	<i>Administration</i>	8,266,000	12,007,402	3,741,402	45.3
Roanoke College	<i>Instruction</i>	14,040,820	21,013,429	6,972,609	49.7
	<i>Administration</i>	5,046,097	7,559,151	2,513,054	49.8
Shenandoah University	<i>Instruction</i>	21,200,971	31,297,112	10,096,141	47.6
	<i>Administration</i>	6,570,152	10,510,822	3,940,670	60.0
Sweet Briar College	<i>Instruction</i>	13,416,487	16,074,871	2,658,384	19.8
	<i>Administration</i>	5,763,990	5,964,208	200,218	3.5
University of Richmond	<i>Instruction</i>	55,402,622	77,570,419	22,167,797	40.0
	<i>Administration</i>	17,946,250	27,016,966	9,070,716	50.5
Virginia Intermont College	<i>Instruction</i>	3,959,394	5,256,247	1,296,853	32.8
	<i>Administration</i>	1,992,581	2,441,893	449,312	22.5
Virginia Wesleyan College	<i>Instruction</i>	7,652,487	11,880,318	4,227,831	55.2
	<i>Administration</i>	4,475,569	6,886,720	2,411,151	53.9
Washington & Lee University	<i>Instruction</i>	41,990,000	59,066,000	17,076,000	40.7
	<i>Administration</i>	10,694,000	16,589,000	5,895,000	55.1

Source: IPEDS

* Private institutions use the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) accounting standards. Instruction and Administration percentages reported above do not include operation and maintenance, interest, and depreciation. Education & General expenditures include personnel, operating, and maintenance costs for the institution but typically exclude capital projects, scholarships, and auxiliary expenses.

** Financial data on Christendom College is not available through IPEDS. Data provided by Christendom College for the period FY 2003-04 to FY 2009-10 show instructional spending increased 63.4 percent (from \$2,671,504 to \$4,364,802) and administrative spending increased 22 percent (from \$1,602,780 to \$1,954,990). These expense totals include operation and maintenance, interest, and depreciation.

WHAT ARE THE COLLEGES SPENDING THEIR MONEY ON?

INSTRUCTIONAL VS. ADMINISTRATIVE SPENDING AS A PERCENTAGE OF EDUCATIONAL & GENERAL EXPENDITURES AT PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS*

INSTITUTION		2002-03 FY as % of E&G	2008-09 FY as % of E&G	Change in % Points	% Change
Averett University	<i>Instruction</i>	51.3%	43.3%	-8.0%	-15.6%
	<i>Administration</i>	19.3	18.9	-0.4	-2.1
Bluefield College	<i>Instruction</i>	34.0	32.2	-1.8	-5.3
	<i>Administration</i>	24.3	26.0	1.7	7.2
Bridgewater College	<i>Instruction</i>	40.0	39.3	-0.7	-1.7
	<i>Administration</i>	16.0	17.9	1.9	11.8
Christendom College**	<i>Instruction</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	<i>Administration</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Eastern Mennonite University	<i>Instruction</i>	55.4	56.2	0.8	1.4
	<i>Administration</i>	15.4	15.9	0.5	3.3
Emory & Henry College	<i>Instruction</i>	43.8	41.8	-2.0	-4.6
	<i>Administration</i>	15.0	15.3	0.3	2.4
Ferrum College	<i>Instruction</i>	40.2	38.5	-1.7	-4.3
	<i>Administration</i>	24.0	25.3	1.3	5.7
Hampden-Sydney College	<i>Instruction</i>	41.3	40.6	-0.7	-1.7
	<i>Administration</i>	19.8	17.9	-1.9	-9.7
Hampton University	<i>Instruction</i>	40.6	36.0	-4.6	-11.3
	<i>Administration</i>	14.2	17.8	3.6	24.8
Hollins University	<i>Instruction</i>	53.6	56.0	2.4	4.5
	<i>Administration</i>	22.5	19.7	-2.8	-12.4
Liberty University	<i>Instruction</i>	33.3	37.6	4.3	13.0
	<i>Administration</i>	24.5	29.9	5.4	21.9
Lynchburg College	<i>Instruction</i>	54.7	54.2	-0.5	-1.0
	<i>Administration</i>	21.0	19.8	-1.2	-5.7
Mary Baldwin College	<i>Instruction</i>	50.9	53.6	2.7	5.2
	<i>Administration</i>	23.5	24.6	1.1	4.7
Marymount University	<i>Instruction</i>	51.6	51.6	0.0	-0.1
	<i>Administration</i>	20.1	21.5	1.4	7.2
Randolph College	<i>Instruction</i>	47.6	41.1	-6.5	-13.7
	<i>Administration</i>	24.7	25.5	0.7	2.9
Randolph-Macon College	<i>Instruction</i>	38.2	37.4	-0.8	-2.0
	<i>Administration</i>	20.8	26.7	5.9	28.6
Regent University	<i>Instruction</i>	48.0	64.6	16.6	34.7
	<i>Administration</i>	16.8	16.2	-0.6	-3.3
Roanoke College	<i>Instruction</i>	47.5	49.9	2.4	5.0
	<i>Administration</i>	17.1	18.0	0.9	5.1
Shenandoah University	<i>Instruction</i>	51.0	52.1	1.1	2.2
	<i>Administration</i>	15.8	17.5	1.7	10.8
Sweet Briar College	<i>Instruction</i>	53.6	52.5	-1.1	-2.1
	<i>Administration</i>	23.0	19.5	-3.5	-15.5
University of Richmond	<i>Instruction</i>	52.2	43.5	-8.7	-16.5
	<i>Administration</i>	16.9	15.2	-1.7	-10.2
Virginia Intermont College	<i>Instruction</i>	49.6	37.1	-12.5	-25.2
	<i>Administration</i>	24.9	17.2	-7.7	-30.9
Virginia Wesleyan College	<i>Instruction</i>	38.3	43.6	5.3	13.8
	<i>Administration</i>	22.4	25.3	2.9	12.8
Washington & Lee University	<i>Instruction</i>	57.4	54.6	-2.8	-4.8
	<i>Administration</i>	14.6	15.3	0.7	4.9

Source: IPEDS

* Private institutions use the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) accounting standards. Instruction and Administration totals reported above do not include operation and maintenance, interest, and depreciation. Education & General expenditures include personnel, operating, and maintenance costs for the institution but typically exclude capital projects, scholarships, and auxiliary expenses.

** Data provided by Christendom College for the period FY 2003-04 to FY 2009-10 show instructional spending went from 45.7 percent of Educational and General expenditures (E&G) to 50.3 percent (4.6 percentage points, a 10.1 percent increase), and administrative spending went from 27.4 percent of E&G to 22.5 percent (-4.9 percentage points, a 17.8 percent decrease). Calculations are based on expense totals that include operation and maintenance, interest, and depreciation.

Are freshmen returning?

Just as businesses track their repeat customers, colleges and universities track their freshmen retention rates. This measure examines the percentage of first-time, full-time freshmen who continue the following year as sophomores. In effect, this is an indicator of the first-year drop-out rate. It is an important measure for two reasons. First, remaining after the first year is an indicator that the student is on track to complete his or her degree. Second, it can also suggest—especially to an institution that has a large drop-out rate after the first year—that it is accepting students who are not college-ready, or that it lacks the capacity to address the needs of students who are at risk of failure. The cost of such errors is large. State and federal governments spent an estimated \$9 billion between 2003 and 2008 on students who dropped out of college during their freshman year.²³

The national average for first-year retention is 79.5 percent for public colleges and 80 percent for private not-for-profit colleges.²⁴ Overall, only 15 of the 39 schools meet that standard. And, in this case, the difference in performance between the publics and the privates is quite drastic. At the high end, William & Mary and the University of Virginia top the chart with retention rates at 95 percent and 96 percent, respectively. At the low end, four public institutions—Norfolk State, Radford, University of Virginia’s College at Wise, and Virginia State—fall below the national average, with Norfolk State the lowest at 66 percent.

By contrast, only four of the 24 privates meet or exceed the national average, although three of these—Christendom, the University of Richmond, and Washington & Lee—rank among the most successful in the state in freshmen retention. Stated another way, at the majority of Virginia’s private institutions in this survey, about one in four freshmen appear to be dropping out before their sophomore year. Even allowing for the fact that some of the students who leave after the first year transfer to other institutions, these retention rates are unacceptable.

What is also alarming is the trend line in the state. In the public sector, the University of Mary Washington, University of Virginia’s College at Wise, and Virginia Military Institute have seen their college retention rates decline over the last six years. Meanwhile, the majority of the private schools surveyed are losing ground. Only seven of the 24 private institutions surveyed managed to improve their freshmen retention rates over the period surveyed.

■ ARE FRESHMEN RETURNING?

**FIRST-YEAR RETENTION RATES FOR FIRST-TIME,
FULL-TIME FRESHMEN AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS**

INSTITUTION	2003 Cohort	2009 Cohort	Change in % Points
Christopher Newport University	76.0%	81.0%	5.0%
College of William & Mary	95.0	95.0	0.0
George Mason University	81.0	86.0	5.0
James Madison University	91.0	91.0	0.0
Longwood University	77.0	80.0	3.0
Norfolk State University	63.0	66.0	3.0
Old Dominion University	78.0	80.0	2.0
Radford University	76.0	76.0	0.0
University of Mary Washington	87.0	83.0	-4.0
University of Virginia-Charlottesville	96.0	96.0	0.0
University of Virginia-Wise	77.0	70.0	-7.0
Virginia Commonwealth University	79.0	85.0	6.0
Virginia Military Institute	86.0	83.0	-3.0
Virginia Polytechnic Institute	87.0	92.0	5.0
Virginia State University	70.0	74.0	4.0

Source: IPEDS.

Note: Original data were reported without decimal places.

FIRST-YEAR RETENTION RATES FOR FIRST-TIME, FULL-TIME FRESHMEN AT PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

INSTITUTION	2003 Cohort	2009 Cohort	Change in % Points
Averett University*	67.0%	57.0%	-10.0%
Averett University-Non-Traditional Programs*	N/A	100.0	N/A
Bluefield College	81.0	59.0	-22.0
Bridgewater College	75.0	70.0	-5.0
Christendom College**	81.6	94.5	12.9
Eastern Mennonite University	78.0	75.0	-3.0
Emory & Henry College	76.0	75.0	-1.0
Ferrum College	57.0	59.0	2.0
Hampden-Sydney College	81.0	78.0	-3.0
Hampton University	83.0	74.0	-9.0
Hollins University	76.0	74.0	-2.0
Liberty University	70.0	71.0	1.0
Lynchburg College	76.0	72.0	-4.0
Mary Baldwin College	62.0	64.0	2.0
Marymount University	75.0	66.0	-9.0
Randolph College	78.0	76.0	-2.0
Randolph-Macon College	65.0	75.0	10.0
Regent University***	N/A	72.0	N/A
Roanoke College	75.0	81.0	6.0
Shenandoah University	75.0	72.0	-3.0
Sweet Briar College	78.0	76.0	-2.0
University of Richmond	92.0	93.0	1.0
Virginia Intermont College	71.0	45.0	-26.0
Virginia Wesleyan College	64.0	63.0	-1.0
Washington & Lee University	94.0	94.0	0.0

Source: IPEDS.

Note: Original data were reported without decimal places.

* Averett University reported separate retention rates for its non-traditional program starting with the 2008 cohort.

** Data are reported from information provided by Christendom College.

*** Regent University did not admit first-time, full-time freshmen until 2005; the retention rate for the 2005 cohort was 57 percent.

Are students graduating and doing so on time?

Nationally, less than 58 percent of today's students graduate in six years: 54.9 percent of the students in public institutions and 64.6 percent of the students in private, non-profit colleges and universities.²⁵ Such low rates put the U.S. behind global competitors. Despite spending more per student on higher education than any other Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) country, the U.S. ranks 16th in the percentage of young adults who have completed college.²⁶ Students who enter college but do not graduate represent a failed investment, and there are consequences for the student, the institution, and taxpayers.

The charts on the following pages show the four- and six-year graduation rates in Virginia for the cohort that entered in 1998 and the cohort that entered in 2004. We measured and reported the percentage of change in the graduation rates between these two cohorts.

Virginia's public schools, as a whole, fare better than the national average, graduating an average of 67.9 percent.²⁷ However, being better than the national average is not cause for celebration. When looked at individually, even at the very best Virginia public schools, significant percentages do not graduate after six years. Six-year graduation rates range widely, including the low of 34 percent at Norfolk State to the high of 93 percent at the University of Virginia, with rates of 50 percent at Old Dominion and Virginia Commonwealth, 60 percent at Christopher Newport, and 63 percent at George Mason.

The Virginia private schools, meanwhile, present an even more disturbing picture. One-third of the private schools surveyed graduate less than half their students in six years. Of course, a baccalaureate degree is supposed to take only four years, not six. Students who entered in 2004 should have graduated in 2008 and moved forward with careers or further training. But if we look at four-year graduation rates in Virginia institutions, only 15 of the 39 schools surveyed graduate more than half of their students in four years. Only seven institutions—Roanoke, the University of Mary Washington, James Madison, the University of Richmond, William & Mary, the University of Virginia, and Washington & Lee—graduate more than 64% of their students in four years—a benchmark typically used to denote students' passing performance. In other words, at a majority of Virginia's public or private four-year colleges in this survey, at least half of first-time full-time students will fail to graduate in four years.

It is, however, a hopeful sign that all but eight schools have increased their six-year graduation rates in the last few years.

**BACCALAUREATE GRADUATION RATES FOR FIRST-TIME,
FULL-TIME FRESHMEN AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS**

INSTITUTION	1998 Cohort Graduation Rate		2004 Cohort Graduation Rate		Change in % points	
	4-Year	6-Year	4-Year	6-Year	4-Year	6-Year
Christopher Newport University	17.0	42.0	42.0	60.0	25.0	18.0
College of William & Mary	78.0	89.0	82.0	90.0	4.0	1.0
George Mason University	27.0	53.0	39.0	63.0	12.0	10.0
James Madison University	62.0	80.0	68.0	82.0	6.0	2.0
Longwood University	45.0	64.0	40.0	59.0	-5.0	-5.0
Norfolk State University	9.0	27.0	11.0	34.0	2.0	7.0
Old Dominion University	21.0	46.0	25.0	50.0	4.0	4.0
Radford University	37.0	56.0	39.0	57.0	2.0	1.0
University of Mary Washington	65.0	74.0	68.0	75.0	3.0	1.0
University of Virginia-Charlottesville	83.0	92.0	85.0	93.0	2.0	1.0
University of Virginia-Wise	19.0	43.0	35.0	48.0	16.0	5.0
Virginia Commonwealth University	17.0	40.0	23.0	50.0	6.0	10.0
Virginia Military Institute	48.0	62.0	60.0	70.0	12.0	8.0
Virginia Polytechnic Institute	44.0	74.0	53.0	80.0	9.0	6.0
Virginia State University	22.0	41.0	24.0	41.0	2.0	0.0

Source: IPEDS.

Note: Original data were reported without decimal places.

BACCALAUREATE GRADUATION RATES FOR FIRST-TIME, FULL-TIME FRESHMEN AT PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

INSTITUTION	1998 Cohort Graduation Rate		2004 Cohort Graduation Rate		Change in % points	
	4-Year	6-Year	4-Year	6-Year	4-Year	6-Year
Averett University*	23.0%	45.0%	28.0%	34.0%	5.0%	-11.0%
Averett University-Non-Traditional Programs*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bluefield College	3.0	34.0	28.0	34.0	25.0	0.0
Bridgewater College	62.0	65.0	58.0	64.0	-4.0	-1.0
Christendom College**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Eastern Mennonite University	47.0	60.0	44.0	57.0	-3.0	-3.0
Emory & Henry College	41.0	51.0	15.0	57.0	-26.0	6.0
Ferrum College	20.0	33.0	18.0	31.0	-2.0	-2.0
Hampden-Sydney College	59.0	68.0	58.0	68.0	-1.0	0.0
Hampton University	40.0	54.0	38.0	54.0	-2.0	0.0
Hollins University***	0.0	61.0	58.0	63.0	58.0	2.0
Liberty University	32.0	45.0	30.0	48.0	-2.0	3.0
Lynchburg College	50.0	60.0	48.0	57.0	-2.0	-3.0
Mary Baldwin College	41.0	43.0	38.0	47.0	-3.0	4.0
Marymount University	38.0	52.0	43.0	57.0	5.0	5.0
Randolph College***	59.0	61.0	55.0	60.0	-4.0	-1.0
Randolph-Macon College	54.0	58.0	58.0	62.0	4.0	4.0
Regent University****	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Roanoke College	52.0	61.0	65.0	71.0	13.0	10.0
Shenandoah University	28.0	45.0	30.0	47.0	2.0	2.0
Sweet Briar College***	65.0	67.0	57.0	59.0	-8.0	-8.0
University of Richmond	78.0	85.0	81.0	87.0	3.0	2.0
Virginia Intermont College*****	0.0	0.0	18.0	29.0	18.0	29.0
Virginia Wesleyan College	30.0	42.0	35.0	45.0	5.0	3.0
Washington & Lee University	88.0	90.0	92.0	93.0	4.0	3.0

Source: IPEDS.

Note: Original data were reported without decimal places.

* Averett University reported separate retention rates for their non-traditional programs starting with the 2008 cohort. Presumably, separate graduation rates will be available starting in 2014.

** Data provided by Christendom College report 5-year graduation rates of 68.7% for the 1998 cohort and 78.1% for the 2004 cohort.

*** Hollins University, Randolph College, and Sweet Briar College all reported four-year graduation rates of 0.0% for at least one year during the period reviewed (not all shown). These appear to have been data entry errors, based on the four-year graduation rates of prior and subsequent years.

**** Regent University did not admit first-time, full-time freshmen for any of the cohort years studied.

***** Virginia Intermont College's four- and six-year graduation rates fluctuated wildly during the period reviewed, from highs of 92.0% for the 2000 cohort to lows of 13.0% and 30.0% respectively for the 2002 cohort (not shown). Additionally, the reported four- and six-year graduation rates for the 1998 cohort may be a data entry error, since IPEDS often substitutes a zero for missing information.

What are the governance structures at Virginia institutions?

The mission of public higher education in Virginia is defined by statute: providing access to higher education for all citizens in the Commonwealth; ensuring affordability of higher education; offering a broad range of academic programs; promoting academic quality; improving student retention; developing articulation agreements; contributing to the state's overall economic well-being; increasing the level of externally-funded research at institutions; contributing to the improvement of Virginia's primary and secondary school system; having solid institutional financial planning; maximizing institutions' operational efficiency; and ensuring student safety on campus.²⁸ The Interim Report of the Governor's Commission on Higher Education calls for important new cost-efficiencies and quality measures. These include such ideas as year-round use of campus resources and developing infrastructure and incentives for institutions to form consortia that leverage instructional resources across the Virginia higher-education system through technology-enhanced distance delivery.²⁹ Such excellent initiatives are urgently needed.

The findings of this report demonstrate that, by and large, Virginia higher education is not meeting these high goals, specifically when it comes to ensuring affordability, promoting academic quality, and maximizing institutions' operational efficiency. While the breadth of this statutory mission can surely contribute to the challenge of meeting each goal, the mission makes perfectly clear that quality, cost, and effectiveness are critical areas for institutional focus.

Who then is responsible for achieving these goals? The answer is boards of visitors, trustees, and council members, working with administrators and faculty.

Public Institutions

Each Virginia public college and university has a board of visitors as its governing body, comprised of up to 17 members, appointed by the governor and confirmed by the General Assembly for four year terms.³⁰ By statute, each visitor is charged with the responsibility "for ensuring that [the state mission's goals] are met" by the institution.³¹ Among those duties are "[to] manage successfully the administrative and financial operations of the institution without jeopardizing the financial integrity and stability of the institution"³² and to develop "objective criteria for measuring educational-related performance."³³

Boards have broad powers to fulfill their duties, including the authority to set tuition rates,³⁴ and to determine fields of instruction to be offered.³⁵ At some schools, board authority is stated expansively.³⁶ At the College of William & Mary, state law directs the board to "make

all needful rules and regulations concerning the colleges, and generally direct the affairs of the colleges,” while the board of the Virginia Military Institute “may make bylaws and regulations for their own government and the management of the affairs of the Institute.”³⁷

In addition to boards of visitors, the Virginia public higher education system also has a statewide coordinating body, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), whose 11 members³⁸ responsibility is to “promote the development and operation of an educationally and economically sound, vigorous, progressive, and coordinated system of higher education in the Commonwealth of Virginia.”³⁹ SCHEV’s duties include serving as gatekeeper for all proposed new degree programs and departments⁴⁰ and reviewing—and when necessary, affirmatively requiring—the discontinuation of programs that the Council determines to be “nonproductive” or “unnecessarily duplicative.”⁴¹ Periodically, SCHEV authors a strategic plan intended to reflect current priorities in achieving the state mission;⁴² it also performs various data collection functions,⁴³ and calculates each institution’s operational cost needs to aid in the governor’s and the General Assembly’s appropriation decisions.⁴⁴

SCHEV’s strategic plan makes clear that boards of visitors play a critical role in the success of public higher education in the Commonwealth, based on their unique knowledge of the function of their institutions:

The Council has responsibility for creating the plan, but implementation is the responsibility of various actors in their appropriate roles. SCHEV advocates, coordinates, and performs its assigned regulatory functions. Higher education institutions implement and manage the full range of academic and support programs at the campus level. . . .

Public higher education in Virginia constitutes a “system” in the sense that the public institutions share collective responsibility for serving the needs of the state through their varying missions. . . .

The “systemness” to be achieved cannot be imposed by fiat; it must be driven by the strengths and missions of individual institutions. This notion of coordination through cooperation is what makes Virginia higher education unique and what this strategic plan aims to achieve.⁴⁵

Private Institutions

Boards of trustees at private institutions have fiduciary authority and responsibility over their institutions, typically set by charter and bylaws. For example, the board of trustees of Bridgewater College holds “the full and complete management and control of the corporation . . . and its affairs,”⁴⁶ while Lynchburg College’s board “oversees the activities of the College [and] ensure[s] the positive direction of the institution.”⁴⁷ Their governance authority by definition includes not only financial responsibility for the institution, but also the policies that affect academic affairs and student life.

The two major differences between the governance structures of public vs. private institutions in the state are: (1) the comparatively large size of private institutions' boards; and (2) the relative independence of private institutions from the state coordinating body. In the case of Hampden-Sydney College, governance is vested in a body of 44 trustees,⁴⁸ Bluefield College's board of trustees has 28 members,⁴⁹ while Shenandoah College's board is comprised of nearly 40 trustees.⁵⁰

The disturbing trends highlighted by this report can only be reversed when trustees, visitors, and council members stay active in controlling costs and keeping higher education affordable, and when they critically evaluate the quality of their institutions' general education programs. Active trustees and visitors can have the most impact when they operate under an effective governance structure that facilitates critical evaluation and the exercise of sound judgment in the best interests of the institution and of the public at large.

In these economically-challenging times, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia can assert its statutory role and seek, as appropriate, closure of superfluous, duplicative, or non-productive academic programs and promote systems to assess the academic effectiveness of public colleges and universities. Indeed, in addition to SCHEV's cost management functions, the Virginia Code requires the Council to “[d]evelop in cooperation with institutions of higher education guidelines for the assessment of student achievement.”⁵¹ SCHEV already measures various institutional data points, and it can serve the state by addressing a much-needed area of learning outcomes measurement.

Currently, Christopher Newport University uses the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency, and two Virginia public institutions have joined the Voluntary System of Accountability developed by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), although neither of these institutions has yet posted outcomes on assessments of students' core collegiate skills on APLU's College Portrait site.⁵² By contrast, 16 North Carolina public universities are described on the College Portrait site, as are nine South Carolina universities, eight Kentucky schools, seven West Virginia institutions, and six Georgia universities.⁵³

A number of private institutions—including Averett, Eastern Mennonite, Emory & Henry, Ferrum, Lynchburg, and Randolph-Macon—have used instruments such as the Collegiate Learning Assessment to measure student growth in core collegiate skills. All boards should take an active role in aggressively monitoring cost-effectiveness and implementing academic quality measures. The findings of this report indicate challenges to cost and quality, making trustee engagement especially urgent.

End Notes

1. Mark Kutner, Elizabeth Greenberg, and Justin Baer, *A First Look at the Literacy of America's Adults in the 21st Century* (Jessup, MD: National Center for Education Statistics, 2005) <<http://nces.ed.gov/NAAL/PDF/2006470.PDF>>.
2. Richard Arum, Josipa Roksa, and Esther Cho, *Improving Undergraduate Learning. Findings and Policy Recommendations from the SSRC-CLA Longitudinal Project* (Brooklyn, NY: The Social Science Research Council, 2011) <http://www.ssrc.org/workspace/images/crm/new_publication_3/%7Bd06178be-3823-e011-ade0-001cc477ec84%7D.pdf>.
3. Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa, *Academically Adrift* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), esp. 33-37.
4. Philip Babcock and Mindy Marks, *Leisure College, USA: The Decline in Student Study Time* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 2010) <<http://www.aei.org/outlook/100980>>.
5. Stuart Rojstaczer, "Grade Inflation at American Colleges and Universities," accessed January 9, 2012 <<http://gradeinflation.com>>.
6. Linda Barrington, Jill Casner-Lotto, *Are They Really Ready to Work? Employers' Perspectives on the Basic Knowledge and Applied Skills of New Entrants to the 21st Century U.S. Workforce* (The Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and the Society for Human Resource Management (New York, NY and Washington, DC: 2006), 18, 31, 34, 39. See also The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, "Most Young People Entering the U.S. Workforce Lack Critical Skills Essential for Success," October 2, 2006, accessed January 6, 2012 <http://www.p21.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=250&Itemid=64>.
7. National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, *Losing Ground: A National Status Report on the Affordability of American Higher Education* (San Jose, CA: National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2002) <http://www.highereducation.org/reports/losing_ground/ar.shtml>.
8. Kenneth C. Green, Scott Jaschik, and Doug Lederman, "The 2011 *Inside Higher Ed* Survey of College & University Admissions Directors," *Inside Higher Ed*, September 21, 2011, 22.
9. Susan Aud, William Hussar, et al., *The Condition of Education 2011* (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2011) <<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011033.pdf>>.
10. See pages 25-26 for study findings on six-year graduation rates.
11. John Immerwahr and Jean Johnson, *Squeeze Play 2010: Continued Public Anxiety on Cost, Harsher Judgments on How Colleges Are Run* (New York, NY and San Jose, CA: Public Agenda and National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2010) <<http://www.publicagenda.org/pages/squeeze-play-2010>>.
12. Francesca Di Meglio, "College: Big Investment, Paltry Return," *Businessweek.com*, June 28, 2010 <http://www.businessweek.com/bschools/content/jun2010/bs20100618_385280.htm>. See also Anthony P. Carnevale, Jeff Strohl & Michelle Melton, *What's it Worth?: The Economic Value of College Majors* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 2011) <<http://www9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/whatsitworth-complete.pdf>>.
13. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Number of Jobs Held, Labor Market Activity, and Earnings Growth Among the Youngest Baby Boomers: Results From a Longitudinal Survey* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, USDL-10-1243, 2010).
14. These figures are weighted averages from College Board, *Trends in College Pricing 2011* (New York, NY: The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center, 2011) Excel Table 4 <http://trends.collegeboard.org/college_pricing/>.

15. Regent University opened its School of Undergraduate Studies in 2005. That was the first year in which it accepted first-time, full-time freshmen.
16. Of those who graduated with student debt from four-year institutions in Virginia in 2010, the average debt was \$23,327. Institute for College Access & Success, *The Project on Student Debt*, accessed January 2, 2012 <http://projectonstudentdebt.org/state_by_state-view2011.php?area=VA>.
17. College Board, *Trends in College Pricing 2011* (New York, NY: The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center, 2011) accessed December 12, 2011 <http://trends.collegeboard.org/downloads/College_Pricing_2011.pdf>; College Board, *Trends in Student Aid 2011* (New York, NY: College Board Advocacy & Policy Center, 2011) <http://trends.collegeboard.org/downloads/Student_Aid_2011.pdf>.
18. Richard Vedder, *Over Invested and Over Priced: American Higher Education Today* (Washington, D.C.: Center for College Affordability and Productivity, 2007) <http://www.cpec.ca.gov/CompleteReports/ExternalDocuments/CCAP_Report.pdf>.
19. Jay Greene, Brian Kisida, and Jonathan Mills, *Administrative Bloat at American Universities: The Real Reason for High Costs in Higher Education* (Phoenix, AZ: Goldwater Institute, 2010), Table A2 <<http://www.immagic.com/eLibrary/ARCHIVES/GENERAL/GLDWTRUS/G100817G.pdf>>.
20. Liberty University reported to the U.S. Department of Education full-time enrollment of 8,128 in Fall 2004, compared to 25,053 in Fall 2009.
21. State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, *Space Utilization and Comparison Report* (Richmond, VA: State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 2004) <<http://www.schev.edu/Reportstats/2004SpaceUtilizationComparisonReport.pdf>>; State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, “Fall 2010 Classroom Utilization Detail – 4 Year,” accessed January 6, 2012 <<http://www.schev.edu/forms/FALL%202010%20CLASSROOM%20DETAIL%204%20YEAR.xlsx>>; State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, “Fall 2010 Class Lab Utilization Detail – 4 Year,” accessed January 6, 2012 <<http://www.schev.edu/forms/FALL%202010%20CLASS%20LAB%20DETAIL%204%20YEAR.xls>>. State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, *Classroom and Lab Utilization Statistics* (Richmond, VA: 2009), <<http://www.schev.edu/forms/Final%20Classroom%20and%20Class%20Lab%20Utilization.pdf>>.
22. Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, *Overview of Space Usage Efficiency* (Austin, TX: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2009) <<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/reports/PDF/1831.PDF>>.
23. Mark Schneider & Lu Yin, *The High Cost of Low Graduation Rates: How Much Does Dropping Out of College Really Cost?* (Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research, 2011) <http://www.air.org/files/AIR_High_Cost_of_Low_Graduation_Aug2011.pdf>; Eric Kelderman, “College Dropouts Cost Taxpayers Billions, Report Says,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 11, 2010.
24. CollegeMeasures.org, “Performance Scorecard – National,” accessed December 12, 2011 <http://collegemeasures.org/4-year_colleges/reporting/national/sm/default.aspx>.
25. Susan Aud, William Hussar, et al., *The Condition of Education 2011* (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2011) <<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011033.pdf>>.
26. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Education at a Glance 2011: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/61/2/48631582.pdf>>.
27. 67.9 percent is the six-year graduation rate for the Fall 2003 cohort. State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, “GRS10: Graduation Rates of Virginia Traditional Four-Year Institutions: Fall 2003,” accessed December 19, 2011 <<http://research.schev.edu/gradrates/grs10.asp>>.
28. Va. Code § 23-38.88(B).

29. Thomas F. Farrell, II and M. Kirkland Cox, *Preparing for the Top Jobs of the 21st Century: Interim Report of the Governor's Commission on Higher Education Reform, Innovation and Investment* (Richmond, VA: The Governor's Higher Education Commission, 2010) <<http://www.education.virginia.gov/initiatives/HigherEducation/docs/FinalHECInterimReport-122010.pdf>>.
30. Va. Code § 23-49.25 (Christopher Newport University); § 23-41 (College of William & Mary); § 23-91.26 (George Mason University); § 23-164.3 (James Madison University); § 23-185 (Longwood University); § 23-174.4 (Norfolk State University); § 23-49.14 (Old Dominion University); § 23-155.4 (Radford University); § 23-91.36 (University of Mary Washington); § 23-70 (University of Virginia); § 23-50.6 (Virginia Commonwealth University); § 23-93 (Virginia Military Institute); § 23-165.4 (Virginia State University). The statute governing membership of the board of visitors for Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Va. Code § 23-115) does not explicitly designate a four year term, although the school bylaws do. See Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, "Bylaws of the Board of Visitors," accessed November 15, 2011 <<http://www.bov.vt.edu/bylaws/bylaws.html#1>>.
31. Va. Code § 23-38.88(B).
32. Va. Code § 23-38.91.
33. Va. Code § 23-38.91(A) (referencing Va. Code § 23-38.87:20(B)(5)).
34. Va. Code § 23-38.87:18(A); § 23-38.104(B) ("[T]he Board of Visitors of a covered institution shall have sole authority to establish tuition, fee, room, board, and other charges consistent with sum sufficient appropriation authority for all nongeneral funds as provided by the Governor and the General Assembly in the Commonwealth's biennial appropriations authorization.").
35. E.g., Va. Code § 23-135.13 (Virginia Polytechnic Institute); § 23-49.31 (Christopher Newport University) ("The existing collegiate curriculum of the University shall be continued; however, the board may make such alterations therein as it shall from time to time deem necessary."). § 23-155.10 (Radford University) ("The curriculum of Radford University shall embrace such branches of learning as relate to teaching in the public free schools of Virginia, without excluding other studies in the arts and sciences.").
36. The autonomy granted to boards through the Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operating Act of 2005, however, carries responsibilities to address state goals which include affordability, academic quality and operational efficiency. Va. Code § 23-38.88(D)(4) confirms the authority of the governor to void a management agreement with a board of visitors if the institution is found to be out of compliance with the terms of the act or the management agreement.
37. Va. Code § 23-44; Va. Code § 23-99.
38. SCHEV members are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the General Assembly for four-year terms. Va. Code § 23-9.3(b).
39. Va. Code § 23-9.3(a).
40. Va. Code § 23-9.6:1(5); Va. Code § 25-9.6:1(7). SCHEV must also "review the proposed closure of any academic program in a high-demand or critical-shortage area [e.g., teacher education or nursing] as defined by the Council." Va. Code § 25-9.6:1(8).
41. Va. Code § 25-9.6:1(6). The Council also oversees institutions' development of articulation agreements for dual enrollment and course transfer. Va. Code § 25-9.6:1(18).
42. Va. Code § 23-9.6:1; The current plan for 2007-2013 identifies target objectives for institutions, including moderating tuition rates to maintain affordability and strengthening academic program quality through outcome measurement. State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, *Advancing Virginia: Access, Alignment, Investment: The 2007-13 Strategic Plan for Higher Education in Virginia* (Richmond, VA: State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 2007) accessed November 15, 2011 <<http://www.schev.edu/Reportstats/2007StrategicPlan.pdf>>.

43. Va. Code § 23-9.6:1(9). For example, SCHEV collects data on institutions' space utilization, cost of attendance, and program productivity. Va. Code § 25-9.6:1(12); State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, "Tuition and Fees and Total Cost of Attendance for Full-time, In-State Undergraduates," accessed November 15, 2011 <http://research.schev.edu/ips/affordability_1.asp>; State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, "Public Institution Program Productivity Review," accessed November 15, 2011 <<http://research.schev.edu/Productivity/default.asp>>. In addition, SCHEV is required to collect data pertaining to "objective measures of educational-related performance and institutional performance benchmarks for such objective measures." Va. Code § 23-9.6:1.01(A). Currently, SCHEV performs an annual Assessment of Institutional Performance for each public four-year institution in the Commonwealth of Virginia, measuring in-state enrollment, enrollment by underrepresented groups, number of degrees awarded, degree distribution in "high need" areas, retention rates, degrees per FTE (full-time equivalent), student transfers, and awards per FTE faculty. State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, "Institutional Performance Standards," accessed November 15, 2011 <<http://research.schev.edu/topicpages.asp?t=7>>.
44. Va. Code § 23-38.87:12, -13. SCHEV works in conjunction with the Higher Education Advisory Committee, an advisory board comprised of representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Education, Office of the Secretary of Finance, the General Assembly, and Virginia public institutions. Va. Code § 23-38.87:20.
45. State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, *Advancing Virginia: Access, Alignment, Investment: The 2007-13 Strategic Plan for Higher Education in Virginia* (Richmond, VA: State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, 2007) <<http://www.schev.edu/Reportstats/2007StrategicPlan.pdf>>.
46. Bridgewater College, "Board of Trustees," accessed November 28, 2011 <<http://www.bridgewater.edu/AboutUs/Administration/BoardOfTrustees>>.
47. Lynchburg College, "Board of Trustees," accessed November 28, 2011 <<http://www.lynchburg.edu/x874.xml>>.
48. Hampden-Sydney College, "H-SC Board of Trustees," accessed November 28, 2011 <<http://www.hsc.edu/Academics/Catalogue-2011-12/Trustees.html>>.
49. Bluefield College, "Bluefield College > Board of Trustees," accessed November 28, 2011 <<http://www.bluefield.edu/trustees>>.
50. Shenandoah University, "Shenandoah University: Board of Trustees," accessed December 19, 2011 <<http://su.edu/about/A21185526E9D464B9DC3E9DAAB0C0507.asp>>.
51. Va. Code § 23-9.6:1(10).
52. College Portrait of Undergraduate Education, "Institutions in Virginia," accessed December 5, 2011 <<http://www.collegeportraits.org/VA>>.
53. College Portrait of Undergraduate Education, "Institutions in North Carolina," accessed January 11, 2011, <<http://www.collegeportraits.org/NC>>; College Portrait of Undergraduate Education, "Institutions in South Carolina," accessed December 5, 2011 <<http://www.collegeportraits.org/SC>>; College Portrait of Undergraduate Education, "Institutions in Kentucky," accessed December 5, 2011, <<http://www.collegeportraits.org/KY>>; College Portrait of Undergraduate Education, "Institutions in West Virginia," accessed December 5, 2011, <<http://www.collegeportraits.org/WV>>; College Portrait of Undergraduate Education, "Institutions in Georgia," accessed December 5, 2011, <<http://www.collegeportraits.org/GA>>.

Appendix A

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR CORE COURSES

Distribution requirements on most campuses today permit students to pick from a wide range of courses that often are narrow or even outside the stated field altogether. Accordingly, to determine whether institutions in fact have a solid core curriculum, ACTA defines success in each of the seven subject areas as follows:

Composition

An introductory college writing class focusing on grammar, clarity, argument, and appropriate expository style. Remedial courses and SAT/ACT scores may not be used to satisfy a composition requirement. University-administered exams or portfolios are acceptable only when they are used to determine exceptional pre-college preparation for students. Writing-intensive courses, “writing across the curriculum” seminars, and writing for a discipline are not acceptable unless there is an indication of clear provisions for multiple writing assignments, instructor feedback, revision and resubmission of student writing, and explicit language concerning the mechanics of formal writing, including such elements as grammar, sentence structure, coherence, and documentation.

Literature

A comprehensive literature survey or a selection of courses of which a clear majority are surveys and the remainder are literary in nature, although single-author or theme-based in structure. Freshman seminars, humanities sequences, or other specialized courses that include a substantial literature survey component count.

Foreign Language

Competency at the intermediate level, defined as at least three semesters of college-level study in any foreign language. No distinction is made between B.A. and B.S. degrees, or individual majors within these degrees, when applying the Foreign Language criteria.

U.S. Government or History

A survey course in either U.S. government or history with enough chronological and topical breadth to expose students to the sweep of American history and institutions. Narrow, niche courses do not count for the requirement, nor do courses that only focus on a limited chronological period or a specific state or region. State- or university-administered, and/or state-mandated, exams are accepted for credit on a case-by-case basis dependent upon the rigor required.

Economics

A course covering basic economic principles, preferably an introductory micro- or macroeconomics course taught by faculty from the economics or business department.

Mathematics

A college-level course in mathematics. Specific topics may vary, but must involve study beyond the level of intermediate algebra and cover topics beyond those typical of a college-preparatory high school

curriculum. Remedial courses or SAT/ACT scores may not be used as substitutes. Courses in formal or symbolic logic, computer science with programming, and linguistics involving formal analysis count.

Natural or Physical Science

A course in astronomy, biology, chemistry, geology, physical geography, physics, or environmental science, preferably with a laboratory component. Overly narrow courses, courses with weak scientific content, and courses taught by faculty outside of the science departments do not count. Psychology courses count if they are focused on the biological, chemical, or neuroscientific aspects of the field.

Appendix B

SCHOOL EVALUATION NOTES FOR CORE COURSES

Below we explain, as applicable, why we did not count as core subjects certain courses that might appear, at first glance, to meet core requirements. The colleges are listed alphabetically.

Averett University

No credit given for Foreign Language because the requirement only applies to select degree programs. No credit given for U.S. Government or History because a survey course in American government or history is an option, but not required, to fulfill the “History and Social Sciences” requirement.

Bluefield College

No credit given for Foreign Language because the requirement only applies to select degree programs. No credit given for U.S. Government or History because a survey course in American government or history is an option, but not required, to fulfill the “History” requirement.

Bridgewater College

No credit given for Literature because the “Humanities: A Literature Course” requirement may be fulfilled with niche courses. No credit given for Foreign Language because students in select degree programs may fulfill the requirement with elementary-level study. No credit given for U.S. Government or History because a survey course in American government or history is an option, but not required, to fulfill the “United States” requirement. No credit given for Economics because it is one of three areas of the “Social Sciences” requirement, from which students need only select two. No credit given for Mathematics because the “Developing the Liberal Arts: Core Skills” requirement may be satisfied by courses with little college-level math content.

College of William & Mary

No credit given for Composition because the “Lower-Division Writing” section of the “Writing Proficiency” requirement may be satisfied by Freshman Seminars that do not focus primarily on composition and writing instruction. No credit given for Literature because the “Literature and History of the Arts” requirement may be fulfilled with non-literature courses. No credit given for U.S. Government or History because a survey course in American government or history is an option, but not required, to fulfill the “World Cultures and History” requirement.

Eastern Mennonite University

No credit given for Literature because the “History and Literature” requirement may be satisfied by history courses. No credit given for Foreign Language because students may fulfill the requirement with elementary-level study. No credit given for U.S. Government or History because a survey course in American government or history is an option, but not required, to fulfill the “History and Literature” requirement. No credit given for Natural or Physical Science because the “Natural Sciences” requirement may be satisfied by courses with little science content.

Emory & Henry College

No credit given for Literature because the “Interpreting Texts” requirement may be fulfilled with courses that are not literature surveys. No credit given for Foreign Language because students may

fulfill the requirement with elementary-level study. No credit given for U.S. Government or History because a survey course in American government or history is an option, but not required, to fulfill the “Understanding the Individual and Society” requirement. No credit given for Mathematics because the “Mathematics” requirement only applies to select majors. No credit given for Natural or Physical Science because the “Understanding the Natural World” requirement may be satisfied by a course in general psychology.

Ferrum College

No credit given for U.S. Government or History because a survey course in American government or history is an option, but not required, to fulfill the “History” requirement.

George Mason University

No credit given for Foreign Language because the requirement only applies to select degree programs. No credit given for U.S. Government or History because a survey course in American government or history is an option, but not required, to fulfill the “Social and Behavioral Science” requirement.

Hampden-Sydney College

No credit given for U.S. Government or History because a survey course in American government or history is an option, but not required, to fulfill the “American Studies” requirement.

Hampton University

No credit given for Foreign Language because students in select degree programs may fulfill the requirement with elementary-level study. No credit given for U.S. Government or history because a survey course in American government or history is an option, but not required, to fulfill the “Cultures and Civilization” requirement.

Hollins University

No credit given for Foreign Language because students may fulfill the requirement with elementary-level study. No credit given for Mathematics because the “Basic Quantitative Reasoning” requirement may be satisfied by a satisfactory score on a university-administered examination, and the “Applied Quantitative Reasoning” requirement may be satisfied by courses in art, music, economics, international studies, and science. No credit given for Natural or Physical Science because the “Scientific Inquiry” requirement may be satisfied by courses in psychology or sociology.

James Madison University

No credit given for Foreign Language because the requirement only applies to select degree programs.

Liberty University

No credit given for Foreign Language because the requirement only applies to select degree programs. No credit given for U.S. Government or History because a survey course in American government or history is an option, but not required, to fulfill the history section of the “Investigative Studies” requirement.

Longwood University

No credit given for U.S. Government or History because a survey course in American government or history is an option, but not required, to fulfill the “General Education Goal 8” requirement. No credit given for Mathematics because the “General Education Goal 5” requirement may be satisfied by courses with little college-level math content. No credit given for Natural or Physical Science because the “General Education Goal 6” requirement may be satisfied by a course with little science content.

Lynchburg College

No credit given for U.S. Government or History because the qualifying courses for the “History” requirement are history of civilization courses rather than U.S. government or history surveys. No credit given for Natural or Physical Science because the “Laboratory Science” requirement may be satisfied by courses in general psychology.

Mary Baldwin College

No credit given for foreign language because students may fulfill the requirement with elementary-level study. In addition, students may choose between studying a foreign language or a foreign culture. No credit given for Mathematics because the “Quantitative Reasoning” requirement may be satisfied by courses with little college-level math content.

Marymount University

No credit given for Literature because the “Introductory Literature” requirement may be fulfilled with niche courses. No credit given for U.S. Government or History because a survey course in American history or government is an option, but not required, to fulfill the “Introductory History” requirement. No credit given for Mathematics because the “Mathematics” requirement may be satisfied by courses with little college-level math content.

Norfolk State University

No credit given for U.S. Government or History because a survey course in American government or history is an option, but not required, to fulfill the “Social Science” requirement. No credit given for Mathematics because the “Mathematics” requirement may be satisfied by a course with little college-level math content.

Old Dominion University

No credit given for U.S. Government or History because a survey course in American government or history is an option, but not required, to fulfill the “Interpreting the Past” requirement. No credit given for Mathematics because the “Mathematics” requirement may be satisfied by courses with little college-level math content. No credit given for Foreign Language because the requirement only applies to select degree programs.

Radford University

No credit given for Foreign Language because the requirement only applies to select degree programs. No credit given for U.S. Government or History because a survey course in American government or history is an option, but not required, to fulfill the “U.S. Perspectives” requirement. No credit given for Mathematics because the “Mathematical Sciences” requirement may be satisfied by courses with little college-level math content.

Randolph College

No credit given for Composition because only students who do not receive a satisfactory score on a university-administered examination must take a writing course. No credit given for Literature because the “Literature or Rhetoric” requirement may be satisfied by courses that are not literature surveys or are narrow in scope. No credit given for Foreign Language because students may fulfill the requirement with elementary-level study. No credit given for U.S. Government or History because a survey course in American government or history is an option, but not required, to fulfill the “History” requirement. No credit given for Mathematics because the “Mathematical Concepts or Quantitative Reasoning” requirement may be satisfied by science or economics courses.

Randolph-Macon College

No credit given for Literature because the “Literature” section of the “Arts and Literature” requirement may be fulfilled with niche courses. No credit for U.S. Government or History because a survey course in American history or government is an option, but not required, to fulfill the “History” section of the “Civilizations” requirement.

Regent University

No credit given for Literature because the “Humanities” section of the “Cultural Perspective” requirement may be satisfied by non-literature courses. No credit given for Economics because an economics survey is an option, but not required, to fulfill the “Social Sciences” requirement.

Roanoke College

No credit given for Composition because the “First-Year Seminars” do not focus primarily on composition and writing instruction. No credit given for Literature because the “Humanities and Fine Arts” requirement may be satisfied by courses that are not literature surveys.

Sweet Briar College

No credit given for Mathematics because the “Quantitative Reasoning” requirement may be satisfied by science courses.

University of Mary Washington

No credit given for Composition because the “Writing Intensive” requirement may be satisfied by writing-intensive courses offered in a range of departments that do not focus primarily on composition and writing instruction. No credit given for Literature because the “Arts, Literature, and Performance” requirement may be satisfied by courses that are not literature surveys. No credit given for Mathematics because the “Quantitative Reasoning” requirement may be satisfied by science and economics courses.

University of Richmond

No credit given for Literature because the “Literary Studies” requirement may be fulfilled with non-literature courses. No credit given for U.S. Government or History because a survey course in American government or history is an option, but not required, to fulfill the “Historical Studies” requirement.

University of Virginia-Charlottesville

No credit given for Composition because students may test out of the “First Writing Requirement” section of the “Competency Requirements” through SAT or ACT scores, and the “Second Writing Requirement” may be satisfied by writing-intensive courses offered in a range of disciplines that do not focus primarily on composition and writing instruction. No credit given for Literature because it is one of three areas of the “Humanities” requirement from which students need only choose two. No credit given for U.S. Government or History because a survey course in American government or history is an option, but not required, to fulfill the “Historical Studies” requirement. No credit given for “Mathematics” because the “Natural Science and Mathematics” requirement may be satisfied by science courses.

University of Virginia-Wise

No credit given for Foreign Language because students may fulfill the requirement with elementary-level study. No credit given for U.S. Government or History because the qualifying courses for the “Western Heritage” requirement are Western civilization courses rather than American government or history surveys.

Virginia Commonwealth University

No credit given for Literature because the “Literature and Civilization” requirement may be fulfilled with non-literature courses. No credit given for Foreign Language because students may fulfill the requirement with elementary-level study.

Virginia Intermont College

No credit given for U.S. Government or History because a survey course in American government or history is an option, but not required, to fulfill the relevant sections of the “Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Fine Arts, and Bachelor of Social Work Core” and the “Bachelor of Science Core” requirements. No credit given for Economics because students may choose between economics courses or a general survey course in political science to fulfill the relevant sections of the “Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Fine Arts, and Bachelor of Social Work Core” and the “Bachelor of Science Core” requirements.

Virginia Military Institute

No credit given for Foreign Language because the requirement only applies to select degree programs. No credit given for U.S. Government or History because the qualifying courses for the “Perspectives on Civilization and Human Achievement” requirement are world history courses rather than American government or history surveys.

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

No credit given for Foreign Language because students may fulfill the requirement with elementary-level study.

Virginia State University

No credit given for Foreign Language because the requirement only applies to select degree programs and may be satisfied by elementary-level study. No credit given for U.S. Government or History because a survey course in American government or history is an option, but not required, to fulfill the “Humanities” requirement.

Virginia Wesleyan College

No credit given for Mathematics because the “Quantitative Perspectives” requirement may be satisfied by courses with little college-level math content.

Washington & Lee University

No credit given for Literature because the “Literature” requirement may be satisfied by courses that are narrow in scope or are not literature surveys. No credit given for U.S. Government or History because the “Humanities” section of the “Arts and Humanities” requirement may be satisfied by courses that are not history surveys. No credit given for Economics because “Economics” is one of five areas in the “Social Sciences” requirement, from which students need only select two.



American Council of Trustees and Alumni
1726 M Street, NW, Suite 802
Washington, DC 20036

Phone: 1-888-ALUMNI-8 or 202-467-6787
Fax: 202-467-6784

Email: info@goacta.org • Website: www.goacta.org