

Student Advisory Committee

**Tuesday March 23, 2021
11:00 AM**



**STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER
EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA**

Student Advisory Committee

§ 23.1-201. Student advisory committee.

A. **The Director of the Council** shall appoint a student advisory committee consisting of students enrolled in public institutions of higher education and accredited private institutions of higher education whose primary purpose is to provide collegiate or graduate education and not to provide religious training. Appointments shall be made in a manner to ensure broad student representation from among such institutions.

B. Members shall serve for terms of one year. Vacancies occurring other than by expiration of a term shall be filled for the unexpired term. Members may be reappointed to serve subsequent or consecutive terms.

C. **The Director of the Council shall ensure** that at least one member of the student advisory committee is reappointed each year. The student advisory committee shall elect a chairman from among its members.

D. The student advisory committee shall meet at least twice annually and **advise the Director of the Council** regarding such matters as may come before it.

2003, c. 710, § 23-9.3:1; 2006, c. 92; 2009, c. 434; 2016, c. 588; 2017, c. 314; 2020, c. 578.

Student Advisory Committee

- A code change in the 2020 General Assembly session granted more flexibility to how the SAC meets and operates.
 - The shift to virtual meetings allowed for more meetings as students did not need to travel to Richmond.
- The SAC has met six times this school year.
- Members also organized themselves into two subcommittees:
 - Policy & Advocacy.
 - Campus Engagement.

Student Advisory Committee

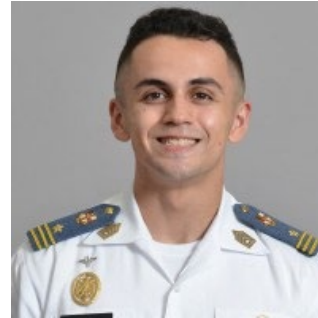
Today's presenters:



Anirban Mahanty
VCU



Reena Medavarapu
VT



Eric Munro
VMI



Tiffany Williams
ODU

Policy & Advocacy

Policy & Advocacy

- **Problem / Solution / Future steps**
- **Issues**
 - Financial aid appropriations
 - Eligibility for undocumented students
 - Experiential learning
 - Vaccine Distribution

Financial Aid Increase – Governor’s Proposal

Problem Statement

- Students in Virginia struggle to afford college.

Proposed Solution: Support \$30 million increase in financial aid

Future Steps

- Federal lobbying and continued increases in financial aid
 - Per student increase is \$770
 - Unmet need of low-income students is \$12,378

Source: SCHEV Financial Aid Data

Financial Aid Eligibility – Undocumented Students

Problem Statement

- Undocumented students ineligible for:
 - Average Pell Grant: \$4,309
 - Average State Grant: \$2,752
- CARES Act funding limited to mixed-status

Proposed Solution: HB 2123

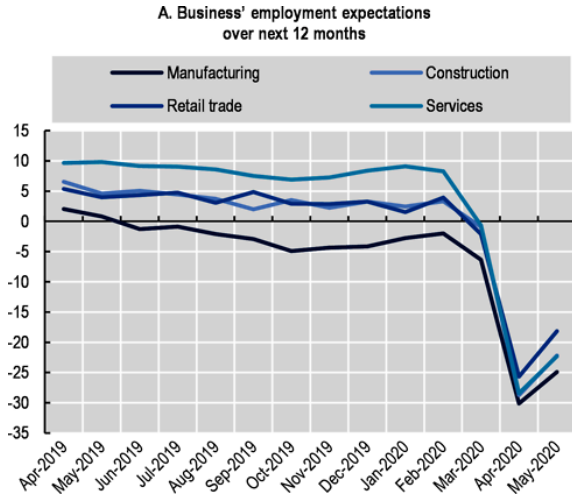
→ Extends eligibility to any student eligible for in-state tuition.

Future Steps

- Raise awareness of new eligibility.
- Advocate for change at federal level.

Source: SCHEV Financial Aid Data

Experiential Learning



**Proposed Solution: Expand VTOP
(Virginia Talent and Opportunity
Partnership)**

- Increase IIP funding
- Expand partnerships

Future Steps

- Broaden opportunities in biology, health care and other sectors.
- Measure quality of student experience and outcomes.

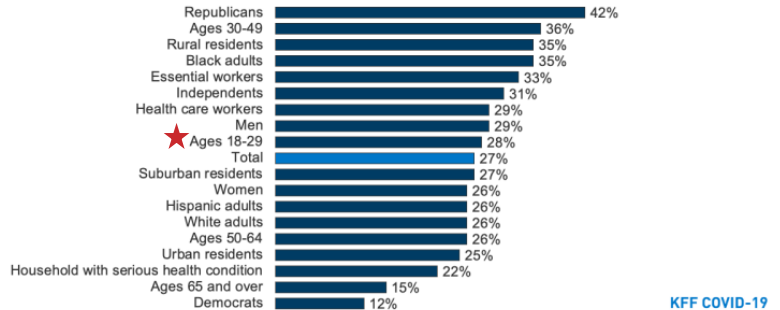
Source: OECD Employment Outlook 2020

COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution

Figure 4

Which Groups Are Most Likely To Be COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitant?

Percent within each group who say, if a COVID-19 vaccine was determined to be safe by scientists and available for free to everyone who wanted it, they would **probably not get it** or **definitely not get it**:



SOURCE: KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor (KFF Health Tracking Poll, Nov. 30-Dec. 8, 2020). See topline for full question wording.

KFF COVID-19
Vaccine Monitor

**Proposed Solution: State-wide
campaign to increase vaccine
acceptance**

→ Partner with VDOH

→ Address institutional
obligations, herd immunity

Future Steps

- **Assess and reevaluate institutional practices of vaccine guidelines**

Source: KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor

Campus Engagement

Overview of SAC Campus Engagement Activities

I. Elevating awareness

- I. Social Media Platforms
- II. Student Organizations
- III. Parent Networks

II. Proposed Initiatives

- I. Mental Health
- II. Food Insecurity



Elevating Awareness

- **The committee discussed additional channels of communications that can be used to reach students on campus**
 - **Social Media Platforms**
 - **Student Organizations**
 - **Parent Networks**
- **This can be useful for updates on items such as changes in SNAP eligibility or mental health services.**



Elevating Awareness

- **50 in 5 initiative:** Implementing a university wide endeavor to reach out and see how all students were doing as the fall semester approached. By giving faculty, staff and university leadership the names of 50 students to call in one-week period.
 - A way to connect with students to see how they are doing and respond to questions and address any need one might have as the upcoming academic years approaches.
 - Proven to be highly successful as many students expressed their appreciation for the outreach and care.

Social Media Platforms

- Many campuses send out important information and updates using official Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook accounts
 - **#REIGNRESPONSIBLY**
- Sending out important information and updates about student support programs can help in reaching students that do not check their emails often
- Both “posts” and “stories” can be utilized to provide important updates
 - A student scrolling through their feed will often see updates put out by their school’s social media account
- **Text messages**
 - (but don’t overdo it!)
 - Opt-in



Student Organizations



- It is also a good idea to use student organizations as a “translator” between campus organizations such as the Financial Services Office and students.
- Many students use their networks (Resident Advisor, clubs, etc.) to get their information.
- Student groups and organizations can assist in disseminating important student support program information.

Parent Networks

- Parent Networks and Associations can also assist in spreading information and awareness about student support programs.
- If there is an active line of communication between support programs and parent groups, students will be more likely to hear about such programs .



VMI Parent's Council



Parent groups more active on facebook than students.

Mental Health & COVID – Proposals



Problem Statement

- Mental health services are found to be limited and are short-staffed in normal times –heightened by COVID.

Proposed Solutions:

- Establishing a peer mentorship and student public health ambassador program.
- Offering mixed delivery programs and activities formats: virtual, hybrid and face-to-face when possible.

Future Steps

- Engaging faculty, staff and university leadership to send emails, calls, & postcards to students during the holiday season ahead of Spring semesters.
- Surveying students several times during the fall and spring semesters to determine needs, how things were going and suggestion for future academic year.

Source: SCHEV Financial Aid Data

Food Insecurity – Proposals



Problem Statement

- 8% of college students report facing food insecurity.
- Many eligible for SNAP do not enroll.

Proposed Solution:

- New federal criteria expanded SNAP eligibility for college students.
 - The SAC helped Department of Social Services with promotional materials.

Future Steps

- Establishing a permanent campus-based food pantry during the academic year.
- Work with DSS to implement HB 1820 which expands eligibility further.



Are you a college student who could use help paying for groceries each month?

The USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps, is temporarily expanding student eligibility.



Now, students enrolled at least part-time in a higher education institution who either:

- are eligible to participate in state or federally-financed work-study during the regular school year (it is not required to actually participate in work-study),
 - or
 - have an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of \$0 in the current academic year
- may be eligible for SNAP by meeting income requirements and additional criteria.*



SNAP Monthly Income Limits to Qualify



Household Size	Max. Gross (total income before taxes/other deductions)
1	\$1383
2	\$1868
3	\$2353

Monthly amounts go up \$486 for each additional person

Visit
[www.dss.virginia.gov/
SNAPcollege](http://www.dss.virginia.gov/SNAPcollege)
or
CommonHelp.virginia.gov
to apply.



*Please see our website for a full list of eligibility factors and steps on how to apply for SNAP.



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

Source: SCHEV Financial Aid Data

Taking the First Step



- It is important to increase awareness to students that it is OK to reach out and utilize support program resources
- Also, it would be good idea to increase the prevalence of student monitoring (check up) programs

Discussion & Questions