

**REPORT OF THE
JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT AND
REVIEW COMMISSION**

**REPORTED TO
THE GOVERNOR
AND
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



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I. INTRODUCTION

TO The General Assembly of Virginia

During the 1972 Session, the General Assembly created a Commission on Higher Education to review coordination of the Commonwealth's higher education community. The Commission was to consider: improved methods to determine the financing of institutions; coordinated planning of educational programs; and, establishment of priorities in the development of a more unified system. Appropriate subcommittees were formed and hearings held to receive written and oral testimony. Several important reports were prepared by the Council of Higher Education and a consultant was employed to conduct a management review of the various institutions. The consultant's report discussed institutional structure, financial management and control, long-range planning, data processing, space utilization, auxiliary operations, and elements of the material, personnel, library and plant management functions.

Based on this broad overview of each college and university, the Commission sought to initiate changes at the State-level that would satisfy the needs of each institution, the system and the Commonwealth. Subsequent to Commission recommendations, legislation was approved which broadened the

authority of the Council of Higher Education to coordinate activities of publicly supported institutions of higher learning in Virginia. The Council was authorized for example, to prepare a Master Plan for higher education, to establish maximum and minimum enrollment projections, to approve or disapprove new curricular offerings and discontinue others. It was also charged to develop a uniform Data Information System and methods of reporting, establish guidelines and formulae relative to budget formation, and make recommendations to the General Assembly with regard to institutional budget requests.

Despite these significant changes, the Commission reported that time did not permit consideration of many specific management problems highlighted at individual institutions. It, therefore, recommended that the assembled material be transferred to the newly created Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission for continuing review by the following resolution.

Senate Joint Resolution No. 14

Directing that certain matters relating to the public institutions of higher education be referred to the General Assembly's Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission by the General Assembly Commission on Higher Education.

Whereas, the General Assembly created in nineteen hundred seventy-two the General Assembly Commission on Higher Education pursuant to Senate Joint Resolution No. 21; and

Whereas, the Commission on Higher Education has studied in detail the management and financial practices of the public institutions of higher education; and

Whereas, the Commission was not given adequate time to enable it to consider fully and to formulate corrective recommendations on numerous observations submitted to it relating to the individual public institutions of higher education; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of Virginia, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Commission on Higher Education is directed to transmit the information and material accumulated by it to the General Assembly's Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission and that the Legislative Audit and Review Commission is directed to continue study of the management and financial practices of the individual public institutions of higher education to the end that it can formulate specific recommendations to correct whatever poor practices that may be found to exist; and, further, that the Legislative Audit and Review Commission is directed to report to the nineteen hundred seventy-five Session of the General Assembly on its work and the cooperation of the individual public institutions in implementing its recommendations.

All agencies, departments and institutions of the Commonwealth shall assist the Commission in its work.

II. ORGANIZATION OF THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT AND REVIEW COMMISSION

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission was created by the General Assembly in 1973. Its primary duty is to carry out operational and performance reviews of State agencies and programs to evaluate their efficiency and effectiveness in accomplishing legislative intent and in the use of funds, personnel, equipment and facilities.

At the time the General Assembly directed the Commission to continue the study of higher education, it was engaged in recruiting and organizing its professional staff. In response to the General Assembly's direction, the first study initiated by the Commission was an evaluation of the Commonwealth's Community College System which had not been included as a part of earlier reports.

The core staff for the Commission was formed by September, 1974. The Commission sought individuals with educational and professional backgrounds to facilitate multi-disciplinary evaluation based on intensive data collection and analysis. The staff blends backgrounds in political science, public administration, legislative research, planning, economics, psychology, management science and the humanities.

This document is submitted to provide an interim report on the work of the Legislative Audit and Review Commission in the important area of higher education.

III. EVALUATION OF THE VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

A report on the community college evaluation will be submitted to the Legislative Audit and Review Commission during early 1975, and after approval, will be published and distributed to each member of the General Assembly, the Governor, and appropriate agencies. According to Commission procedure, the draft report is first sent to the State Board and the Department of Community Colleges for their review and comments prior to completion. Agency review insures accuracy of content and interpretation. Areas under study are indicated in this interim report as they relate to matters addressed by the Commission on Higher Education and the General Assembly's direction to the Legislative Audit and Review Commission.

When the Commission on Higher Education compiled its information on four-year colleges and universities, no analogous data for two-year colleges existed. Since its founding in 1966, the Community College system has been in a phase of development and intensive building. However, the last of the planned colleges became operational in 1973 and evaluation of performance and management was deemed necessary in view of the current economic climate and the Legislature's interest to coordinate all public institutions of higher learning.

Today, the Community College system is comprised of twenty-three publicly-supported comprehensive colleges with thirty-four campuses located throughout Virginia. Its importance

is highlighted by the fact that approximately one of every three students attending a State public higher educational institution is a community college student. Legislative appropriations have increased from just over \$9 million in 1966-68 to over \$132 million during the current biennium, representing a significant portion of the Commonwealth's investment in higher education.

The system and its component parts are being evaluated in several major areas of its educational mission. The study includes, but is not limited to, the five following areas:

Management - From their inception, the colleges were intended to comprise a system rather than function as autonomous or independent schools. The effectiveness of systemwide administration and control is being assessed in terms of fiscal and academic management, planning, and maintenance of educational standards.

Occupational-Technical Education - The colleges were located to provide maximum accessibility; curricula offerings, particularly in occupational-technical fields, were to be related to regional needs. The means of determining community need and success of graduates in obtaining employment in their field of training are key elements of determining effectiveness.

University Parallel Education - The community colleges were to provide an inexpensive, regional alternative for students to obtain the first two years of college education before trans-

ferring to a four-year school. Evaluation in this area includes analysis of admissions policies, course transferability, student attrition and the ability of transfer students to compete with native students at four-year schools.

Curriculum Planning - In a system, as opposed to autonomous schools, unnecessary course, program and degree proliferation should be minimized. The extent and methods of curriculum control are being assessed for the system and for each college.

Student Services - The community college system maintains an open admissions policy and relies on individualized counseling to match students and programs. The role of counseling in meeting student, college and community needs is a particularly critical area of inquiry.

IV. ADDITIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION PROJECTS

The material received from the Commission on Higher Education consisted of fifteen volumes prepared by the consultant firm of Donald Shaner and Associates, correspondence, transcripts of testimony before the Commission and its subcommittees, and background material for reports prepared by the Council of Higher Education. This data has been organized, reviewed and summarized.

The legislation increasing the responsibility of the Council of Higher Education, was closely studied to determine the effect of probable Council actions. Conferences were held

with the Council, consultants, and other groups associated with higher education.

Numerous changes at the State level have taken place regarding management of four-year institutions and others are contemplated. The Legislative Audit and Review Commission is undertaking to monitor information from the Council and from each college or university regarding these new directions. Thus, the Commission will be able to ascertain what has already been accomplished.

Three types of issues have been identified: those regarding State-level management and coordination; those relating to internal management policies that affect all institutions in similar fashion; and, those that relate directly to internal management of particular institutions.

Further discussion by the Commission and its staff now involves identification of priority areas in which additional study may lead to other viable management improvements. Included in this category are such functions as institutional planning, data processing, auxiliary operations, and library management. After completion of the community college evaluation, the Commission will also have the data base to consider the inter-relationships between two-year and four-year institutions, as well as areas of cooperation or competition between these public higher education facilities and other State sponsored post-secondary training programs.

The Commission will begin its additional work program concerning higher education during 1975 and report its findings and recommendations periodically to the General Assembly.

The Commission wishes to express its appreciation to the Department of Community Colleges, the Council of Higher Education, Donald Shaner and Associates, and the employees of all State agencies and institutions who have lent assistance to these activities.

Respectfully submitted,

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