UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA
BOARD OF VISITORS AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

BOARD MEETING: September 16, 2011

COMMITTEE: Full Board

AGENDA ITEM: 2012-2018 Six-Year Institutional Plan

BACKGROUND: The Virginia Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) of 2011 became effective on July 1 and commits Virginia to become a leader in college degree attainment and in the national and international knowledge-based economies. In addition to providing a framework for stimulating economic growth in the Commonwealth and preparing Virginians for the top jobs of the 21st century, the Act also requires in § 23-38.87:17 that each institution develop, adopt, and submit biennially a six-year plan addressing the institution’s academic, financial, and enrollment plans.

DISCUSSION: In accordance with the HEOA and subsequent communications from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), the University submitted the 2012-18 Six-Year Institutional Plans for the Academic Division and the College at Wise on July 1. The plans reflect programs and general strategies that will advance the objectives outlined in the HEOA, as well as initiatives that will enhance the quality of education, research, and service at the University’s Academic Division and the College. On August 3, the Director of SCHEV, the Secretaries of Education and Finance, the Director of the Department of Planning and Budget, and the Staff Directors of the House Appropriation and Senate Finance Committees met with President Sullivan to discuss the University plan and with Chancellor Prior to discuss the College at Wise plan, and will provide comments no later than September 1. The University and the College must then respond to the comments and submit the final 2012-18 Plans by October 1. The HEOA requires Board of Visitors adoption of the final plan. Summaries of the plans for the Academic Division and the College at Wise are included as Attachments A and B, respectively.

ACTION REQUIRED: Approval by the Board of Visitors
APPROVAL OF 2012-2018 Six-Year Institutional Plan

WHEREAS, the Virginia Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011 became effective on July 1, committing Virginia to become a leader in college degree attainment and in the national and international knowledge-based economies; and

WHEREAS, § 23-38.87:17 of the Act requires the governing boards of all public institutions of higher education to develop and adopt biennially an institutional six-year plan and submit that plan to SCHEV, the Governor, and the Chairs of the House Committee on Appropriations and the Senate Committee on Finance; and

WHEREAS, the University submitted its preliminary plans for the Academic Division and the College at Wise as required on July 1, outlining general strategies to advance the objectives of the Act and to enhance teaching, research, and service; and

WHEREAS, final institutional plans must be approved by the Board of Visitors and submitted to SCHEV, the Governor, and the chairs of the House Committee on Appropriations and the Senate Committee on Finance no later than October 1;

RESOLVED, the Board of Visitors approves the 2012-18 six-year institutional plans of the University’s Academic Division and the College at Wise; and

RESOLVED FURTHER, the President is authorized to transmit the six-year plans to the State Council, the Governor, and the chairs of the House Committee on Appropriations and the Senate Committee on Finance.
SIX-YEAR PLAN: ADDRESSING TOP JOBS 21
THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

September 2011
“Every student in Virginia deserves the opportunity to get a high-quality education at an affordable price. Virginia’s higher education institutions are among the best in the nation. However, we must increase access and ensure that we are adequately preparing our students for the jobs of tomorrow when they graduate. The ‘Top Jobs’ legislation will enable our institutions to meet the goal of issuing an additional 100,000 degrees over the next 15 years, making Virginia one of the most highly educated states in the nation. In fact, based on this legislation, for example, the University of Virginia Board of Visitors already is poised to add nearly 1,000 new spaces for in-state students on the University’s grounds, and that’s great news. Our legislation also places a greater emphasis on the high demand science, technology, engineering and math subjects through the formation of a public-private partnership that will engage the business and professional community in leveraging best practices for K-12 and higher education. The legislation will create the framework for sustained reform-based investment and will encourage meaningful innovation through the use of greater technology, year round facilities usage and innovative and economical degree paths. By implementing these reforms, more Virginia students will have access to Virginia institutions. These reforms will help us attract new employers to Virginia, and better prepare our citizens to fill the jobs that already exist in the state today. We must do better in providing an affordable quality education in Virginia, and we must look to better capitalize on the resources already available at our great institutions. This legislation is based on a clear understanding of what it takes to not only succeed, but to lead, in the 21st century economy – and, first and foremost, it takes a highly educated workforce. We have a good idea what this investment will produce for our state, because the Cooper Center’s comprehensive recent study, sponsored by the Business Higher Education Council, shows that every dollar we invest in the higher education system produces 13 dollars in additional economic output in Virginia. It returns even more in new tax revenues to the Commonwealth than it costs. So it is one of the very best economic investments we can make for our people. But we are not just investing; we are also innovating and reforming – and the two must go hand in hand.”


“The University of Virginia has submitted a Six-Year Plan that gives us a formal framework for aligning our priorities with key priorities identified by Governor McDonnell and the Higher Education Commission. We believe that the strategies identified in our plan will allow us to support the Commission’s goals while providing a greater educational experience for more students.”

Teresa A. Sullivan
President, University of Virginia
Introduction

The University of Virginia’s mission has expanded since the institution first opened for classes in 1825, but Thomas Jefferson’s core belief in the importance of a well-educated citizenry remains as vital as ever. We continue to believe that a highly educated workforce is critical to the future of our nation, not only to sustain democracy, as Jefferson stated, but also to create new knowledge, stimulate meaningful innovation, and advance new possibilities for citizens in the Commonwealth and throughout the world.

The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011

In an effort to make the Commonwealth of Virginia a leader in college degree attainment and in the national and international knowledge-based economies, Governor Robert McDonnell championed The Virginia Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011 (HEOA) also known as the Top Jobs Act. The act provides a framework for increasing the number of Virginians who receive college degrees, stimulating economic growth, and diversifying research in the Commonwealth. In addition, the legislation requires that every two years each higher education institution submit a six-year plan addressing its academic, financial and enrollment objectives. By establishing a long-term link between higher education and job creation, the Higher Education Opportunity Act is designed to prepare Virginians for the top jobs of the 21st century.

The Six-Year Plan: Our Approach

The University of Virginia’s six-year plan for 2012-18 reflects the institution’s early commitment to The Higher Education Opportunity Act. Our plan reflects programs and general strategies that will advance the objectives in the HEOA, as well as initiatives that will enhance the quality of education, research, and service in the University’s academic division.

U.Va. FACTS and FIGURES

- Academic Division and Health System budget: $2.5 billion.
- Largest employer in Charlottesville with over 13,700 employees.
- On-Grounds enrollment, Fall 2010: 14,039 undergraduate, 6,525 graduate students.
- One-year student retention rate: 97 percent.
- Six-year graduation rate: 93 percent.
- Research budget: $314 million.
- Local spending by U.Va. units, employees, students, and visitors: more than $1 billion
- One dollar of state support for U.Va. supports activities that result in $3.45 of new spending in Virginia.
The University of Virginia’s six-year plan takes the following approach:

- Responds to all objectives of the Higher Education Opportunity Act
- Recognizes the need to limit future tuition increases.
- Reflects initiatives that reach beyond the undergraduate student population.
- Relies on funding partners (state, federal, private donors, and others) rather than just students and their families to meet the cost of all strategies outlined.
- Demonstrates continuous efforts at self-assessment and action to address our mission, even in areas where we may already be quite strong.

**HEOA Academic Objective: Educate More Virginians**

With a six-year graduation rate of 93 percent – the best among all public research universities and second only to a few private universities in the nation – U.Va. already achieves significant results in higher education. We must meet this challenge, therefore, by using our facilities, programs, and resources in new and creative ways. We have identified four major strategies to help meet the HEOA objective of more undergraduate degrees:

1. **Enroll more undergraduates**

Consistent with the governor’s proposal to produce 100,000 more degrees in the next 15 years, the University will enroll more undergraduate students, maintaining our ratio of enrolling seven in-state students for every three non-residents. Our new growth plan calls for enrolling 1,673 new undergraduates by the 2018-2019 academic year, an increase of 11.9 percent from 2010-2011. Of these, 1,171 students (70 percent) will be Virginians.

2. **Accelerate the time required for degree completion**

We estimate that three-quarters of our first-year students arrive with advanced standing through Advanced Placement and other test credits; on average, these students have earned the equivalent of more than one academic semester before their first day of class. The exemplary credentials of many of our undergraduates allow us to think of ways to reduce the time in which they can earn degrees. To offer these undergraduates the opportunity for an accelerated degree – or degrees – would not only increase the numbers of graduates but also open available slots in subsequent incoming classes.

**Accelerated degree program**: We are exploring the creation of a “3 + 1 accelerated degree program” that would allow motivated students to remain
at the University for the standard four years but earn both a bachelor’s and a master’s degree in certain programs. Public policy, commerce, Middle Eastern and South Asian studies, statistics and education are areas that could be amenable to the master’s portion of a 3 + 1 format.

**Summer Session:** Accelerated degree programs will require that we make better use of our resources and classroom facilities throughout the summer. As student demand dictates we will expand the summer session, which enrolled almost 8,000 students in summer 2011.

**January Term:** Established in 2004 as an opportunity for students to take an intensive two-week course and earn three credits, the January Term offers classes on University Grounds and in remote parts of the world. The number of students enrolled in January Term in 2011 included 928 on-Grounds and 208 off-Grounds students. Ten study abroad classes will be offered in January 2012. January Term will grow as we expand opportunities to include students from other institutions.

(3) Enroll additional adult students in the Bachelor’s of Interdisciplinary Studies Program and other completer programs

Our completer programs, designed for adult learners who have some college credits and want to return to complete their bachelor’s degree, are successful and expanding. The Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies (BIS) program – with a presence in Charlottesville, Hampton Roads and Northern Virginia – enrolled 251 students in fall 2010. In 2012, the program will expand to Loudoun County and Richmond. We are also working toward a new Bachelor of Professional Studies (BPS) program in collaboration with Piedmont Virginia Community College, which would initially focus on allied health fields.

Another success is PRODUCED in Virginia, a cooperative distance-learning program with the Virginia Community College System that helps meet the demand for a tech-savvy workforce. Students earn an associate’s degree and a bachelor of science degree in engineering science, almost entirely without leaving their communities. The first class of engineers PRODUCED in Virginia will earn their BSE degrees in May 2012.

(4) Increase degrees in critical STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and math) and in STEM-H (-Health)

The Higher Education Opportunity Act links degrees with careers in high-demand fields such as science, technology, engineering, math and health. Increasing graduates in these fields is an important priority. We have
experienced a 26 percent growth in STEM degrees and a 25 percent growth in STEM-H degrees over the past decade. Our target is to increase the strength of the Commonwealth’s STEM-H workforce by enrolling 33 to 40 percent of first-time undergraduates in STEM-H fields.

It should be noted that as enthusiastic as we are to support the Governor’s proposal to graduate more Virginians and prepare them for top jobs in our economy, an increase in faculty members must accompany an increase in undergraduate degrees. Faculty members teach and lead students in the research that creates new knowledge. In the critical STEM-H fields, for example, we estimate an average start-up cost of $600,000 per faculty member for lab space, equipment and related costs. An inability to hire these faculty members for lack of one-time startup funds will create a bottleneck in our ability to expand STEM-H fields.

We also recognize that financial aid is a vital component in educating Virginians. Our nationally acclaimed financial aid program, AccessUVa, has provided 100 percent of need through grants to low-income students and loan-capped packages for middle-income students since 2004. In the 2010-11 academic year, 4,702 students (32.8 percent) demonstrated financial need, and the average aid package was $17,932. The program’s cost is rising – it was $83.3 million in 2010-11 – and requires a larger portion of tuition revenue every year. We are looking for ways to contain the rising costs yet keep our undergraduate student body academically qualified and socioeconomically diverse in the face of looming federal cuts to student aid programs.

**HEOA Objectives: Diversify Research and Promote Economic Growth**

The University plans to foster new strategic research opportunities in key areas including sustainability, biosciences, energy, K-12 education, defense intelligence and the medical cancer, cardiovascular and neural specialties.

Cancer research, as an example of economic contribution to the region, enhances patient care, health and the economy; creates jobs, new ventures and licensure revenue; and attracts additional external funding. A study by the Weldon Cooper Center projects that the economic impact for the region from the University’s Emily Couric Clinical Cancer Center is $75 million in salaries and revenues from a $5 million investment. We plan to request $5 million in state support to expand clinical trials and outreach to Southwest Virginia.
Commercialization opportunities and innovation partnerships will increase, and we will continue to seek opportunities to create public/private partnerships to expand research opportunities and new ventures, such as the Rolls-Royce collaboration with U.Va., Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, and John Tyler Community College. We will also enhance proof-of-concept funding opportunities modeled after the highly successful Coulter Translational Research Partnership, which has in a very short time produced a 7:1 return on investment. In the 2013-14 fiscal year we will seek state funds of $5 million to match private contributions to develop the U.Va. Innovation Accelerator, a public-private partnership designed to facilitate knowledge transfer and business development around university research and innovation.

**Our Most Valuable Resource**

Employees are the University’s most valuable resource. In order to attract and retain the best talent to support its academic mission, the University must remain an employer of choice among institutions of higher education. Thus, our budget priorities reflect the critical importance of merit-based investments in the highest quality faculty and staff.

Prior to the economic downturn, the University had made great strides in faculty compensation to become competitive with our peer institutions. We have lost important ground during the past five years and are struggling to regain our position. Our lagging faculty salaries need to be increased to the 60th percentile of our peer institutions, as identified by the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia. There is a $13,754 gap between that 60th percentile goal and our rank in the 26th percentile.

The University Staff program bases compensation on market-based pay with incentives and rewards for career development and performance. The goal is to have our salaries at the 50th percentile of these competitive market pay ranges, but University staff salaries lag the market by 7.88 percent. The University’s classified employees work under a compensation scheme determined by the state, which should also consider the competitive position of staff salaries.
Efficiency in Processes, Use of Facilities and Technology

The University always strives for greater efficiency. Examples of our efforts can be found at the following web site: www.virginia.edu/processsimplification. One of the top priorities of President Sullivan’s first term is the development of a new internal financial model that provides revenue centers with a transparent resource allocation and decision making process, a more effective long-range planning tool, and incentives for entrepreneurial activity and prudent stewardship of resources.

While it is true that more efficient use of existing resources and facilities will accommodate enrollment growth and increase our productivity, we should acknowledge that U.Va. is already a national model of efficiency. For over 20 years, U.S. News and World Report has ranked U.Va. among the top 25 institutions, public and private, in the country. In each of these 20 years, the University has also been the most efficient among the top 25 public and private institutions as measured by comparing our quality ranking – which is high – with our expenditure per student – which is low. We consistently rank high in Kiplinger’s Personal Finance magazine “100 Best Values in Public Colleges.” This year, we ranked #3 in the nation for the fifth time in six years.

The use of technology to enhance instruction gains ground with each academic year. The University’s latest venture is a partnership with three other Virginia public institutions (Virginia Tech, James Madison University, and George Mason University) and CISCO Systems in which we will deploy CISCO’s Telepresence technology to share instructional resources across our institutions. Our collaborative efforts are focused on five areas: 1) sharing in the instruction of strategic languages, 2) increasing the pipeline for STEM students, 3) redesigning courses to increase scale, enhance learning outcomes, and drive per student cost down, 4) enhancing dual enrollment classes aimed at high school juniors and seniors in STEM areas, and 5) enhancing research competitiveness by leveraging technology investments already made by each institution.

Conclusion

Starting from a solid foundation of proven performance, our six-year institutional plan includes programs and strategies that align with the objectives of the Higher Education Opportunity Act: find new and better ways to increase the numbers of undergraduate degrees, stimulate economic development, and diversify research. At the same time, these strategies align with Jefferson’s vision to enrich the quality of education, research and service.
that the University of Virginia will provide to its students, the citizens of the Commonwealth, and the world.

Governor McDonnell and the General Assembly have clearly stated their priorities for higher education in the Top Jobs Act. Many of these priorities — enrolling and graduating more Virginians; granting more degrees in science, technology, engineering, and math; enhancing research collaboration among colleges and universities; using technology to teach in creative new ways; and using our institutional spaces more fully and more efficiently — align well with our vision for the University of Virginia.

To do all these things, we must have adequate housing, dining, recreational facilities, need-based financial aid, and faculty and staff to serve the new students and protect the quality of the undergraduate experience for all our students. To that end, we will need to work together with the governor and members of the General Assembly to ensure appropriate state funding for the additional Virginians we will serve.

Teresa A. Sullivan
President, University of Virginia
AN ACADEMIC, FINANCIAL & ENROLLMENT BLUEPRINT TO ADDRESS TOP JOBS 21.

The University of Virginia’s College at Wise

Higher Education Advisory Committee
August 2011
Contributing to Virginia’s Top Jobs 21
Vision of an Educated Citizenry &
Vibrant Economy

“Every student in Virginia deserves the opportunity to get a high-quality education at an affordable price. Virginia’s higher education institutions are among the best in the nation. However, we must increase access and ensure that we are adequately preparing our students for the jobs of tomorrow when they graduate.” Governor Bob McDonnell

1. INTRODUCTION: MISSION, PLACE & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

By its very nature, The University of Virginia’s College at Wise has aspirations for service to Virginia’s citizens that are identical to those outlined in the Top Jobs of the 21st Century legislation. Access, affordability, economic development, and investment are watchwords of the UVa-Wise culture. Since its beginning in 1954, UVa-Wise has progressed from that first class on the county poor farm to a growing and relevant learning community.

UVa-Wise is a public, four-year college located in the Appalachian mountains of far Southwest Virginia. We offer majors in the liberal arts and sciences and in professional programs, including education, business, nursing, and software engineering. Our faculty, staff, students, alumni and greater citizenry believe passionately in our mission of student success and service to the region. We embrace our region’s desire for greater economic prosperity and a better quality of life, and work diligently to achieve those outcomes. We serve as the region’s linchpin for economic development and education.

UVa-Wise’s effectiveness and growth are inextricably linked to the success of the place in which it resides, an opportunity that we embrace. Providing a quality, student-centered education for our region is the core of the College’s mission.

A Special Mission . . .

- UVa-Wise serves Virginians – 95.4% of our student body is from the Commonwealth (Fall 2010). This high percentage has been consistent throughout our history.
- We are devoted to undergraduate education and are one of only two undergraduate public senior institutions in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- 62.6% of our student body is from Southwest Virginia. 50.6% of the student body is from the Coalfields (Fall 2010).
- UVa-Wise students, both rural and urban, are economically disadvantaged and a majority are first generation college students. 65% of the student body qualified for need-based aid in FY2011. We serve an acutely economically disadvantaged group of students. Of those
students who completed the FAFSA, 31.7% had an expected family contribution of $0 – their families could contribute nothing toward their education.

- Our students don’t follow a typical path – most work while going to school and many step in and out of College because of family and financial pressures.
- We are one of the smallest senior institutions in the Commonwealth and one of the youngest.
- UVa-Wise is the only branch campus of the University of Virginia and shares many functions and processes that streamline our operations and create efficiencies.

Where we are and what we’re doing now . . .

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND IMPACT

- UVa-Wise is a center for hope in rural Southwest Virginia, a region where the –
  - Median household income is $41,560, compared to Virginia’s $80,851.
  - Poverty rate is 19%, compared to Virginia’s 10.1%
  - Percentage of citizens with college degrees is 11.5%, compared to Virginia’s 33.4%
  - Mining industry has seen a steep decline in jobs in the period 1990 - 2009 (-6,168 jobs) and the greatest growth has been in the health care and social assistance sector (+3,903 jobs).
  - Transfer payments as a percentage of total personal income have grown from 14% in 1969 to 35% in 2009, with medical benefit payments growing at the most rapid pace. By comparison, Virginia had an average of 13% transfer payments as a percentage of total personal income in 2009.

- The region is, however, now seeing significant gains in key economic indicators –
  - The unemployment rate has declined in the last few years driven by an emerging IT sector and a more stabilized mining industry.
  - Per capita income, largely stagnant in the 1980’s and 1990’s, has in recent years grown at a rate faster than the state and nation.

- UVa-Wise takes seriously its role in improving the region’s economic prosperity and quality of life. To that end, we have –
  - Increased our headcount enrollment from 1,447 in Fall 2000 to 1,990 in Fall 2010, a 37.5% increase.
  - Increased transfer enrollment by 15.7% in the five-year period from from Fall 2006 to Fall 2010.
  - Improved our fall-to-fall retention rate by 9 percentage points in the last five years and our four-year graduation rate by 3.7 percentage points in the most recent five year comparison (cohorts 2002 and 2006).
  - Enhanced our admission standards (improving students’ opportunities for persistence and success and sending a strong message to our regional public schools that better preparation is required.)
  - Launched new academic majors, such as our ABET-accredited software engineering and computer science programs, that helped recruit new tech companies into the region.
  - Opened an Office of Economic Development to support current and new employers, provide professional and leadership development, and assist the region’s economic development community.
AFFORDABLE ACCESS FOR VIRGINIANS

- In FY 2011, we awarded $13,784,449 in need-based financial aid. The average need-based financial aid award was $8,435.
- From FY2008 to FY2012, UVa-Wise has moderately increased tuition and mandatory E&G fees as compared to Virginia’s other senior public institutions – an average annual increase of 5.2% for UVa-Wise as compared to an average annual increase of 7.9% for all other public senior institutions.
- Our students consistently graduate with a lower debt load than students at any of the nation’s public liberal arts colleges because of the excellent work of our financial aid office, robust private scholarship support, and the containment of costs through efficient operation.
- The majority of UVa-Wise students would not have access to higher education were it not for the College having such a robust financial aid program.

FISCAL INNOVATION AND PRUDENCE

- Summer College enrollment has increased by 24.9% from Summer 2007 to Summer 2011. Courses have been added to improve timeliness to degree and to better utilize facilities. UVa-Wise is preparing for more online learning in Summer College by recently upgrading our online learning platform, training faculty in its use and developing a pilot faculty pay plan to incentivize online course development.
- We are improving offerings for adult degree completers at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon by piloting an on-line completion program in FY2012.
- In that 64% of the College’s E & G budget in FY2012 is from state appropriations (the highest percentage of the state’s senior institutions) and because the College has incurred a $5.16 million reduction (-35%) in its state appropriation over the past five years, we have had to assertively increase efficiencies and become better at financial planning.
- In support of the Restructuring Act, the University of Virginia and the College formed a partnership that blends education, economic development and health improvement - a partnership that is leveraging resources at both institutions and has resulted in over $10 million in new investments in the region in three years.

2. THE SIX-YEAR PLAN

Guiding Principles . . .

Six principles guided the development of the UVa-Wise academic, financial and enrollment six-year blueprint:

1) Continue our commitment to student success and service to Southwest Virginia.
2) Fulfill the goals of the legislation while doing what is feasible for our small college.
3) Build on our documented successes in improving student retention (the Early Alert program), growing our Summer College program and extending our tuition support program to a wider student base.
4) Keep our student body profile in the forefront of every deliberation, paying attention to the tenuous balance between tuition and fee increases, enrollment growth, and institutional vitality.
5) Understand the limits of no additional state support for the academic plan and what that means at a small college that enrolls few out-of-state students.
6) Expand the opportunities to share resources with the University of Virginia (e.g. High Need Degrees and Science Consortium).

Six-Year Plan Integration . . .

- As we have enhanced our admission standards for the Fall 2011 class, future enrollment growth is difficult to assess. In addition, a sudden increase in part-time freshmen in Fall 2010 was unusual and it is uncertain if this will continue. The elimination of the year-round provision of students receiving Pell Grants in FY2011, the potential reductions in SEOG and Federal Work study funding, and the potential reduction in Pell Grant funding in FY2012 exacerbate the issue. Although we believe our Early Alert initiative and enhanced admission standards will produce long-term results, the enrollment projections must, at this time, be conservative. At the next biennial update, when the outcomes of these initiatives will be available, a clearer picture should emerge that will afford us greater certainty in the enrollment projections.

- A key component of the College’s mission is to provide high quality, affordable educational opportunity. This plan supports these goals through modest tuition and fee increases and emphasis on persistence, STEM-H enhancement, and tuition and fee support for especially promising students.

- As noted in the guiding principles, the financial capacity of our students is always at the forefront in determining tuition and fee increases and how that balances with institutional effectiveness. We determined that next year’s 8% tuition and mandatory E & G increase must cover the cost of any new initiatives (with some predicted cost savings in certain areas.) The addendum, outlining additional important initiatives (e.g. the STEM “Pathways” project), demonstrates the entire cost of full implementation, which would require support from the Commonwealth or private resources.

Academic Components of the Plan . . .

Early Alert Program - improving student success.

The Early Alert program is the top priority of the six-year plan. The strategies outlined build on what has been effective over the past two years to raise student persistence rates, yet goes further. The College will build a predictive mathematical model for student success that identifies student risk factors as well as institutional characteristics that encourage - or discourage - student success. This initiative also includes changing College policies and processes – e.g. interval grade reporting, required supplemental instruction and continued enhancement of the College’s admissions standards.

High Need Degrees - producing high-demand, high income graduates.

In recent years, U Va-Wise has begun new STEM programs in software engineering, computer science, and biochemistry and built new classroom and laboratory spaces for the Department of Natural Sciences and the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science. Both software engineering and computer science recently received ABET accreditation. This initiative will include new marketing initiatives, regional public school outreach, sharing of resources with U.Va. and efforts to create new scholarship opportunities. In nursing, the College will explore an online RN to BSN cohort completer program. For all STEM-H programs, the College will identify new opportunities to improve current articulation agreements with the College’s three primary community college feeder institutions – Mountain Empire Community College, Virginia Highlands Community College and Southwest Virginia Community College.
UVa-Wise students are typically first-generation college students with high financial need. Access for many students is dependent upon financial aid, with many students’ packages a combination of public and private support, and minimal loan indebtedness. The College has also successfully raised significant scholarship funds from private donors. In recent years, we launched the AIMS program. AIMS (Appalachian Intermountain Scholars) pays tuition and fees to students transferring from Mountain Empire Community College who demonstrate academic promise and a strong work ethic. AIMS now supports over 30 transfer students each year with continued tuition and fee support as long as they maintain good academic standing. UVa-Wise School Scholars expands this AIMS approach to a wider student base - students from other jurisdictions and students entering as freshmen. UVa-Wise School Scholars will focus on students interested in STEM-H fields. Initial private support has been received from the Slemp Foundation and Bank of America, and several proposals are currently pending.

The Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) is currently the College’s best strategy for the long-term goal of improving the academic readiness of our applicants. By improving the quality of teaching in the public schools, more students will be prepared for college academics. CTE serves over 1,000 public school educators with credit and non-credit programs and workshops, including online teaching licensure opportunities. Enrollment in credit courses for FY12 is projected to increase 25% from the previous year, and CTE is introducing an alternative semester schedule to better accommodate school professionals. This initiative will increase the variety and number of programs offered, emphasizing STEM teacher development and opportunities for licensure in STEM. CTE will also launch an online special education licensure curriculum in Fall 2011 that will complement its online teacher recertification curriculum for teachers with provisional licenses. The CTE administration and faculty are working with the region’s school districts to better assess, predict, and meet evolving professional development and state certification needs.

Further develops our growing Summer College to better utilize our facilities and shorten our students’ time to degree. Summer College enrollment has grown 24.9% in the last five years through more general education courses and more diversity in offerings. Online learning opportunities will also increase as faculty members take advantage of the new online learning platform and incentive pay plan.

Stabilizes and expands our robust partnership with the University of Virginia in education, health and economic development. It is one of the most effective, mutually beneficial alliances in Virginia resulting from the Restructuring Act. The collaboration includes dozens of regional partners including the planning and health districts, regional public schools, regional health centers and systems, regional businesses and industries and several state agencies. For example, through this partnership the Darden Executive program is being offered in Southwest Virginia for the first time. The College’s Office of Economic Development has developed and is implementing a mid-level supervisors program that has graduated 92 supervisors in seven cohorts to enhance existing industry competitiveness. The Healthy Appalachia Institute, a public health institute seeking to address geographic health disparities, is improving health access for disadvantaged women in cancer screening and care, increasing the number of future health professionals, among other projects. The SWELL (the Southwest Virginia Early Language and Literacy) program is a collaboration with the local Head Start program and East Tennessee State University that is designed to improve early language acquisition for very young children in the home using innovative voice recognition technology and software. The Clinch River project - downtown revitalization and outdoor recreation – is being led by U.Va.’s Institute for Environmental Negotiation and has drawn 75 stakeholders from 30 organizations to the table. In October, the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities will recognize this partnership with an award during the National Outreach Scholarship conference.
The College has demonstrated a continuing commitment to undergraduate research in a number of ways. It has instituted a highly successful FINS (Fellowships in the Natural Sciences) undergraduate research program that supports students/faculty in summer research. In recent years the College has been able to offer at least six FINS fellowships each summer, funded primarily by endowed funds. UVa-Wise has had an active undergraduate research council since 2007. The College was a founding member and has been an active participant in an annual COPLAC undergraduate research conference with UNC-Asheville, and the University of Montevallo. It also participates in an annual undergraduate research symposium with Emory & Henry College. Academic leaders have identified more than $50,000 in endowed funds that will be used in support of student research and conference presentations to expand this effort to the humanities.

The addendum includes initiatives that are important to the future vitality of UVa-Wise and the region, but which couldn’t be included in the plan because of the “no additional state funds” guideline. These are the “Pathways” initiative, an acceleration of the High Need Degrees initiative, and faculty and staff salary increases. The “Pathways to Science and Engineering Careers: A Community-Based Initiative,” will be a systemic collaboration between the PK-12 public schools and UVa-Wise that will create greater community awareness of the broad range of opportunities in science-related careers, provide professional development for public school and college teachers, and stimulate students’ interest and persistence in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields. In the first year, while additional external funds are sought, UVa-Wise will partner with the University of Virginia to bring proven programming to Wise County Schools in professional development for teachers (teaching scientific inquiry and nanotechnology) and programs for middle school students (engineering kits). The College will also expand its current middle school student programming such as the robotics camp and Lego science teams. We will only pilot aspects of the “Pathways” initiative in FY2012 because of fiscal constraints. We offer the addendum for consideration and discussion.

Greater Prosperity and Well-Being

Southwest Virginia is now seeing the beginnings of a transformed economy, brought about in large part by a more educated and capable workforce. Higher education is the catalyst for this change and UVa-Wise is its anchor in far Southwest Virginia. Investment in higher education is investment in the people of Southwest Virginia and its future economic prosperity. UVa-Wise stands ready to partner with the Commonwealth to begin these Top Jobs 21 strategic improvements and to make a difference in the lives of our students, our region and the Commonwealth.