



Donald Finley, President VBHEC

**SC Conference for Public and
Independent College and University
Trustees and Administrators**

October 7, 2010



***Business and higher education leadership
helping shape public policy since 1994***

Our founding, history and accomplishments ...



- **Founders**
- **Objectives**
- **Sustaining support and effectiveness**
- **Our most ambitious goal ...**



GROW BY DEGREES

A Campaign of the Virginia Business Higher Education Council

HONORARY LEADERSHIP

Gov. Bob McDonnell - Sen. Mark Warner - Sen. Jim Webb

Gov. Tim Kaine - Sen. John Warner - Gov. George Allen - Gov. Jim Gilmore

Gov. Chuck Robb - Gov. Doug Wilder - Gov. Gerald Baliles - Gov. Linwood Holton



GBD Strategic Objective

To accomplish a systemic, sustainable transformation in the political-governmental standing of Virginia higher education

– *and, through that transformation* –

To secure a reliable, predictable revenue stream and other positive policies that will help make Virginia higher education the national pacesetter over the next decade and beyond.



Strategic premises

(1) FUNDING SITUATION ACUTE

- The boom-bust cycle is familiar, but the bust this decade has been extreme. State E&G funding is down 40-50% on a constant-dollar per-student basis, threatening quality, access and affordability.
- The problem is one of priorities. If college funding had just kept pace with average general fund growth during the same period, the state would be spending \$300 million more on higher ed annually.



Strategic premises

(2) POLITICAL WEAKNESS

- The funding situation is a symptom of higher education's relative political weakness. There is no clear political consensus in the state to protect higher ed funding.
- The political weakness is exacerbated by the decentralized Virginia system, which makes concerted action more difficult.
- Political support is also hampered by the widespread perception that Virginia already has excellent colleges that are not at risk.



Strategic premises

(3) TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

- Major policy initiatives rarely occur in Virginia unless undertaken by the Governor. And Governors rarely undertake major initiatives unless they have campaigned on them. The 2009 election thus presents a pivotal moment to set the stage for a positive initiative.
- To sustain transformative change, higher ed needs a strong, ongoing advocacy coalition that levels the legislative playing field.



Strategic premises

(4) ECONOMIC FOCUS

- Historic economic events have converged to make economic recovery/economic growth THE political issue during the Grow By Degrees program, including the 2009 campaign.
- This creates a unique opportunity to build support for higher education investment and innovation by calling attention to the close connection between higher education and economic growth on both a personal and macroeconomic level.



Turning to the professionals

- Bi-partisan firm
- Public policy experience
- Full-service

SC Conference For Public and Independent College and University Trustees and Administrators

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MWC Offerings

- **State Government Relations**
 - Georgia
 - Illinois
 - North Carolina
 - South Carolina
 - Virginia
- **Federal Government Relations**
- **International Government Relations**
- **Infrastructure and Economic Development**
- **Grassroots Mobilization**
- **Strategic Communications**

Affecting Public Policy

Four-pronged strategy:

- Research
- PR
- Grassroots/Grasstops Coalition
- Lobbying

Affecting Public Policy

Tools ^{and} Tactics

- Public opinion polling
- Earned media campaign
- Video and other advocacy materials
- Economic Impact Analysis



Major campaign deliverables

- **GRASSTOPS COALITION:** Formation of a grasstops advocacy coalition with near-term and sustainable impact.
- **ELECTION-YEAR COMMUNICATIONS:** An intensive election-year dialogue on higher education's impact on the Virginia economy, including a higher ed summit to place higher ed at top of the Virginia policy agenda.
- **GUBERNATORIAL/LEGISLATIVE ACTION:** Major higher education legislative initiative (funding and reform) led by the new Governor in 2011, preceded by a 2010 gubernatorial commission.
- **EDUCATE DECISION-MAKERS:** Increased understanding of higher ed finance among General Assembly and Executive Branch officials, leading to sustained funding.



GBD Program Timeline

Phase One

planning, polling, assessment phase

Phase Two

election-year and transition program

Phase Three

commission and legislative process



Phase 1

Bipartisan polling research completed ...

Agreement forged on 7 key messages/priorities ...

- (1) In the new economy, success depends on college degrees!
70,000 more degrees in the next 10 years**
- (2) Focus on high-demand, high-earnings degrees (STEM, healthcare).**
- (3) Develop innovative and cost-efficient new pathways to degrees.**
- (4) Expand job-specific training at community colleges.**
- (5) Maximize return on investment in new-economy research.**
- (6) Promote economic development and workforce training in each region of Virginia.**
- (7) Make college affordable for middle-class families.**

Pre-launch outreach to 4 gubernatorial candidates ...

Candidates embrace major GBD policy goals ...



Phase 2

Major speech by candidate McDonnell at GMU, outlining sweeping higher ed initiative to pursue as Governor ...

*Successful GBD campaign/website rollout in June;
-- News conferences featuring business, college leaders resulted in extensive news and editorial coverage ...*

*Briefings held for statewide and legislative candidates;
-- Higher ed messages highlighted in campaigns ...*

*Initial development of GBD coalition:
-- All living governors, 3 senators on board as co-chairs
-- Outreach by institutions via website, email, mail
-- Presentations to numerous target organizations*



Media coverage

“Group hopes to expand Va. college enrollment, aid”

The Virginian-Pilot
PilotOnline.com

“Group promotes college access”

The Washington Post

“Coalition launches effort to increase state support for higher education”

**Richmond
Times-Dispatch**



Media coverage

“Virginia college campaign kicks off”



“Va. business coalition seeks more higher-ed funding”



“Higher education council revved up about college”





Website attracting strong visitation



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HOME

WHO WE ARE

OUR AGENDA

GET INVOLVED

NEWS & EVENTS

JOIN US



JOIN THE **GROW BY DEGREES** COALITION

IN THE NEWS

EVENTS

GROW BY DEGREES



Can Virginia lead the way in shaping a future of opportunity and prosperity in the knowledge-based global economy? We believe it can—and *must*.

Grow By Degrees, a campaign of the Virginia Business Higher Education Council (VBHEC), aims to fuel Virginia's strong recovery and sustained economic growth through high-impact investments and innovations in our public colleges, universities, and community colleges.

Our **2020 Vision** promises a prosperous, entrepreneurial Virginia that ranks among the top states and countries in educational attainment and personal income. Access to an affordable, high-quality college degree is increasingly a prerequisite for success in the fast-changing, high-tech economy. Virginians who

A Vow to Ease Tuition's Burden

July, 12, 2009

[Virginian-Pilot](#)

"Republican Bob McDonnell and Democrat Creigh Deeds will argue over many topics this year, but it's good to know they both recognize that state support for public colleges isn't a partisan issue."

[Read more](#) | [Add a comment](#)

Lofty Goals for Higher Ed

June, 30, 2009

[Daily Progress](#)

"The goals of the Virginia Business Higher Education



Coalition member organizations

- Virginia Chamber of Commerce
- Fredericksburg Regional Alliance
- Greater Washington Board of Trade
- Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce
- Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce
- Northern Virginia Technology Council
- Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Thomas Jefferson Institute for Public Policy
- Virginia Business Council
- Virginia21
- Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Virginia Latino Higher Education Network
- Virginia Tidewater Consortium for Higher Education
- VA Rural Center
- Others pending



Phase 2 cont.

Both candidates attend October '09 Higher Ed Summit;

- Commit to make higher education a top priority.*
- Reject tuition caps and caps on out-of-state students.*
- Oppose further funding cuts.*

Economic impact analysis establishes Virginia higher ed's strong return on investment:

- Unveiled at higher ed summit, generating news coverage.*
- Distributed to legislators, candidates, money cte staff.*

Collaboration with McDonnell transition:

- VBHEC and institutions have input in transition report.*
- Gov's Inaugural, G.A. addresses stress higher ed goals.*



Study of the Economic Impact of Virginia Public Higher Education



WELDON COOPER
CENTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

University of Virginia

Terance J. Rephann, Ph.D.

in association with

John L. Knapp, Ph.D.

William B. Shobe, Ph.D.

September 2009



About the Study

- The first comprehensive analysis of the economic impact of Virginia's public higher education system.
- Two components measured:
 - Economic impact of higher education expenditures.
 - Economic impact of human capital development.
- Also projected economic impact of the Governor's plan for 100,000 additional degrees by 2025.
- The study is based on 2007 economic data, and all numbers expressed in terms of 2007 dollars.



RETURN ON INVESTMENT IN VIRGINIA'S PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION



Based on 2007 data

source: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service



BENEFITS FROM VIRGINIA'S YEARLY HIGHER EDUCATION INVESTMENT

\$24 Billion



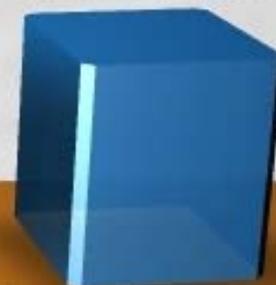
GDP

144,000



Jobs

\$2.5 Billion



Tax Revenue

Based on 2007 data

source: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service



Growing By Degrees

What 100,000 More Degrees By 2025
Will Mean to Virginia's Economy

- \$39.5 billion more in Virginia GDP
- \$36.0 billion in increased personal income for Virginians
- \$4.1 billion in new tax revenues for state government

What's Next

The Critical Path From Here



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Final Year Actions

1. **POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENT:** Guide development of a comprehensive legislative package, including key policies and funding model, as product of Commission.
2. **PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS:** Media relations program to generate public and opinion-leader awareness of key messages via Commission process and endorsement of Commission recommendations (“Governor’s bipartisan plan”).
3. **COALITION EXPANSION AND MOBILIZATION:** Use campaign for enactment of Governor’s bipartisan plan to identify and mobilize grassroots/grasstops Coalition members and advocates.
4. **LEGISLATIVE PASSAGE:** Execute coordinated lobbying strategy using Coalition advocates, media relations, and direct lobbying by GBD lobbyists, higher ed institutions, and influential supporters.

The
End



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