



2011 Workplan

Table of Contents

Section		Page
1	JLARC Work Planning Process	1
2	Mission, Goals, and Objectives	5
3	Research Plan	7
4	Virginia Retirement System Oversight	17
5	Fiscal Analysis Services	19
6	Other Oversight Activities	23
7	Division Management	29
8	Research Methods	33
9	Information Systems Support	35
10	Publications and Graphics	37
11	Business Management and Office Services	41
12	Training and Development	45

JLARC Work Planning Process

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) is the oversight arm of the Virginia General Assembly. It was established by the Legislature in 1973 to review and evaluate the operations and performance of State agencies and programs. Since its establishment, JLARC's responsibilities have been expanded to include oversight of the Virginia Retirement System, review of fiscal impact statements, support for the Council on Virginia's Future, evaluation of proposed mandated health insurance benefits, and other oversight activities. The evolution of JLARC's statutory mandates requires a structured but flexible work planning process.

This workplan document reflects Commission and staff judgment on a feasible work schedule for 2011. The work planning process is a modified management-by-objective system adapted to serve a small, research-oriented organization such as JLARC. The process can be subdivided into three basic steps: plan preparation and approval, plan control, and plan evaluation.

PLAN PREPARATION AND APPROVAL

The JLARC biennial budget and research topic selection processes are the foundation for the annual workplan. The plan is prepared annually by the director and the deputy director. Research topics are developed and approved annually by the Commission and the General Assembly. Plan preparation begins after topics have been selected, usually near the end of the legislative session.

The workplan establishes a general framework for defining agency goals and objectives, work activities, a project timetable, and staff assignments for the current year. The plan also aids in problem identification and may be periodically revised to reflect changes in organizational priorities and needs. While there can be substantial overlap in JLARC's work areas, objectives and activities are presented for the ten separate program areas within this plan:

- *Research Plan and Priorities* — a brief summary of studies and other research activities to be completed during the year.

- *Virginia Retirement System Oversight* — a discussion of the continuing oversight activities and research projects for the next year.
- *Fiscal Analysis* — a discussion of activities of the fiscal analysis section, including expenditure forecasting, fiscal impact reviews, and an annual report on State spending trends.
- *Other Ongoing Oversight* — a discussion of JLARC’s responsibilities regarding internal service funds, higher education management agreements, evaluations of mandated health insurance benefits, and other areas.
- *Division Management* — a discussion of work activities carried out within each JLARC research division.
- *Research Methods* — a listing of work activities to be carried out by the staff methodologist.
- *Information Systems Support* — an overview of the computer and other technology services in support of JLARC's research activities, business functions, and print and online communications.
- *Publications and Graphics* — a summary of work activities planned by the publications analyst.
- *Business Management and Office Services* — an outline of administrative and office services activities.
- *Training and Development* — a discussion of staff training and development planned for the year.

PLAN CONTROL

The annual workplan is submitted to the Commission for its review and approval, generally in May of each year. Agency and project managers are periodically informed about project scheduling and achievements via project workplans, weekly planning meetings, monthly planning and project status reports, and personnel time allocation reports.

Planning meetings are held twice monthly and feature informal reports on the status of projects and activities. These meetings are used to coordinate activities and to set priorities for administrative support during the week. The staff leadership team—which consists of the director, deputy director, division chiefs, and managers of the business, fiscal analysis, and methods sections—outlines a plan of work for the period preceding each Commission meeting.

Periodic meetings are held with project leaders and the leadership team. These meetings are a vehicle for keeping key staff members involved in and informed of important items of organizational and

project interest. Plan, project, and other work responsibilities are also communicated through project-specific planning documents and organizational directives such as the *Research Guide* and *Administrative Manual*.

The leadership team periodically reviews status reports on each of the ongoing research projects. Status reports include such information as the completion date, work phases completed, work accomplished since the last reporting period, and significant report findings. The workplan may be revised from time to time to reflect changes in project scope, status, and priorities.

Time allocation forms are prepared by staff on a weekly basis. These forms are used to track individual and project time and to prepare periodic cost allocation reports when needed.

PLAN EVALUATION

The accomplishments of the JLARC workplan can be measured by four types of outcomes:

- *Products* — studies and reviews produced and reported;
- *Completion of Other Scheduled Activities* — the extent to which work activities are effectively completed;
- *Legislative/Executive Utilization* — (a) the extent to which JLARC reports provide useful information to the General Assembly and executive agencies, (b) the extent to which the Legislature and executive agencies implement JLARC recommendations, (c) potential for cost savings accruing to the Commonwealth, and (d) potential for improvements in agency operations and service delivery; and
- *Legislative Feedback* — the extent to which members of the Commission, the General Assembly, and leadership use the research products and information.

JLARC accomplishments are also assessed by follow-up of completed studies and reported biennially in the *Report to the General Assembly*. The last such report was prepared in September of 2009 and will be updated in September 2011.

Mission, Goals, and Objectives

JLARC's mission, goals, and objectives are based on the statutory mandates for the agency and direction from the Commission.

MISSION

JLARC's mission is to provide the General Assembly with an objective and vigorous oversight capability. Through analytic research and evaluation, the Commission aids in ensuring that the Legislature is informed about State program operations, agencies fulfill legislative intent, and programs operate efficiently, effectively, and economically.

GOALS

JLARC's goals are based on the statutory mandates for the agency:

- Provide the General Assembly with reliable and valid information for use in legislative decision-making.
- Monitor and report whether State agencies and programs are in compliance with legislative intent concerning appropriations and objectives.
- Determine whether State agencies and programs meet criteria of efficiency, effectiveness, and economy.

OBJECTIVES

JLARC has 12 objectives related to its mission and goals:

- Complete management, operational, program, and/or performance reviews and evaluations of State agencies and programs as directed by the General Assembly or the Commission in accordance with the Commission's general statutory authority and the Legislative Program Review and Evaluation Act.
- Provide accurate and timely information about the effectiveness and efficiency of State agencies and programs to members of the General Assembly, other governmental entities, and the citizens of Virginia.
- Develop report recommendations that will help agencies to operate more efficiently, effectively, or economically; improve

services; and identify and eliminate duplication, overlap, and poor performance.

- Complete annual reviews of spending growth in State government and periodic reviews of expenditure forecasts.
- Complete reviews of fiscal impact statements as requested by the chairs of the standing committees during sessions of the General Assembly.
- Oversee and evaluate internal service funds as well as the Virginia Information Technologies Agency more broadly in compliance with statute and legislative direction.
- Oversee and evaluate the Virginia Retirement System in compliance with statute and legislative direction.
- Evaluate proposed mandated health insurance benefits and report the findings to the Special Advisory Commission on Mandated Health Insurance Benefits.
- Evaluate compliance with and impact of the management agreements for State-supported institutions of higher education and report the findings to the General Assembly.
- Monitor agency implementation of Commission recommendations and prepare follow-up studies on completed reports as necessary.
- Complete other oversight responsibilities such as participation in debt capacity and inmate forecasting committees.
- Continuously enhance JLARC research processes and practices, staff skills and abilities, and information technology resources.

Research Plan

To complete the work mandated by the General Assembly and the Commission, a schedule is developed for each of the studies assigned of the current year. This schedule is based on deadlines in the study mandates, the information needs of the legislature, the complexity of the research involved, and the availability of staff and other resources. Detailed research workplans are developed for each study to ensure timely completion of the work as scheduled. The studies to be completed or initiated in 2011 are summarized below, and other oversight activities are summarized in later sections of the workplan.

Review of Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission

(Planned briefing: June 13, 2011)

The 2010 General Assembly included language in Item 30 of the Appropriation Act requiring JLARC to evaluate and report, by June 30, 2011, on the performance of the Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission (TICR). TICR is the mechanism that Virginia set up to distribute a portion of funds paid by tobacco companies under the Master Settlement Agreement. Statutes assign TICR the mission of using the money to revitalize the tobacco-dependent communities in Virginia. Since establishment in 2000, TICR has awarded 1,365 grants totaling \$764 million. These grants have focused on projects located throughout a 41-locality region, including Southside and Southwest Virginia.

The JLARC review will examine TICR's strategy and goals as well as the impact of the grants on the region's economy. The review will also address TICR's outcome metrics and accountability measures.

State Contracting and the Federal Immigration Reform and Control Act

(Planned briefing: June 13, 2011)

At its October 2010 meeting, JLARC approved a resolution directing staff to study the policies that State agencies use to ensure that contractors verify the legal resident status of their employees. The federal Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) was enacted to address a variety of issues related to immigration.

The provisions of IRCA most relevant for this JLARC staff review are the employer sanctions provisions, which require employers to hire only individuals who may legally work in the U.S. In general, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE) takes the lead role in monitoring and enforcing IRCA compliance. ICE criminally prosecutes employers that knowingly hire unauthorized workers, and also arrests any unauthorized workers that it finds through its worksite enforcement activities.

Review of Virginia Commonwealth University Management Agreement

(Planned briefing: June 13, 2011)

The Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act directs JLARC to conduct a two-year review of the initial management agreement of each public institution of higher education. Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) entered into a management agreement with the State on July 1, 2008, which gave the university relative autonomy in the areas of financial operations and management, capital projects, information technology, procurement of goods and services, leases of real property, and human resources. This review will determine if VCU met its institutional performance benchmarks and has complied with terms pertaining to each of the financial and administrative areas.

Options for Improving Coordination Among Virginia's Education Entities

(Planned briefing: July 11, 2011)

Senate Joint Resolution 32 (2010) directs JLARC to study the role of the Secretary of Education in improving coordination between K-12 schools, community colleges, and four-year institutions. Under current law, the Secretary is responsible for the Department of Education and the State Council for Higher Education but does not have statutory responsibility for coordination of education. Better coordination in education could increase the preparedness of students entering college, reduce the need for remedial education, and better align the education and training of students with the State's workforce needs.

This study will (1) examine the current extent of coordination among the education entities in the State and identify opportunities for further coordination, (2) consider increasing the statutory authority and duties of the Secretary of Education to improve coordination among all levels of education, and (3) consider possible alternative structures to assist the Secretary in coordinating Virginia's education system.

Third Grade Reading Proficiency

(Planned briefing: September 12, 2011)

Senate Joint Resolution 31 (2010) directs JLARC to study ways to promote and ensure early reading proficiency and comprehension among third graders in the public schools. The mandate for the review cites the importance of early reading proficiency for the academic success of children. The research literature on early reading, reading experts, and school-level staff also indicate that it is critical for children to achieve reading proficiency by the end of third grade and that children who fall behind in reading can have difficulty catching up.

This study will (1) address the extent to which Virginia students in the early grades are successful readers and the factors that correlate with success, (2) identify key strategies and best practices for increasing reading proficiency in the early grades, and (3) provide recommendations or options for improving third grade reading proficiency in Virginia specifically.

2011 Report to the General Assembly

(Planned publication: September 2011)

JLARC is required by statute to produce a biennial report to the General Assembly summarizing significant actions taken by executive agencies in response to JLARC reports and recommendations, and the resulting savings to the Commonwealth. The 2011 biennial report will provide an update on JLARC reports published from 2005 through September of 2010. Additional information on the 2011 *Report to the General Assembly* is included in Section 10 of this workplan.

Mitigating Risk of Improper Payments in Virginia's Medicaid Program

(Planned briefing: October 11, 2011)

House Joint Resolution 127 (2010) directs JLARC to study the Commonwealth's Medicaid program to identify opportunities to reduce waste as well as improper payments resulting from error, fraud, and abuse. The Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) administers Virginia's Medicaid program. DMAS is also the primary agency responsible for addressing improper payments, and the agency conducts several program integrity activities designed to reduce improper payments.

The study resolution specifically requires JLARC to (1) study past or current evidence of waste and inefficiency in the state Medicaid

program, and describe the nature and extent of such waste and inefficiency; (2) study and describe the nature and scope of fraud or abuse of the state Medicaid program by recipients, providers, suppliers, manufacturers, or others who receive benefits from the state Medicaid program, if any; (3) compare the nature and scope of waste, inefficiency, fraud, or abuse occurring in the Commonwealth with that occurring in other states that are similar to Virginia in terms of geography, demographics, or financial commitment to Medicaid; and (4) identify programs in the Commonwealth and other states that have proven successful in reducing waste, inefficiency, fraud, or abuse of state Medicaid programs. An interim report was presented in October 2010, and the mandate directs that all work be completed by November 30, 2011.

State Spending: 2011 Update

(Planned briefing: October 11, 2011)

The fiscal analysis section will continue its review of State spending, mandated by §30-58.3 of the *Code of Virginia*. The October report will update the 2010 report by including expenditures and appropriations from FY 2011 and by examining budget growth from FY 2002 through FY 2011. The report will also identify the largest and fastest growing programs and compare the growth to indicators of economic activity (such as inflation) and other factors.

Review of the Effectiveness of Virginia Tax Preferences

(Planned briefing: November 14, 2011)

Senate Joint Resolution 21 (2010) directs JLARC to review the effectiveness of tax preferences that are available through the State's corporate income, individual income, and retail sales and use tax systems. The types of preferences that will be reviewed include exemptions, subtractions, deductions, credits, and other structural features such as reduced tax rates. Concerns about the effectiveness of Virginia's tax preferences in meeting their public policy goals have been raised, in part because the extent to which those tax preferences reduce tax revenue is largely unknown.

As directed by the mandate, this study proposes to (1) determine which preferences are used and to what extent, (2) examine the fiscal impact of preferences, (3) examine the public policies for which the tax preferences were established and whether the desired public policies have been achieved, (4) report on whether other states routinely provide a sunset date for their tax preferences, and (5) propose mechanisms or processes for the ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of tax preferences.

Review of the Civil Commitment and Conditional Release of Sexually Violent Predators

(Planned briefing: November 14, 2011)

The 2011 General Assembly included language in Item 30 of the Appropriation Act requiring JLARC to undertake a comprehensive review of the civil commitment of sexually violent predators at the Virginia Center for Behavioral Rehabilitation (VCBR) and the conditional release program administered by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. The act directs staff to review and examine the impact of the following three factors on the projected number of individuals likely to be civilly-committed: (1) current law and commitment practices; (2) the screening and assessment process to identify those potentially eligible for civil commitment, including the current risk assessment instrument; and (3) the commitment review process.

The Appropriation Act also directs staff to examine policies and practices of other states, including any best or cost-effective practices. Finally, the language directs staff to examine the costs of civil commitment, including an analysis of security and treatment staff ratios.

Follow-Up Review of Retirement Programs for State and Local Employees

(Planned briefing: December 12, 2011)

A February 2011 letter from the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee requested JLARC to conduct a review of Virginia's employee retirement programs. This study is intended to be a follow-up to the 2008 JLARC report on State employee compensation which included a detailed review of Virginia's retirement programs for State and local employees. The additional study has been requested due to continued General Assembly interest in considering structural changes to the State's retirement programs and the different economic and budgetary outlook since the 2008 JLARC review.

This study proposes to examine (1) the goals that Virginia's State and local governments should try to achieve through offering retirement programs; (2) the extent to which current defined benefit plans achieve these goals, and how the current plans could be changed; (3) how the retirement programs should be funded; (4) which alternative retirement plans would best meet the needs of the Commonwealth, its localities, and its school divisions, if applicable; and (5) the estimated fiscal impact associated with any recommended changes to the retirement programs. In conducting this

review, JLARC staff will obtain the consulting services of an actuary as well as retirement plan experts.

Third-Party Payments for Assisted Living

(Planned briefing: December 12, 2011)

The 2011 General Assembly adopted HJR 580 directing JLARC to review third-party payments for persons residing in assisted living facilities. About 34,500 persons reside in approximately 300 licensed assisted living facilities in Virginia. A key concern of this study resolution appears to be the extent to which third-party payments from, for example, long-term care insurance will or should count towards an individual's eligibility for State and federal financial assistance programs. The study is also to recommend measures to encourage the development of additional revenue sources for providers of assisted living services.

State Spending on Standards of Quality (SOQ) Costs

(Planned briefing: December 12, 2011)

Section 22.1-97 of the *Code of Virginia* requires JLARC to “report annually to the House Committees on Education and Appropriations and the Senate Committees on Finance and Education and Health the state expenditure provided each locality for an educational program meeting the Standards of Quality.” This work by JLARC staff is to be coordinated with the Virginia Department of Education (DOE). Section 22.1-97 also requires that DOE report local-level data on required local expenditures for the SOQ and local operating dollars budgeted and spent to meet local SOQ cost responsibilities.

The 2011 JLARC special report, the eighth report in this series, will address State SOQ spending in FY 2011. As was the case in prior years, JLARC staff plan to first brief the Commission on the findings, and then furnish the report to the committees identified in the statute. If requested, JLARC staff would be available to appear before any of the committees to discuss or answer questions about this report.

Evaluation of Incentives Promoting Regional Facilities and Operations

(Planned briefing: Summer 2012)

House Joint Resolution 570 (2011) directs JLARC to study the costs and benefits to the Commonwealth of providing financial and other incentives to localities that collaborate on capital projects and operating services. By building facilities and providing services on a regional basis, local governments may be able to achieve

greater economies of scale and realize cost savings. The study will identify incentives that have been found effective in promoting regional collaboration, and assess the extent to which the cost of incentives could be recouped through reductions in local and State spending. HJR 570 requires completion of the study by November 30, 2012.

Efficacy of Year-Round School

(Planned briefing: Fall 2012)

House Joint Resolution 646 (2011) directs JLARC to study the efficacy of year-round school. The study mandate notes that year-round education is not a typical practice in this country, but it is not a novel concept either. The mandate also notes that numerous benefits as well as concerns have been cited regarding this approach.

Eight items for study are noted in the mandate to guide the review. The review is to identify schools or divisions in Virginia, other states, and other countries which have experience with year-round schooling and consider the advantages and disadvantages that have been found. The review is to “ascertain and weigh the essential factors that must be considered before implementing year-round schools statewide,” and consider various issues and matters that are deemed “necessary to provide feasible and appropriate recommendations.”

In conducting the review, JLARC is to include opportunities for input for various parties with expertise in, or that would be impacted by, year-round schooling. The review will likely be initiated in the fall of this year as staff resources become available. HJR 646 requires completion of the review by November 30, 2012.

Misclassification of Employees as Independent Contractors

(Planned briefing: Fall 2012)

Senate Joint Resolution 345 (2011) directs JLARC to study the misclassification of employees as independent contractors. The concern is that persons who predominately work as employees for a single employer are sometimes not accordingly identified as employees of that employer. Rather, they are identified as independent contractors. As a consequence, the employer-in-fact avoids responsibility for paying employer taxes or for withholding certain taxes from the employee’s wages. In turn, the employee classified as an independent contractor might or might not accurately report his or her tax obligations.

Nationally, the U.S. Government Accountability Office has estimated that in 2006, certain misclassification practices were depriving the federal government of substantial revenues (an estimated \$2.72 billion). Such practices may be depriving State and local governments of substantial revenues as well. Illinois, for example, has estimated that it lost almost \$125 million in income tax revenue from 2001 to 2005 due to this practice. A number of states reportedly have established task forces or commissions to examine this issue. In conducting its review, JLARC is to review the consequences of misclassification, estimate the amount of revenue potentially lost to the State and local governments in Virginia, and recommend strategies for alleviating the problem. SJR 345 requires completion of the review by November 30, 2012.

Review of the Effectiveness of Economic Development Incentive Grants in Virginia

(Planned briefing: Fall 2012)

Senate Joint Resolution 329 (2011) directs JLARC staff to review the effectiveness of economic development incentive grants available in Virginia. Economic development grants are typically awarded as incentives for businesses to locate or expand in the Commonwealth, and include programs such as the Governor's Development Opportunities Fund and the Virginia Investment Partnership. Grant programs have received additional funding in recent years, yet limited research has been conducted to evaluate their effectiveness.

As directed by the mandate, this review will (1) identify which economic development incentive grants are available and to what extent they are used, (2) examine the public policies for which the grant programs were established and whether the desired public policies have been achieved, and (3) propose a mechanism or process for the ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of grant programs. The Commission will provide a final report to the Governor and the General Assembly no later than November 30, 2012.

Land Conservation Funding

(Planned briefing: Fall 2012)

Senate Joint Resolution 335 (2011) directs JLARC to study long-term dedicated funding sources for land conservation. The resolution cites the Commonwealth's land protection policy from Article XI, Section 1 of the *Constitution of Virginia*. It also notes a commitment by the Governor to conserve 400,000 acres of open space in Virginia by January 2014. A potential concern noted in the mandate is that there is a lack of "a stable funding source" to support land conservation. In conducting the review, JLARC is to ex-

amine and build upon prior efforts in Virginia to examine the land conservation issue, as well as examine innovative funding mechanisms which may exist in other states. The study is to identify viable options for a long-term dedicated source of funding. The review will be initiated as staff resources become available later this year or early in 2012. The review is to be completed by November 30, 2012.

Impact of Restructuring Virginia's Local Business, Professional, and Occupational License Tax

(Planned briefing: Fall 2013)

The 2011 General Assembly included language in Item 30 of the Appropriation Act requiring JLARC to study the local revenue impact of restructuring the basis of the Business, Professional, and Occupational License (BPOL) tax from gross receipts to net income. The language also authorizes local tax officials to require businesses applying for a business license in 2011 to report their net income and an estimate of the tax they would have paid if it had been based on income. This information will be made available to JLARC by April 2013, and will be used to estimate the extent to which local revenue collections and taxpayer liabilities would have differed if the BPOL tax were assessed on the basis of net income rather than gross receipts. The Commission will provide a final report to the Governor and the General Assembly no later than November 1, 2013.

Reporting Schedule

Table 1 (next page) shows the schedule for presenting the study findings and recommendations to the Commission in 2011. The schedule accounts for specific reporting requirements in the joint resolutions or Appropriations Act language that directed several of the studies as well as the research workload for each project.

Table 1: Commission Reporting Schedule for 2011

May 10	2011 Director's Report 2011 JLARC Workplan FY 2012 Strategic Plan 2011 Auditor of Public Accounts Workplan
June 13	Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission State Contracting and Federal Immigration Reform and Control Act Review of Virginia Commonwealth University Management Agreement
July 11	Semi-Annual VRS Investment Report Virginia Retirement System Director and CIO Status Reports Options for Improving Coordination Among Virginia's Education Entities
August	No Meeting
September 12	Third Grade Reading Proficiency 2011 Report to the General Assembly
October 11	Mitigating Risk of Improper Payments in Virginia's Medicaid Program Review of State Spending (2011 Update)
November 14	Review of Effectiveness of Virginia Tax Preferences Civil Commitment and Conditional Release of Sexually Violent Predators
December 12	Follow-up Review of Retirement Programs for State and Local Employees Third Party Payments for Assisted Living State Spending on Standards of Quality Costs (2011 Update) Semi-Annual VRS Investment Report
Completed in 2012	Evaluation of Incentives Promoting Regional Facilities and Operations Efficacy of Year-Round School Misclassification of Employees as Independent Contractors Review of the Effectiveness of Economic Incentive Grants in Virginia Land Conservation Funding
Ongoing	Virginia Retirement System Oversight Internal Service Fund Oversight Evaluations of Proposed Mandated Health Care Benefits Virginia Information Technologies Agency Oversight Review of Expenditure Forecasts Fiscal Analysis Reports Fiscal Impact Statement Reviews (General Assembly Sessions) Debt Capacity Oversight Inmate Forecast Oversight Staff Support for the Council on Virginia's Future Staff Support for the Joint Commission on Transportation Accountability

Section 4

Virginia Retirement System Oversight

The Virginia Retirement System Oversight Act of 1994 authorizes JLARC's oversight function of the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) (§§ 30-78 through 30-84 of the *Code of Virginia*). The act directs JLARC to oversee and evaluate the Virginia Retirement System on a continuing basis and as directed by the General Assembly.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Provide timely, accurate information about the retirement system to the General Assembly.
- Assess the appropriateness of the structure of governance for the retirement system and recommend modifications to the structure as necessary.
- Evaluate on a periodic basis the soundness of the retirement system trust funds.
- Evaluate the performance of the VRS investment program and report to the General Assembly on any significant changes in the investment program.
- Evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of VRS administration and operations.

WORK ACTIVITIES FOR 2011

Work activities for oversight of the retirement system are intended to ensure that the General Assembly is informed about important aspects of the system's investments, actuarial status, and administrative effectiveness.

Attend Monthly Meetings of the Board of Trustees and Committees

(Ongoing)

JLARC staff will continue to attend the regular meetings of the VRS Board of Trustees, the Investment Advisory Committee, and the Defined Contribution Plan Advisory Committee. Staff may also periodically attend meetings of the following committees of the VRS Board of Trustees: administration and personnel, benefits

and actuarial, audit and compliance, and optional retirement plan advisory committee.

Semi-Annual Investment Reports

(Planned dates for briefing: July 2011 and December 2011)

JLARC staff will continue to monitor and review the VRS investment program. The focus of the review will remain on investment policy and asset allocation, as well as investment performance and risk management. JLARC staff will obtain detailed information concerning these areas through regular attendance of meetings of the VRS Investment Advisory Committee and the VRS Board of Trustees, structured interviews with VRS investment staff, reviews of VRS documents, reviews of documents of other public employee retirement systems, and analysis of secondary sources of investment data.

At the July 2011 meeting, the VRS director and chief investment officer will also provide a status update on the system to the Commission.

Update of the Online Guide to the Virginia Retirement System

(Ongoing)

The Retirement Oversight Act requires JLARC to publish a guide to the Virginia Retirement System. The *Guide* is produced with the assistance of the VRS staff, and is available online at <http://vrsguide.virginia.gov>. It is revised each year to reflect changes in benefit programs as well as investment and financial information. By publishing the *Guide* online, labor and other costs associated with producing hard copies have been eliminated. In addition, access to the *Guide* is more convenient, and links to legislation, *Code of Virginia* references, and other information are available.

Section 5

Fiscal Analysis Services

The fiscal analysis section was established in 1999 to assist with legislative fiscal impact analysis and to conduct oversight of the executive branch expenditure forecasting process. During each General Assembly Session, the section focuses on reviewing executive branch fiscal impact statements that are referred to JLARC by committee chairs. The results of the staff reviews are published in fiscal impact review reports. In addition to reviewing fiscal impact statements, the section responds to ad hoc requests by General Assembly members and other legislative staff, as determined by the JLARC chairman or director.

The section also conducts an annual review of State budget growth (required under §30-58.3 of the *Code of Virginia*). Staff in the section also periodically review the forecasts that are key to major State programs, including Medicaid, corrections, primary and secondary education, and higher education. Staff also participate in other JLARC projects and reviews.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Review the fiscal effects of legislation at the request of committee chairs, as required by the Appropriation Act.
- Conduct annual assessments of State expenditure growth, as required by §30-58.3 of the *Code of Virginia*.
- Evaluate the performance of key executive branch forecasts and their relation to the Commonwealth's biennial budget, and provide information about these forecasts to the General Assembly.
- Provide technical support to the General Assembly in the areas of legislative fiscal analysis and expenditure forecasting.

WORK ACTIVITIES FOR 2011

Work activities for the fiscal analysis section are related to statutory mandates for reviews of spending, the fiscal impact of legislation, and expenditure forecasts.

Review State Spending Growth

(Planned date for briefing: October 2011)

The JLARC fiscal analysis section will continue its review of State spending as discussed in Section 3 of this workplan.

Prepare Fiscal Impact Reviews

(Planned date: Annual Sessions of the General Assembly)

Upon the request of a committee chair, the fiscal analysis section reviews the fiscal impact statement on any legislation. Through the 2011 General Assembly, the section has prepared about 80 such reviews. These reviews serve as a “second opinion” on the projected cost of a specific bill and have resulted in concurrence as well as non-concurrence with the fiscal impact estimated by State agencies.

Prepare Comparison of the States Publication

(Periodic)

In 2003 the Commission directed staff to develop interstate comparisons of important benchmark areas. The Commission was also interested in the effect of State expenditures on local personal property tax (car tax) relief and Revenue Stabilization (Rainy Day) Fund deposits on Virginia’s national rankings. In response, staff prepare a small publication consisting of tables comparing the 50 states on a variety of economic and demographic indicators. The document displays how the states rank on indicators such as population, personal income, revenues, taxes, employment, and tuition at State colleges and universities.

Monitor Expenditure Forecasts

(Periodic)

In 2000 and 2001, the fiscal analysis section presented the Commission with an overview of the forecasting methods and procedures used in developing four major “budget driver” forecasts: elementary and secondary education average daily membership (school attendance), higher education enrollment projections, Medicaid expenditures, and the State-responsible felon population. The review found that three of the four forecasts were strongly linked

to the State budget (the exception was higher education) and that the four forecasts used to prepare the FY 1999 budget were relatively accurate. The section reviews these expenditure forecasts on a periodic basis.

Other Oversight Activities

The Commission is responsible for several ongoing oversight activities assigned by statute. These responsibilities are assigned to JLARC management staff and team leaders although additional staff may occasionally be assigned to these duties. These oversight activities include reviews of internal service funds, proposed mandated health insurance benefits, and higher education institution management agreements. In addition, staff also periodically review Administrative Process Act exemptions. Staff also participate in the Inmate Forecast Technical Committee and the Debt Capacity Advisory Committee.

INTERNAL SERVICE FUNDS OVERSIGHT

JLARC monitors internal service funds on a continuing basis, pursuant to its authority under §2.2-803 of the *Code of Virginia*. The Commission reviews the status of fund accounts and evaluates requests to change the nature and scope of the services provided or the customers served. The Commission also approves in advance the rates employed by fund managers for billing customer agencies. JLARC monitors nine funds of the Department of General Services (DGS), three funds of the Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA), and one fund at the Department of Accounts (DOA). During 2011, the Commission will consider and act on any rate changes requested by DGS, VITA, and DOA internal service fund managers.

DGS Funds

1. *Virginia Distribution Center Fund* for the procurement and distribution of goods such as canned foods, paints, paper products, and cleaning supplies to State agencies, local governments, and school divisions.
2. *Office of Graphic Communications Fund* for graphic design, layout, photography, and typesetting services provided to State agencies.
3. *Building Operations Program Fund* for the building rent plan as well as special maintenance agreements between DGS and entities whose office space is located at the seat of government.

4. *State Surplus Property Operation Fund* for the management and disposal of surplus property for State agencies and institutions.
5. *Federal Surplus Property Operation Fund* for the acquisition and distribution of federal surplus property.
6. *Consolidated Laboratory Services Fund* for the laboratory analyses provided for the Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; the testing of motor fuels for the Virginia Department of Transportation; and the testing of drinking water samples for public waterworks.
7. *Division of Real Estate Services* for activities associated with real estate transactions by State agencies and institutions.
8. *Bureau of Capital Outlay Management Fund* for the review of plans and specifications for capital and non-capital State projects to ensure compliance with the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code.
9. *Fleet Management Fund* for the operation and management of the State's centralized fleet of passenger vehicles.

VITA Funds

1. *Computer Services Fund* for data processing and desktop computing services to State agencies.
2. *Automated Services Fund* for automated systems design, development, and maintenance services to State agencies.
3. *Telecommunications Services Fund* for telephone and data transmission services to State agencies.

DOA Fund

1. *Payroll Service Bureau* for centralized payroll processing services provided to some State agencies.

EVALUATION OF PROPOSED HEALTH INSURANCE MANDATES

Sections 2.2-2503 and 30-58.1 of the *Code of Virginia* direct JLARC to assess and evaluate proposed mandated health insurance benefits and report its findings to the Special Advisory Commission on Mandated Health Insurance Benefits. There were no mandated benefits proposed during the 2011 Session that will require a JLARC evaluation. However, House Bill 726 from the 2010 Session requires the Special Advisory Commission to review existing man-

dated health insurance benefits to assess their social and financial impact and their medical efficacy. This review has not been initiated, and JLARC staff's role in the review has not yet been determined.

OVERSIGHT OF THE VIRGINIA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AGENCY

Chapter 145 of the 2010 Virginia Acts of Assembly, and the 2010 Appropriation Act, direct JLARC to review and evaluate the Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA) on an ongoing basis and require a more defined review of VITA's internal service funds. The act requires oversight in three specific areas: (i) infrastructure and outsourcing; (ii) VITA's planning and oversight responsibilities, and (iii) VITA's procurement services and oversight of State agency procurement activities.

REVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS

The Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act, in §23-38.88 D.3 of the *Code of Virginia*, requires that JLARC review the initial management agreements implemented by institutions of higher education. The institutions that sign management agreements commit to meeting the 12 goals identified in the act. JLARC is to consider the degree to which the institutions with management agreements are meeting these goals, the overall degree of compliance of the institutions with the terms of the agreements, and the degree to which the institutions demonstrate the ability to successfully manage their operations under the agreements.

The JLARC review, in cooperation with the Auditor of Public Accounts, is to address institutional compliance with the agreement requirements during a time period of at least 24 months from the effective date of the agreements. In November 2005, the University of Virginia, Virginia Tech, and William and Mary executed agreements which became effective July 1, 2006. JLARC staff prepared a report on the compliance of these institutions with the management agreements (House Document 29, 2008). Virginia Commonwealth University has also executed a management agreement that went into effect July 1, 2008. JLARC staff will complete a review of that institution's compliance with its agreement prior to June 30, 2011, as directed by the act.

REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS ACT EXEMPTIONS

The Administrative Process Act (APA) applies to the creation and implementation of regulations by government agencies. The APA specifies that opportunities be provided for public notification and

comment on the regulations. Regulatory activity that is exempt from the APA in many cases does not allow for the same degree of opportunity for public notification and comment.

Section 2.2-4005 of the *Code of Virginia* requires that JLARC “shall conduct a review periodically of the exemptions authorized by this chapter. The purpose of this review shall be to assess whether there are any exemptions that should be discontinued or modified.” The provision that requires that JLARC’s review be performed “periodically” provides the Commission with the flexibility to initiate this activity at times when such a review appears warranted, such as when issues or concerns have been raised relative to regulatory agency use or abuse of the exemptions.

JLARC staff completed a comprehensive assessment of APA exemptions in September 2009. The study recommended the removal of three obsolete exemptions, which were discontinued by the 2010 General Assembly. The study also contains an appendix listing the rationales and usage of each of the exemptions, which should provide a good base of information for future assessments of the exemptions.

SUPPORT OF THE COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF VIRGINIA

In 2003, the General Assembly passed and the Governor signed House Bill 2097, the “Roadmap to Virginia’s Future.” This act provides that each agency develop strategic plan information and “performance measurement results.” The act also creates the Council on the Future of Virginia and (in §2.2-2686 of the *Code of Virginia*) directs JLARC to provide staff assistance to the council. JLARC staff will provide technical support as requested by the council in 2011.

PARTICIPATION ON THE INMATE FORECAST TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Since the late 1980s, the Secretary of Public Safety has overseen an annual process of forecasting future inmate populations. This process, known as “consensus forecasting,” is technical in nature, and is conducted by a forecast group comprised of representatives from JLARC and the Department of Corrections, the Department of Criminal Justice Services, the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission, and experts appointed by the Secretary of Public Safety from the fields of criminal justice, population forecasting, or other appropriate fields of study. The Deputy Director of the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission acts as chair of the technical advisory group. The staff methodologist represents JLARC in reviewing the development of forecast methodologies and alternative forecasts of the State’s prison and jail populations.

PARTICIPATION ON THE DEBT CAPACITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The JLARC director is a member of the Debt Capacity Advisory Committee created by the 1994 General Assembly. The committee is required to review the size and condition of the Commonwealth's tax-supported debt and submit to the Governor and General Assembly an estimate of the maximum amount of new tax-supported debt that may be prudently authorized for the next biennium. If necessary, the director submits an informational memorandum to the chairs of the money committees.

Division Management

Research projects are usually assigned to one of two research divisions, each headed by a division chief. Certain projects are also usually assigned to the deputy director, who will carry out the functions of a division chief for those projects.

The purpose of division management is to ensure quality products by supporting and monitoring the research and reporting activities of project teams. Division chiefs are responsible for maintenance of organizational standards, adherence to deadlines, effective communication, and overall coordination of specific research tasks for each project assigned to the division. Major division chief activities include providing conceptual and research support, evaluating personnel, reviewing products, coordinating organizational resources, substantively editing reports, and carrying out project research and leadership roles when necessary.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Produce high-quality reports that meet legislative needs for information.
- Promote the development of skilled and productive research teams.
- Manage projects to achieve consistency with workplans, deadlines, and staff resources.
- Support staff development through performance evaluation and training.
- Advise the director on broad organizational issues and participate in organizational planning.
- Promote clear and accurate communication throughout JLARC for project and personnel management purposes.
- Serve as a liaison with legislative committees and subcommittees formed under the Legislative Program Review and Evaluation Act or established for specific projects.
- Support research teams with the identification of issues and the development of project workplans.
- Develop and implement a framework for periodic monitoring of team products, processes, and documentation.

- Ensure that teams secure necessary organizational support in research methods, data processing, and report production.
- Advise teams on effective written and oral presentation of research findings and conclusions.
- Edit reports and briefings, as needed, for substance and style to ensure accurate, clear, and appropriate presentation to various audiences.
- Ensure that legislative committees receive appropriate information and logistical support.
- As necessary, serve as project leaders in lieu of team leaders who depart or are otherwise unable to successfully bring a project to closure.

WORK ACTIVITIES FOR 2011

Coordination and management of assigned research staff and projects are the fundamental activities of the divisions. The division chiefs advise their respective teams and monitor products throughout the research and report development process. They also participate in organizational planning, extended project reviews, staff development, and project follow-up activities.

Project Management

Each division chief meets with team leaders and team members to develop concepts, assess research and reporting processes and products, and monitor the status of projects. Projects are periodically discussed with the director.

Extended Review

The extended review process subjects major research products to the scrutiny of the director, deputy director, division chiefs, the staff methodologist, and the publications analyst. The reviews routinely occur at two stages of the research process: the workplan and pre-exposure stages. At both stages, products are examined for sufficiency of evidence, soundness of conceptualization and recommendations, and clarity of presentation.

Staff Development

Division chiefs participate in the performance appraisal of professional staff. They also provide formal and informal training and technical assistance, as needed, in aspects of project management, team building, research, and reporting.

Legislative Liaison

Division chiefs help coordinate related projects and serve as a point-of-contact for legislative committees involved with a functional area. As necessary, they facilitate arrangements, transfer information, and perform follow-up activities.

Research Methods

The research methods section supports teams in developing and carrying out evaluations of State programs and agencies. The staff methodologist consults with project teams concerning individual project needs and trains staff members in the use of research techniques.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Support the conceptualization, design, and implementation of research methods and techniques that produce valid results for the General Assembly.
- Develop and implement training activities to enhance staff members' capability to conduct applied research.
- Advise team members on research design, statistical methods, and data processing techniques to be used in the research process.
- Develop processes for providing technical assistance and consultation on JLARC studies.
- Provide technical assistance to the fiscal analysis section.

WORK ACTIVITIES FOR 2011

The research methods section actively participates in team-based projects, training, and special projects.

Team Support

The staff methodologist frequently consults with project teams to explore alternative design concepts for studies and to assist in implementation of the designs. In 2011, the staff methodologist will also provide direct support for the study of third grade reading proficiency in Virginia.

Training

Training offers an opportunity to enhance the capability of analysts to conduct research. The staff methodologist assesses the need for methods training and works with the deputy director to develop appropriate courses. Training activities include multiple-session courses, workshops, individual tutorials, and informal discussions.

Extended Review

The staff methodologist serves as a member of the extended review team. In addition to a general review of team projects, the staff methodologist is responsible for assessing the sufficiency of methods and analysis. The methodologist also verifies major analytic findings of reports.

Research Guide

The staff methodologist works with the deputy director to update the JLARC *Research Guide*. The *Research Guide* is an evolving reference that is intended to operationally define, formalize, and enhance research activities at JLARC.

Information Systems Support

Information systems support is provided by a number of resources within JLARC to assist teams in developing and carrying out increasingly sophisticated analyses of State programs.

Support activities include consulting with project teams concerning individual project needs as well as training staff members in the use of relevant software. In addition, JLARC research products are made available to the public on the primary JLARC website (<http://jlarc.virginia.gov>) and the *Guide to the Virginia Retirement System* website (<http://vrsguide.virginia.gov>).

Currently, most in-house information systems support is provided by the research support assistant and the publications analyst. Other staff also support this function primarily as in-house experts on applications or tools for which they have been specially trained. For example, several staff have received training on Microsoft Access, ArcView GIS, and SAS, and provide assistance to other staff members on those applications.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Advise team members on information processing techniques to be used in the research process.
- Provide technical assistance and consultation.
- Enhance the efficient use of available information processing resources, including personal computers.
- Support the availability and accessibility of computer resources used by the research staff.
- Make JLARC research products available to the General Assembly and the public on the JLARC website.
- Make the *Legislator's Guide to the Virginia Retirement System* available to the General Assembly and the public on the JLARC website.

WORK ACTIVITIES FOR 2011

IT support for the teams and administrative functions in 2011 will focus on development of surveys, use of Microsoft Office applications by research staff, management of in-house applications such

as the time allocation system, development of PDF forms for administrative processes, and hardware support as necessary.

Two major projects are also planned. The first is a redesign of the JLARC website to implement dynamic pages for document access and downloads. A new visual appearance is also planned. This project will be managed by the Division of Legislative Automated Systems. The second project is the deployment of Microsoft OneNote for use by research teams. A pilot with two teams in 2010 was successful, so OneNote will be deployed across most of the study teams as they begin new projects in 2011. Training on use of the software will be conducted internally by staff who participated in the pilot.

Publications and Graphics

The purpose of the publications and graphics section is to assist staff in developing research reports and briefings and in producing high-quality publications for use by the General Assembly and executive agencies. The publications analyst carries out the responsibilities of this program area.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Produce high-quality JLARC publications on a timely basis at a reasonable cost.
- Create high-quality informational graphics to enhance the communication of research findings in reports and briefings.
- Serve as a resource to staff concerning audiovisuals (including digital photography), presentation technology, and general communications.
- Consult with team members, team leaders, and division chiefs on formatting, writing, editing, and the use of graphics in research reports and other materials.
- Consult with the Division of Legislative Automated Systems' graphic designer on formatting, design, and use of graphics for research reports and other materials.
- Through self-training and systems development activities, maintain an in-house, state-of-the-art desktop publishing and presentation system to meet the organization's publications, presentation, and graphics needs.
- Contribute to the development of high-quality research reports through participation in each report's extended review.
- Develop and implement training programs such as style guides, workshops, and tutorials to increase staff skills in writing, presentations, word processing, and graphics.
- Orient new staff to the agency's writing style and templates for reports and presentations.
- Update and maintain the online *JLARC Style Guide* and other JLARC web pages.
- Explore audiovisual and computer resources available for use in training, professional development, graphics, presentation techniques, report production, and other areas.

- Lead special projects and participate in research studies as required by the director.

WORK ACTIVITIES FOR 2011

Report production is the primary function of the publications section. The section meets JLARC's needs for developing graphics, prepares reports for printing, and carries out other activities related to JLARC's reporting responsibilities.

Report Production

The publications section prepares reports for printing. The process has four main phases:

- *Graphic and Editorial Consultation.* From the time the project is assigned until the report goes into extended review, the research team works directly with the publications section as necessary on the preparation of graphics for report drafts and the briefing. Team leaders also consult with the publications analyst concerning composition, format, and editing.
- *Extended Review.* The publications analyst participates in every report's extended review process to critique organization, tone, format, effectiveness of the writing, general content, and graphics.
- *Editing.* The publications analyst reviews and edits report drafts for grammar, coherence, clarity, stylistic consistency, and format. Consultations are arranged as necessary with the project team members.
- *Preparation for Printing.* After the team has received the agency responses and made necessary changes to the report, it is given a final review by the publications analyst. The graphics are finalized, and final format decisions are made. The document is then converted to a pdf, the pdf is printed, and the hard copy is reviewed by the team leader and division chief and approved by the director. For the final disposition of legislative documents, the publications analyst coordinates with the Division of Legislative Automated Systems.

Other Products and Responsibilities

Besides producing final reports, the publications section prepares other final informational products for the organization.

- *Briefings.* Commission briefings in Senate Room A utilize a digital projection system. The publications analyst manages and applies this technology according to the agency's needs and trains analysts on its use. The publications analyst also

coordinates, provides graphics support, and acts as stage manager for the monthly staff briefings to the Commission.

- *Special Reports.* The publications analyst consults with the appropriate staff members to produce special JLARC publications such as the *VRS Oversight Report*, *Virginia Compared to the Other States*, and special studies conducted by the fiscal analysis section. Once each biennium, the publications analyst is also responsible for producing the *Report to the General Assembly*, which combines general information about JLARC's role with follow-up of recent studies.
- *General Communications.* The publications section frequently participates in the review and preparation of agency correspondence, award submissions, surveys, informational briefings about the agency, and internal forms and documents.

Publications Training

The publications analyst provides training to impart knowledge and improve skills of JLARC staff. Private writing tutorials and reviews of analysts' early drafts are also available upon request. New staff are trained in JLARC style, report formatting, and use of JLARC templates. Additional training areas may include informational graphics, advanced word processing, and presentation software and hardware.

General Computer Responsibilities

The publications analyst assists staff with problems with the agency's personal computers and printers, the formatting of documents for use on the website, maintenance of selected web pages, and system coordination with the Division of Legislative Automated Systems.

Follow-Up and Reporting Activities

Biennially, the publications analyst coordinates efforts to track implementation of study recommendations made in the past four years. Agencies use an online questionnaire to report any actions taken in response to recommendations, as well as savings resulting from those actions. Agency responses are maintained in an Access database. Consulting with the director and project leaders, the publications analyst prepares JLARC's biennial *Report to the General Assembly*. This report summarizes recent studies, provides follow-up information on selected older studies, and reports the number of recommendations that have been implemented and the resulting savings to the Commonwealth. The next edition of this biennial report is due in September 2011.

Business Management and Office Services

The business management and office services section is responsible for the administrative functions of the office. It is under the general supervision of the deputy director. The business management function includes budgeting, fiscal, personnel and human resource activities, along with general administrative management of the office. The fiscal and human resources manager (business manager) oversees the daily operations of the section.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Provide a responsive, service-oriented function for the office's research mission.
- Ensure an effective system of internal control to provide accountability, promote operational efficiency, strengthen compliance, and reduce the risk of financial or other asset losses due to fraud, waste, or abuse.
- Execute the budget plan and monitor expenses and receipts for compliance, as well as monitor and control expenditures for the current year for appropriateness, accuracy, and timely processing.
- Administer the payroll, oversee the timely completion of staff evaluations, monitor payroll deductions, and activate salary adjustments.
- Conduct all administrative preparation and follow-up for Commission meetings, including polling of members, copying and organizing documents, and drafting meeting minutes.
- Monitor and manage employee leave balances and track project hours and other staff activities through the time allocation system.
- Monitor and control fixed assets and inventory.
- Coordinate human resources and personnel services for the office.
- Assist in preparation for and orientation of new staff members.
- Administer employee benefit programs and assist staff in their efforts to access current information.

- Maintain the *JLARC Administrative Manual* and inform staff of policy and procedural changes or developments.
- Carry out responsibilities as outlined in the records management policies and procedures, including maintenance of agency archives.
- Ensure that the research staff is provided with accurate and timely document reproduction, word processing, and data entry support.
- Coordinate travel arrangements for research teams in the conduct of field work.
- Organize legislative tracking activities.
- Coordinate parking for agency staff.
- Provide opportunities for the support staff to receive training to enhance current skills and capabilities.
- Integrate office logistics and office activities.
- Provide quality phone and reception coverage.

WORK ACTIVITIES FOR 2011

Budgeting

Budgeting activities include establishing and monitoring the budget plan and processing and controlling agency expenditures. The current budget year's expenditures are monitored and controlled to ensure that prompt payment, reporting, and other established guidelines are met. Appropriate budget worksheets are prepared annually to ensure expenditures are maintained within the budget limits.

Payroll/Personnel

Required reconciliations are completed and leave balances are monitored to ensure accurate payment to employees and proper withholding. The preparation of personnel evaluations is monitored to ensure timely completion and processing.

Benefits

In order to keep abreast of all changes to employee benefits and to provide staff with accurate and current information, the section manager continues to attend benefit administrator meetings. The section manager is responsible for providing information to and assisting employees with health care benefits, flexible reimbursement accounts, optional life insurance, long-term care insurance, deferred compensation, savings bonds, and retirement benefits. Throughout the year, the section manager also assists employees with updating or changing their health care memberships or plans

when qualifying conditions occur. The section will continue to assist with and inform employees about benefit changes related to the Virginia Retirement System, the Virginia Sickness and Disability Program, the Long-Term Care Insurance Program, Optional Group Life coverage, and the Deferred Compensation Plan. As benefits continue to change, the section manager distributes accurate and timely information and answers staff questions.

Commission Meeting Preparation

The administrative section is also responsible for preparing all materials used for JLARC Commission meetings. These include generating a Commission meeting preparation list, mailing materials to Commission members prior to meeting dates, copying and organizing all meeting materials, distributing meeting materials to Commission members, and drafting meeting minutes. After the completion of Commission meetings, the section processes members' travel reimbursements and assists with preparing reports and other materials for posting on the agency website.

Records Management

The records manager, with the assistance of the administrative section, will carry out the responsibilities as outlined in the agency's records management policy.

Revision of JLARC's *Administrative Manual*

The section manager distributes revisions to JLARC's *Administrative Manual* on an ongoing basis. As a result of converting the manual to the Adobe PDF format, making and distributing updates and changes to the manual has become a more timely and efficient process. In addition, online publication of the administrative manual has reduced labor and other costs associated with producing hard copies, and has provided staff with desktop access to the manual. By producing the manual in the Adobe PDF format and on the desktop, staff can easily access links to websites containing additional benefits information and other State and federal policies.

Document Processing

There is regular involvement with the research staff to promote a steady workflow of material through word processing and data entry assistance. Further, support staff assists with document reproduction activities.

Training and Development

Training and professional development are largely the responsibility of the individual, but JLARC offers an annual training program to ensure that staff have skills appropriate to work requirements. Each staff member, in conjunction with his or her supervisor, assesses personal strengths and weaknesses. Individual staff members can then pursue self-directed study (such as online software courses or writing webinars), training, university courses, or other options. The training program is coordinated by the fiscal and human resources manager.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Maintain an organizational training program that promotes the accomplishment of agency missions and goals.
- Orient new staff to JLARC processes and procedures.
- Provide staff with greater opportunities to grow and succeed.
- Strengthen JLARC's approach to organizational and team management.
- Provide staff with appropriate training opportunities to improve work performance and enhance their capacity for greater responsibility.
- Provide staff with training opportunities on presentation skills and techniques.

TRAINING PROGRAM

Staff training activities are designed to improve job performance. Job performance can be enhanced through meaningful learning experiences that impart knowledge, improve skills, or change attitudes.

Assessment of Training Needs

An ongoing assessment of training needs is conducted for the research and administrative staff. This assessment may include consideration of staff requests for training, review of education and training courses already taken by staff, and review of performance reports. This year a comprehensive assessment of the JLARC research process has also included an assessment of training needs.

Training Activities

Based on organizational and individual needs, a training program is designed and implemented annually. The program contains training and education courses aimed at meeting JLARC's overall training and staff development needs. While the organization will attempt to provide opportunities for staff to acquire the skills necessary for advancement, responsibility ultimately rests with the individual. Staff members are expected to be proactive in identifying and addressing their own needs. Opportunities for training include

- in-house training courses and ongoing tutorials,
- programs conducted by other State agencies,
- limited university tuition reimbursement for pre-approved coursework,
- consultant-conducted classes or programs at JLARC,
- outside seminars and training sessions, including continuing education and skills development classes at State universities and community colleges,
- self-directed writing or reading programs, and
- others as requested and approved.

Training courses will be designed to strengthen staff research, managerial, technical, and human relations skills.

2011 Training Activities

Specific activities for the 2011 training program are included in Table 2 (next page). In addition to these ongoing training opportunities, a project leader training program is currently being developed to provide further training to analysts who have been recently selected to lead research teams. A training package is also being prepared to facilitate the assimilation of new hires.

COMMONHEALTH PROGRAM

CommonHealth is the Employee Wellness Program provided by the Department of Human Resource Management, with a selected member of the JLARC staff serving as the agency's coordinator. In addition to serving JLARC staff and their families, the CommonHealth program is also available to staff of other legislative agencies, including the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees.

JLARC staff have been active participants in the statewide Healthy Virginians initiative, encouraging staff to increase physi-

cal activity and decrease caloric intake. As part of this initiative, staff are encouraged to take time-out and walk an additional 15 minutes each day and participate in local charity walks. For their ongoing support of this program, JLARC staff received a Gold Level of participation and the agency was recognized as a Healthy Workplace.

The CommonHealth program operates on a quarterly system in which the program for each quarter is pre-determined. JLARC staff will continue to participate in the program offered each quarter, in addition to the other recurring CommonHealth-sponsored programs. These programs include Future Moms, blood drives, fitness center discounts, and seasonal immunizations.

Table 2: 2011 Training Program

Periodic or Special Training	Provider
Legislative Staff Management Institute	NCSL
Fundamentals for Supervisors	VCU
Commonwealth Management Institute Training	VCU
Virginia Executive Institute	VCU
Health Care Benefits	DHRM/Selected Staff
Human Resource Leadership Conference	DHRM
Library of Virginia Orientation	Library of Virginia Staff
Agency Risk Management & Internal Control Systems	DOA
NCSL/NLPES Programs, Training	NCSL/NLPES Trainers
Microsoft Office® Applications Training	Selected Staff / Outside Trainers
Geographic Information Systems / Mapping Training	Selected Staff / Outside Trainers
Lexis-Nexis Training	Legislative Services Staff
Lobbyist-in-a-box Training	DLAS, Selected Staff
Certificate in Evaluation Practice	The Evaluator's Institute
Management Skills Training	University of Richmond
Ongoing Training	Provider
CARS, CIPPS (Payroll), Fiscal Management Training	DOA
Software Tutorials	Selected Staff, DLAS
New Employee Orientation	Lambert, Other Staff
Writing and Graphics Tutorials	Erwin
CommonHealth Activities	Whorley
Retirement System Benefits Training	VRS
Benefits Administration Training	DHRM
Records Management Training	Irby
Worker's Compensation Training	DHRM

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