

Study Resolution

Virginia Community College System

Authorized by the Commission on November 7, 2024

WHEREAS, Virginia employers need a quality workforce including candidates with associate degrees and technical certifications and credentials, and wages for individuals without four year degrees have been rising after decades of stagnation; and

WHEREAS, despite these workforce needs and trends, community college enrollment has declined 23% over the past decade, and 11 colleges lost more than 20% of their enrollment; and

WHEREAS, the Appropriation Act specifies that funds available to the Virginia Community College System be reallocated to accommodate changes in enrollment and other cost factors at each of the community colleges; and

WHEREAS, the 2024 General Assembly established the College and Career Ready Virginia Fund and required local school divisions to offer no cost dual enrollment courses for the Passport Program and the Uniform Certificate of General Studies Program; and

WHEREAS, VCCS's six-year plan discusses the community college system's enrollment declines, and details a plan to transform the system through a focus on (1) adults who need to reskill or upskill to improve their employment options, and (2) high school students who want to earn a postsecondary credential to improve their employment options; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission that staff be directed to review how well the Virginia Community College System is adapting to the changing higher education landscape. In conducting its review, staff shall assess: (i) trends in enrollment and its composition, and its impact on tuition and fee revenue; (ii) student outcomes and how well the community college system provides students the necessary skills and credentials to meet the workforce needs of Virginia employers; (iii) the use of virtual instruction and other innovative approaches to fully utilize instructional capacity and meet student needs; (iv) opportunities offered to high school students to gain a postsecondary credential or degree through concurrent enrollment or other strategies; (v) ways to gain operational efficiencies given trends in enrollment and its composition; and (vi) how other states have adapted their community college systems to improve student outcomes, programmatic alignment with workforce needs, or operational efficiency.

JLARC shall make recommendations as necessary and review other issues as warranted.

All agencies of the Commonwealth, including the Virginia Community College System, State Board for Community Colleges, State Council for Higher Education in Virginia, local school divisions, public four year institutions, Virginia Office of Educational Economics, Virginia Employment Commission, Virginia Department of Workforce Development and Advancement, Department of Planning and Budget, and Secretary of Education shall provide assistance, information, and data to

JLARC for this study, upon request. JLARC staff shall have access to all information in the possession of agencies pursuant to § 30-59 and § 30-69 of the Code of Virginia. No provision of the Code of Virginia shall be interpreted as limiting or restricting the access of JLARC staff to information pursuant to its statutory authority.