

Recommendations: Spending and Efficiency at Higher Education Institutions

RECOMMENDATION 1

The General Assembly may wish to consider amending § 23.1-1303 of the Code of Virginia to expressly include in the duties of boards of visitors at public four-year higher education institutions the responsibility to fully consider the impact that policies and decisions in non-instructional areas—such as intercollegiate athletics, institution-funded research, and staffing levels for non-instructional positions—have on student costs. (Chapter 7)

RECOMMENDATION 2

The General Assembly may wish to consider amending § 23.1-306 of the Code of Virginia to require as part of the six-year planning process that institutions experiencing reductions in cost efficiency because of declining enrollment report their efforts to improve efficiency and/or better align operations with enrollment levels by (i) reducing unnecessary staffing, (ii) eliminating low enrollment academic programs, and (iii) reducing facilities' square footage. (Chapter 7)

RECOMMENDATION 3

As part of the six-year planning process, OpSix should (i) monitor efficiency efforts and steps taken by institutions to better align operations with enrollment levels, and (ii) recommend that updated or subsequent plans identify further efforts to improve spending efficiency or better align operations with enrollment levels when necessary. (Chapter 7)

RECOMMENDATION 4

The General Assembly may wish to consider amending § 23.1-1303 of the Code of Virginia to constrain the amount of student fees and institutional funds that can be allocated to intercollegiate athletics by establishing a maximum proportion of the total cost of attendance that student fees and institutional funds cannot exceed per student. (Chapter 7)
