

From: faculty_senate_of_virginia Discussion List
[mailto:FACULTY_SENATE_OF_VIRGINIA@LISTSERV.VT.EDU] **On Behalf Of** Lollar, James G
Sent: Thursday, February 10, 2011 5:57 PM
To: FACULTY_SENATE_OF_VIRGINIA@LISTSERV.VT.EDU
Subject: Legislative Update



FSVA Senators and Colleagues,

Attached is the most recent update regarding the status of legislation in the General Assembly of interest to higher education (thanks to Brian Turner for an excellent summary). As previously communicated, based on actions taken in the House and Senate over the past week, it appears the Governor's proposal to reduce the state's contribution to faculty retirement plans will not be adopted by the General Assembly. However, it also appears that the Senate will use the issue in the conference budget committee to gain leverage for K-12 education and other initiatives. The reality of state politics is that nothing is totally over until the General Assembly adjourns, but we are fairly confident that faculty will be held harmless on the retirement plan issue this session.

The other significant legislation that we should be evaluating is the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HB 2510; SB 1459). The full text of these bills can be reviewed at the following web links:

<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?ses=111&typ=bil&val=HB2510&Submit2=Go>

<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?ses=111&typ=bil&val=SB1459>

While many of the details are unclear at this time, and the House and Senate bills contain some differences in scope, both versions offer what I consider some positive direction for higher education, with several areas of concern that need to be addressed. For example, the specific roles of the new "advisory commission" as it relates to SCHEV remains largely undefined. Second, a stated desire of moving academic institutions to a "12 month" operation could prove costly in terms of resources needed to appropriately staff and support the change—depending on what it means to have "optimal year round utilization of resources and other efficiency reforms." I have also attached a copy of the *"Final Report of the Governor's Commission on Higher Education Reform, Innovation, and Investment" that provided the foundation for the Higher Education Opportunity Act.* I encourage you to read the report and legislation, and express your support or concerns directly to your Delegate and Senator.

If you have any questions or additional concerns you want me to address in my visits next week at the General Assembly, please let me know.

Again, thank you for responding to the call for help—you were heard, and you made a difference!

Jim

James G. Lollar, Ph.D.
President, Faculty Senate of Virginia
(540) 831-5121