

**THE CRISIS IN HIGHER EDUCATION
IN VIRGINIA AND A SOLUTION**

Report of the

VIRGINIA ADVISORY LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

To the

THE GOVERNOR

and

The GENERAL ASSEMBLY of VIRGINIA



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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON PUBLIC EDUCATION IN VIRGINIA
AND A SOLUTION

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THE VIRGINIA ADVISORY LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, AUGUST 15, 1955.

To:

HONORABLE THOS. B. STANLEY, *Governor of Virginia*

and

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA.

The General Assembly of Virginia at its 1954 regular session adopted House Joint Resolution No. 46, directing the Virginia Advisory Legislative Council to study and report on the educational opportunity offered by the extension services of the various universities and colleges of the State. The text of this resolution is as follows:

Whereas, previous Virginia Advisory Legislative Council studies have indicated that a large number of high school graduates cannot afford to attend the colleges and universities of the State; and

Whereas, it is anticipated that the number of high school graduates will increase tremendously within the next decade and exceed the present capacity of our institutions of higher learning; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Virginia Advisory Legislative Council be, and hereby is, directed to make a study and report on the educational opportunity offered by the extension services of the various universities and colleges, with the view of determining whether such extension services can and should be developed to meet the higher education needs of those who cannot afford to attend the State universities and colleges. The Council shall consider the relationship of the various extension programs now being offered in relation to the overall educational requirements of the State; their curriculum and accrediting of courses for the purpose of conferral of degrees by the institutions of higher learning.

All agencies of the State government having knowledge and interest in these matters shall assist the Council, on request, in the prosecution of its study. The Council shall complete its investigation and make its report to the Governor and General Assembly not later than September thirty, nineteen hundred fifty-five.

The Council selected Robert Y. Button, of Culpeper, member of the Senate and of the Council, as Chairman of a committee to make the initial study and report to the Council. The following persons were selected as members of this committee: Harrison Mann, of Arlington, member of the House of Delegates; J. Earl Moreland, of Ashland, President, Randolph-Macon College; Walter S. Newman, of Blacksburg, President, Virginia Polytechnic Institute; W. N. Neff, of Abingdon, former member of the Senate of Virginia and member of the State Board of Education; J. Hoge Tyler, III, of Norfolk, former member of the Senate of Virginia; and George B. Zehmer of Charlottesville, Director, Extension Division, University of Virginia.

The Committee consulted with informed persons in the field of higher education in Virginia, assembled and studied available data bearing on the problem, held conferences with the heads of the State supported institutions of higher learning and with representatives of the Association of Virginia Colleges, an organization composed of the institutions of higher learning in Virginia.

The Committee concluded its deliberations and submitted its report to the Council. The Council has reviewed the report of the Committee and now submits the following findings and recommendations:

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Institutions of higher learning in Virginia are now operating at full capacity, and all available evidence indicates a tremendous increase in those seeking admission. The general population in Virginia has been steadily increasing during recent years and conservative estimates indicate that the population of college age will increase by at least one-half in the next 20 years. It seems highly probable that the number of Virginia high school graduates desiring to go to college will increase substantially beyond presently planned increases in the physical plant of the existing institutions. If the educational needs of these students are to be met, additional facilities must be provided.

The most economical way of providing higher education for the greatly increased number of students requiring it, and at the same time maintaining standards comparable to those of our present educational plant, is the organization, in densely populated communities, of branches of existing institutions offering the first two years of college education. The location and sponsorship of such institutions should be determined by the General Assembly and to assist it in making this determination there should be a legislative commission charged with making the necessary investigations upon the basis of which the specific locations and sponsoring institutions may be selected. If the General Assembly should decide that there should be created a Board of Higher Education, to exercise certain supervisory functions in connection with the existing institutions, such investigations could well be made by that Board without the necessity of creating an additional Commission.

There is also a demand in fast growing industrialized areas for institutions to provide the technical training beyond the high school level which is essential to provide competent supervisory personnel in modern industrial plants. Industry in some areas has shown a willingness to share in the development of such an educational program. The commission suggested above should also be charged with determining the feasibility of projects of this nature and the extent of support which would be forthcoming.

The practicability of branch institutions has been demonstrated in Virginia. The Norfolk divisions of the College of William and Mary and Virginia State College, the Richmond Professional Institute, a division of William and Mary, the Danville branch of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and the recent establishment of a similar institution at Wise by the University of Virginia have met local needs in those areas. In order to meet additional needs which are not now being taken care of by existing facilities, it is recommended that the present university center in Arlington County be developed into a branch of the University of Virginia offering two year courses, both in the field of liberal arts and in other subjects for which there is sufficient demand in that area.

THE VIRGINIA PROBLEM

Throughout the entire United States, educational authorities are confronted with a problem similar to that in Virginia. During the early years of the present decade approximately two million students were enrolled in colleges and universities throughout the nation. According to estimates of the United States Office of Education the enrollment, nation-wide, will have increased to three and one-half million by 1969.

The situation in Virginia is similar. Dr. Lorin A. Thompson, Director of the Bureau of Population and Economic Research, estimates that the present population of Virginia between 18 and 21 years of age is 199,640. Without any allowance for the continuation of the immigration to Virginia which has been the experience of the past 20 years, the population 18-21 years of age in 1970 is estimated to be 307,521. Based upon this figure, he further estimates that the probable minimum enrollment in institutions of higher learning in the year 1970 will be 48,624 (which is conservative as compared to other estimates); this compares with approximately 32,000 at the present time.

It should be emphasized that the figures stated above are absolute minimums. If the effect of continued in-migration is considered, Dr. Thompson's estimated enrollment for 1970 is 52,937.

A similar study made by Dr. John K. Folger, staff associate, Southern Regional Education Board, estimates a total college enrollment for Virginia for the year 1969-70 of 63,155, nearly double the present enrollment.

In December, 1954, a survey of Virginia institutions of higher learning was made by G. Tyler Miller, President, Madison College, at the request of the Association of Virginia Colleges. This was entirely independent of the tabulations which were made in connection with this study, but the results were substantially identical. A summary of his findings as to the anticipated capacities of the public and private institutions in 1969-70 appears as Exhibit 2 to this report, and indicates that, *if all present plans for expansion are carried out* by both public and private institutions, the total capacity for 1969-70 will be 50,630.

The *minimum* estimate which has been made of the potential enrollment for the year 1969-70 is over 48,000. Mr. Miller, in his paper, points out that the 1954 fall enrollment has already exceeded by 1797 students the number estimated by Mr. Thompson. In the light of this experience it seems apparent that a more accurate figure for potential students would be between Dr. Thompson's estimate and that of Dr. Folger—about 55,000. The maximum number which can be accommodated in present Virginia institutions, if they can expand to the full extent of present plans, is 50,630, as shown in Exhibit 2.

The above figures include the plans of private institutions for expansion to take care of their share of the anticipated increase in enrollments. There is nothing certain about increases in the capacities of any of the present institutions, inasmuch as funds are not presently on hand and available to provide for any of the increased dormitory space or other facilities which will be required. Particularly is expansion of the private institutions problematical, since the money for such expansion must be raised from private sources, and that in the face of constantly increasing costs for ordinary operating and maintenance costs.

In summary, therefore, it seems evident that even if all the present expansion plans of the private institutions are carried out in detail, and the publicly supported institutions receive the full amounts of the appropriations which they are currently seeking, many more students will be seeking admission to the institutions of higher learning in the State than can be accommodated.

Great concern has been expressed by persons interested in higher education in Virginia for many years because the percentage of Virginians who attend college is substantially lower than that in the nation as a whole. The Virginia ratio of college students to the population 18-21 years of age is 14.8% which compares with a figure of 29.6% for the country. Thus only half as many Virginians aged 18 to 21 attend college as the national average. It is certainly to be hoped and anticipated that this situation will improve. A trend in this direction may be inferred from the fact that while in 1942-43 only 20.9% of high school graduates entered college, by 1947-48 this percentage had risen to 26.7, and in 1952-53 (the latest year for which data are available) the figure was 33.3%. It has been estimated that approximately 1,000 high school graduates in the upper one-fourth of their classes are unable, for financial or other reasons, to secure the college education for which they are intellectually qualified. Increasing prosperity throughout the Commonwealth will permit many of these children to attend college and will, from the standpoint of the capacity of the educational plant, further complicate the problem.

WAYS IN WHICH THE PROBLEM CAN BE MET

Faced with the two basic facts—that many thousand more young Virginians will seek college educations in Virginia during the next 15 years and that existing facilities will be inadequate to deal with the situation—the Council has explored the possible means of meeting the need. It has been constantly borne in mind that higher education must and will be provided for the youth of this State. It is not right that children growing to adulthood in Virginia during the next twenty years should be deprived of the training which will enable them to compete successfully against youth who are adequately educated in other states. It is frequently pointed out that the last half of this century will be an age of mechanization and engineering and of scientific development, in which any region lacking the technically trained men and women necessary to direct complex industrial processes, must sink to an economically inferior level and stay there. We have advanced greatly in the past twenty years. We must do as well in the next twenty.

Virginia cannot look to institutions situated in other states to educate her youth. As indicated above, the problem is a national one, and the institutions in other states will be overcrowded also. If the demands are not met within Virginia, the result must inevitably be a more and more restrictive process of selection or overcrowding on the part of the colleges

and universities and the denial of the opportunity for academic training to those who do not meet standards which in many cases fail to reflect the applicants' ultimate educational potential.

Various solutions have been advanced for meeting the problem, as follows:

Greater utilization of present facilities. Suggestions have been received that the existing institutions could, by full utilization of their present plants, accommodate a portion of the expected increase in enrollment.

In considering this problem, however, certain difficulties should be anticipated, as follows:

Greater use of existing facilities on this basis will require additional faculty and some additional supplies and equipment and administrative and operational personnel.

Recognition should be taken of the fact that a certain physical exhaustion occurs near the end of a long day regardless of the number of hours taught. Accordingly, the whole scheme would call for a scheduling of instructors' time so they would normally have morning and afternoon hours only or late afternoon and evening hours only. Due consideration should be also given to faculty assignments to committees and other essential, additional housekeeping assignments.

Also, there is the extracurricular activities problem. Throughout the history of college and university life the value of concerts, lectures, demonstrations, seminars, etc.,—intangible values to be sure but real nevertheless—have been recognized. Presently such activities are provided principally during afternoon and evening hours. Unless careful thought and planning are given to this problem, the extension of the teaching day into the afternoon and evening hours will mean a great cultural loss to many members of the faculty and the student body.

Finally, the problem of scheduling classes throughout a twelve hour day presents itself. This already troublesome problem would be considerably magnified when the attempt is made to schedule classes to meet in the afternoons and evenings, which might be necessary to make the fullest use of existing facilities.

Enlargement of present facilities. The long-range plans of the several State institutions of higher learning for the expansion of their facilities have recently been considered by the Commission appointed by the Governor to make a study of capital outlay needs of all State agencies. That Commission had before it detailed requests from the several institutions for programs which, according to reports made to the Commission, will increase the anticipated capacity approximately one-half. Those requests, totaling approximately \$70,000,000, were considered by the Commission on Capital Outlays in the light of the needs of other State agencies and institutions and anticipated State revenues, and some of the requests were included in its report. Even if the General Assembly approves all the requests, it is expected that the demands for higher education within the next fifteen years will exceed facilities available.

If the estimated numbers of students seeking higher education materializes, it will then be too late to make plans to provide for them. Buildings to house these students cannot be erected overnight, nor adequate faculties to instruct them assembled quickly. Efforts to meet the demand after it has actually arisen will be mere makeshifts, and will prove far more costly than carefully planned development of the State's educa-

tional plant to be ready for these students as they are ready to attend. In the light of the approaching crisis in higher education in Virginia it does not appear that the Commonwealth can afford to deal with emergencies only as they arise. Only by thoughtful, long-range planning, in advance of the need, can the most adequate application of the State's tax revenues be made.

Increasing Percentage of Virginians at State-supported Institutions. There is no overall policy among the several State institutions of higher learning on admission of non-Virginia students. Higher tuition fees are charged out-of-State students, but although this matter has been given some study in the past, little uniformity has resulted. The percentage of non-Virginians has ranged from less than four per cent to more than forty per cent at different institutions and at different times. It might be pointed out that those institutions with large endowments (to which contributions have been made by non-Virginians) have tended to admit larger percentages of out-of-State students.

It is not within the purview of this study to consider the admissions policy of the several institutions. At the present time this is a matter wholly within the discretion of the institutional authorities. But attention is called to the fact that hundreds of non-Virginians are being educated at our State institutions and as pressures grow for education of native students, there will be demands for action looking toward a reduction of the number of out-of-State students who are admitted. However, it must also be recognized that a relatively small number of students is involved at most of the institutions and also that increasing pressures upon colleges and universities in other states may make it more difficult for Virginians to be educated elsewhere. The balance in interstate exchange of college students is now in Virginia's favor, and if this changes, a greater burden will be thrown upon the Virginia institutions.

Extension Courses. Institutions in this State have had considerable experience in the field of providing extension courses in various subjects. Some of these have been in the nature of correspondence courses, others have been classes taught away from the campus of the sponsoring institution by members of its staff. The University of Virginia through its extension division and through experimental "university centers" has participated extensively in this field and the College of William and Mary has also supplied needs for this type of instruction over a wide area in Tidewater Virginia. Virginia State College is extensively engaged in providing such courses where they are desired, and the Virginia Polytechnic Institute offers a wide variety of programs in its field throughout the State, both on the adult and undergraduate levels.

Extension courses, as the term is usually used, cannot alone meet the general demand which will be felt for academic training for college age students. They are by their nature generally restricted to those types of courses which can be taught with limited laboratory equipment and library facilities. They have proved most useful in providing needed adult education in areas where general college facilities are not present. Yet even in those areas where demand and population density have permitted the organization of extension classes, it has not been found possible to provide general collegiate education in the variety and sequence required in degree programs.

Community Colleges. Careful consideration has been given to the experience of other states in the development of independent "community

colleges" offering, generally, two years of college training in small institutions located in the smaller centers of population. Some success has been had with such institutions, but there are many disadvantages which appear to militate against the adoption of a State policy of supporting the development of such institutions. It has been extremely difficult to maintain uniform standards of quality for the instruction offered by such community colleges, and in some instances accreditation by the recognized accrediting associations has not been obtained. This had resulted in a waste on the part of many students of the time and money expended in the expectation that, after completing the offered two year course, they might continue their education at an accredited four year institution.

Also it has been found that more is demanded locally of the community college type of institution than its character will permit to be accomplished. Residents of the areas where such colleges are located tend to demand curriculum offerings and other facilities which are the equal of those of the larger, established institutions and have become disgruntled when these have not been provided. There has also been a tendency to seek expansion of such colleges to four year institutions regardless of the needs and capabilities of the educational system of the states as a whole.

It must be pointed out that private two year institutions have not been subject to the disadvantages commented on above. The governing boards of these colleges have generally been fully realistic as to the mission which could be successfully performed by them, and in Virginia the ten established private junior colleges are providing two years of college work for approximately 10% of the enrollment of college students in the State.

Branch Institutions in Populous Areas. A "branch" of an existing accredited institution of higher learning, consists of a center of instruction under the sponsorship of the parent institution but located away from its campus where it owns or occupies on a long-term lease a physical plant, maintains full-time administrative and faculty personnel, offers a prescribed program of study providing two or more years of standard work leading to a degree or degrees in general or professional studies.

Branches of existing institutions offer many advantages over independent community colleges. Initially, and of vital importance, is the fact that the reputation of the parent institution is a stake in the operation of the branch. The branch is under the control of the parent institution and the standards of education offered there can accordingly be held to the same level as those of the sponsoring college or university. The problem of accreditation does not arise as acutely. The branch, provided it meets the fixed standards of the regional accrediting body, will have much the same standing as the sponsoring institution, and students who attend the branch can transfer with full credit to the sponsoring institution in case they desire to pursue their education through four years of college, and other institutions will generally accept their credits.

The branch is less expensive, both to the State and to the student, than would be comparable education at a four year institution. To secure full accreditation it must build or lease its physical facilities, which precludes the use, during off hours, of public school buildings, but if it is located in an area with sufficient population, it need have no dormitory facilities, thus eliminating one of the major costs at the usual four year college. To some extent also the administrative and supervisory costs of a separate institution can be minimized insofar as the branch is concerned. Tuition costs can be higher at the branch than at the central institution and yet result in a lower overall cost to the student since he can

live at home and be spared the costs of board and lodging. Therefore the operations of the branch can be more nearly self-supporting.

The limited experience which has been had in Virginia with the operation of branch institutions and university centers, as well as the more extensive experience which other states have had, indicates that a measure of local support can be expected for an educational institution which serves primarily the needs of the locality. This is especially true of the branch-type institution since, as is noted above, the quality of instruction will be comparable to that of the parent institution and the reputation of the parent institution is the student's assurance that he will receive proper credit for his studies at the branch. The people of the locality take a proprietary interest in such a school and are willing to put forth the necessary effort to build it up and improve the education which it gives to a much greater degree than is true of an institution located elsewhere.

The establishment of branch institutions offering only two years in a college curriculum will have two considerable advantages which will lessen the costs and strengthen the program offerings at the four year institutions. In the first place it may be possible to develop in branch institutions terminal courses of education which will be adequate for a large number of the students who might otherwise apply for admission to the four year institutions. The requirements of a terminal course are of course fundamentally different from those in the first two years of a degree course and if it proves feasible to have such offerings in branches, the four year institutions can concentrate on their primary function—degree offerings.

The number of dropouts and turnover in enrollment in the first two years of college education is materially greater than that in the last two years. Many students matriculate in college who either are not intellectually qualified to do work at the college level or who do not have sufficient ambition to complete their college training. The existing four year institutions are compelled to take these students and a part of their expensive plants are thus partially wasted. There is no possibility under our present system of screening out any large number of the students who for one reason or another prove to be dropouts. Insofar as students of this type attend the branch institutions which are recommended, their capabilities and intentions will be determined at a lesser cost both to themselves and to the State, thus leaving the facilities available at the four year colleges to students who will take full advantage of them.

The proposed branches can also make a substantial contribution in one field of education in which a grave shortage is developing. Facilities for education in nursing in Virginia are not now adequate. The pattern of nurses' education has been undergoing material changes in recent years to meet the needs developed by advances in medical science. More and more there is demand for nurses with highly specialized skills, and providing this training is expensive, both for the student and for the institutions which furnish it. The candidate for a professional degree in nursing could receive her initial year's training at her home, in an institution offering a general curriculum, before transferring to the institution where she would receive the necessary specialized instruction, thus making maximum use of the facilities now available for advanced training and effecting a material increase in the supply of nurses.

Industrial development has also created a demand for post-high school education below the professional level which is now not generally available in Virginia. In many industrial plants, technically trained personnel

are needed for supervisory positions, but professional skills are not required. This need has been particularly acutely felt in the Roanoke area. It has been suggested that financial participation of the interested industries might be obtained and the cost to the State might be held to a minimum. The possibilities of integration of this type of education into the overall educational system of Virginia should be borne in mind.

It is not recommended that branch institutions be established in great number. They can be justified only where there is sufficient population in the immediate area or within a reasonable radius, such as 25 miles, to insure that the enrollment will be sufficient to justify the staff, overhead, capital outlay and administrative expense required. Inasmuch as such institutions would be established primarily to meet local needs and to enable students in the communities to secure college training which they might not otherwise get, or to reduce the over-all cost of their college educations, it is felt that the citizens of the political subdivisions which would be served should assist in the financial outlay necessary for locating a branch in such a community, although the extent of local capabilities would vary from locality to locality, and no requirement for a fixed amount of local participation in the capital outlay costs of initiating such a branch should be made a prerequisite to its establishment.

The selection of areas in which branches might successfully be operated should not be a function of the several State educational institutions. This determination must be made by the General Assembly, which must consider the needs of the State as a whole. It is accordingly recommended that a Commission be established to consider the mechanics of establishing branch institutions, determine what locations might be suitable therefor in cooperation with both public and private institutions throughout the State, choose the existing State institutions which might best be chosen to operate such branches, establish the cost to the State of such institutions as are found to be required to meet the rising needs, and report on these matters to the next regular session of the General Assembly. This Commission would not be charged with consideration of operating details or with the establishment of policies at any of the established parent institutions. Such matters as the fixing of the tuition to be charged at a branch should be left between the parent institution and the budget-making authorities of the State. However, as has been earlier discussed in this report, experience has shown that it is more nearly possible for a branch to be self-supporting as to operating costs than is the case with a full-fledged four-year institution, and the plans which might be worked out with the several State institutions for the establishment of branches could well be formulated with this in mind.

There is attached a bill to create such a Commission. However, if the General Assembly should decide to create a Board of Higher Education, to exercise certain supervisory functions in connection with the existing institutions, the duties suggested could be performed by that Board without the necessity of creating an additional commission.

In reply to a letter inquiring as to the legal authority necessary for the establishment of a branch institution of a State college or university in Virginia, the Attorney General of Virginia wrote, under date of March 30, 1955, as follows:

"Section 31 of Chapter 708 of the Acts of Assembly of 1954 (the Appropriation Act) reads as follows:

"No State institution of higher learning shall hereafter undertake or engage in the operation of any new or additional extension

school, day school or junior college, without the approval of the General Assembly being first obtained.'

"This is the only restriction placed upon the board of visitors or other governing board of a State college or university in regard to the establishment of branches or extension services. Therefore, it is my opinion that the only legal authority necessary for the establishment of a branch institution of a State college or university would be either an act or a resolution of the General Assembly of Virginia."

In order to meet the present need in the Northern Virginia area (where the present operation of a University Center has shown a considerable demand for the recommended type of institution), it is recommended that an appropriation be made to the University of Virginia to enable it to establish the Northern Virginia university center as a branch institution of the University and to operate it as such during the ensuing biennium. The Attorney General's opinion indicates that a specific provision in the Appropriation Act for such an institution would be adequate legislative authority.

No specific recommendation can be made as to the amount of the appropriation required. This depends on the number of students expected, the curriculum to be offered, and the extent of non-state support which can be obtained. As a general indication of costs which may be involved there is attached as Exhibit 3 an estimate prepared at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute after a survey of similar institutions in Virginia and other states.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing suggestions for the immediate development of a branch of the University of Virginia in the Northern Virginia area and for the long range planning of branch institutions in the more densely populated areas to meet expected enrollment pressures are not offered as a substitute for the development to their maximum efficient operation of the existing institutions nor as a substitute for any planned expansion on the part of the private institutions of the State. The heads of the several State institutions and the representatives of the private institutions have been consulted in the preparation of this report. All are agreed that existing facilities will not suffice; considerable sentiment was expressed that expansion of existing institutions on their own campuses would not be sufficient to meet the demands. The private institutions recognize the problems which lie ahead and are most anxious to carry their share of the load. Their contribution to the overall educational picture in the State is recognized by the Council and no development which would minimize their contributions can be contemplated. However, we are convinced that in addition to all that the State and private institutions can do within the limits of funds available, there will be need for higher education for many more Virginians if the State is not to fall behind in meeting its responsibilities to the future. Our conviction that these needs must be met is reiterated, and it is again pointed out that the development of several branch institutions in appropriate locations is the most economical way in which the problem can be solved and the only one which in our judgment can be accomplished within the fiscal resources of the Commonwealth.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Council desires to express its appreciation to the members of the Committee for the contribution of their time and effort in the conduct of

the study. It further acknowledges the assistance given it by the heads of the several publicly and privately supported institutions of higher learning, the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the staff of the State Department of Education, and the Director of the Bureau of Population and Economic Research of the University of Virginia, who at the request of the Committee made a study of prospective college enrollments in Virginia which is appended to this report as Exhibit 1.

Respectfully submitted,

HARRY B. DAVIS, Chairman
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