January 14, 2019

To members of Virginia’s Senate and House of Delegates:

As they help prepare students for success in life and in their careers, Virginia’s public colleges and universities also have key roles to play when it comes to workforce development and keeping Virginia’s talent pipeline filled.

Accordingly, the decisions made by the governing boards of our public colleges and universities have far-reaching and lasting impacts not just on students and their families, but also on the economies of Virginia and our communities.

These governing boards exist to hold public institutions accountable and make decisions in the best interest of Virginia’s students, taxpayers, and other stakeholders. Yet decision-making is often based solely on information and briefings delivered by a school’s administrators or its president.

The members of college governing boards chart a school’s future, approve multi-billion-dollar budgets, and increase tuition and fee rates with little or no public discussion or opportunity for comment. That needs to change.

Just as many other state-appointed boards and commissions are legally required to have periods for public comment to hear from diverse perspectives, public higher education should be held to the same level of accountability to Virginia taxpayers.

Therefore, we urge the Virginia General Assembly to support legislation requiring that the governing boards of Virginia’s public colleges and universities set aside time to hear from the public before setting rates for tuition and fees.

Sincerely,

Organizations
AARP – Virginia
American Council of Trustees and Alumni
National Campus Leadership Council
Partners for College Affordability and Public Trust
U.S. PIRG
Virginia Coalition for Open Government
Virginia Education Association
Virginia Parent Teacher Association

Individuals
Jeff Ainslie
Former Member, Old Dominion University Board of Visitors (1998-2002)
President of Sales, Operations and Finance, Ainslie Group
Former President, Homebuilders Association of Virginia
Elizabeth Alcorn  Chair, Greene County Democratic Party
Tom Allison  Deputy Policy and Research Director, Young Invincibles
The Honorable Rich Anderson  Former Member, Virginia House of Delegates (2010-2018)
Dr. Lee Armistead  Former Vice Chair, Tidewater Community College Board (2008-2016)
Garrett Berger  Property Portfolio Controller, Armada Hoffler Properties, Inc.
Abigail Brand  Regional Caucus Chair, Virginia Young Democrats (Staunton, Augusta, Waynesboro)
Rebecca Chalmers  Community Leader
Barbara Cockrell  Chairman, Middlesex County Democratic Committee
Angie Connolly  Community Leader
Wally Connolly  Community Leader
Rebecca Daly  Chair, Charlotte County Democratic Party
Louise Davis  Chair, Buckingham County Democratic Party
The Honorable William J. Deutsch  Member, Prince William County School Board
Erika Dyer  YRFV State Central Committee Rep., Republican Party of Virginia
Ed Elkins  Vice President Industrial Products, Norfolk Southern Corporation
Cindy Free  Community Leader
Col. J. Jack Hilgers, USMC (RET)  Former Member, Old Dominion University Board of Visitors (1998-2002)
Director of Development, Virginia Department of Veterans Services
Jim “J.R.” Hoeft  Host, The J.R. Hoeft Show
Margo Horner  8th Congressional District Chair- Arlington, Democratic Party of Virginia
Michael King  Chief Financial Officer, Southern Auto Group
Charles Kolb  Former Deputy Assistant to the U.S. President for Domestic Policy
Former General Counsel for Regulations and Legislation, U.S.
Department of Education
Senior Advisor, Business for America
The Honorable Jordan Labiosa  Member, New Castle Town Council
Chairman, Craig County Republican Committee
James Lewis  Immediate Past President, Virginia Young Democrats
Richard McCarty  11th CD Rep., Republican Party of Virginia State Central Committee
The Honorable Andria McClellan  Member, Norfolk City Council
Delceno Miles  President and CEO, The Miles Agency
John Piscitelli  Senior Vice President- Investments, Davenport and Company
Nicholas Proffitt  Chair, Republican Party of Chesapeake
The Honorable David Ramadan  Former Member, Virginia House of Delegates (2012-2014)
Former Member, George Mason University Board of Visitors
Founder, RAMA International, Inc.
The Honorable Amelia Ross-Hammond  Former Member, Vice Beach City Council (2013-2016)
Retired Distinguished Professor, Norfolk State University
Joel Rubin  CEO, Rubin Communications Group
Michelle Sanderson  Chair, Virginia Beach Young Democrats
The Honorable Elizabeth Schultz  Member, Fairfax County School Board
Debbie Schwartz  Director of Development and Community Relations, Senior Services of Southeast Virginia
Dr. Dishant Shah  Magisterial Chair, Henrico County Republican Committee
Philip Shucet  President, The Philip A. Shucet Company
The Honorable Louisa Strayhorn  Former Member, Virginia Beach City Council (1994-1998)
CEO, LSA Consulting
The Honorable Chris Stuart  Former Member, Hampton City Council (2010-2014)
Past President, Virginia Security Association
Vice President, Top Guard Security

Terri Thompson  Board Chair, Tidewater Community College
Kishore Thota  Chair, Young Republican Federation of Virginia
The Honorable Michael Watson  Former Member, Virginia House of Delegates (2012-2014)
The Honorable Rick West  Mayor, City of Chesapeake
Yvonne Jackson-Wilson  Chair, Nottoway County Democratic Party
The Honorable Dr. Pat Woodbury  Newport News City Council

*Individual titles are listed for identification purposes only.*