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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 594

Offered January 10, 2007

Prefiled December 29, 2006

Requesting the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia to study the feasibility of establishing an online public institution of higher education. Report.

Patron—Poisson

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, created pursuant to Chapter 1.1 (§ 23-9.3 et seq.) of Title 23, is charged with serving as the coordinating agency for the public institutions of higher education in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth has the 11th largest higher education system in the United States consisting of 15 public four-year institutions, one public two-year institution, and 23 community colleges committed to excellence, research, and service; and

WHEREAS, anticipated enrollment increases and growing demands upon the current system will continue to challenge the Commonwealth to develop creative solutions; and

WHEREAS, the costs associated with obtaining higher education continue to climb; and

WHEREAS, Virginia transportation issues are one of the contributing factors to the rising costs of higher education; and

WHEREAS, new, innovative, and affordable online education programs and courses may meet the needs of a wide and diverse market; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia be requested to study the feasibility of establishing an online public institution of higher education.

In conducting its study, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia shall (i) solicit the participation of and collaboration with all interested parties, (ii) consider the efficacy and appropriateness of delivering degree programs through distance learning, (iii) consider access to Virginia institutions of higher education by residents of the Commonwealth, and (iv) evaluate all available options.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia by the Office of the Secretary of Technology. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia for this study, upon request.

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia shall complete its meetings for the first year by November 30, 2007, and for the second year by November 30, 2008, and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document for each year. The executive summaries and reports shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports no later than the first day of the next Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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