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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 99

Offered January 9, 2008

Prefiled January 8, 2008

*Establishing a joint subcommittee to study the merits of operating colleges and universities in Virginia year-round. Report.*

Patron—Poisson

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the face of higher education has changed and today's college must serve both traditional and nontraditional students, as many students are older, female, married, and employed with full-time careers; and

WHEREAS, colleges have traditionally established fall-to-spring academic calendars, and today, many persons believe this structure no longer offers students and colleges the benefits it previously provided; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Education estimates that "only 36 percent of entering freshmen complete a bachelor's degree in four years," and the option of year-round college may help more students to complete their studies in less than four years if colleges offered courses taught traditionally in the fall and spring during the summer; and

WHEREAS, it is believed that a year-round college calendar with flexible financial aid rules would have many benefits, such as helping low-income students continue their studies without interruption until graduation, enabling institutions of higher education to meet the increasing enrollment demand without the costs of building new facilities, motivating students to complete their undergraduate degrees in three years, and allowing academically-challenged students to take a lighter course load; and

WHEREAS, the year-round college design would enable institutions to meet increasing enrollment demand; promote more efficient use of academic buildings, dormitories, and other campus facilities; lessen competition for housing and classes and the need for new campus construction to accommodate more students, thereby reducing the tax burden and tuition; and allow gifted students to accelerate their studies and complete college in less than four years; and

WHEREAS, with the creation of year-round colleges, more students would be able to avail themselves of internships, explore career options, vacation during the academic year, and take advantage of opportunities to study abroad during the academic year without taking off a semester to engage in such programs; and

WHEREAS, despite the many challenges of changing to a year-round college calendar, colleges and universities in the nation that have moved to a year-round college calendar attest to the educational benefits and advantages for students and cost savings for the institutions, including less competition for housing and classes, more income for the institution, and lower tuition for students; and

WHEREAS, although a year-round college calendar poses financial aid challenges because Pell Grants, Stafford loans, and other forms of financial aid are not available to students on the basis of year-round study, efforts to make federal financial aid resources available throughout the year have been proposed; and

WHEREAS, increasingly, colleges and universities are being asked to respond to the growing demand to structure higher education programs and services to meet the needs of today's students, provide support for business and industry, serve as a pillar in the economic development infrastructure, conduct research, and contribute to the communities in which they are located; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study the merits of operating colleges and universities in Virginia year-round. The joint subcommittee shall have a total membership of 10 members that shall consist of eight legislative members and two ex officio members. Members shall be appointed as follows: five members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates; and three members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules. The Executive Director of the State Council of Higher Education and the Chancellor of the Board for Community Colleges or their designees shall serve ex officio with voting privileges. The joint subcommittee shall elect a chairman and vice chairman from among its membership, who shall be members of the General Assembly.

In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall (i) determine the benefits of a year-round college calendar in Virginia; (ii) identify and evaluate the economic and academic advantages and disadvantages of the year-round college calendar, including, but not limited to, cost savings, rising

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59 enrollments, more rapid graduation due to accelerated programming, higher tuition and institutional  
60 costs, administrative and curriculum problems, admissions, retention, and persistence concerns, barriers  
61 to student seasonal employment, availability and flexibility of federal financial aid and other public and  
62 private grants-in-aid for higher education, academic continuity, scheduling for research activities, and  
63 capacity and utilization of academic buildings, dormitories, and other facilities.

64 Administrative staff support shall be provided by the Office of the Clerk of the House of Delegates.  
65 Legal, research, policy analysis, and other services as requested by the joint subcommittee shall be  
66 provided by the Division of Legislative Services. Technical assistance shall be provided by the State  
67 Council of Higher Education, the Board for Community Colleges, and the staffs of the House  
68 Committee on Appropriations and the Senate Committee on Finance. All agencies of the Commonwealth  
69 shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee for this study, upon request.

70 The joint subcommittee shall be limited to four meetings for the 2008 interim, and the direct costs of  
71 this study shall not exceed \$9,500 without approval as set out in this resolution. Of this amount an  
72 estimated \$1,500 is allocated for speakers, materials, and other resources. Approval for unbudgeted  
73 nonmember-related expenses shall require the written authorization of the chairman of the joint  
74 subcommittee and the respective Clerk. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed  
75 to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required.

76 No recommendation of the joint subcommittee shall be adopted if a majority of the House members  
77 or a majority of the Senate members appointed to the joint subcommittee (i) vote against the  
78 recommendation and (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the  
79 joint subcommittee.

80 The joint subcommittee shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2008, and the chairman shall  
81 submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and  
82 recommendations no later than the first day of the 2009 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The  
83 executive summary shall state whether the joint subcommittee intends to submit to the General  
84 Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or  
85 Senate document. The executive summary and the report shall be submitted as provided in the  
86 procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents  
87 and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

88 Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint  
89 Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or  
90 delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the 2008 interim.