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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 278

House Amendments in [] — February 10, 1994

Requesting the Secretary of Education, in cooperation with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, to study the feasibility and costs of implementing three-semester academic years at Virginia's public institutions of higher education.

Patrons—Shuler, Behm, Bennett, Crouch, Heilig, Kilgore and Scott; Senator: Marye

Referred to Committee on Education

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth's public institutions of higher education, committed to academic excellence, research, and service, have traditionally delivered their services on a nine-month academic calendar; and

WHEREAS, anticipated enrollment increases and growing demands on the Commonwealth's budget will continue to challenge these public colleges and universities to develop innovative administrative practices that promote efficiency and cost-savings; and

WHEREAS, the Report of Virginia Commission on the University of the 21st Century noted that the "adequacy of the nine-month academic calendar" has been questioned rarely, and that this calendar may well be an "anachronism that reflects the needs of an agrarian society for labor in the fields during the summer growing season"; and

WHEREAS, while the adjustment of the academic calendar year to accommodate a three-semester format may provide some institutions with much-needed flexibility to serve burgeoning enrollments and to provide students with the opportunity to graduate on an accelerated schedule, further study of potential financial and operational concerns is necessary to develop any recommendations for change; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, that the Secretary of Education, in cooperation with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, be hereby requested to study the feasibility and costs of implementing three-semester academic years at Virginia's public institutions of higher education. The study shall include, among other things, a review of current administrative, fiscal, and operational constraints that may impede any adjustment to the current academic calendar; consideration of enrollment projections at Virginia's public institutions; examination of suitable facilities that might effectively serve students in summer months; a survey of academic scheduling practices successfully employed by public institutions across the nation; and recommendations for the implementation of any calendar adjustments at the various public institutions that will promote efficiency and cost-savings as well as continued academic excellence.

The State Council of Higher Education [~~and the Department of Education~~ for Virginia] shall provide staff support for the study. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Secretary, upon request. The Secretary and the State Council shall complete their work in time to submit their findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1995 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

ENGROSSED

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