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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 651

Offered January 21, 1999

Encouraging public institutions of higher education to offer accelerated degree programs in the field of information systems for non-traditional students.

Patrons—Cox, Abbitt, Albo, Bryant, Cantor, Clement, Davis, Diamonstein, Dudley, Griffith, Howell, Ingram, Jones, J.C., Keating, Marshall, Nixon, Parrish, Phillips, Plum, Puller, Rhodes, Robinson, Rust, Stump, Van Yahres, Watts and Williams; Senators: Barry, Forbes, Lambert, Martin, Norment, Quayle, Ticer and Wampler

Referred to Committee on Education

WHEREAS, many students who do not pursue the college preparatory program, opt instead for other educational, employment, or military opportunities before making a decision to attend college; and

WHEREAS, due to business downsizing or the desire to embark upon a second career, many young and older adults have returned to college for further study; and

WHEREAS, because these students and adults, generally, are older than the average college student, and, often have been engaged in full-time employment or other pursuits prior to entering college, they are sometimes referred to as non-traditional students; and

WHEREAS, there are thousands of high-paying, high-tech jobs in the information systems industry in Virginia which remain unfilled due to the lack of trained and skilled persons for the information systems field; and

WHEREAS, distance learning is an accepted but under-utilized medium for educating students in the information systems field; and

WHEREAS, there are many successful accelerated degree programs in information systems offered through private distance learning programs nationally, and in Virginia, which demonstrate the effectiveness of teaching and learning through this technology; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's public colleges and universities currently offer or participate in a limited number of distance learning programs for adult students returning to college; and

WHEREAS, collaborative planning and full implementation of distance learning programs among Virginia's public institutions of higher education would result in the sharing of outstanding faculty, greater student access to requisite and advanced level courses, and the enhancement of the institutions' course offerings at little or no additional costs; and

WHEREAS, the basic technological infrastructure to transmit lectures and courses, offer accelerated degree programs in the information systems field, and facilitate access to outstanding faculty through distance learning is substantially in place; and

WHEREAS, offering accelerated degree programs in the information systems field would reduce the amount of money and time required of students to complete the program, and produce skilled workers for the information systems industry in a timely fashion; and

WHEREAS, maximizing the use of distance learning to provide accelerated degree programs in the information systems field would increase the number of qualified persons to work in the field and enable the Commonwealth to attract and sustain the high-tech industry; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That public institutions of higher education be encouraged to offer accelerated degree programs in the field of information systems for non-traditional students. Public institutions of higher education should be encouraged to provide such programs which focus on preparing and equipping non-traditional students with the necessary knowledge and skills required for employment and successful careers in the information systems industry; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the State Council of Higher Education be requested to encourage the continued development of collaborative relationships among Virginia's public institutions of higher education to offer accelerated degree programs in the information systems industry, and to facilitate the sharing of eminent faculty, lectures, and courses; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates send a copy of this resolution to the Chairman and Director of the State Council of Higher Education, requesting that they disseminate copies of the resolution to members of the Council, the Chairman of the Boards of Visitors and the Presidents of the respective institutions so that they may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly in this matter.

INTRODUCED

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