VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2004 SESSION

CHAPTER 537

An Act to direct the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia to develop policies and strategies to eliminate the barriers between the Commonwealth's institutions of higher education and industry and enhance the development of human capital in the Commonwealth.

[H 547]

Approved April 12, 2004

Whereas, excellence in teaching at the undergraduate level and high-quality research are two main factors that contribute to a university's success; and

Whereas, a focus on quality research and teaching will bring about growth in revenues, attract higher quality students and faculty, and higher rankings for Virginia-based universities; and

Whereas, for the Commonwealth's universities to maintain and enhance their positions at the forefront of research on a national and international basis and draw industries to locate, incubate, and grow to maturity in Virginia, they must recruit and retain top faculty; and

Whereas, the competitiveness of Virginia-based universities lies in the hands of high-quality faculty and researchers with the drive to provide excellent education and build positive relationships with industry; and

Whereas, these relationships lead to research and development of new technologies; and

Whereas, bringing new technologies from the research laboratory to the marketplace requires academia and industry to work together in new and innovative ways; and

Whereas, investment in strategic areas will allow the Commonwealth to more fully benefit from its investments in higher education and economic development; and

Whereas, new technologies can spawn new industries leading to new jobs, new products, and new markets thereby multiplying their impact on the economy; now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. *§ 1. The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) shall develop policies to eliminate the barriers between the Commonwealth's institutions of higher education and industry and enhance the development of human capital in the Commonwealth. These policies and strategies shall include a review of (i) offering incentives for industry to partner with universities in the practical training of undergraduate and graduate students; (ii) providing opportunities and incentives for corporate scientists and engineers to have adjunct appointments at universities to train and collaborate with faculty and students; (iii) assisting universities in acquiring funding to build or buy facilities where academic labs and corporate entities can work together; (iv) providing opportunities and assistance for academic researchers to take one- to two-year sabbaticals in a corporate setting or national lab and bring that experience back to the institution; (v) increasing the two-year leave of absence for science and engineering faculty to generate more industrial-sponsored research; (vi) allowing industry to fully fund faculty salaries and allow the faculty to work in industry while remaining a university employee, with proper safeguards in place; and (vii) allowing faculty to be part-time university employees and part-time industry employees, also with proper safeguards in place. The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) shall report its findings to the Governor and the General Assembly by November 30, 2004.*

§ 2. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to SCHEV, for the development of these policies and strategies, upon request.