

# 2014 Virginia Summit on Economic Competiveness and Higher Education Opening Remarks – Linwood Rose

First let me thank the Chamber, the Council on Virginia's Future, and the Virginia Business Higher Education Council. Special appreciation to Barry Duval, Dubby Wynn and Heywood Fralin for their personal commitment to Virginia's future and for their leadership, and thank all of you for being here today.

Given the revenue forecast for the biennium and the reality of budget cuts once again it would be easy to get discouraged about the future. But you know, there are always bumps in the road, always impediments and hurdles to clear if you want to accomplish something meaningful and worthwhile. I have always wanted to be part of something that would improve the human condition. That is why I chose to be an educator. Every artist, scientist, engineer; every athlete, chef, farmer or entrepreneur knows about set backs and even failure, but they persevere to create and to improve what they do. Just as they persevere, we should not surrender our ambitions to a few challenging budget years.

I am not suggesting that we ignore reality, but instead that we accommodate it in our plans rather than having it dictate our direction. As Heywood said earlier, we all know that an educated workforce is key to economic prosperity and to a civil society. We must invest in and cultivate educated citizens. Jefferson and Madison recognized that an enduring feature of our society must be an enlightened or educated citizenry. We want Virginians to lead productive lives so that they might provide for themselves and their families, but we also want them to lead meaningful lives, as caring contributors to the advancement of our society. We want Virginians to advance intellectually, to add to their knowledge base, but we also want them to develop their skills so that they might function effectively in the world in which we live. In short, educated citizens.

This summit is about economic competitiveness and I assure you that advanced education; public and private, from certificates and licenses to graduate degrees is critical to the Commonwealth's ability to compete economically with other states and nations. As leaders we must have the vision and perhaps more importantly, the will to prepare our citizens for the demands of the future.

The Virginia Business Higher Education Council believes that it is time for a more aggressive, but achievable goal. Let's call it an extended goal, beyond the goal of 142,000 more graduates that the public and private not-for-profit colleges and universities are scheduled to collectively produce by 2025. The State Council of Higher Education has reported that "Current projections have the Commonwealth well on its way to attaining that goal without difficulty." In fact, it is anticipated that in 2025 we will be ranked third nationally with a state-wide college attainment of 55 percent. Why stop there?

Why not have the best educated workforce among all of the states in the Nation? Favorable tax policy, a diverse economy, affordable energy, good transportation are all important factors in retaining, building and attracting business to our state, but think how powerful it would be for a governor, other political leaders, the Chamber, and our economic development professionals to say to a prospect, "Come to Virginia where we have the best educated populous in the country."

With the commitment of the Governors, the General Assembly and the institutions from 2000 to 2012 the college attainment rate in Virginia improved by approximately a half percent annually. Today we rank 9<sup>th</sup> among states with 47 percent college attainment of our residents aged 25-64. If this rate of growth is used to project a future trend, our current trajectory will see us move to sixth among states in 2020, and third by 2025 with 55 percent college attainment.

I ask again, “why should we settle for fifty-five percent when a rate of just over sixty-percent could place us at the top among states?”

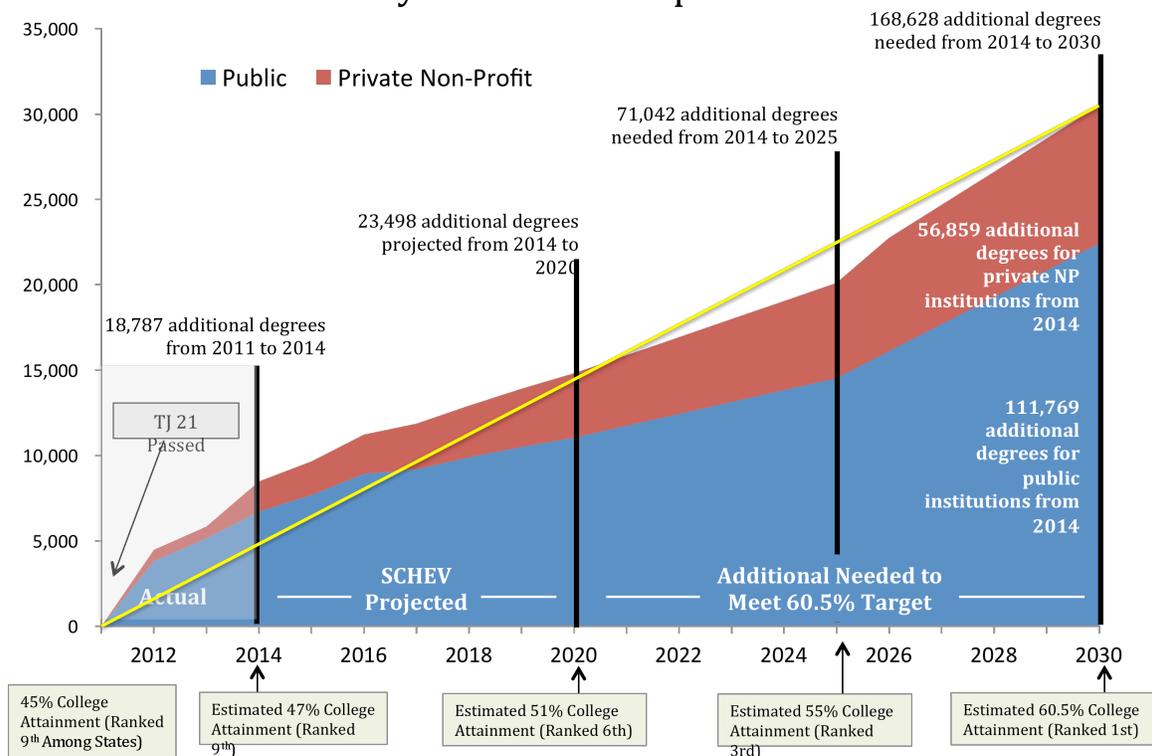
Of course, as emphasized earlier, maintaining this trend is dependent upon both sustained funding and supportive institutional practices. As SCHEV stated in their report: *Degree Attainment and Student success in the Commonwealth*, published last May, “If the Commonwealth wishes to direct a focused effort to improve student success and graduation rates, it should be done through adequate general fund appropriations and not left to be funded through tuition increases.”

Relying on the acclaimed work of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) and of our own State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCEHV), we have projected the gap between today’s 47 percent and 60.5 percent to be approximately 168,628 additional degrees. With commitment to what we will call an “extended goal” and with appropriate resources, we believe this is an achievable number by 2030.

It is proposed that the target for these additional degrees will be split between the public and the private non-profit sectors in roughly the same proportions that each currently generates. Therefore, the public sector needs to produce an additional 111,769 in-state degrees and the private non-profit sector needs to produce an additional 56,859 degrees.

Let’s take a look at this graphically:

### What Needs to Happen to Achieve 60.5% Degree Attainment by 2030 - The Top State in the U.S.



The vertical axis in this chart represents the number of new degrees produced each year from 2011 to 2030. Our new starting point will be 2014 rather than 2011. In this chart, we did not change the 2025

projected numbers from that which was originally projected. However, I have added the yellow trend line to illustrate that one might imagine a smoother trajectory to 2030 than what this chart illustrates.

These are the states projected to be the highest achievers in college attainment in 2030. NCHEMS extrapolated college attainment trends in each of the states to project where the states would fall in terms of relative rank. The projections include no leap-frog policy changes that could produce different results. Of course, much can happen in fifteen years, so we will need to monitor our progress as well as that of other states going forward.

## Estimated College Attainment in 2030

Percent of Adults  
Age 25-64

|               |      |
|---------------|------|
| Virginia      | 60.5 |
| Minnesota     | 60.1 |
| North Dakota  | 58.3 |
| Massachusetts | 58.2 |
| Vermont       | 56.9 |
| New Hampshire | 55.9 |
| New Jersey    | 55.6 |
| Connecticut   | 55.4 |
| New York      | 55.3 |
| Colorado      | 55.0 |
| Iowa          | 54.8 |
| Maryland      | 54.2 |

Source: NCHEMS, 2014

The year 2030 may seem like a long way away, but we must make the right decisions now for the outcomes we desire later. In his book *Timequake* by Kurt Vonnegut a timequake occurs that forces humanity to re-live, for a ten-year period, all the implications of the decisions they made previous to the quake. Ask yourself, if you knew that you had to “re-live” the results of your decisions, your actions and your investments what decisions would you make now about our Commonwealth’s future as a player in an intensely competitive economy?

We began this effort to achieve a higher rate of degree attainment with the unanimous political approval of the Top Jobs Act or TJ21, and the collaboration of our public and private not-for-profit institutions. We have made progress, and in our view, continued collaboration will produce a skilled workforce and

educated citizenry that will be the envy of every other state. One of our fifty states will be number one in college attainment in 2030. Why not us? Why not Virginia?

I would now like to introduce Bob Lindgren, president of Randolph Macon College, to comment on the role of the private not-for-profit institutions in meeting the degree production required by this new degree attainment goal.

**[President Lindgren speaks]**

I am delighted to join my colleague, Dr. Lin Rose, here today to talk about this laudable and essential goal: growing the number of Virginians becoming college graduates.

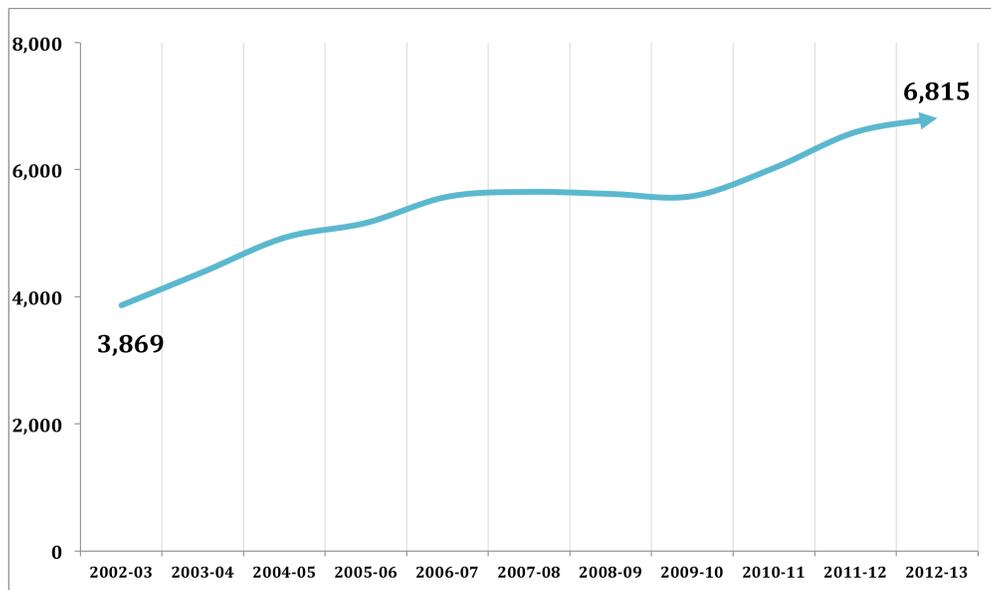
It is a goal that all of us share in Virginia higher education because, as Lin said, it directly impacts our ability as a state to be economically competitive nationally.

Virginia is blessed with a wonderful network of both public and private higher education institutions. And it is no coincidence that Dr. Rose and I are standing here together today, because reaching such a goal cannot be done by the public institutions alone – or the private institutions alone – but only by both groups working in partnership with each other and with all of you.

Those of us in higher education must also partner with K-12 educators and leaders in government and business to achieve this goal.

I agree with what Lin has said here: The Grow by Degrees goal is a tall order. Looking at the numbers, it asks Virginia private colleges to grow the awarding of degrees to in-state students substantially over the next 15 years – and make no mistake, that is very significant for us.

**In-State Undergraduate Degrees Awarded by Virginia Private Colleges  
2002-2013**



To give you some context, over the past 10 years, degrees awarded by Virginia private colleges to in-state students have already grown steadily; nearly 3,900 degrees awarded in 2003 to over 6,800 in 2013, a 76% increase.

At Randolph-Macon College, we have grown in the past five years from 1100 students to a record 1400 students this year. We have done it with the much needed assistance of Tuition Assistance Grants for our Virginia students and families. The TAG program is huge for us. And I know my colleagues at other Virginia private colleges would echo what I say here.

We accept this challenge quite willingly, even enthusiastically. We know just how important it is for us to partner with the Virginia public universities to produce the best educated graduates and workforce in the country.

I will share with you what I expressed Don Finley a few weeks ago as we talked about our important message today: Count us in!

We look forward to the challenge, and working arm-in-arm with each and every one of you, to achieving it spectacularly.

Thank you.