

1989

The origins and development of Virginia's student assessment policy: A case study

Serbrenia J. Sims

College of William & Mary - School of Education

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**The origins and development of Virginia's student assessment
policy: A case study**

Sims, Serbrenia J., Ed.D.

The College of William and Mary, 1989

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THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF
VIRGINIA'S STUDENT ASSESSMENT POLICY:
A CASE STUDY

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Serbrenia J. Sims
November 1989

THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF
VIRGINIA'S STUDENT ASSESSMENT POLICY:
A CASE STUDY

by

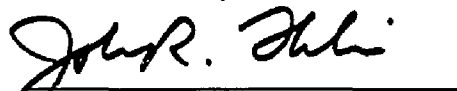
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Dedication

This report is dedicated to: my husband, Ronald R. Sims, who taught me all the things I thought I knew; my daughter Nandi Rebeccah Cele Sims; and my mother, Mabel Lee James.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Completing the requirements for the Doctor of Education has involved the direction, cooperation, and help of certain key individuals. To them I express my thanks.

A particular debt of gratitude is owed to the members of my dissertation committee. Dr. Baldwin, Dr. Bryce, Dr. Thelin, and Dr. Yankovich, thank you for your guidance, support, and encouragement.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

The terms "assessment" and "accountability" have often been voiced on college campuses and in state government over the past few years. One consequence of this increased concern over assessment of college outcomes and accountability for funds has been the addition of state mandated student assessment procedures to the existing regional accrediting agencies' quality control mechanisms.

The Purpose of the Study

With this addition in mind, the purpose of this study was to review the historical origins and chronology of the student assessment movement in the United States and in particular to describe and analyze Virginia's higher education student assessment policy evolution. (Virginia's policy is the result of three pieces of legislation: Senate Joint Resolution 125, Senate Joint resolution 83 and, Senate Bill No. 534; therefore, for the remainder of this study the term "Virginia's student assessment policy" will be used to refer to these three pieces of legislation.) The study will describe and analyze Virginia's student assessment policy as it evolved during the national student assessment movement so as to provide a better understanding of one aspect of the multi-dimensional relationship between state government and

higher education in the Commonwealth. Emphasis will be placed on the policy formulation process associated with Virginia's student assessment policy. Therefore, this is a study on the formulation of higher education policy at the state level.

The review of Virginia's policy formulation process will be patterned after a similar study on policy formulation conducted by Stephen K. Bailey, former Dean of Syracuse's Maxwell School of Public Administration, in his analysis of the federal Employment Act of 1946 (Bailey, 1950). However, since Bailey's study focused on federal as opposed to state policy formulation, it will be used only to construct the general guidelines for this study. Thomas R. Dye's models for policy analysis as proposed in his 1972 book, Understanding Public Policy, will serve as the primary backbone and conceptual framework for the analysis of Virginia's student assessment policy formulation process (Dye, 1972).

Significance of the Study

Monitoring student achievement has become an important and controversial part of the educational policy aspect of higher education. Faculty evaluate students through a variety of mechanisms such as examinations, and written and oral presentations in almost all courses to determine

student's grades and whether or not course objectives are being met (SCHEV, 1986; Ewell, 1987).

Not only are students evaluated, but the colleges and universities that they attend are also evaluated. Through a variety of mechanisms, state governments monitor the educational programs on many college campuses. In addition, six regional accrediting bodies function to try to analyze the overall health of the institutions. One hundred and fifty-four professional accrediting bodies look at specialized programs (ranging from agriculture to nursing education) on these campuses. And many states have coordinating bodies that try to keep collegiate programs well-balanced (Harclerod, 1980). From this perspective, higher education in America is highly assessed. Yet many states, including Virginia, recently instituted legislation to aid in the assurance of quality higher education within their borders. One might ask, "Why has assessment become so visible and controversial?" One reason was the release of the 1983 national report on the condition of elementary-secondary education (A Nation at Risk). Although this report did not discuss higher education specifically, it stimulated similar concerns of quality and accountability for resources by institutions of higher education. Higher education moved into the limelight with a series of reports dealing with undergraduate education. Central among these reports were the National Institute of Education's 1984

report; Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education which gave good marks to higher education's accomplishments in terms of adapting to growth and change, but noted that there was room for improvement; the Association of American Colleges' 1985 report Integrity in the College Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community which looked at problems in the undergraduate curriculum and offered solutions to those problems; and the National Endowment for the Humanities' 1984 report, To Reclaim a Legacy: A Report on the Humanities in Higher Education written by William Bennett. Bennett's report claimed that colleges and universities were failing to give students an adequate education in the culture and civilization of which they are members (Boyer, 1985; Ewell, 1985). These reports along with dissatisfaction with existing accountability measures being conducted by accreditation agencies and specialized program agencies fueled the spread of student assessment at the state level (Harclerod, 1980; Floyd, 1982; Marcus et al, 1983).

States have responded differently to the perceived need to institute some form of student assessment. New Jersey instituted the first state-wide program of student assessment designed to test entering students for basic college skills. Georgia followed with a basic skills test for "rising juniors." Florida mandated both an examination for entering college students and rising juniors. Tennessee

stepped forward with a required entry level test and financial incentives for institutions to assess their two-year and four-year outcomes. In other states, however, institutions have been encouraged but not required to develop student assessment programs. Virginia is distinctive in that it has charted a middle course: it has mandated student assessment but has allowed the individual colleges to develop or choose those assessment methods most appropriate to their very diverse characters and missions (SCHEV, 1987).

Virginia's student assessment policy is important because it serves as an interesting example for other states that have not yet instituted student assessment legislation. By mandating student assessment and then allowing the diverse institutions to develop their own methods of assessment, Virginia's policy allows institutions to maintain a high level of campus autonomy, thereby reducing fears of governmental control. Virginia's policy was developed after careful consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of other states' actions. Ideally, it will serve its primary purpose--assessing student achievement--while at the same time maintaining a balance between higher education's need for autonomy and the state's need for accountability of resources.

The Research Problem

The problem of this study is twofold: first, to trace the historical origins and development of the student assessment movement in the United States and in the state of Virginia; and second, to describe and analyze Virginia's student assessment policy formulation process within this movement. Virginia's student assessment policy formulation process will be systematically examined and compared to six policy formulation models (systems theory, elite theory, group theory, rational decision-making theory, incrementalism, and institutionalism) as proposed by Thomas R. Dye in his 1972 book, Understanding Public Policy.

In answering this problem, the study addressed these major research questions:

The Research Questions

The first major research question was: What is the historical context for Virginia's higher education student assessment movement?

Subsidiary Questions are:

- 1-a). What were the intended goals of student assessment?
- 1-b). What forces or perceived forces affected the development of the student assessment movement in the United States?

- 1-c). Why has student assessment been instituted at the state level when other review and accrediting agencies already exist to monitor the quality of colleges and universities?
- 1-d). Who were the major participants and what were their roles in the development of the student assessment movement in the United States?

The second major research question of this study was:
What were the major events and characters in the formulation of Virginia's student assessment policy?

Subsidiary Questions are:

- 2-a). Who were the major participants and what were their roles in the development and passage of Virginia's student assessment policy?
- 2-b). Who supported and who resisted the passage of Virginia's student assessment policy? And what were their reasons for taking a stand one way or the other?
- 2-c). What are some of the characteristics of Virginia's political system that aided the passage of its student assessment policy?
- 2-d). What are some of the intended results of Virginia's student assessment policy?

- according to the house and senate committees that passed the legislation?
- 2-e). What are some of the perceived reasons (stimulants) of Virginia's student assessment policy?
- 2-f). From whom did the legislators receive advice for the development of Virginia's student assessment policy?
- 2-g). According to the legislation, how was Virginia's student assessment policy to be implemented?
- 2-h). Was the proposed implementation process supported by higher education institutions?
- 2-i). Does Virginia's student assessment policy have an important theoretical base? If so, what was the theoretical base for opponents and supporters? (On what basis do people support or not support Virginia's student assessment policy?)
- 2-j). Why was Virginia's student assessment policy initially instituted in the form of a resolution which has no force of law as opposed to a bill which requires the governor's signature and also has force of law?

The third major research question of this study was:
On the basis of the historical description and narrative gathered for this study, does the case study of assessment policy formulation in Virginia conform clearly to one of the six policy formulation models (system theory, elite theory, group theory, rational decision-making theory, incrementalism, and institutionalism) as proposed by Thomas R. Dye in his 1972 book, Understanding Public Policy?

Subsidiary Questions are:

- 3-a). Can any of Dye's models be eliminated from consideration and if so, what are the justifications for elimination?
- 3-b). Is there an alternative model to the six that Dye proposes that would better describe Virginia's student assessment policy formulation process?

Research Context: Autonomy and Public Accountability

"Autonomy" in higher education has been defined as the power of a university or college to govern itself with a minimum of outside controls (Bok, 1979). On the other hand, public accountability can be defined within a broad framework as a state's responsibility to provide for the needs or abuse of public institutions (Bok, 1979). These two concepts served as the research context for arguments on

state intervention via assessment and accountability measures in the affairs of institutions of higher education. According to Bok, "The problem is where to draw the line. How much autonomy should universities have in carrying out their academic functions? Under what circumstances may the government intervene? And when the government acts, what methods of regulation should it employ to achieve its ends with minimum damage to the academic enterprise" (Bok, 1979, p. 82)? These questions have been asked throughout history and varying answers have been proposed.

Traditionally, academe has been immune from many pressures of government intervention. Academic independence and diversity have been highly prized and protected values. However, due to heavy reliance on government funding, legal principles permitting the government to insist on institutional accountability and the right to participate to an increasing degree in the academic process were established. According to Cowan (1984), once the principle that government funding also allows government regulation was well established, it was difficult to contain. Even those institutions that decided to forego governmental assistance have been unable to disentangle themselves. Once the legal basis for government's intrusion into academic affairs was established there seemed to be no potential limit to the scope of such regulation. Wildavsky (1979) also warns that governmental intervention is incremental--

once a base for intervention has been established it is built upon year after year until there is little to no autonomy for the regulated institutions.

Initially, according to Nathan Glazer (1979) government regulation of higher education was benign in its origins and the attitude of faculties had been that of approval. The federal government's involvement with higher education had nothing to do at the beginning with any sense on anyone's part that there were abuses to be controlled. Rather higher education was seen as a good thing. It was valuable for personal advancement, and so access to higher education was considered a suitable reward for veterans. Thus we had the G.I. Bill and the payment of World War II veterans' tuition. Institutions could advance America's research capability and achievement. And so there was a second major government involvement: funding of research on American campuses. And it continued from there (Glazer, 1979).

One might ask, "How did it happen that higher education came to be viewed by government with suspicion, and hostility?" Glazer identifies three routes to this final result: 1) real abuses developed as government contracted with higher education for services; 2) the explosion of social regulation such as racial and sexual discrimination increased scrutiny of higher education; and 3) a real suspicion of and hostility towards higher education institutions that developed among some important opinion-

making sectors which represented one or another organized sector of the population and which were ready to appeal to the courts to impose on agencies their particular views of the proper function of regulation (Glazer, 1979). Chester E. Finn, Jr. provides several examples in his 1978 book, Scholars, Dollars, and Bureaucrats of abuses by higher education institutions:

Among the principle offenders (of the G.I. Bill) were thousands of profit-making proprietary schools that sprang into existence, some of which were patronized exclusively by veterans and too many of which were found to be falsifying their records, overstating their charges, and generally abusing the Federal program. The problems intensified with the loan programs and the massive defaults of the 1970's. What was a legitimate institution and what was legitimate academic work? The Federal government and its agencies were forced into the business of deciding (Glazer 1979, p. 49).

At the state level, demands for accountability by students, parents, and businesses, through assessment of institutions of higher education, have caused the states to become involved in the affairs of public institutions of higher education. State involvement has come in the form of accountability (through assessment of outcomes of higher

education) for the uses of monies directed towards meeting the needs and demands of the people. The logic is that since the public colleges and universities are obtaining state funds generated through taxation of citizens then the state and its representative bodies have a right to demand accountability for the uses of its funds. The question then becomes: How did the student assessment/accountability policy come about?

In his 1979 book, Legislated Learning, Arthur Wise stated that most educational policies are based on generally accepted common sense. For example, to have clear objectives is a good thing; to plan is sensible; to coordinate is reasonable; to regulate ensures equal treatment; and to follow procedures is to ensure fairness. Yet, not only do educational policies based upon these characteristics often fail to achieve their intended results, but they are increasingly becoming the cause of profound, unanticipated, and unexamined changes in the conception of educational operations in the United States (Wise, 1979).

According to Wise, one reason for this is that educational policy is becoming more and more determined by the states, by the federal government, and by the courts, rather than by the schools and colleges themselves. This policy intervention is causing an hierarchical control structure to be instituted within the governance of

education. At the top of this hierarchy is the federal government; the state government is in the middle; and this leaves the schools and colleges at the bottom (Wise, 1979). Whenever there is an increase in the control of educational institutions there is always a threat to the autonomy of the institutions. This threat serves as the main context for most opposition to federal, state, and local government interventions into higher education (Hagar, 1976; Wise, 1979).

Theoretical Base: Dye's Models of Policy Formulation

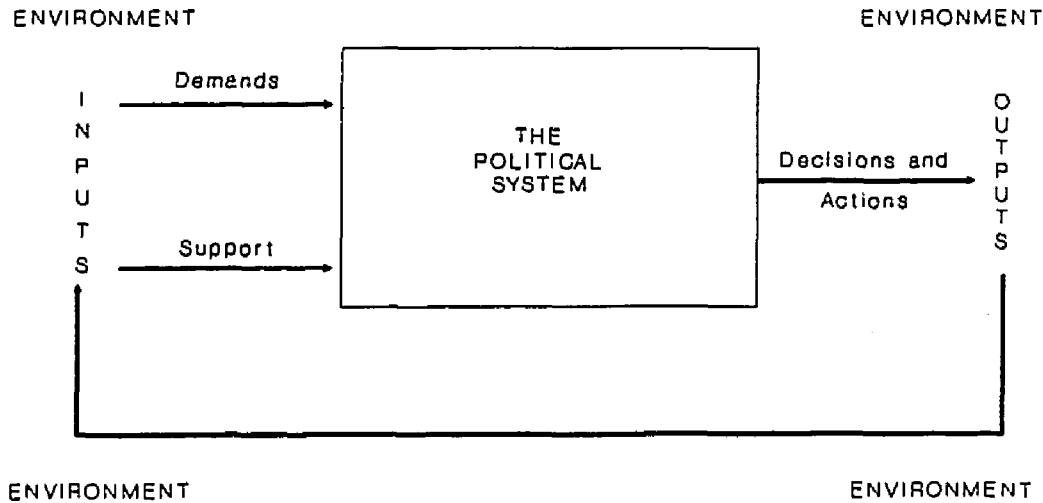
Thomas R. Dye proposes six models of policy formulation that can be used to analyze Virginia's student assessment policy formulation process and the extent of government involvement in the process. These theories are: systems theory, elite theory, group theory, incrementalism, rational decision-making theory, and institutionalism. The purpose of which is to:

- 1) simplify and clarify our thinking about government and politics,
- 2) to identify important political forces in society,
- 3) to communicate relevant knowledge about political life,
- 4) to direct inquiry into politics, and
- 5) to suggest explanations for political events and outcomes (Dye, 1972, p. 17).

Model One--System Theory: Policy as Systems Output

Dye's Systems theory diagrammatically depicts public policy as an output of the political system. The political system is defined by Dye as the group of interrelated structures and processes which function authoritatively to allocate values for a society. The concept of "system" implies an identifiable set of institutions and activities in society that function to transform demands into authoritative decisions requiring the support of society. The concept of "systems" also implies that elements of the system are interrelated, that the system can respond to forces in its environment, and that it will do so in order to preserve itself. Inputs are received into the political system in the form of both demands and support. Demands occur when individuals or groups, in response to real or perceived environmental conditions, act to affect public policy. Support on the other hand is given when individuals or groups accept the outcomes of the political process and conform to policy decisions by obeying the laws. The system preserves itself by: 1) producing reasonably satisfying outputs, 2) relying upon deeply rooted attachments to the system itself, and 3) using or threatening to use force (Dye, 1972, pp. 18-19). Figure 1.1 is a diagram of the conceptualization of political activity and public policy as described by Dye (1972) in the systems theory.

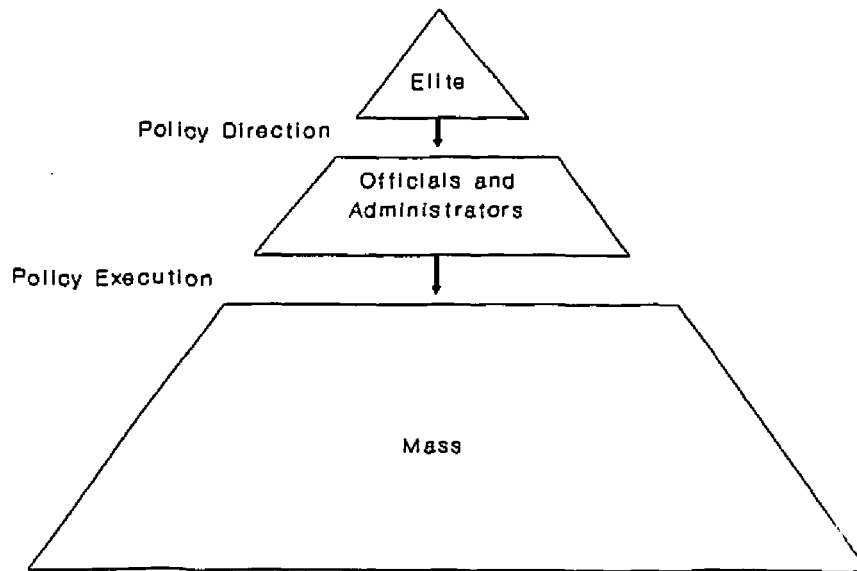
FIGURE 1.1
The Systems Model



Model Two--Elite Theory: Policy as Elite Preference

Elite theory suggests that general public or masses are apathetic and ill-informed about public policy, and that the elites (power holding individuals) actually shape mass opinion on policy questions more than masses shape elite opinion. If this is true, then public policy really turns out to be the preferences of elites. Public officials and administrators merely carry out the policies decided upon by the elite. Policies, thus, flow "downward" from elites to the masses as opposed to rising from the demands of the masses. Figure 1.2 presents the model of elite theory as proposed by Dye (1972).

FIGURE 1.2
The Elite Model



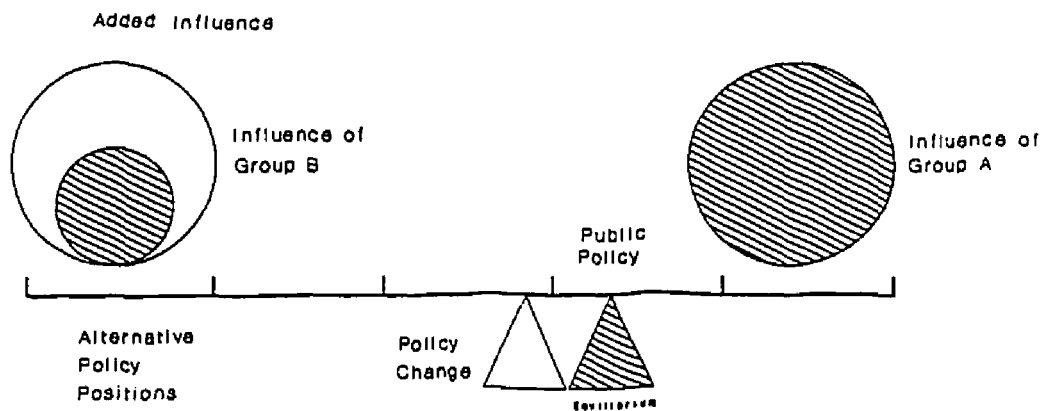
Model Three--Group Theory: Policy As Group Equilibrium

The premise for Dye's Group theory suggests that group interactions are the central basis of politics. A "group" is defined as individuals with common interests united formally or informally to press their demands upon government (Dye, 1972). Dye explains that, individuals are important in politics only when they act as part of, or on behalf of, group interests. The group thus becomes the essential bridge between the individual and his government. Politics is really the struggle among groups to influence public policy (see Figure 1.3, Dye's group model). The extent of influence is determined by the number of

individuals participating, wealth, organizational strength, access to decision makers, and the internal cohesion of the group. The task of the political system is to manage group conflict by

- 1) establishing rules of the game in the group struggle,
- 2) arranging compromises and balancing interests,
- 3) enacting compromises in the form of public policy, and
- 4) enforcing compromises (Dye, 1972, p. 23).

FIGURE 1.3
The Group Model



According to group theorists, public policy at any given time is the equilibrium reached in the group struggle. This equilibrium is determined by the relative influence of interest groups. Changes in the relative influence of any

interest group can be expected to result in changes in public policy (Dye, 1972).

Model Four--Rationalism: Policy as Efficient Goal Attainment

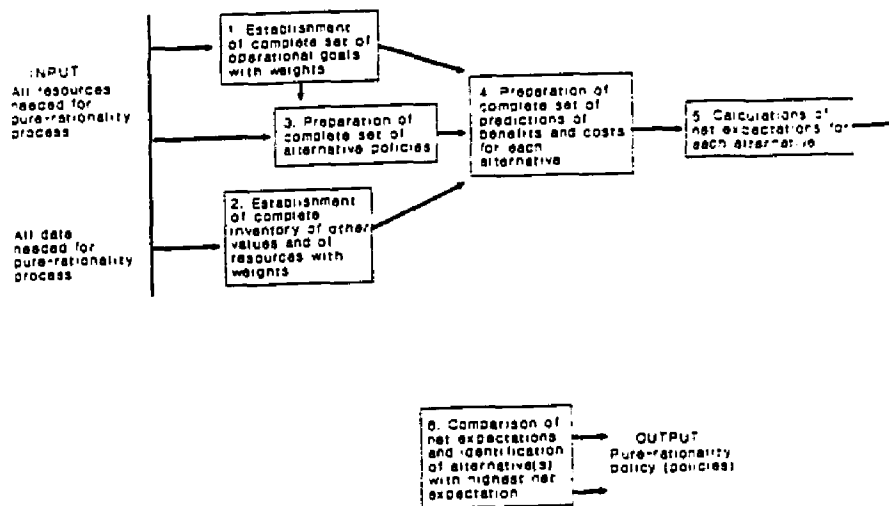
A rational policy (the "one best way") is one which is correctly designed to maximize "net value achievement." "Net value achievement" can be achieved only when all relevant values of society are known, and when any sacrifice in one or more values which is required by a policy is more than compensated for by the attainment of other values. According to Dye, rationality is interchangeable with the concept of efficiency--efficiency is the ratio between valued inputs and valued outputs. This concept of efficiency as it applies to the rational model includes the calculation of all social, political, and economic values sacrificed or achieved by a public policy, not just those which can be measured in quantitative terms such as financial values.

According to Dye's model (see Figure 1.4, Dye's rational decision-making model), in order to select a rational policy, policy makers must:

- 1) know all of the society's value preferences and their relative weights;
- 2) know all of the policy alternatives available;

- 3) know all of the consequences of each policy alternative;
- 4) calculate the ratio of achieved to sacrificed societal values for each policy alternative; and
- 5) select the most efficient policy alternative (Dye, 1972, p. 27).

FIGURE 1.4
The Rational Model



The rationalism model assumes that all of a society's value preferences can be identified and weighted. There must also be complete understanding of societal values. Rational policy making also requires information about alternative policies such as the predictive capacity to foresee accurately the consequences of alternate policies, and the intelligence to calculate correctly the ratio of costs to benefits. Finally, rational policy making requires a decision-making system which facilitates rationality in policy formation (Dye, 1972).

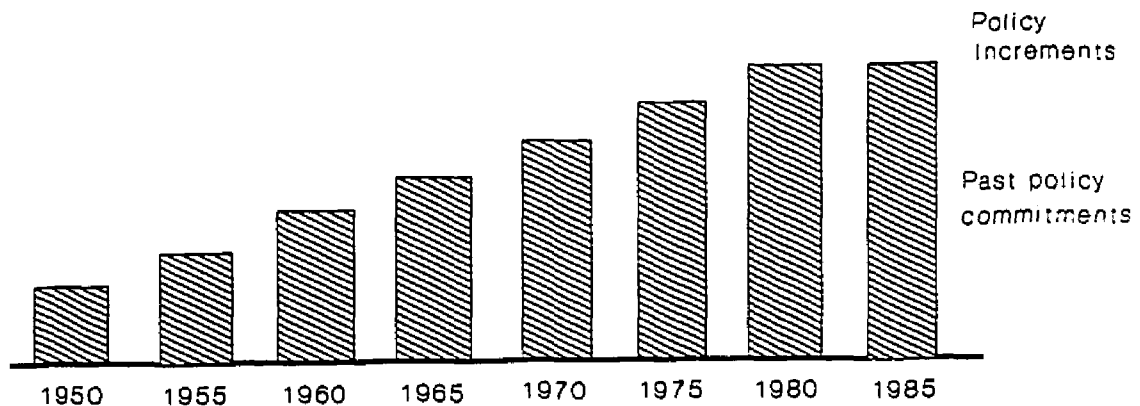
Model Five--Incrementalism: Policy as Variations of the Past

Incrementalism portrays public policy as a continuation of past policy activities with only incremental changes. Economist Charles Lindblom first presented the incremental model in his critique of the traditional rational model of decision making. According to Lindblom (1959), decision makers do not annually review the whole range of existing and proposed policies as required by the rational model. Instead, due to time constraints, intelligence, and cost they apply the more conservative approach to decision making--incrementalism.

Incrementalism is conservative in that existing programs, policies, and expenditures are considered as a base, and attention is concentrated on new programs and policies and on increases, decreases, or modification of current programs. Policy makers generally accept the legitimacy of established programs and tacitly agree to continue previous policies (Dye, 1972; Lindblom, 1959). According to Dye, they do this for several reasons. First, because they do not have the time, intelligence, or money to investigate all of the alternatives to existing policies. Second, policy makers generally accept the legitimacy of previous policies because of the uncertainty about the consequences of completely new or different policies. Third, there may be heavy investments in existing programs

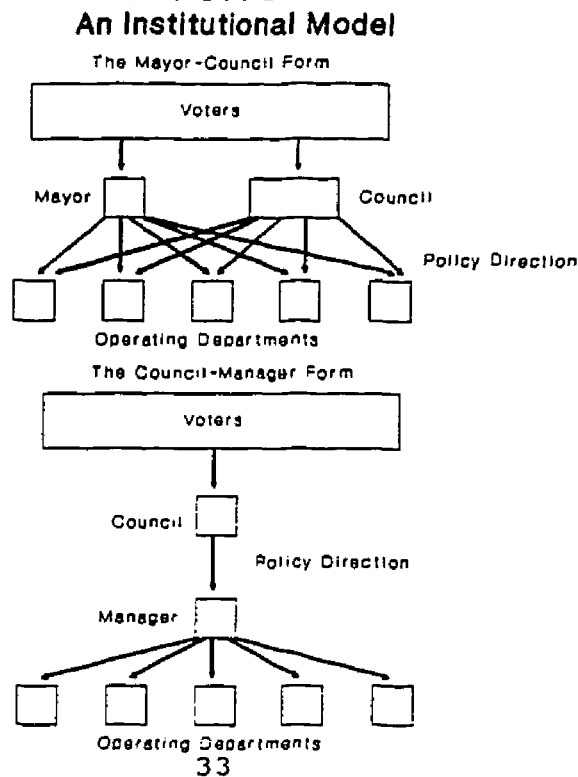
which preclude any radical change. Fourth, incrementalism is politically expedient in that in that agreement comes easier in policy making when the items of dispute are only increases or decreases in budgets, or modifications to existing programs. Fifth, the characteristics of policy makers themselves recommends the incremental model primarily because human beings rarely act to maximize all of their values, instead, they act more often to satisfy a particular demand. Finally, in the absence of any agreed upon societal goals or values it is easier for the government of a pluralist society to continue existing programs rather than engaging in overall policy planning towards specific societal goals (Dye, 1972). Figure 1.5 represents the incrementalism model as proposed by Dye.

FIGURE 1.5
The Incremental Model



Model Six--Institutionalism: Policy as Institutional Activity

The institutional approach to studying public policy making looks at the relationship between public policy and governmental structures and institutions. According to Dye, a policy does not become a public policy until it is adopted, implemented, and enforced by some governmental institution which give public policy three characteristics. First, government policies are generally regarded as legal obligation by which everyone must abide. Second, only government policies extend to all people in a society. And third, government monopolizes coercion in society--only government can legitimately imprison or kill violators of its policies (Dye, 1972). Figure 1.6 presents the institutionalism model. **FIGURE 1.6**



Dye proposes these six models for conducting public policy analysis, however he warns that the models are not competitive, in the sense that any one of them could be judged "best." Each one provides a separate focus on political life, and each can help us to understand different things about public policy. Most policies, according to Dye are a combination of rational planning, incrementalism, interest group activity, elite preferences, systemic forces, and institutional influences (Dye, 1972).

Definition of Terms

- 1). Accountability - being held responsible and answerable for specified results or outcomes of an activity over which one has authority.
- 2). Assessment/Student Assessment - the process of determining whether or not students have met educational goals set by their programs of study, institutions of higher education, or the state (SCHEV, 1987, p. 37).
- 3). Educational Outcomes/Learning Outcomes - what the student learns and can do as a result of education.
- 4). Political System - a group of interrelated structures and processes which functions authoritatively to allocate values for society (Dye, 1972, p. 18).

- 5). Policy - governing principles that serve as guidelines or rules for decision making and action in a given area.
- 6). Policy Formulation - the act of establishing principles to serve as guidelines for decision making and action.

Assumptions Used in the Study

This study rests on the following assumptions:

- 1). The origins and development of Virginia's student assessment policy could be delineated based upon the review of legal and historical documents and the responses of interviewees to interview questions.
- 2). Virginia's political system characteristics such as partisanship, interest groups, and apportionment are important determinants of causes and consequences of public policies.
- 3). Interviewees have relatively complete memory and provide truthful information.

Limitations of the Study

For the purpose of this study the following limitations were set:

- 1). One major limitation of this study was the absence of extensive legislative documentation associated with Virginia's student assessment legislation. The state of Virginia, has no requirement that committees and

subcommittees of the legislature keep records of their proceedings; therefore it will be necessary to rely heavily on interviews as opposed to comprehensive documents in the reconstruction process.

- 2). The study will not document activities associated with Virginia's student assessment policy past the signing of Senate Bill 534 by Governor Gerald Baliles in 1989.

Organization of the Study

The content of this study, which focused on the origins and development of Virginia's student assessment policy, will be presented in five chapters. This chapter served as an introduction to the study by stating the purpose, the significance, the problem, the research questions, the research context, the theoretical base, and the assumptions and limitations of the study.

Chapter II is a review of the literature on student assessment and policy analysis. This chapter includes a review of the national literature in addition to state, legal, and historical documents on student assessment. Chapter III describes the methods and procedures utilized in this research effort. The two methods by which data were collected for this study were 1) reviewing legal and historical documents, and 2) conducting intensive interviews. Chapter IV reviews the history and chronology of student assessment in Virginia by reviewing the

historical context for student assessment at the national level. Also included in this chapter is a review of the major events and characters involved in the formulation of Virginia's policy. The chapter concludes with an analysis of Thomas Dye's six theories of policy formulation as they apply to Virginia's student assessment case. Chapter V, the final chapter, summarizes the study, delineates conclusions based on the research findings, discusses implications and limits of the research, and offers recommendations for further research.

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CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to review pertinent literature on: 1) the origins and development of the student assessment movement in the United States; 2) the origins and development of Virginia student assessment policy to its passage; and 3) Thomas Dye's six models of policy formulation (elite, systems, group, incremental, institutional, and rational-decision making theory). Careful consideration of major works in each main area of focus was necessary to analyze and describe Virginia's student assessment policy formulation process. Additional works such as short articles, dissertations, and essays were not include in the review of the literature, but are referenced at the end of the chapter.

Historical Origins and Development of Student

Assessment in the United States

Accreditation's Influence

Harclerod (1980) traced the development of accreditation from 1787 to 1980. Emphasis was placed on major events that affected accreditation such as World War II, and the problems associated with the proliferation of specialized accrediting agencies.

1787 - 1914. Accrediting began at the state level in New York. The New York Board of Regents was established to register each curriculum at each institution, and to report yearly to the legislature. Voluntary nonprofit educational associations began with the American Medical Association in 1847. Four of the regional accrediting agencies were formed during this period (New England, Middle States, Southern, and North Central). In 1912 the North Central association established the first set of 12 criteria for accreditation (Harclerod, 1980).

1914 - 1935. The Southern (1917), Middle States (1919), and Northwest Associations (1923) established accrediting standards. In 1914, the Association of American Universities published its list of prestigious institutions. In 1934, the North Central Association adopted a new, less objective principle for accreditation that was based on judging an institution in terms of its purpose and its total pattern as an institution (Harclerod, 1980).

1935 - 1948. Specialized association continued to proliferate. The federal government attempted to stop the operation of fraudulent institutions. Efforts to institute state accrediting of colleges and universities were started. All voluntary associations moved toward the principle of

basing accreditation of individual institutions on the institution's own objectives (Harclerod, 1980).

1948-1975. In 1948, the Association of American universities stopped its listing of institutions based on quality. There was a rapid increase in the number of specializes associations. An increase in the federal role at institutions of higher education began as a result of the passage by Congress of the Veterans Readjustment Assistance Acts of 1944 and 1952. In order to be more influential, the Federation of Regional Accrediting Commission and the National Commission on Accrediting combined their forces in 1975 to form the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) (Harclerod, 1980).

1975-1980. Proliferation of accrediting agencies continued to be a problem for COPA. COPA shifts its attention to dissemination of information and research. Several major studies of accreditation such as nontraditional education and education on military bases were undertaken (Harclerod, 1980).

The literature on the influence of accrediting agencies on the development of student assessment was divided into three sections according to chronological influence of the agencies.

Institutional Focus. Originally accrediting agencies were primarily concerned with institutional advancement, therefore they began to focus on quality assurance methods such as college entrance examinations, and the establishment of common standards among colleges in an area. Several works were used to develop accrediting agencies' primary concern with institutional matters.

Kenneth Young, Charles Chambers, H. R. Wells, and associates' 1983 book, Understanding Accreditation, served as the primary back-bone for accreditation's history. This book reviewed: evaluating educational quality, assuring institutional accountability, achieving and maintaining high academic standards, making education more responsive to student's needs, and offsetting the dangers of government control of education.

Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility (1976), by David A. Trivett was used to summarize perceptions and criticisms of accreditation. Trivett also provided support for Young's and Harclerod's historical development of accreditation and the role of student assessment within that history.

Additionally, William Selden's Accreditation: A Struggle Over Standards in Higher Education (1960) devotes an entire chapter to the "institutional reformation" role of accrediting agencies. He warns that "... if the regional associations do not squarely face the question of the soundness of their

methods and the validity of their criteria, other forces will develop and challenge the authority of the colleges and universities to evaluate themselves..." (Selden, 1960, p. 44).

Societal Focus. Societal concerns, the second function of accreditation as identified by Young et al (1983), emerged as a general theme for several other major works. Selden's 1960 book, Accreditation: A Struggle Over Standards in Higher Education, as discussed above also reviewed the federal and state government's interest in accreditation. The federal government's interests was described initially as a mean to distribute GI funds. On the other hand the states wanted better supervision of colleges and universities. Selden discusses the need for education to adjust to social changes that were happening during the 1950's and early 1960's.

A more recent review of societal concerns as related to accreditation appeared in Chester Finn's 1978 book, Scholars, Dollars, and Bureaucrats. This book was used to develop a historical framework on federal government involvement in higher education.

Student Focus. Accreditation's shift to student concerns was discussed extensively by Young et al (1983). Reviews of the Council of Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) study on nontraditional education and its resulting shift towards outcomes assessment was discussed. Additional information on student concerns came from Finn (1978). Finn reviewed student criticism about accreditation as it existed in the 1970's and

the need for institutions and accrediting agencies to become more responsive to these expressed needs.

In 1987 the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' Commission on Colleges released its Resource Manual on Institutional Effectiveness. This manual reviewed a recently approved Section III of the Criteria for Accreditation. This section, "Institutional Effectiveness," focused on the expansion of accreditation to emphasize the results of education as opposed to resource measures such as the proportion of faculty holding doctorate degrees, and the number of library holdings. Emphasis was placed on the extent to which the institutions used "assessment information to re-evaluate goals, to make essential improvements, and to plan for the future" (SACS, 1987, p. iii).

Expansion and Curriculum Development's Influence

A second theory on the formulation of student assessment in the United States was proposed by Resnick and Goulden in their 1987 chapter, "Assessment, Curriculum and Expansion in American Higher Education: A Historical Perspective" in Diane Halpern (Ed.), Student Assessment: A Tool for Improving Teaching and Learning. They believe that student assessment initiatives were the result of periods of increased enrollment which eventually lead to a disjointed curriculum that catered primarily to the desires of the student body. Student assessment came along as a means to provide coherence to the

curriculum during periods of enrollment consolidation. Resnick and Goulden identified individual institutions as the primary initiators of these student assessment endeavors.

Pace (1979), Measuring the Outcomes of College, also reviews the establishment of several offices at major universities in the 1930's designed to study local educational research. The activities included evaluating alternative curricula, assessing student development and achievement, and comparing teaching methods. He then presents ideas for new kinds of assessment and models for more systematic and effective institutional self-studies.

Various movements of higher educational reform (such as curriculum development, the returning adult student, and the professionalization of teaching) of the early 1970's on colleges campuses spurred the use of assessment techniques on college campuses (Young et al, 1987). The returning adult student was often required to develop a portfolio documenting their knowledge and competencies gained outside of college. This information was then used by admissions and counseling officers to award academic credit for outside learning (Edgerton, 1986).

The liberal arts colleges and general education programs were next to enter the growing field of assessment. Alverno College in Milwaukee with the help of AT&T developed an assessment center in 1973. This assessment center was designed to help assess whether or not students were acquiring

abilities such as critical thinking, problem solving, communicating, and making value decisions from the existing curriculum (Ewell, 1985). Peter Ewell reviews Alverno College and Northeast Missouri State University's efforts to develop student assessment in his 1985 report, Levers for Change.

Peter Ewell's 1984 book, The Self-Regarding Institution: Information for Excellence, summarizes institutional effectiveness efforts and presents possible outcome dimensions. Additionally, this book demonstrate ways institutions have actually used assessments of student growth and development to improve teaching, the curriculum, and the learning environment.

Assessment in American Higher Education, a 1986 booklet by the Department of Education, is a collection of essays that summarize trends in assessment, current institutional efforts, and a variety of assessment efforts.

State Government's Influence on Student Assessment

Historically, government had left the process of reviewing the quality of college programs to the accrediting associations as noted by Trivett (1976), however, voluntary accreditation came under fire primarily because the states no longer believed that voluntary accreditation was trustworthy (Marcus et al, 1983). States held this belief for two major reasons: lack of public reporting, and control of the process by the institutions accredited (Floyd, 1982). Also recognized

as a weakness of accrediting agencies were: lack of rigor and standards in the review process, lack of serious self-criticism on the part of institutional participants, and a "back scratching" ethos. Trivett (1976) reported that associations did not monitor or enforce standards of excellence, nor did they report which standards a college failed to meet. As a result the status of voluntary accreditation as the guarantor of excellence in academe was threatened.

The recent push for student assessment was stimulated by the release of several national reports such as:

A Nation at Risk. This report by the National Commission on Excellence in Education released in April 1983 looked at the quality of high schools. It concluded that more and more young people were emerging from high school neither ready for college nor work. Five recommendations were made: 1) state and local high school graduation requirements in English, mathematics, science, social studies, and computer science should be strengthened; 2) schools, colleges, and universities should adopt more rigorous and measurable standards, and four-year colleges should raise admission requirements; 3) the use of more time for learning with an increase in homework assignments and a lengthening of the school day and year; 4) the improvement of teacher preparation and the demonstration of both aptitude for teaching and competence in an academic

discipline; and 5) the support of citizens in providing fiscal support and stability required to bring about these reforms.

Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education: This report by the National Institute of Education's Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education released in October, 1984 asserts that despite significant success in adapting to growth and change, all is not well in American higher education. Reason cited were: only half of those who enter college for a bachelor's degree eventually receive it; colleges and universities have become excessively vocational in their orientation; curricula have been fragmented; the ideal of integration of knowledge has been diminished, and few colleges examine the learning and growth of the students they graduate. Among the report's 27 recommendations were five recommendations for assessment and providing feedback to help improve the effectiveness with which students, faculty, and the institution carry-out their work.

To Reclaim a Legacy: A Report on the Humanities in Higher Education. This report written by William J. Bennett for the National Endowment for the Humanities in November 1984 claimed that colleges and universities were not giving students an adequate education in the culture and civilization of which they are a part. The report recommended that all colleges and universities should offer a "core of common studies" to include a chronological understanding of Western

Civilization; several masterworks of English, American, and European literature, proficiency in a foreign language, and familiarity with at least one non-western culture.

Integrity in the College Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community. This report released in February 1985 by the Association of American Colleges reviewed the decline and devaluation of the undergraduate degree. It urged faculty to take responsibility for the curriculum at their institutions. A minimum required curriculum should consist of: 1) inquiry, abstract logical thinking, and critical analysis; 2) literacy: writing, reading, speaking, and listening; 3) understanding numerical data; 4) historical consciousness; 5) science; 6) values; 7) art; 8) international and multicultural experiences; and 9) study in depth.

These reports along with mistrust of accrediting agencies standards caused officials in Virginia to look at the quality of the undergraduate experience in its public colleges and universities.

Historical Origins and Development of Student

Assessment in Virginia

The historical origins of student assessment in Virginia was traced through the State Council for Higher Education's (SCHEV) Virginia Plan for Higher Education, state documents, and legislation.

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia's Influence

One possible route for the higher education student assessment movement in Virginia can be traced back through SCHEV's plans. In its 1974 Virginia Plan for Higher Education SCHEV identified accountability for resource, people, money and materials provided to the public institutions of higher education as one of its major goals (SCHEV, 1974). Since this initial statement of accountability as a primary goal of SCHEV there has been other references to attainment of this goal. In its 1983, 1985, and 1987 version of the plan, the Council reinforced its commitment to accountability by calling for the establishment of a state-wide student assessment policy.

Another document issued in 1987, Ten Years of Higher Education in Virginia, by Gordon Davies, Director of SCHEV, provided his personal perspective on higher education in Virginia. Davies states that, "...we do not know in fact what they [students] are learning or how well. Neither do we know whether they are prepared to participate in collegiate study" (p. 13). Davies recommends that, regardless of the difficulties involved, colleges and universities must assess whether or not their students are acquiring the abilities necessary to remain well educated throughout their lifetime.

Virginia's Policy Legislation: State Government's Influence

Senate Joint Resolution 125, passed by the General Assembly in 1985 directed the Council of Higher Education "to investigate means by which student achievement may be measured to assure the citizens of Virginia the continuing high quality of higher education in the Commonwealth." The study was conducted and presented to the 1986 General Assembly as Senate Document No. 14. This document proposed six recommendations for measuring student achievement at Virginia's colleges and universities. Recommendation number two suggested that "all state supported institutions of higher education establish procedures and programs to measure student achievement ..." (p. 16). Senate Document No. 14 and its recommendations were accepted by the General Assembly in Senate Joint Resolution 83. In that resolution, the General Assembly requested public institutions of higher education in the state "to establish assessment programs to measure student achievement." Additionally, SCHEV in cooperation with the state-supported colleges and universities, was requested to establish guidelines for designing good assessment programs and report to the public results of institutional efforts to measure student achievement in its biennial revisions of The Virginia Plan for Higher Education." In January of 1989, Senate Bill No. 534 was proposed. This bill amended the Code of Virginia to include within SCHEV's duties the responsibility to develop in cooperation with institutions of higher education

guidelines for the assessment of student achievement and to report the institutions' findings in the biennial revisions of the master plan for higher education.

Dye's Policy Formulation Models

Thomas R. Dye in his 1972 book, Understanding Public Policy, proposes six models of policy formulation that can be used to analyze Virginia's student assessment policy formulation process and the extent of government involvement. These theories are: systems theory, elite theory, group theory, incrementalism, rational decision-making theory, and institutionalism.

Model One--System Theory: Policy as Systems Output

Thomas Dye's systems theory was based on the works of political analyst David Easton. As early as 1953 David Easton applied systems theory analysis to the study of political behavior. Easton describes his 1953 book, The Political System, as a response to fundamental changes, towards behaviorism that took place in political science after World War II. The purpose of this book was to help "in some small way to win back for theory its proper and necessary place" in political science (1971, p. x). Easton expanded his theory in subsequent works such as "An Approach to the Analysis of Political Systems," World Politics (1957); A Framework for

Political Analysis (1965); and the second edition of The Political System (1971).

Model Two--Elite Theory: Policy as Elite Preference

Thomas Dye's elite theory was explained in detail in Thomas R. Dye and Harmon Zeigler's, The Irony of Democracy (1970, 1981). Elite theory suggests that public policy should be viewed as the preferences and values of a governing elite. This theory negates the concept of democratic governance where governmental decisions are based on the desires of the majority.

Model Three--Group Theory: Policy As Group Equilibrium

Group theory has its roots in James Madison's analysis of American politics as it existed in the 1700's. Madison identified "factions" (or in modern terms, "interest groups") as the chief source of political activity in America. Madison's often-quoted definition of a "faction" identifies one as:

a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or a minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse or passion, or of interests, adverse to the rights of the citizens, or the permanent and aggregate interests of the community (Madison, p. 54).

This definition of a faction served as the basis for David B. Truman's The Governmental Process (1951, 1971) and Earl Latham's "the Group Basis of Politics." In turn, these works according to Dye served as the base for his group theory. Latham describes public policy from the group theory perspective as follows:

public policy is actually the equilibrium reached in the group struggle at any given moment, and it represents a balance which the contending factions of groups constantly strive to weight in their favor (1956, p. 239).

Thus, the influence of a group is determined by their number, wealth, organizational strength, leadership, access to decision makers, and internal cohesion (Dye, 1972, p. 24).

Model Four--Rationalism: Policy as Efficient Goal Attainment

Dye's rational theory is based on Yehezkel Dror's pure-rationality model as described in his 1968 book, Public Policymaking Reexamined. Dror's model is presented as the "universally ideal pattern of decision making that should be approximated as closely as possible" (Dror, 1968, p. 132). A pure-rationality model should consist of complete, weighted, inventories of society's values and resources. One must also be able to make valid predictions of the costs and benefits

of each alternative. Dror states that these tasks are far beyond the knowledge and capacity of policy makers; however, the pure-rationality model should be approximated as closely as possible.

Model Five--Incrementalism: Policy as Variations of the Past

Charles E. Lindblom proposed the incremental model to decision making in his 1959 article, "The Science of "Muddling Through"." He argued that pure rationality was not the best method for decision making or policy making instead the process of "muddling through"--slow evolution of policies by cautious incremental changes--was a better representation of the decision making/policymaking process. The basic principle of this model is that the more different an alternative is from past policies, the more difficult it is to predict its results in the policymaking process.

A second noted author to apply incremental theory to the political process was Aaron Wildavsky. Wildavsky's book, The Politics of the Budgeting Process first issued in 1964 applied incrementalism to the federal budgeting process. Wildavsky suggests that budgetary decisions are made in an incremental fashion by policy makers primarily because they do not have the time, energy, or expertise to review every budget request. So they usually accept last years's "base" spending level as legitimate and focus attention on proposed increases (increments) for each program.

Model Six--Institutionalism: Policy as Institutional Activity

Historically, not much attention has been focused on the relationship between public policy and the structure of governmental institutions. Instead studies usually described specific governmental institutions according to their structures, organization, duties, and functions. Little attention was given to the impact of institutional characteristics on policies as Dye describes in his institutional theory.

Dye warns that the six models of policy formulation as described above through the literature are not competitive in the sense that one can be judged best. Each one provides a separate focus on political life, and each one helps us to understand different things about public policy. Dye explains that most public policies are a combination of the six models presented above (Dye, 1972). For a detailed description of the models see Chapter One.

Summary

In response to the need to define a "college," student assessment was introduced into colleges and universities as early as the 1800's. Accrediting agencies were formed to maintain high academic standards in these institutions. Gradually, the role of accrediting agencies evolved from its initial focus on institutional advancement to include foci on

societal and student concerns. The student focus served as a template for present student assessment policies of regional accrediting agencies. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools was first to emphasize the results of education as opposed to resource measures such as the number of library holdings.

A second push for student assessment was a result of increases in the number of students attending higher education institutions and the corresponding desire to up-grade the curriculum at these institutions. Numerous institutions used student assessment techniques to assess student development and achievement. Several major institutions began using student assessment as a means to evaluate alternative curricula, and to compare teaching methods.

State involvement in student assessment came as a result of decreasing confidence in accrediting agencies standards. After the release of several national reports on the quality of higher education, states wanted assurances of high quality products (students) at state-supported institutions. Thus the push for student assessment in Virginia and in other states were spurred by two factors: the desire to increase the quality of state-supported higher education; and the need for accountability for state funds.

The theoretical models for policy formulation as proposed by Thomas Dye were used to determine which policy best fit the development of Virginia's student assessment policy

formulation process. Chapter Three describes the methodological procedures undertaken in this study to accomplish the in-depth analysis of Virginia's student assessment policy.

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CHAPTER III: DESIGN

The design used in this study was developed after a careful review of methodology used in similar policy studies as presented in Chapter Two. Emphasis was placed on the design used by Stephen Bailey in his 1950 book, Congress Makes a Law. Bailey's design will be explained in more detail later in this chapter. A second source for the design used in this study were opinions of individuals who had done similar historical studies. These individuals included, college professors, and doctoral students from the College of William and Mary. Information from government officials and others involved in Virginia's higher education student assessment policy analysis was also used in constructing the design for this study.

Bailey's Policy Formulation Design

Bailey's 1950 book, Congress Makes a Law: The Story Behind the Employment Act of 1946, is a narrative that attempts "to present a reasonably objective picture of the formulation of a public policy in the Congress..." (p. ix). His analysis of the legislative policy-making process was defined as the interaction of ideas, institutions, interests, and individuals. His book is an attempt to explain how these four forces interact in a particular historical context in relation to a particular economic issue--full employment.

Bailey identified two sources for his research: written sources and interviews. He explained that his bibliography gave sufficient indication of the written sources, but some of the most significant material in the study came from interviews.

Live sources are not necessarily more reliable than written ones. But unless live sources are used in a study of Congressional policy-making, a meaningful analysis is virtually impossible. In the legislative process, what is committed to writing is only the seventh of the iceberg above the water. Although four hundred interviews have not exposed all of the submerged data about S.380, they do perhaps give some indication of the types of forces at work in the legislative process (Bailey, 1950, p. x).

Following the example of Bailey's book, this study used document analysis and intensive interviewing to gather information to answer the subsidiary research questions and thereby answer the major research questions. The information was then used to develop a case history of Virginia's student assessment policy.

Document Analysis

Document analysis was used for collecting retrospective data on the history of the student assessment movement in the United States and on the development of Virginia's student assessment policy. Information obtained through document analysis was used to develop a holistic picture of student assessment policy and Virginia's policy formulation process for higher education. Documents were obtained from the personal files of state legislators, members of the State Council of Higher Education (SCHEV), and from state publications housed in The College of William and Mary library and the Legislative Services library in Richmond, Virginia. These documents aided in constructing the chronology of Virginia's student assessment policy and in identifying people and groups that were influential to the development of the policy. Some of the information obtained through document analysis was used to aid in the generation of questions for the intensive interview sessions.

Documents were analyzed according to four categories:

- 1) Their ability to aid in the construction of the chronological development of student assessment in the United States, and in Virginia's student assessment policy;
- 2) Connection with Dye's models discussed in Chapter Two;

- 3) legislative opinions and;
- 4) Connection with legislative influence from interest groups or interested parties.

Seven guidelines established by Guba and Lincoln as they appeared in Merriam's 1988 book, Case Study Research in Education, were used to determine what information would be placed into each category:

- Include any information that is germane to the area and not excluded by boundary-setting rules [see Limitations of Study as discussed in Chapter One].
- Include any information that relates or bridges several already existing information items.
- Include any information that identifies new elements or brings them to the surface.
- Add any information that reinforces existing information, but reject it if the reinforcement is merely redundant.
- Add new information that tends to explain other information already known.
- Add new information that exemplifies either the nature of the category or important evidence within the category.

- Add any information that tends to refute or challenge already known information (Merriam, 1988, p. 136).

Advantages and Disadvantages of Document Analysis

There are three advantages to using document analysis as a form of research. First, written documents have proven to be good sources primarily because they are not subjected to recall problems. Second, if dated they may also provide more detail on the chronology of events than one can get through interviewing alone. Third, document analysis serves as a good source for obtaining background information such as a listing of key staff and legislators who were instrumental in passage of Virginia's student assessment policy without wasting the time of busy officials.

On the other hand, there are also some disadvantages to document analysis. First, they are often purposely misleading, incomplete, and often designed to sell the program rather than to reveal its flaws. Second, one can not cross-examine a document. These advantages and disadvantages were kept in mind during this policy analysis study.

Sources of Virginia Documents

- 1). The Index of Topical Studies by the General Assembly of Virginia 1970-1986.

- 2). The Code of Virginia - Final version of Senate Bill 534 that gave SCHEV the responsibility for conducting student assessment.
- 3). State Council for Higher Education for Virginia.
 - A. The Virginia Plan for Higher Education - Includes SCHEV's goals for public institutions of higher education in Virginia; review of student assessment plans at state colleges and universities.
 - B. The Measurement of Student Achievement and the Assurance of Quality in Virginia Higher Education - Was used to describe the nature of Virginia's student assessment legislation.
 - C. "Guidelines for Student Assessment" - Issued by SCHEV on March 19, 1987 to be used by public colleges and universities in the state of Virginia.
- 4). The White Paper - Published by the Virginia State Chamber of Commerce gave a short weekly chronology of bills and resolutions, committee assignments, and general information on Virginia's political process. It included votes, and amendments to proposed legislation.
- 5). Drafts of Bills as presented to the Division of Legislative Services
- 6). Acts of the Assembly
- 7). House and Senate Journals - Included complete versions of resolutions and bills as presented to the house and

the senate. Also votes on different versions of legislation was obtained from these sources.

- 8). House and Senate Committee Records - Because of the lack of documentation within committees, little to no information was obtained from this source.
- 9). Digests of Acts
- 10). Local Newspapers

These documents were then used to identify influential groups and people with interest in higher education student assessment. Groups with interest in student assessment were:

The State Council for Higher Education in Virginia

The Senate Committee of Education and Health

The House of Delegates Committee on Education

State Public Higher Education Institutions

The Executive Branch of Virginia's Government--This included the Governor, and the Secretary of Education

The Public at Large

From the list of interest groups identified above the researcher formed a list of influential individuals to participate in the study. Twelve individuals were identified and asked to participate (by interviews) in the study.

Intensive Interviews

In eliciting information related to political issues and public policy, it has been found that the interview is one of the most reliable and frequently used instruments. Other studies (identified by Agnes Braganza 1987) done by Hagar (1976), Nowlan (1973), Moos and Rourke (1959) employed this technique in the study of relationships between the state and higher education. It was found that the interview technique offered a more intimate and complete picture of the topics that were being pursued.

Interviewees for this study were:

- 1). **Gordon Davies**, Director of SCHEV, aided in the writing of Virginia's student assessment legislation and was influential in the passage of the legislation.
- 2). **Deborah DiCroce**, President of Piedmont Virginia Community College, and former Provost of Tidewater Community College (Portsmouth Campus) assisted in the development of Virginia's student assessment "Guidelines."
- 3). **Brenda Edwards**, Legislative Research Assistant, for the Legislative Services Library (Richmond, Virginia) attended committee meetings on student assessment legislation.

- 4). **Peter Ewell** is an author and national consultant on student assessment at colleges and universities in the United States.
- 5). **Benjamin J. Lambert, III**, Senator from District 9 in Richmond, sponsored SJR - 83 which accepted the recommendations of SCHEV regarding the measurement of student achievement. Lambert also sponsored SB - 534 that was passed by the 1989 Session of the General Assembly giving SCHEV formal powers to oversee student assessment in Virginia.
- 6). **Frank Luth** served as the Director of Student Assessment at James Madison University.
- 7). **Ann-Marie McCartan** is the Coordinator of Academic Programs at SCHEV. She is currently working on Virginia's student assessment project.
- 8). **James H. McMillan**, Associate Professor, Virginia Commonwealth University assisted in the preparation of SCHEV's report to the state legislature: "The Measurement of Student Achievement and the Assurance of Quality in Virginia Higher Education".
- 9). **Margaret (Peg) Miller**, Assistant Director for Academic Programs, at SCHEV is currently responsible for overseeing compliance with Virginia's student assessment policy.
- 10). **David Potter** of George Mason University formerly served as the Assistant Director of Academic

Programs at SCHEV. While at SCHEV, he prepared the report to the state legislature: "The Measurement of Student Achievement and the Assurance of Quality in Virginia Higher Education".

- 11). Robert E. Russell, Senator from District 11 in Richmond, was the initial sponsor of SJR - 125 which called on SCHEV to conduct a study on the quality of higher education in the state of Virginia.
- 12). Norma E. Szakal of the Legislative Services Library assisted in the writing of Virginia's student assessment legislation.

Procedure for Interviews and Summarizing Data

The interviewees were contacted by telephone and asked if they would participate in an interview for the study. Each participant accepted. During the phone conversation interviewees were informed about the purpose of the research project and the kinds of questions that would be asked during the interview. The purpose was cited as the construction of a case history of Virginia's student assessment policy. An interview date was then set at their convenience.

On the day of the interview each participant was informed that they could decline to answer any or all questions that would be asked during the interview. Each participant was then asked if they objected to having their interview tape recorded. The tape recorder was turned on after verbal

approval was obtained. Two participants, Deborah DiCroce and Peter Ewell, were interviewed by telephone. Notes were taken during these telephone interviews.

The first question asked of all participants was: "Please explain to the best of your knowledge, the policy formulation process of Virginia's student assessment policy and your role in its implementation." After obtaining their response, follow-up questions generated by their response were then asked. The interview was then conducted according to three areas of interest to the study as generated by the three major research questions identified in Chapter One.

The first major research question was: What is the historical context for Virginia's higher education student assessment movement?

The second major research question was: What were the major events and characters in the formulation of Virginia's student assessment policy?

The third major research question was: On the basis of the historical description and narrative gathered for this study, does the case study of student assessment policy formulation in Virginia conform clearly to one of the six policy formulation models (systems theory, elite theory, group theory, rational decision-making theory, incrementalism or

institutionalism) as proposed by Thomas R. Dye in his book, Understanding Public Policy?

Each interviewee was not asked questions from all of the above categories. Prior to the interview a review of documents was conducted and each interviewee was asked questions that pertained to their areas of involvement in Virginia's student assessment policy formulation issue. However, if during their brief given at the beginning of the interview, some information that filtered over into other categories was identified they were questioned on this area also.

One individual selected not to answer all questions on the record. In this case the tape recorder was turned off and the individual was assured that the source of their comments would not be revealed.

After each interview was completed the participants were thanked for their time. In each case the participant suggested further documents either from their personal files or from other individuals that were involved in the student assessment process.

The last step was to summarize data. Each interview was transcribed verbatim from the tape recording. Information was then compiled according to its ability to aid in the answering of each of the three research question identified above. The analysis of the data will be presented in Chapter Four.

After obtaining information through the above sources, the process of triangulation was used to validate the results and then construct a case study analysis of the process of developing a state student assessment policy in Virginia.

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**CHAPTER IV: PRESENTATION AND
ANALYSIS OF DATA**

The purpose of this chapter is 1) to present an analysis of the formulation of Virginia's student assessment policy, and 2) to identify the best fit of six policy formulation models as proposed by Thomas R. Dye in his 1972 book, Understanding Public Policy for explaining this case in terms of public policy theory.

Since Virginia's student assessment policy is complex analysis will be approached in a careful, systematic manner. Therefore, the researcher of this study will present the findings of the study in the same order as the major research questions discussed in Chapter One. Each section will begin with the statement of the major research question and will include answers to each of the subsidiary questions in an attempt to answer each major research question.

First Major Research Question: What is the historical context for Virginia's higher education student assessment movement? The answer to this question was found by reviewing the background of student assessment as it appeared in 1) the history of accrediting agencies; 2) the response to critical periods of expansion and curriculum development in higher

education; and 3) more recently in response to the national push for accountability.

**Historical Origins and Development of Student
Assessment in the United States**

The history of assessing the quality of higher education in the state of Virginia has its origins in the national move for external accountability. This goes against the historical practice of allowing faculty and administrators of an institution to review their programs, methods, and degrees of learning in higher education. Initially, one of the primary techniques for accountability for colleges and universities was through accrediting agencies.

Accrediting Agencies' Influence

Historically, accrediting agencies have had to serve three beneficiaries--institutions, society, and students (Young et al, 1983). Accrediting agencies' roles as server of institutions, society and now, students evolved as a result of external demands for accountability primarily from members of the higher education community and others such as the federal government that had an interest in the quality of colleges and universities in the United States. Each role will be discussed as it evolved in the history of accrediting agencies.

Stage One: Institutional Focus. Accrediting agencies and related accrediting activities originated over a century ago to solve problems related to college admissions of high school graduates by diploma rather than examination and the maintenance of academic standards in "colleges" (Selden, 1960, p. 42). The problem originated from several sources: first, the rapid spread of colleges, universities, and high schools after the 1850's; second, the move away from the classical curriculum; third, the development of the elective system; fourth, the addition of new degrees; and fifth, the drive to push some elementary college subjects back into the high schools. These changes made it hard to define a college. Many colleges found themselves providing remedial education as opposed to "higher learning" thus the need for some kind of accrediting agency to set standards for institutions of higher education (Harclerod, 1980, p. 7). New regional accrediting association began to develop working definitions of the term "college" as well as establishing what preparations students seeking college admissions should have.

Accrediting began at the state level in New York. The University of the State of New York (the New York Board of Regents) was established in 1784 as a board for King's College (now Columbia University) and other colleges or schools in the state. However, after three years of arguments, the law was changed in 1787, allowing Columbia and all other such institutions to have their own boards. The board of Regents

were empowered and required to visit every college in the state yearly, to register each curriculum at each institution, and to report yearly to the legislature. Thus accrediting activities began at the state level. Iowa followed New York's lead in 1846, Utah in 1896, Washington in 1909, Virginia in 1912, and Maryland in 1914 (Harcleroad, 1980).

On the other hand voluntary, nonprofit educational associations began with the American Medical Association in 1847. However, little control was exerted until after 1900 when the Association reorganized. This had become essential because of the low state of professional schools of all types, including medicine. Other specialized accrediting associations that began during this period are the Association of American Law Schools (1900), the American Osteopathic Association (1897) with its Committee on Education in 1901, and the Society of American Foresters (1900) (Harcleroad, 1980).

During this same period, four regional associations were formed (New England, Middle States, Southern, and North Central), but only the North Central Association (1895) established and applied standards of accreditation. By 1895 they covered all of the United States except the Pacific Coast and some mountain states. Each of these associations worked diligently for stronger and more explicit academic standards.

Accreditation emerged as a national activity on August 3-4, 1906, when representatives from the four existing regional associations and representatives from the College Entrance Examination Board met "to present a plan... for establishing, preserving, and interpreting in common terms the standards of admission to college, whatever the method or combination of the methods of admission, in order to accommodate migrating students and to secure just understanding and administration of standards" (Young et al, 1983, p. 2). The end result of this meeting was the agreement to:

- * Recommend that the regional associations have their member colleges accept certificates from accredited schools in other regions.
- * Encourage the regional associations not yet doing so to organize "a college entrance certificate board or a commission for accrediting schools."
- * Propose the development of common definitions and standards.
- * Establish a permanent commission "for the purpose of considering, from time to time, entrance requirements and matters of mutual interest to colleges and preparatory schools (Young et al, 1983, p. 2).

During this same period, two important accreditation events occurred. First the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, which started accrediting high schools in 1905, decided to accredit member colleges. However, it was 1912 before the North Central Association established the first set of 12 specific criteria for accreditation, and 1913 when they published the first list of fully accredited institutions (Harclerod, 1980). The New England, Middle States, and the Southern regional associations followed the North Central's lead and also established accrediting standards and put them into operation.

In the 1930's, the North Central Association adopted a new stand for accreditation. This new principle was based on judging an institution in terms of its purpose and its total pattern as an institution. This new principle, later adopted by other associations, made it possible for accrediting to be adapted to the ever widening spectrum of post-secondary education institutions such as normal schools, junior colleges, universities, and technical schools.

The second important development for accrediting agencies during this period was the beginning of specialized accreditation through associations. The American Medical Association established its Council on Medical Education in 1904, developed a rating system in 1906, and prepared the first classification of schools in 1907. These actions evolved into specialized accreditation and established

patterns for other professional association. Eleven special programmatic associations started between 1914 and 1935: podiatry, business, law, library and music, dietetics, nurse anaesthesia, pharmacy and engineering, and optometry.

Specialized associations continued to proliferate, including: chemistry; journalism, architecture, and art. Institutional presidents beginning in 1924, through their own association, tried to limit the number of association with which they would work. The federal government also made efforts to stop the operation of degree mills by using laws against fraud, and abuse of the postal service. The apparent need for state controls on degree mills led to another push during the 1930's toward state standards and state accrediting of colleges and universities. After numerous discussions and national conferences on the problem, the emphasis was left to voluntary accreditation and only the most flagrant degree mills were put out of business.

In the meantime, the voluntary associations consolidated their position nationally. Between 1935-1948, all voluntary associations moved to some degree toward the new principle adopted by the North Central Association, basing accreditation of individual institutions on the institution's own objectives rather than on a single set of standardized criteria. This helped them later to adapt accrediting to a wide diversity of institutions.

Major changes took place in accreditation from 1948-

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In 1948, the Association of American Universities stopped its listing of institutions, which for 40 years had been the most important form of accreditation listing of the educational quality of institutions. With its prestigious list no longer available, the regional associations lists became much more important. Another consequence was a rapid increase in the number of specialized associations. Over 17 widely known associations were established.

This first phase of accrediting history--institutional emphasis--was characterized by regional accrediting associations refining their standards for membership and developing procedures for assessing educational quality on the basis of an institution's self-study and by an evaluation of the institution by a group of visiting peers (Young et al, 1983). Accreditation's roles were expanded when societal concerns were added to its primary mission of institutional quality.

Stage Two: Societal Focus. This phase was represented by an increase in the federal role at institutions of higher education. The primary purpose of federal intervention was to use "federal appropriations to encourage wider access and opportunity for postsecondary students as a way to achieve national goals" (Young et al, p. 237-38). In achieving this

diverse goal several pieces of federal legislation was enacted--the GI bills, the National Defense and Education Act, and the Higher Education Act.

The GI bills of 1944 and 1952 looked to higher education as the primary means of helping veterans get established in a productive career. A major part of the 1944 GI bill provided education benefits that could be used for almost any type of education from elementary school through graduate school. Institutions would be reimbursed by the Veterans Administration based on the number of veterans enrolled. There was little to no control over the selection of institutions. Many schools lacked both accreditation and effective state regulation through licensing. This scandal led to the revised GI bill of 1952 (Finn, 1978, Young et al, 1983).

In the GI bill of 1952, Congress turned to the states for help in determining eligible institutions for VA funds. The states in turn turned to accrediting agencies for approval of programs. Thus accreditation was a tool to aid the federal government in the dispersal of funds Young et al, 1983).

In 1958, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) as a reaction to the Sputnik challenge. This act called on institutions of higher education to develop broad strengths in science and defense areas. Again accreditation was used to aid the Office of Education in determining which institutions were eligible for funds.

During the 1960's Congress passed the Higher Education Act which was an effort to provide higher education opportunities to economically disadvantaged students regardless of their preparation for college level work. In a response to this challenge regional accrediting associations broadened their membership to include the rapidly growing community college and vocational school sectors.

In a significant service to both the postsecondary education community and the federal government, the regional accrediting commissions demonstrated that the general process of self study and peer review, designed as a way to judge that an institution had set appropriate educational objectives for itself and was reasonably achieving them, could serve as a unifying concept for quality assurance among many disparate types of institutions (Young et al, 1983, p. 251).

The expansion of accrediting agencies' roles to include responding to federal needs in addition to institutional needs served as a template for the addition of another sector-- student's needs.

Stage Three: Student Focus. With the great expansion of colleges and universities in the late 1950's, 1960's, and early 1970's as a result of increased enrollments, and

increased governmental funding came a parallel growth in the responsibilities for accrediting agencies. After this time period a growing problem exploded, when the number of students defaulting on federally guaranteed loans rose rapidly and when it was alleged that the accrediting system could be held partially responsible. "For Thousands Accreditation Has Spelled Deception" trumpeted an article in the Washington Post on June 26, 1974. Some students proclaimed they are defaulting on the federal loans because the institution in which they had enrolled had failed to provide the educational program it had promised. In a number of cases, the students claimed, the school had lured them with the prospect of a federally insured loan, which it was able to do because, being accredited, it was eligible to participate in the program. However, once the students had signed over their borrowed funds to the school in the form of tuition, the institution had its money and did not care if the student paid off the loan--if he didn't the government would (Finn, 1978). This accusation spurred growing concerns over the quality of accreditation standards.

The problems for accrediting agencies continued to grow. The federal government realized that it needed a better way of policing the schools, both to look after the interests of students as consumers and to protect its own monies, looked for other mechanisms for accountability. Because of the large amounts of federal money involved, officials of the executive

branch advised Congress to gradually intensify federal oversight of the operations of accrediting agencies. The only other alternative was to monitor all the schools and colleges that participated in federally funded programs, a course of action that would enlarge the domain of direct federal regulation and erode the academy's ability to regulate itself (Finn, 1978).

In order to be more influential, and to respond to expressed limitations of accrediting agencies, the Federation of Regional Accrediting Commission and the National Commission on Accrediting combined forces in 1975 to form the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA). According to the COPA board, COPA has five major priorities:

- 1) dealing with the problems associated with proliferation and specialization in accreditation;
- 2) evaluating educational quality and measuring outcomes of education;
- 3) coping with the role of government (federal and state) in accreditation;
- 4) developing a national education-information program on accreditation; and
- 5) selecting, training, and evaluating volunteers in accreditation (Young, 1979, p. 139).

During its first fourteen years, COPA has made significant progress in addressing its second priority: evaluating educational quality and measuring educational outcomes of education. This was done by reviewing and conducting studies on nontraditional education.

Nontraditional education generally describes students (such as minorities, women, and adult) and curricula such as external degree programs, and credit for prior experience which are not integral parts of the higher education system (Levine, 1981). It focuses on the needs of the student as opposed to the needs of the institution. It encourages diversity of individual opportunity rather than uniform prescription, and deemphasizes time, space and even course requirements (Young et al, 1983). The growth of nontraditional education throughout the latter part of the 1960's and continuing throughout the 1970's and 1980's raised legitimate questions concerning the comprehensiveness of the voluntary accreditation process. One question posed by Young et al asked, "Could accreditation, which was geared mainly to evaluating the education process within traditional institutions, effectively assess the quality of education in these new institutions and programs, which place less emphasis on process and more on outcomes?" (1983, pp. 344-345). In order to answer this question COPA conducted its own study.

COPA, spurred by other studies of nontraditional education, conducted its own study on nontraditional

education. COPA reviewed all the accreditation procedures of the accrediting bodies recognized by COPA, and made a detailed analysis of the programs and the accreditation experiences of sixty-two institutions, and conducted a national study of 1,500 educators. The study was completed in 1978 and found that-

- * The nontraditional education movement is a positive and creative force in American postsecondary education, providing added stimulus for needed reform, and is specifically focused on the issues of equality of access, quality of results, and individual achievement...
- * Nontraditional education is basically a variation within, not a departure from, the traditional purposes, processes, and outcomes of American postsecondary education...
- * Separate standards or criteria should not be applied in the evaluation of traditional educational institutions. Rather, a single set of procedures and criteria that recognizes both process and performance components should be used in the evaluation of all institutions (Young et al, 1983, pp. 346-47).

The results of the national survey of 1,500 educators found that they strongly supported a move towards the assessment of educational outcomes in the accreditation process. In a section of the survey dealing with the future role of regional accreditation, the respondents selected as their primary concern that accrediting bodies should "focus more on educational outcomes and less on structure and process" (Young et al, 1983, p. 347). In response, the COPA project recommended that all postsecondary education would benefit from broadening current accreditation procedures, which focuses mainly on educational process--intended to achieve the institution's purpose and mission--to include an educational outcomes orientation.

COPA concluded that an accreditation procedure that emphasizes learning outcomes can be equitably and comprehensively applied to all higher education institutions or programs regardless of their orientation. Recommendation eleven of the study provides the conceptual framework for developing educational outcomes oriented procedures:

The accreditation association responsible for the evaluation of an institution or program [should] require that the institution or program place major emphasis on learning to demonstrate that it:

- 1) Has clear educational goals and objectives that are sufficiently explicit to be assessable and that

presuppose in their realization the learning necessary for successful performance in the fields for which students are being educated;

- 2) Maintains a system of educational delivery that embraces and affords the opportunity for learning;
- 3) Applies performance criteria that, if met, would reasonably assure graduates of competence in the area for which they are being prepared, and
- 4) Employs effective instruments to assess student attainments which would be acceptable if independently examined by recognized scholars (Young et al, 1983, p. 349).

In response to COPA's findings, the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools conducted a complete review of the state of the art of outcomes assessment and reviewed its own procedures to assess their effectiveness in dealing with all types of Higher education institutions within their jurisdiction. In June 1981 the Middle States Commission changed its basic accreditation document, Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education, and revised its Handbook for Institutional Self-Study to be more responsive to educational outcomes (Young et al, 1983).

The Southern Association of Colleges and School (SACS) Commission on Colleges responded to the COPA project by

conducting a three-year study. This study was designed to review and evaluate its entire accreditation process and standards. The project sought to develop an accreditation process that would deal in a comprehensive and uniform manner with collegiate institutions. The final report of the committee states:

The subcommittee believes that while indicators of quality are needed that apply to the components of input and process, there is also the need to have quality indicators of program and service outcomes. Based on the review of the state of the art, this subcommittee concludes that while the feasibility for using an input-process-outcome model of accreditation is somewhat based on theory and speculation, the commission should move to develop this model to assess institutional effectiveness (Commission on Colleges, 1981, p. 9).

SACS verified these findings and those of the COPA study by conducting an extensive survey of its constituent colleges. There were 1,704 respondents. The responses to one question on the survey about the accreditation process are significant (Commission on Colleges, 1981, p. 42):

Question

The method of education is partly represented by the relationship between means and outcomes. The accrediting process can emphasize primarily the means of education (faculty, library, facilities, and so on) or the outcomes of education (what the student learns and can do as a result of education). Traditionally, accrediting agencies have emphasized means more than outcomes. In the future, would you like to see the accrediting process emphasize:

Responses	Percentage
1. Means totally	2.35
2. Means much more than outcomes	18.37
3. Means somewhat more than outcomes	24.12
4. Means and outcomes equally	33.98
5. Outcomes somewhat more than means	11.09
6. Outcomes much more than means	6.57
7. Outcomes totally	.12

This project of the Commission of Colleges of SACS was the first comprehensive effort by an accrediting agency to identify, define, and apply the outcomes concept to the accreditation process. In 1987 James T. Rogers, Executive Director Commission on Colleges of SACS, stated in the foreword of SACS Resource Manual, "We believe strongly that it is both proper and educationally sound to require that an

accredited institution state its goals, develop methods by which the achievement of these goals can be evaluated, and finally, demonstrate that the evaluative information received is utilized in the planning process" (1987, p. ii). This new emphasis on results is evident in SACS's 1987 Resource Manual which included a new section, Institutional Effectiveness designed primarily to address concepts such as determination of purpose, establishment of goals, and evaluation of results.

Expansion and Curriculum Development's Influence

Prior to the third phase of accreditation history-- student's focus--little to no attention was paid to outcomes assessment by the accrediting agencies. Resnick and Goulden (1987) argued that student assessment developed along a different avenue and was a result of changes in curricular programs, and expansion in the history of American higher education. Accreditation's student assessment (educational outcomes) response was a reaction to events that were external to the domain of accrediting agencies.

During the 20th century higher education in America has undergone two periods of rapid expansion. The first period ranged from 1918 to 1928. And the second period which is just coming to an end ranged from 1952-1983. These periods were characterized by major changes in the undergraduate curriculum and stressful increases in the number of students participating in the higher education system. Towards the

end of each period, a movement for student assessment has occurred, with the goal of restoring "coherence and substance" to the undergraduate program at college and universities (Resnick and Goulden, 1987, p. 77).

The First period of Expansion 1918-1928. The first period of rapid expansion in higher education was from 1918-1928. During this period the portion of eighteen to twenty-four year olds attending college rose from 3.6 percent to 7.1 percent. The period was characterized by educators complaining about the incoherence of the curriculum, the low abilities of the students, and the overcrowding of institutions (Resnick and Goulden, 1987).

During the first period of expansion according to Resnick and Goulden, Tatlock (1924) complained about the absence of assessment measures that could register the difference between the ideals of college education and the actual gains made by students. Tatlock argued, "There is no opportunity to appraise the student as an entire educated human being" (Resnick and Goulden, 1987, p. 86). In addition, Tatlock bemoaned that the course program was merely "fantastic patchiness which was sometimes ludicrous" (Resnick and Goulden, 1987, p. 80). This and similar complaints spurred institutions to develop holistic and integrative assessment measures such as comprehensive examinations in a student's major field of study. Generally these tests were locally designed and administered by the faculty at an institution.

Comprehensive examinations were expected to bring integrity back to major fields of study, increase students desire to learn, and give student the opportunity to defend their command of a field.

The Second Period of Expansion 1952-1983. The second period of expansion saw an increase in enrollment of eighteen to twenty-four year old triple from 13.8 percent to 40.5 percent. This increase is attributed to demographic factors such as the baby boom, and an increase in minority enrollment. In addition to these demographic factors, the increased importance assigned to a college education by society in general also contributed to the increase in college enrollments.

During this time period the structure of institutions changed as they grew larger and more complex. Large state universities became multiversities, and the number of community colleges increased seven-fold. Overall, the number of accredited colleges and universities grew from two thousand to more than three thousand during this period.

In the four year colleges and universities the curriculum changed dramatically as indicated by the changing patters of student majors.

The students majors in the liberal arts declined precipitously. The portion of students majoring in history, philosophy, math, social science, literature,

foreign languages, and science dropped from 40 percent to 20 percent. The major gainer in student majors was business. Selected as a major by 23 percent of those receiving baccalaureate degrees at the end of this second period of expansion, business had almost doubled its share of undergraduate degrees in twenty years (Resnick and Goulden, 1987, p. 82)

In addition to this problem various movements of higher educational reform (such as the nontraditional education, and the professionalization of teaching) of the early 1970's on colleges campuses spurred the use of assessment techniques on college campuses. Some of the early experimenters with student assessment were specialized programs--such as the returning adult student, and teacher education. These programs were followed by student assessment as a method of full curriculum review at small colleges such as Alverno and Northeast Missouri State University.

Nontraditional education began to receive greater respectability during the late 1960's and early 1970's. This movement was characterized by adults participation in the college experience. The returning adult student was often required to develop a portfolio documenting their knowledge and competencies gained outside of college. This information was then used by admissions and counseling officers to award academic credit for outside learning (Edgerton, 1986).

The field of teacher education used assessment as a tool to aid in its recognition as a true profession. During this time period, the Holmes group and the Carnegie Forum had recently issued major reports, calling for the transformation of teaching into a full profession. The Carnegie Forum called for the creation of a national board to develop standards and procedures for entering the profession. The initial version developed by Lee Schulman and Gary Sykes of Stanford required the candidates for teaching certificates to not only take written tests but also participate in 2 1/2 day assessment exercises--video-tape samples of actual teaching (Edgerton, 1986; McMahon, 1986).

The liberal arts colleges and general education programs were next to enter the growing field of assessment. Alverno College, a small private women's college, in Milwaukee was one of the early innovators of student assessment measures. The student assessment program at Alverno College emphasizes individual student development. In addition to the emphasis put on individual development, Alverno's student assessment program is comprehensive and has as its objectives: 1) providing feedback to individual students for their own progress, 2) ensuring that the curriculum is effectively meeting established educational goals. These goals are met by conducting standardized tests and tests of psychological and personal development (Ewell, 1985, p. 23). In 1973, with the help of AT&T Alverno College developed an assessment

center designed to help assess whether or not students were acquiring abilities such as critical thinking, problem solving, communicating, and making value decisions from the existing curriculum (Edgerton, 1986). The Alverno student assessment program has had remarkable success and serves as a model for other small liberal arts colleges.

Northeast Missouri State University, a regional comprehensive university formerly a public teacher' college, began assessing their students in 1971. To determine the degree of learning achieved by its students, Northeast Missouri State conducted "value-added" assessment programs. The original intent of the program was to test curricular effectiveness by comparing the results obtained by its students with national scores on standardized achievement tests--primarily the ACT Assessment, the ACT-COMP, the GRE, and professional school entrance tests. Since the inception of its student assessment program scores on standardized test have improved markedly along with changes in the curriculum, and as a result NMSU is now attracting better students (Ewell, 1985).

National Push for Accountability

The current national student assessment movement, which is being conducted primarily at the state-level, was spurred by the desires for accountability for funds and the assurance of quality in the nation's institutions of higher education.

Forces Affecting Student Assessment

Three forces for change stimulated the push for assessment: curriculum development, political accountability, and elementary and secondary reform.

Curriculum Development. Throughout the history of American higher education the debate over the proper balance between specialized courses and liberal education has been waged. This debate resurfaced during the years 1979-1981 as a result of three national commissions' reports. These reports called attention to deficiencies in three basic areas of undergraduate study: the humanities, foreign languages, and international studies. As a result a select committee of the Association of American Colleges in January 1982 began the Project on Redefining the Meaning and Purpose Baccalaureate Degrees (Bennett, 1984).

Political Accountability. As money became tighter in the 1970's as a result of double digit inflation, and oil embargoes institutions of higher education argued that they should be funded because their end products--well educated students--would increase the economic base of the states and thus the United States. From a consumer protection standpoint the government began to ask for proof of this assurance.

Thus states and the federal government indirectly influenced the development of student assessment.

Elementary and Secondary Reform. After the release of A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform in April 1983 state officials began to ask questions concerning the quality of post secondary education. A Nation at Risk released by the National Commission on Excellence in Education in 1983 stated that high school graduates emerged from school without the necessary knowledge and skills needed for college and the work force. These young people were therefore deprived of the privileges of society. This report sounded the alarm for elementary and secondary education reforms and caused those responsible for colleges and universities to start asking similar questions about higher education.

Major Participants

The interaction of curriculum development, political accountability, and elementary and secondary reform forces caused several major participants at the national level to push for student assessment. The major players at the national level were commissions set up to study the general quality of colleges and universities in the United States and the Secretary of Education, William J. Bennett.

National Commissions. The student assessment fire was fueled in the 1980 by several reports. The 1983 report, A

Nation at Risk by the National Commission on Excellence in Education looked at the quality of elementary and secondary education and spurred similar concerns about postsecondary education. The National Institute of Education's report, Involvement in Learning, and the National Endowment for the Humanities report written by William J. Bennett To Reclaim a Legacy also spurred the concern for quality and student assessment in higher education (Ewell, 1987; Ewell, 1985; McMahon, 1986; Study Group On the Coalition of Excellence in American Higher Education, 1984). Also, the Association of American Colleges report, Integrity in the College Curriculum, was instrumental in the acceptance of assessment procedures on college campuses. (For more information on the contents of these reports please see Chapter Two: Review of the Literature.)

William J. Bennett. Another major participant in the drive for student assessment at the national level was William J. Bennett. In his November 1984 report, To Reclaim a Legacy: A Report on the Humanities in Higher Education, Bennett claimed that colleges and universities were failing to give students "an adequate education in the culture and civilization of which they are members." He also stated that, "Most of our college graduates remain shortchanged in the humanities--history, literature, philosophy, and the ideals and practices of the past that have shaped the society they

enter" (Bennett, 1984, p. 1). The report recommended that all students encounter a "core of common studies" to include an understanding of Western civilization; several masterworks in English, American, and European literature; proficiency in a foreign language; and familiarity with non-western cultures. In addition to this initiative, Bennett continued to push for curricular change.

In October 1986 at Harvard University's 350th anniversary celebration, Bennett (later Secretary of Education) accused colleges and their representatives of having narrow interests in obtaining federal dollars for their institutions, while saying little about other aspects of higher education--such as "purpose, quality, curriculum, and the moral authority and responsibilities of universities" (Bennett, 1986, p. 27-31; Palmer, 1986, pp. 1, 27). In addition to the above accusations, Bennett also charged that colleges and universities often failed to make sure their students actually learned anything before they graduated.

These accusations caused an uproar in the higher education community. College and university officials took immediate offense to Bennett's accusations calling them "superficial" because they were based on opinion and did not take into account many important facts about the condition of higher education in the United States (Bok, 1986; Palmer, 1986). Nevertheless, Bennett's comments caused many to review

the quality of their colleges and universities by instituting student assessment and other quality assurance measures.

States' Initiatives

Historically, government has left the process of reviewing the quality of college programs to the accrediting associations. As is noted by Trivett (1976), most states accept accreditation as evidence of sufficient quality to qualify an institution for state licensure. The federal government, in turn, recognizes state licensure and accreditation as preconditions for eligibility for federal funds (Marcus, 1983). However, spurred by the release of several national reports including A Nation at Risk, which looked at the quality of high schools, the states turned their attention to the quality of the college experience and the role of accreditation in the accountability process.

Despite the fact of its historic centrality to perceptions about institutional quality, voluntary accreditation, came under strong fire from the states (Marcus, Leone, & Goldberg, 1983). The states did not believe that voluntary accreditation, as it had been carried out historically, could be a major element in the state accountability process. States held this belief for two major reasons: lack of public reporting, and control of the process by the institutions accredited (Floyd, 1982). Also recognized as a weakness of accrediting agencies were: lack of rigor and

standards in the review process, lack of serious self-criticism on the part of institutional participants, and a "back scratching" ethos. Trivett (1976, p. 59) reported that associations do not monitor or enforce standards of excellence, nor did they report which standards a college failed to meet.

Those responsible for allocating and administering public funds have taken these criticisms seriously. Thus far, at least 17 states have given their higher education agency the responsibility and general powers to accredit institutions and programs within their state. As a result the status of voluntary accreditation as the guarantor of excellence in academe has been threatened.

An additional threat to accreditation as the guarantor of excellence in academe came in 1986 when the National Governors' Association's Task Force on College Quality decided to focus on how colleges and universities could demonstrate that student learning was occurring (National Governor's Association, 1986). In order to assure accountability the Task Force concluded that "postsecondary institutions must assess student learning and ability, program effectiveness, and institutional accomplishment of mission" (National Governor's Association, 1986, p. 159). The Task Force made six recommendations for accomplishing this goal by the year 1991:

1) Governors, state legislatures, state coordinating boards, and institutional governing boards should clearly define the role and mission of each public higher education institution in their state. Governors also should encourage the governing boards of each independent college to clearly define their missions.

2) Governors, state legislatures, coordinating boards, governing boards, administrators, and faculties should re-emphasize--especially in universities that give high priority to research and graduate instruction--the fundamental importance of undergraduate instruction.

3) Each college and university should implement systematic programs that use multiple measures to assess undergraduate student learning. The information gained from assessment should be used to evaluate institutional and program quality. Information about institutional and program quality also should be made available to the public.

4) Governors, state legislatures, and statewide coordinating boards should adjust funding formulas for public colleges and universities to provide incentive for improving undergraduate student learning based upon the results of comprehensive assessment programs.

Independent colleges and universities should be encouraged to do likewise.

5) Governors, state legislatures, coordinating boards, and governing boards should reaffirm their strong commitment to access to public higher education for students from all socio-economic backgrounds.

6) The higher education accrediting community should require colleges and universities to collect and utilize information about undergraduate student outcomes. Demonstrated levels of student learning and performance should be consideration in granting institutional accreditation (National Governor's Association, 1986, pp. 160-163).

Prior to these recommendations, some states had already begun to address the issue of student assessment. In a 50-state survey done by the Education Commission of the States (ECS) during January and February 1987, it was found that two-thirds of the states had initiated formal assessment procedures. Of the states not reporting formal state-wide assessment procedures, a majority reported some assessment activity at the campus level (Boyer, Ewell, Finney, and Mingle, 1987).

Boyer, Ewell, Finney, and Mingle (1987) provide a "mosaic" of states' student assessment initiatives based on the 1987 ECS survey. They identified six levels of state involvement in student assessment: 1) mandated statewide testing programs; 2) testing for teacher education; 3) early intervention programs; 4) encouraging institutional action; 5) assessment within existing statewide mechanisms; and 6) statewide monitoring of other outcomes.

Some of the early initiators of mandated statewide testing programs were New Jersey, Georgia, Florida, and South Dakota. These early programs generally emphasized the use of mandated basic skills assessment for entering freshmen, "rising junior" examinations, and "value-added" approaches to assessment. Newer states that have mandated statewide testing programs such as Texas have followed a path similar to that of New Jersey in mandating basic skills assessment of reading, writing, and computation for entering freshmen.

Testing for teacher education emerged as an distinct area of statewide initiatives because of public concerns about the quality of the elementary and secondary teaching force. The ECS survey found that nine states reported testing initiatives in place for teacher education; and another three were pilot testing a similar program. Most states have focused on tests of basic skills as a condition for college admission; others have instituted a "rising junior" examination. The majority of the programs instituting "rising-junior" examinations use

commercially available tests such as the Pre-Professional Skills Test from the Educational Testing Service.

Early intervention programs seeks to identify students' deficiencies in basic skills prior to college admission. The belief is that if deficiencies are identified and addressed early then quality students would "trickle up" to the college level. Ohio and Indiana are representative states that use this method of early assessment.

Encouraging institutional action is the preferred approach by the majority of states instituting student assessment policies. Approximately 15 states, including Virginia, have taken this approach to assessment. Generally, these states have asked institutions to develop explicit assessment plans and to report to their state board the results of their assessment procedures.

Assessment within existing statewide planning, quality control, or accountability mechanisms has been the route for Alabama, Kansas, Rhode Island, Nevada, Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky and Arizona. For example in Alabama, institutions are required to report assessment initiatives and outcomes measurement as part of ongoing quality assurance reporting.

Statewide monitoring of other outcomes is the last assessment category identified by Boyer, Ewell, Finney, and Mingle (1987). Some states monitor such outcomes as student retention, satisfaction and job placement of college graduates, and economic and community development. Two states

where this kind of program is being instituted are Maryland and North Carolina.

No two states' initiatives were alike. Their initiators range from legislators, and executive officers to governing boards and state university systems officers (Ewell, 1987, p. 24). Some states follow the "Florida Plan" of direct legislative action. These states and their corresponding legislation are Colorado--Colorado's House Bill 1187; California--California's Assembly Concurrent Resolution 141; and Virginia--Virginia's Senate Joint Resolution 125. On the other hand, New Jersey and Maryland follow the "Tennessee Plan" a program sponsored by a coordinating or governing board without specific legislation (Heywood, 1977; Education Commissions of the States, 1986).

Second Major Research Question: What were the major events and characters in the formulation of Virginia's student assessment policy? This question can be answered by reviewing the history and chronology of accountability measures and student assessment in the state of Virginia.

Historical Origins and Development of Student Assessment in Virginia

The historical origins and development of Virginia's student assessment policy was traced through the State Council for Higher Education's (SCHEV's) Virginia Plan for Higher

Education. By law, SCHEV is required to publish these statewide plans for higher education and to revise the plan every two years. It has done so since 1974 (SCHEV, 1987).

State Council For Higher Education's Influence

One major force for student assessment in the state of Virginia was the State Council For Higher Education. In its 1974 Virginia Plan for Higher Education the Council set three goals for higher education:

- 1) To provide each citizen of the Commonwealth access to the form of higher education most appropriate to his interests and abilities (SCHEV, 1974, p. 12).
- 2) To maintain institutional excellence in teaching, research, and public service (SCHEV, 1974, p. 16).
- 3) To guarantee to the citizens of the Commonwealth the accountability of the total educational process (SCHEV, 1974, p. 19).

These three goals can be summarized as: access, excellence, and accountability. Elaborating on the third goal of accountability, SCHEV made the following commitments:

- 1) To assure the most effective and efficient use of all resources provided to higher education.

- 2) To assure opportunities for both the intellectual and personal development of the individual student and to help prepare the individual for productive participation in society.
- 3) To ensure state-wide and institutional accountability through coordination and cooperation among all elements of the state's total higher education community and between higher education and all other levels of education (SCHEV, 1974, pp. 20-21).

Inherent in these commitments were the future foundations of Virginia student assessment policy: 1) accountability for state funds; and 2) accountability for the quality of the educational process for students who graduate from Virginia's higher education institutions.

In its 1983 plan, SCHEV stated that "quality in undergraduate education must be once again the focal point. Parents, students, legislators, and employers have all shown their concern" (SCHEV, 1983, p. 28). In general, students and society have been concerned about quality, and the attainment of skills and performance factors; whereas the institutions of higher education have persisted in thinking about bodies of subject matter. From higher education's narrow perspective, discussion has been limited to the quality of

students entering the system; on the other hand, society has been interested in the outputs of the system (SCHEV, 1983).

In an attempt to alleviate fears associated with government involvement in higher education affairs, SCHEV stated that assessment measures would not endanger higher education's central and important principles of scholarship or academic freedom. However, higher education must be willing to define its expectations and to judge results in an attempt to be accountable to students, society, and higher education itself (SCHEV, 1983).

In 1985 SCHEV stated that it felt that the goals identified in 1974 were still valid, and that substantial progress had been made towards achieving them. The Council concluded from efforts to attain these goals that Virginia higher education was now positioned in such a manner that it was time to make a major move forward into the front ranks among state systems in the nation. According to SCHEV this is a good time to raise a new question for discussion among Virginia's leaders, and to set an additional goal for higher education. The question for discussion among Virginia's leaders is: "What must be done to move Virginia colleges and universities from their position of relative strength, particularly in undergraduate education but also in some research areas, to the very forefront of American higher education?" (SCHEV, 1985, p. 19). The new goal is "to build

a system of colleges and universities that is among the best in the nation" (SCHEV, 1985, p. 19).

In achieving this fourth goal, SCHEV identified ten actions that it felt would make Virginia higher education the best in the nation. The fifth of these suggests that "...as a condition of full guideline funding, that each institution develop systematic, non-anecdotal methods for assessing student learning" (SCHEV, 1985, p. 21). The plan should not be the same for each institution, but should respond to the diversity of Virginia's colleges and universities. In the 1987 edition of The Virginia Plan for Higher Education, SCHEV included its first report to the legislature on the status of Virginia's student assessment movement. They added that "in future revisions of the plans, colleges and universities will be expected not only to report results but, more important, to show how the information collected has benefitted faculty, students, and the curriculum, as well as tell what effects the process has had on other parts of the institution..." (SCHEV, 1987, p. 41).

Virginia's Student Assessment Policy

The move towards student assessment in the state of Virginia was in two directions. The first route was through the legislature with the workings of Senator Robert Russell later to be joined by Senator Benjamin Lambert. The second route was through James Madison University's pilot student

assessment project. Both routes were substantially influenced by Gordon Davies and the staff of the State Council of Higher Education (SCHEV).

Route One. In 1984 Senator Robert Russell of Senate District 11 was contacted by one of his constituents, Francis Dana Payne, who had served as Director of General Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University and had previous interests in student assessment. On May 14, 1984 after having several phone conversations with Senator Russell on the need for student assessment in Virginia, Mr. Payne wrote a letter to Senator Russell that included a general outline for his proposal of accountability in higher education which called for the state to set up an external examining and testing board. This examining board ... "would delegate to individual disciplines a series of examinations to spot-check and administer to classes within colleges which receive federal or state aid, or whose students receive federal or state aid. The examination would be secured, administered, and graded by persons **external** to the college. In no way could the college control the marking or public publishing of the results. To prevent the relaxation of examination rigor, examinations would be published following their administration." (Payne, 1984, p. 1).

This proposal having already been published in **UNIVERSITAS: University Professors for Academic Order** in its

October 1982 issue was included as an enclosure to the letter to Senator Russell. Also included in this letter was an earlier version of the article dated August 12, 1982; several newspaper clippings that supported the need for student assessment; and another paper by Payne entitled, "University Assessor Systems," which briefly reviewed the British assessor system as a possible route for accountability for quality in the United States (see Payne's documents in Appendix B).

Based on Payne's recommendations, Senator Russell drafted Senate Joint Resolution 125 which was presented to the 1985 session of the General Assembly on January 22, 1985. This initial resolution was co-patroned by the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Education and Health, Stanley Walker, and Senators Gray and Schewel. It requested the Senate Committee on Education and Health and the House Committee on Education to establish a joint subcommittee to study the quality of higher education in the Commonwealth. This joint subcommittee was to be composed of eight members, two from the membership of the Senate Committee on Education and Health to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, and three from the House Committee on Education to be appointed by the Speaker of the House. The Secretary of Education, the Chancellor of the Virginia Community College System, and the Director of Higher Education would also serve as ex officio members. The subcommittee was requested to review national reports on the quality of higher education and

determine from their findings how high quality higher education would be continued in the Commonwealth (see SJR 125 dated January 22, 1985 in Appendix C).

According to Senator Russell, the legislation was initially proposed as a resolution for two reasons: 1) historically, study requests are proposed in the form of a resolution primarily because they are investigative procedures that may or may not be important to the extent that a law is required; and 2) resolutions do not require the signature of the governor which is a time consuming process that run the risk of rejection by the governor.

After hearing about Senator Russell's attempt to pass student assessment legislation, Gordon Davies, director of the State Council for Higher Education (SCHEV) contacted Senator Russell with proposed changes for getting the legislation passed. Senator Russell was provided excerpts from the National Institute of Education's (NIE) report, Involvement in Learning which supported Davies quest for assessment in Virginia (see NIE's excerpts in Appendix D). In addition to the excerpts, Russell was given a draft of a proposed resolution written by Gordon Davies and his staff at SCHEV (see Davies' draft resolution in Appendix E). This draft suggested that a joint study commission/joint subcommittee be established to review student achievement in Virginia's public higher education system. The study commission would be composed of four Senators and four

Delegates who would be aided by SCHEV, college and university officials, and interested citizens. Realizing that the higher education experts were primarily concentrated in SCHEV, Senator Russell openly welcomed their suggestions for getting the legislation passed.

After reviewing this additional information provided by Gordon Davies and the State Council, Senator Russell on February 1, 1985 made a statement to the Senate Rules Committee that requested an "Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute for Senate Joint Resolution 125" (see Senator's Russell's statement to the Senate Rules Committee in Appendix F). The amendment was accepted by the Senate Committee on Rules and was proposed as Senate Joint Resolution No. 125--Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute dated February 1, 1985. In the final language as written by the Legislative Services Office:

..the Senate Committee on Education and Health and the House Committee on Education are requested to establish a joint subcommittee to review, with the aid of the State Council of Higher Education, state colleges and university officials, and interested citizens, student achievement...and to investigate means by which student achievement may be measured...(SJR 125)

In this version the term "study commission" as proposed by Davies was omitted. The joint subcommittee was to be composed of eight members, three from the Senate Committee on Education and Health to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, and five from the House Committee on Education to be appointed by the Speaker of the House (see SJR 125--Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute in Appendix G).

In the final version of Senate Joint Resolution 125 the State Council of Higher Education was requested to study the quality of higher education in the Commonwealth. In conducting its review, SCHEV was requested to seek advise from officials at Virginia's public colleges and universities. Gordon Davies and Senator Russell stated that this was a more favorable arrangement because of lack of expertise and the cost of conducting a joint subcommittee of the General Assembly as proposed in the first and second versions of SJR 125 (see the final version of SJR 125 in Appendix H).

In response to the study request of the final version of SJR 125, Davies directed his Assistant Director of Academic Programs, David Potter, to conduct a study on the measurement of student achievement and the assurance of quality in Virginia higher education. This study was conducted in 1985 and accepted by the Senate as "Senate Document no. 14" during the 1986 session of the General Assembly (see Senate Document 14 in Appendix I). Six recommendations of the study were

later accepted by the legislature in SJR 83 that was proposed by Representative Benjamin Lambert of Richmond (see SJR 83 in Appendix J). The six recommendations for measuring student achievement at Virginia's public colleges and universities were:

Recommendation 1: That the academic relationship between secondary and higher education be strengthened...

Recommendation 2: That all state supported institutions of higher education establish procedures and programs to measure student achievement...

Recommendation 3: That institutions administer tests to determine the entry level skills of students whose past performance, as defined by high school grades or Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, indicated that they might have difficulty doing college level work; and that each institution identify a minimum threshold of achievement to qualify for college degree credit courses...

Recommendation 4: That institutions with students whose skills fall below the threshold established for college level work provide remedial education to maintain access

while improving the quality of students' performance prior to full participation in degree credit courses...

Recommendation 5: That an advisory committee to the Council of Higher Education be established to develop guidelines for designing good assessment programs, to assist the institutions on request to develop the programs, and to advise the Council on progress in this area...

Recommendation 6: That universities submit annual reports of progress in developing their assessment programs and concrete, non-anecdotal and quantifiable information on student achievement to the Council of Higher Education (SCHEV, 1986, pp. 16-17).

In addition to accepting the above recommendations SJR 83 requested that institutions and their boards of visitors "establish assessment programs to measure student achievement; and that the Council in cooperation with the state-supported colleges and universities, should establish guidelines for designing good assessment programs and report to the public results of institutional efforts to measure student achievement in its biennial revisions of The Virginia plan for Higher Education" (SJR 83, 1986).

In summer 1986 David Potter, leader of Virginia's student assessment project, left SCHEV for a position at George Mason University. He was replaced by Margaret Miller. Miller's recruitment took most of the fall of 1986 and some institutions had begun to feel that the state Council was not serious about assessment because of the lack of communication from the Council during this period (Miller's interview, 1989). However, in November 1986 the academic vice presidents from the public colleges and universities in Virginia, came together with SCHEV's staff to establish guidelines for student assessment that respected both the complexity of the issue and the need to provide state-wide coherence to the assessment plans to be presented by June 30, 1987 (see Guidelines for Student Assessment in Appendix K). In January of 1987, the Council established a task force of institutional representatives to work with the staff of SCHEV to develop details of the official guidelines. Final copies of the guidelines were issued to institutions of higher education in April 1987. The final version offered ten guidelines that broadly reflected the tone of Senate Document No. 14, and attempted to respect the diversity of Virginia's higher education institutions, and also attempted to achieve a minimal level of consistency across plans (Ewell, and Boyer 1989; Guidelines, 1987)

The executive branch of Virginia's government got involved with student assessment in May of 1987. In Governor

Gerald Baliles' guidance memorandum for the development of the 1988-90 biennial request that year, he stated that in order to receive "incentive funding" public institutions of higher education in the state of Virginia must submit an acceptable assessment plan to SCHEV by the June 30, 1987 deadline.

This action showed that the state government was serious about assessment. Now, the State Council had both the legislative and executive branch's political support in demanding institutional compliance with the student assessment policy. In addition to political support, SCHEV responsibilities were expanded. Determining the acceptability of assessment plans was now an explicit SCHEV responsibility (Davies interview, 1989; Ewell and Boyer, 1989). This linking of compliance to incentive funding resources has been identified by Peter Ewell, student assessment expert, as the single most important decision taken by state authorities in Virginia's approach to assessment. Ewell and Boyer report that:

The decision to link assessment with state funding was critical and had a number of immediate consequences. Certainly it got the attention of the institutions by signalling the fact that the state authorities were serious about assessment...[O]ne SCHEV staff member noted, "we found that it was easier to get what we wanted with a kind word and a gun than with just a kind word."

And this signal did indeed have the desired effect of forcing institutional closure on the issue: clearly under the circumstances it was less possible to do nothing or to report that assessment was "under discussion" by the faculty (Ewell and Boyer, 1989, p.4)

In addition to tying incentive funding to compliance, formal legislation amending the Code of Virginia was passed. In the 1989 session of the General Assembly, Senator Benjamin Lambert at the request of Gordon Davies put in Senate Bill 534 to amend the State Code of Virginia giving SCHEV the formal authority to "develop in cooperation with institutions of higher education guidelines for the assessment of student learning." (see SB 534 in Appendix L) According to Davies this action was suggested by Secretary of Education Finley (who once worked for the State Council) during a conversation that occurred prior to the 1989 session. Finley explained that student assessment was one issue that the Governor was interested in but it did not have a constituency, therefore he felt it would be good if student assessment was formally written into the Code. This move according to Davies created apprehension by certain universities in the state; but he also noted, this apprehension was dispelled after the distribution of carefully drafted letters written by him and the president of the University of Virginia. According to

Davies, SB 534 was intended to insure that the assessment money was in the base budget of the colleges and universities.

Route Two. The second route to student assessment was through SCHEV's involvement with James Madison University (JMU) and their desire to revise their curriculum. With the employment in 1986 of a new Vice President for Academic Affairs, Russell G. Warren, James Madison University found itself on the edge of a major push towards assessment. Realizing the need to show hesitant institutions in the state that assessment could be done successfully by a large, complex, institution, Gordon Davies contacted the president of James Madison University and requested that its proposal for Funds for Excellence (a SCHEV coordinated project) money for curriculum development be revised to include student assessment. The revision was made and correspondingly, the State Council funded James Madison's pilot student assessment project. With the help of Dr. Davies, additional money was obtained from the General Assembly to aid in the funding of James Madison's project (Davies, Luth and Potter's interviews, 1989).

JMU's pilot project was important to Dr. Davies' efforts to institute student assessment in Virginia because it silenced much criticism from representatives of other large institutions in the state. However, it should be noted that this route to student assessment was abandoned by SCHEV after

Senator Russell's successful passage of student assessment legislation. Within these movements for student assessment several major players were identified. The major players can be grouped as either supporters or critics of Virginia student assessment policy.

Major Participants in Virginia

The major players in Virginia student assessment movement were identified from references in historical documents and from interviewees.

Supporters of Virginia Student Assessment Policy. From the narrative given above the supporters of Virginia's student assessment bill was varied. They included the Director of the State Council, Gordon Davies; Dr. Frances Dana Payne of Virginia Commonwealth University; the legislators who sponsored the legislation--Russell, and Lambert; and James Madison University. The primary reason for supporting this legislation was a desire to ensure the quality of the higher education in the Commonwealth of Virginia. A secondary reason stated by the legislators was the concern for accountability for funds.

Critics of Virginia Student Assessment Policy. The more vocal critics of Virginia's student assessment policy were representatives (presidents, vice-presidents, and faculty) of

elite institutions in the state of Virginia. They felt that because of their reputations for excellence in higher education and the quality of their faculty and entering student body it was not necessary for them to "prove" to anyone that they turned out quality students. In addition, they felt that student assessment was a violation of their autonomy by the state government and the State Council into areas that had traditionally been reserved for higher education. Faculty and administrators in Virginia also feared unintended side effects of student assessment such as teaching to the test, limiting access of the educationally disadvantaged to a college education, narrowing curriculum, and adversely affecting research activities (McMillian, 1989; Potter, 1989; and Lambert, 1989). These concerns were not only expressed in Virginia but at other institutions across the United States. In a 1986 survey by the American Council on Education the following stumbling blocks to assessment were identified: no funds to develop procedures (71 percent); no clear way to evaluate (64 percent); fears about misuse of results (60 percent); lack of faculty support (58 percent); and no good evaluation instruments (57 percent) (National Governors' Association, 1986, p. 164). However, because of fears of reprimand from the director of the State Council and from the state government; and because no organized group existed to voice their views these institutions were relatively silent in their resistance. Another factor that

could have played a role in keeping these institutions silent was general support for student assessment by other sectors of society such as parents, businesses, etc. Their opposition may have been seen as an attempt to cover-up information from the tax-paying public.

The Third Major Research Question: On the basis of the historical description and narrative gathered for this study, does the case study of assessment policy formulation in Virginia conform clearly to one of the six models (systems theory, elite theory, group theory, rational decision-making theory, incrementalism, or institutionalism) as proposed by Thomas R. Dye in his 1972 book, Understanding Public Policy?

Dye's Policy Formulation Models

"Public policy" is defined by Thomas Dye in his book, Understanding Public Policy as "whatever governments choose to do or not to do" (Dye, 1972, p. 1). The process is very much a political activity involving participation by sources both inside and outside of government. Dye identifies six models to help understand political life and public policy: systems theory, elite theory, group theory, rational decision-making theory, incrementalism, and institutionalism. The purpose is to:

- (1) simplify and clarify our thinking about government and politics,
- (2) to identify important political forces in society,
- (3) to communicate relevant knowledge about political life,
- (4) to direct inquiry into politics, and
- (5) to suggest explanations for political events and outcomes (Dye, 1972 p. 17).

For this research, two of the six policy formulation models have been eliminated from consideration in the analysis of Virginia's student assessment policy. Models that were rejected at first screening were the: rational decision-making theory, and institutional theory. Reasons for their elimination will be discussed below.

Rational Decision-Making Theory

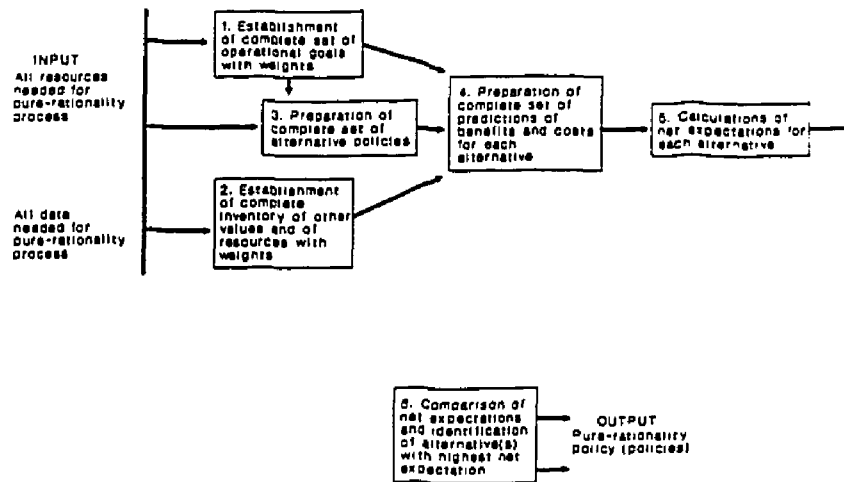
Under the rational decision-making theory (the "one best way"), the policy makers must:

- 1) know all of the society's value preferences and their relative weights;
- 2) know all of the policy alternatives available;
- 3) know all the consequences of each policy alternative;

- 4) calculate the ratio of achieved to sacrificed values for each policy alternative; and
- 5) select the most efficient policy alternative (Dye, 1972).

The rational decision-making theory as proposed by Dye (1972) is shown in Figure 4.1.

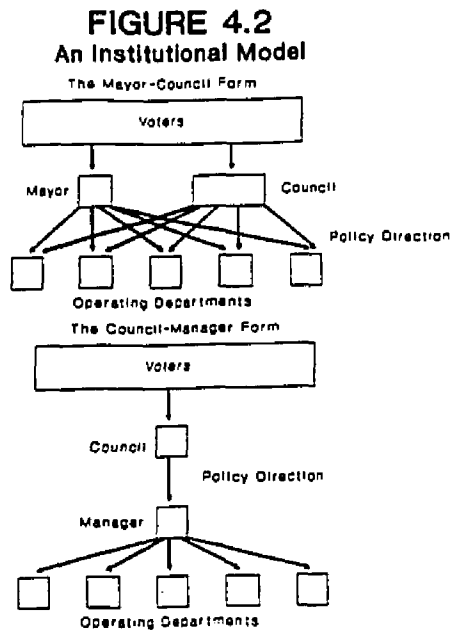
FIGURE 4.1
The Rational Model



Clearly it is impossible for any policy to conform to the comprehensive requirements of the rational decision-making theory which assumes that all of society's value preferences can be known and weighted. This is not a reasonable assumption for financial and time constraint reasons; therefore, the pure rational decision-making theory was not considered a remote possibility for Virginia's student assessment policy.

Institutionalism Theory

The institutional approach to studying public policy making primarily looks at the relationship between public policy and government institutions or structures (see Dye's institutional model in Figure 4.2). According to Dye (1972) "institutional studies usually describe specific governmental institutions--their structures, organization, duties, and functions--without systematically inquiring about the impact of institutional characteristics on policy outputs" (p. 32). Although elements of the institutional model are inherent in Virginia's student assessment case, the institutional approach would not serve as the best fit for Virginia's student assessment policy. Virginia's student assessment policy goes beyond the narrow scope of the institutional model to include interactions between major players, the impact of national events, and economic considerations.



After eliminating the rational, and institutional theories as possibilities for best fit with the Virginia case study of student assessment policy formulation, the researcher analyzed the remaining four theories: elite, group, incrementalism, and systems.

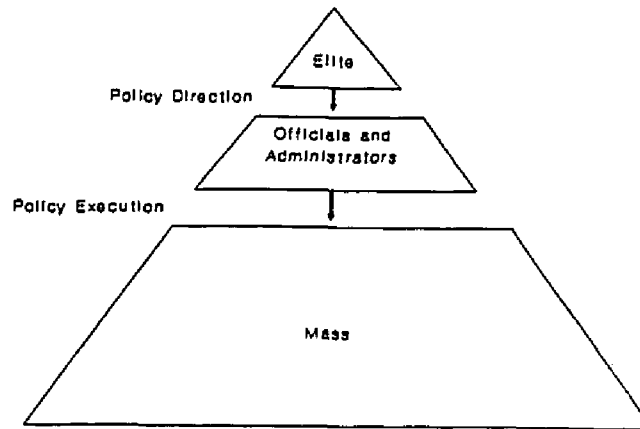
Elite Theory

Elite theory rests on two major premises: 1) the public at large is apathetic and ill-informed about public policy; and 2) that the elites shape public opinion on policy questions more than masses shape elite opinion (Dye, 1972). Thus, public policy flows downward from the elites to the masses (see Figure 4.3, Dye's Elite Model).

From Virginia's student assessment case it appears that government elites such as the Director of SCHEV, the legislators, the Secretary of Education, and the Governor, were the primary forces affecting the development and passage of Virginia's student assessment policy. Albeit some representatives (officials and administrators) of the public higher education institutions were vocal in expressing disagreement and in some cases agreement with the policy and with the contents of the legislation to legislators and to power holding individuals at the State Council for Higher Education, the general direction for the policy was downward from the elites. Little to no influence came from the general public (the masses) even though one of the main focal points

of the legislation was to assure the public of the continuing high quality of higher education in the state of Virginia.

FIGURE 4.3
The Elite Model



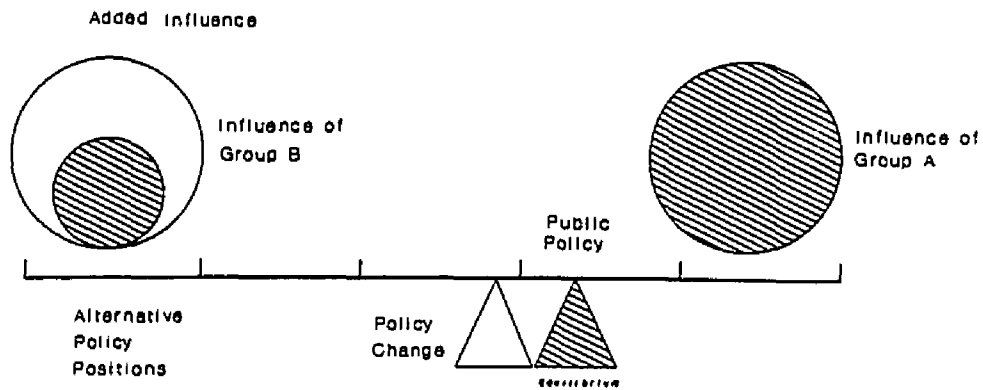
Group Theory

Group theory says that the interactions of groups are the central basis of politics and that the group is the "essential bridge between the individual and his government" (Dye, 1972, p. 23). Further, politics is the struggle among groups to influence public policy-making (see Dye's group model in Figure 4.4). With this in mind, the political system must manage group struggles by:

- 1) establishing rules of the game in the group struggle,
- 2) arranging compromises and balancing interests,

- 3) enacting compromises in the form of public policy,
and
- 4) enforcing these compromises (Dye, 1972, p. 23).

FIGURE 4.4
The Group Model



Public policy thus is the equilibrium reached in the group struggle and is determined by the relative influence of interest groups. According to Dye, the overall influence of groups is determined by their numbers, wealth, organizational strength, leadership, access to decision makers, and internal cohesion (Dye, 1972).

Virginia's student assessment policy is an excellent example of the power of interest groups in pushing legislation which had widespread support both nationally and at the state level, and the necessity of accommodating specific interest groups and finding workable compromises before the legislation

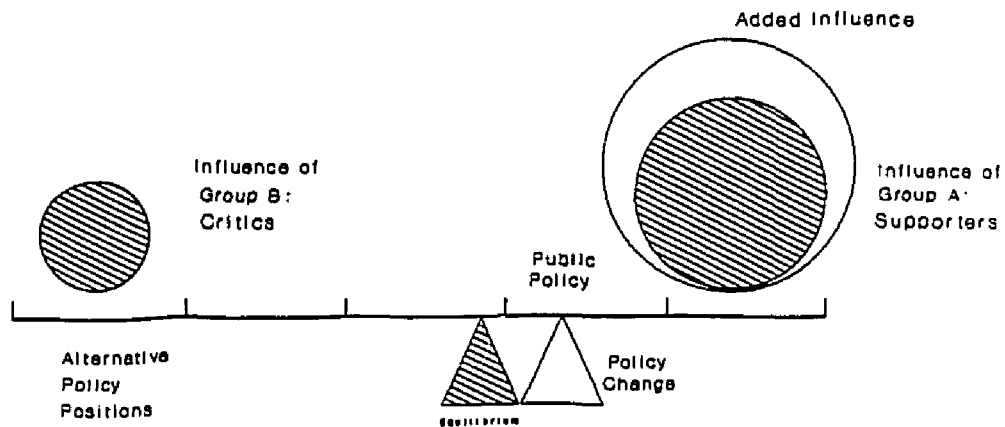
could be passed. As far back as 1981, supporters of student assessment in the state of Virginia were gaining strength and making allies in an attempt to press their demands upon the state government. Within this coalition, articles were written, conferences were attended, and knowledge was gathered on other states's initiatives in developing and passing student assessment legislation.

On the other hand forces against student assessment were somewhat surprised by what appeared to be a sudden push for assessment. The critics were disorganized with no clear leaders in their opposition efforts. Therefore when the subject was presented to the general assembly the forces opposing the passage of the student assessment legislation were overwhelmed by the push for assessment. Their only recourse was to find ways to work within the system of student assessment.

Based on historical documents and interviews with major players, the following groups were identified as having a significant impact on the development of Virginia's student assessment policy: The State Council of Higher Education; Virginia's executive branch of government; the State Legislators, representatives of public colleges and universities--the academic vice presidents and presidents; and interested constituents (see Figure 4.5, a Revised Group Model as proposed by the researcher). From this list the

supporters of student assessment were SCHEV, the executive branch, the State Legislators, and interested constituents.

FIGURE 4.5
The Revised Group Model



The arguments by supporters for student assessment legislation were:

- 1) Higher education in the Commonwealth of Virginia has been recognized for its quality and thus supporters wanted to ensure that quality is not only maintained but improved (SCHEV, 1985; SJR 125; SJR 83).
- 2) Because of the large percentage (over 17%) of the general funds of the state budget that is spent on higher education, the state has the right to hold institutions accountable for their outputs primarily through student achievement (SJR 125).

- 3) The existing system of accountability through accrediting agencies did not address student assessment.

Critics of Virginia's student assessment policy included representatives of public colleges and universities--the academic vice presidents, presidents, and faculty. Generally, the opponents argued:

- 1) The passage of student assessment legislation would infringe upon their traditional rights of autonomy, and limited government intervention.
- 2) Select institutions had been repeatedly recognized for their quality, and superior students (based primarily on SAT scores) therefore, assessment of their students was not needed.
- 3) Concern was expressed over the unintended consequences of student assessment such as teaching to the test.
- 4) Concern was expressed over the funding of student assessment projects.

The overall influence of the critics was limited because of their lack of leadership, access to decision makers, organizational strength, internal cohesion, and the "positive" nature of the legislation. It was extremely difficult for most

institutions to oppose Virginia's student assessment legislation because of fears of reprimand in the form of budget cuts and "loss of grace" with key individuals at the State Council for Higher Education. However, the stronger institutions such as The College of William and Mary and The University of Virginia were vocal in expressing their self-oriented opposition to the legislation. This action did not help smaller, less recognized institutions who feared across the board comparisons with stronger institutions that might have resulted in budget cuts because of their inferior appearances.

As a matter of compromise in the original legislation (SJR 125), it was requested that the Council seek advice from Virginia's colleges and universities in conducting its study on student achievement in Virginia's public higher education system. In the second piece of legislation, SJR 83, it again requested that "...the Council in cooperation with the state-supported colleges and universities, should establish guidelines for designing good assessment programs..." The resolutions were accepted by the General Assembly and passed respectively in 1985 and 1986. In 1989 through Senate Bill 534, SCHEV was given authority to oversee compliance of institutions with the student assessment policy.

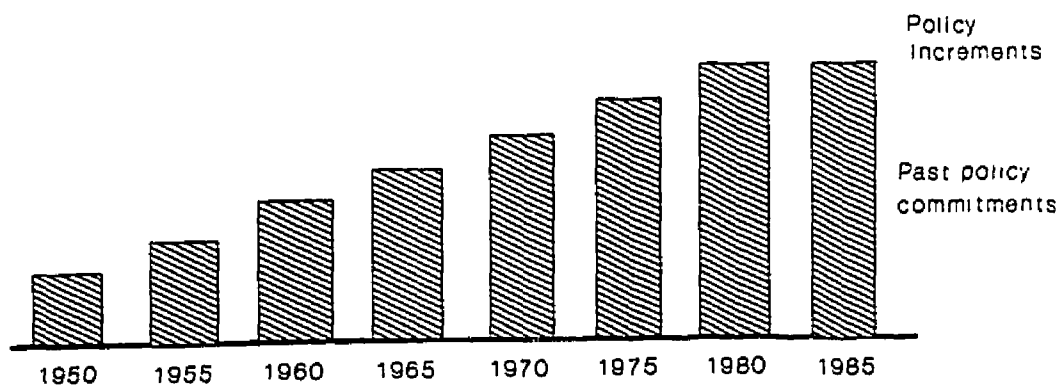
Figure 4.5, The Revised Group Model, represents group influence on the passage of Virginia's student assessment policy. The circles are intentionally disproportionate to

show the overwhelming influence of the supporters. Also, the direction for policy change and the equilibrium are shifted towards the desires of Group A: The Supporters of Virginia's student assessment policy.

Incrementalism Theory

Incrementalism views public policy as a continuation of past activities with only incremental modifications. This model was first proposed by economist Charles Lindblom in the course of a critique of the traditional rational decision-making theory and is more commonly associated with budgeting, however it can be applied to other areas. Lindblom argued that decision makers do not actually review the whole range of existing and proposed policies as required by the rational model, but due to time constraints, intelligence, and cost they apply the more conservative approach to decision making--incrementalism (Lindblom, 1959) (see Dye's incremental model in Figure 4.6).

FIGURE 4.6
The Incremental Model



Incrementalism is conservative in that existing programs, policies, and expenditures are considered as a base, and attention is concentrated on new programs and policies and on increases, decreases, or modifications of current programs.

The Base of Virginia's Student Assessment Policy. In the case for the Commonwealth of Virginia's student assessment policy, the foundation for the incremental model was an existing commitment to accountability for tax dollars spent on higher education, and a commitment to the personal development of individuals students (SCHEV, 1974). These commitments to accountability served as the initial base for Virginia's student assessment policy upon which "increments" were added.

Increments to Virginia Student Assessment Policy. Florida, Tennessee, Georgia, and New Jersey's student assessment policies were reviewed by a study commission setup by SCHEV for the expressed purpose of finding elements of their policies that could be used in Virginia. In addition to looking at these states' policies, the study commission of the State Council also looked at the pilot student assessment program at James Madison University within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

In analyzing the similarities between the states' policies and Virginia's policy, the researcher of this study

looked at two categories: 1) the initiators of the policy, and 2) the contents of the state policy. The categories were then used to determine the extent of overlap of Virginia's policy with other states' policies. It was found that two areas overlapped with Virginia's policy: 1) The initiators were state legislators, and 2) incentive funding was used to improving the quality of undergraduate education.

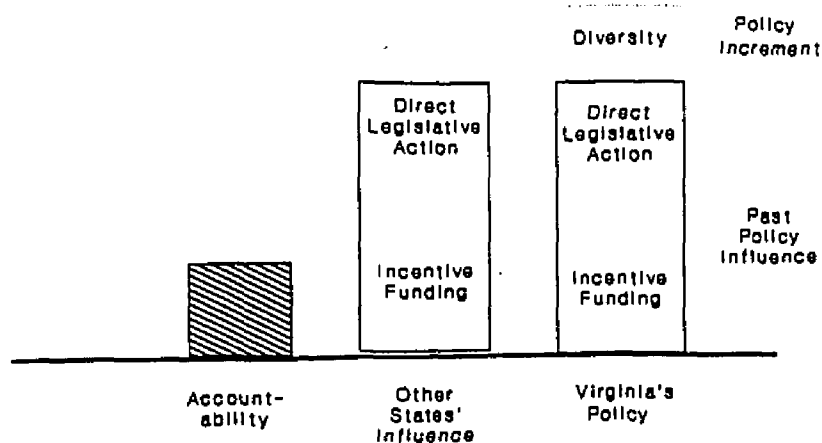
Two other states, Florida and New Jersey, that were reviewed by SCHEV's study commission had used direct legislative action to institute their student assessment policy. According to Dr. Davies, Virginia chose state legislative action because institutions of higher education within the state of Virginia would have viewed a State Council's mandate for student assessment with open hostility and would have furthered strained an already strained relationship.

The second area of overlap taken from the states was incentive funding for improving the quality of undergraduate education. Incentive funding or the "Funds for Excellence" program in the state of Virginia was controlled by the State Council and was directed towards "projects to improve undergraduate instruction that grow logically from the mission and student assessment plan of each institution.." The Funds for Excellence program operates in a grant-like fashion: institutions submit quality-enhanced proposals that are judged on their merits by a review panel and funded accordingly

(Ewell and Boyer, 1989, p. 22). This technique of incentive funding had already been successfully employed in New Jersey and Tennessee.

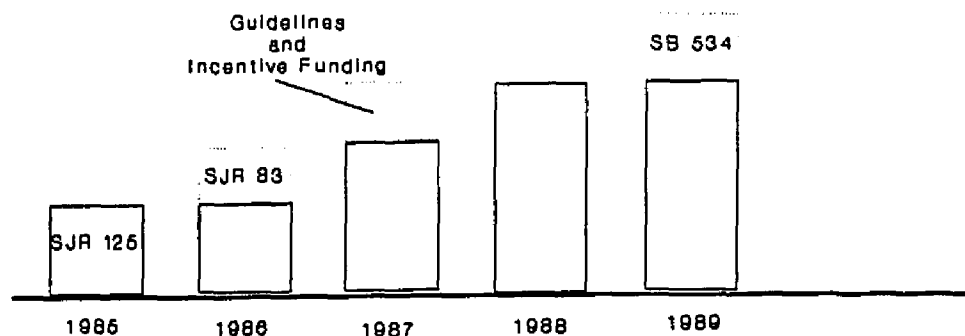
In addition to incentive funding and legislative initiation, another layer was added to Virginia's student assessment policy--diversity. Virginia's policy is unique in that it fosters diversity among its state institutions of higher education. Senate Document No. 14 emphasized that meaningful assessment should be a campus-specific and evolving effort that required substantial planning, funding, and faculty involvement. This emphasis on diversity of assessment plans to coincide with the diversity of mission statements of Virginia's public institution was a welcomed departure from the then-current trend toward mandated testing as a state-based approach to assessment (Ewell and Boyer, 1989, p. 23) (see Figure 4.7 as proposed by the researcher).

Figure 4.7
Revised Incremental Model: Policy Contents



The incremental nature of Virginia's student assessment policy can also be seen in the progressive steps and revision to the policy over time. In 1985, the contents of SJR 125 as passed served as the initial base for Virginia's student assessment policy. This legislation simply called for SCHEV to conduct a study on the need for student assessment in Virginia. The study was conducted and the recommendations of the study were accepted in 1986 as SJR 83. This resolution then called for the state colleges and universities, to develop assessment programs to measure student achievement. In addition SCHEV, with the aid of the state colleges and universities, should develop guidelines for conducting student assessment measures and report the results. Finally, in 1989 SCHEV was given formal authority to oversee assessment measures at the state colleges and universities (see Figure 4.8 as proposed by the researcher).

FIGURE 4.8
Revised Incremental Model: Chronology
FIGURE 4.8
Revised Incremental Model: Chronology

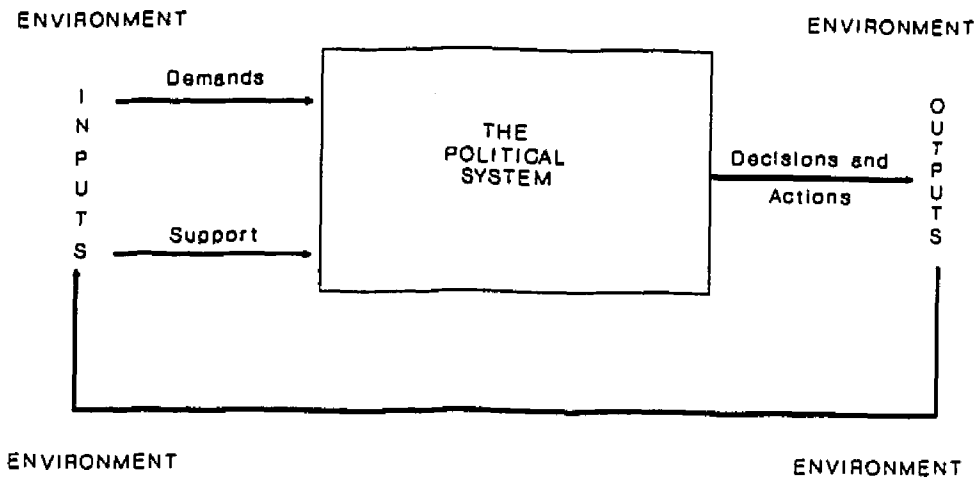


The Systems Theory

Systems theory portrays public policy as an output of the political system. The political system is defined by Dye as the group of interrelated structures and processes which function authoritatively to allocate values for a society (Dye, 1972). The concept of "system" implies an identifiable set of institutions and activities in society that function to transform demands into authoritative decisions requiring the support of society. The concept of "systems" also implies that elements of the system are interrelated, the system can respond to forces in its environment, and that it will do so in order to preserve itself. Inputs are received into the political system in the form of both demand and support. Demand occur when individuals or groups, in response to real or perceived environmental conditions, act to affect public policy. Support is rendered when individuals or groups accept the outcomes of elections, obey the laws, and generally conform to policy decisions. The system preserves itself by:

- 1) producing reasonably satisfying outputs,
 - 2) relying upon deeply rooted attachments to the system itself, and
 - 3) using or threatening to use force (Dye 1972, p. 19)
- (see Figure 4.9).

FIGURE 4.9
The Systems Model



The Political System (Black Box) of Virginia's Student Assessment Policy. Virginia's political system consists of a network of interactions between various groups and individuals who wish to directly affect public policy. Actions within the political system are guided by informal and formal rules of conduct.

The informal level of public policy making in Virginia consists of interactions of individuals and events that are necessary in order to have legislation introduced in the General Assembly. At the informal level, lobbyists attempt to shape public policy by influencing members of the general assembly to sponsor desired legislation. A variety of variables such as competition, participation, partisanship, and reformism affect the lobbyist's ability to influence

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veto the legislation. In the case of a resolution, the governors signature is not required.

The informal and formal aspects of Virginia's political system are constantly being affected by the environment. Factors such as economic consideration, and federal policies are constantly altering positions of interests groups and legislators.

The Environment of Virginia Student Assessment Policy.

Virginia's student assessment policy came about in an environment that was highly supportive of accountability and student assessment. Several reports released at the national level criticizing the quality of secondary and postsecondary education spurred the move towards student assessment and other measure of quality assurance (Association of American Colleges, National Commission on Excellence in Education; National Commission on Higher Education Issues; National Endowment for the Humanities; National Institute of Education).

Stimulated by the release of the above reports, the National Governors' Association formed a Task Force on College Quality which focused on how colleges and universities can demonstrate that student learning is occurring (National Governors Association, 1986, p. 20). Concerned primarily with continued economic development, cultural vitality, and general prosperity, the Task Force made six recommendations to

governors on establishing assessment programs (National Governors Association pp. 160-163).

Businesses also voiced frustrations about higher education's graduates' readiness for employment. More than 10 percent of companies surveyed in 1977 provided remedial education, even for college graduates, who tended to be weak in communication and interpersonal skills (National Governors' Association, 1986).

Inputs into Virginia's Student Assessment Political System. Inputs into a political system can be through demands or support. Demands occur when individuals or groups in response to real or perceived environmental conditions act to affect public policy. In Virginia's political system, demands were generated by both supporters and opponents of Virginia's student assessment legislation. On one hand the supporters which included, F. Dana Payne, the Legislators--Senators Russell and Lambert, SCHEV officials, and Governor Baliles, pushed for greater accountability for public funds that were allocated to public colleges and universities by the General Assembly. In addition to accountability for funds, the supporters pushed the student assessment issue because it was seen as a way to ensure and possibly increase the present quality of Virginia's institutions. Within this framework the supporters of Virginia's student assessment policy also wanted to ensure that the diversity of Virginia's colleges and universities would be maintained.

On the other hand, opponents--representatives from colleges and universities--of Virginia's student assessment policy argued that historically, Virginia's political system had allowed the institutions of higher education to set their own standards for accountability and this should be maintained. Faculty and administrators also feared unintended side effects of student assessment such as teaching to the test, limiting access of the educationally disadvantaged to a college education, narrowing curriculum, and adversely affecting research activities.

Support is rendered when individuals conform to policy decisions. Support of Virginia's student assessment policy was displayed primarily through the development of individual student assessment plans at Virginia's public institutions of higher education.

Outputs of Virginia's Student Assessment Political System. Outputs of Virginia's student assessment political system were three pieces of legislation: 1) Senate Joint Resolution 125 which called on the State Council of Higher Education to conduct a study on the quality of higher education in the Commonwealth; 2) Senate Joint Resolution 83 which accepted the recommendation of the State Council of Higher Education regarding measurements of student assessment and requested that assessment programs to measure student achievement be established at Virginia's public colleges and

universities; and 3) Senate Bill 534 which amended the Code of Virginia giving the State Council of Higher Education the authority to oversee public institution's compliance with student assessment legislation. The student assessment Guidelines and other documents that were generated as a result of the above legislation are also outputs of the political system.

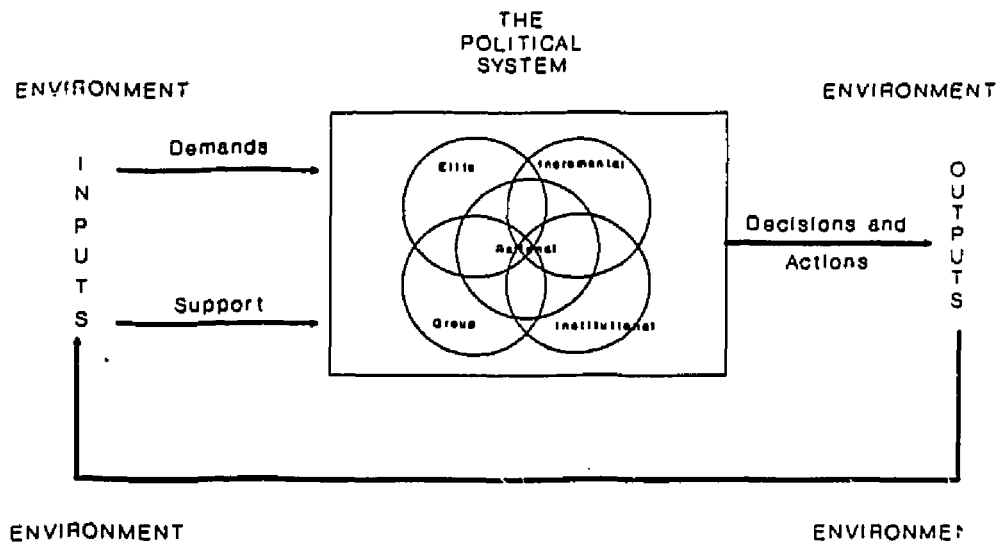
Conclusion

Dye's warning that the models are not competitive in that one of them could be judged best (page 34 of this study) appears to be true in Virginia's student assessment case. Elements of each model surfaced in the case study thereby making it difficult to judge which of the six models provided the best clarification for the case. For this study it appears that Dye's models tend to confuse more than they clarify. Therefore the researcher of this study proposes the following revised systems model as the best fit for Virginia's student assessment case (see Figure 4.10).

Since the systems theory appears to represent the general framework of Virginia's student assessment policy within which other theories operated, logically, the systems theory should not be placed on the same level with Dye's five other theories for policy development. Each of the other five theories can be included within the political system box of the Systems theory feedback loop which would then represent a more

accurate picture of what happens in the policy formulation process.

FIGURE 4.10
The Revised Systems Model



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CHAPTER V.
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS,
AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR FURTHER STUDY

Summary

The purpose of this study was to trace the origins and development of a higher education policy in the state of Virginia with the hopes of providing a better understanding of one aspect of the multi-dimensional relationship between state government and higher education in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The development and passage of Virginia's student assessment legislation was one modification to the states' traditional position of "autonomy for institutions of higher education." By reconstructing and documenting the historical origins and development of Virginia's student assessment legislation, it was intended that higher education policy-makers and other interest groups would recognize the complicated interactions of people and group processes that were involved and use this information/knowledge when future higher education policy issues arise in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Logically following from the stated purpose, the problem of this research was to describe the historical origins and development of Virginia's student assessment legislation. In order to address the problem, three major areas of inquiry

were investigated: 1) the historical context for Virginia's higher education student assessment movement, 2) major events and characters in the formulation of Virginia's higher education student assessment policy, and 3) conformity of Virginia's higher education student assessment policy to Thomas Dye's policy formulation models.

The data for this study was obtained through the use of two procedures: 1) reviewing historical documents, and 2) conducting intensive interviews. The investigation of the problem was guided by the procedure and design developed by Stephen Bailey in his documentation of the Employment Act of 1946. The investigation of the problem was conducted in five phases. The first phase involved reviewing the national literature on student assessment. The second phase involved reviewing specific legal and historical documents related to Virginia's student assessment policy. Through references in Virginia's legal and historical documents, the major participants (interviewees) were identified. The third phase of the investigation centered on the selection of major participants to be interviewed. During the fourth phase intensive interviews were conducted with persons who were considered major participants in the creation, development, and passage of Virginia's student assessment legislation. The interviewees, as described above, were asked to name other persons who they felt were instrumental in the development and passage of Virginia's higher education student assessment

policy. Interview questions were developed by the researcher according to the three major research questions. The questions asked of the specific interviewee were tailored to their areas of involvement in Virginia's student assessment policy formulation chronology. Interviews were tape recorded, and verbatim transcripts were prepared for later use in analyzing the data.

The fifth and final stage of the investigation involved summarizing and analyzing the data. The data gathered from both the documents and interviews supported each other. The data was organized and categorized according to the three major research questions. That arrangement provided a systematic outline for organizing the details of information obtained from both sources.

As a part of the historical context of Virginia's higher education student assessment legislation, a review of the history of student assessment on the national level was presented. Student assessment had its origins in the national move for accountability which was manifested through the development of accrediting agencies as early as 1787. Historically both the state and federal government had left the process of reviewing the quality of college programs to the accrediting associations. Most states accepted accreditation as evidence of sufficient quality to qualify an institution for state licensure. In turn, the federal government recognized state licensure and accreditation as

preconditions for eligibility for federal funds. Despite the fact of its historical centrality to perceptions of institutional quality, voluntary accreditation came under strong fire in the mid-1970's and 1980's. The states came to believe that voluntary accreditation, as it historically had been carried out, could not be a major element in their accountability process. States held this belief for the following reasons: 1) lack of public reporting and control of the process by the accredited institutions, 2) lack of rigor and standards in the review process; 3) lack of self-criticism on the part of the institutional participants; and 4) a back scratching ethos.

The push for accountability was spurred by the release of several reports: A Nation at Risk (1983), stated that more and more young people emerge from high school unable to participate effectively in the work force or in higher education because of the low quality of their education. Involvement in Learning (1984) asserted that despite significant success in adapting to growth and change in recent years, higher education needed some improvement. This report offered 27 recommendations to institutions of higher education that would improve the college experience one of which was to require proficiency assessments in liberal arts and the student's major. Integrity in the College Curriculum (1985) suggested that institutions develop assessment programs that fosters institutional autonomy and diversity while maintaining

excellence in education. Thus far two-thirds states have instituted some form of accountability through student assessment.

The Commonwealth of Virginia became involved with state mandated student assessment in 1985. The 1985 session of the General Assembly passed Senate Joint Resolution (SJR) 125 which requested the State Council of Higher Education to conduct a study of the quality of higher education in the Commonwealth. The study was conducted and reported back to the Senate as Senate Document No. 14. Included within this study were six recommendations for measuring student achievement at Virginia's public colleges and universities. These recommendations ranged from strengthening the academic relationship between secondary and higher education to establishing an advisory committee to develop guidelines for designing good assessment programs. These recommendations were accepted in SJR 83 which was passed by the 1986 session of the General Assembly. In 1989, the State Council for Higher Education was given formal authority to oversee institution's compliance with Virginia's student assessment policy. This was done through an amendment to the Code of Virginia, Senate Bill (SB) 534, which was signed into law by Governor Gerald Baliles during the 1989 session of the General Assembly.

From the constructed cases study, it was concluded that none of Thomas Dye's six policy formulation model (elite,

incremental, rational, institutional, group, or systems) as proposed in his 1972 book, Understanding Public Policy, could be judged as "best fit" for Virginia's student assessment case. Vestiges of each model existed. With this in mind the researcher proposed a revised systems model that included interactions between all of Dye's models as a better model for Virginia's student assessment policy

Conclusions

From the case study the following conclusions were drawn:

1. What is the historical context for Virginia's higher education student assessment movement?

The historical context for Virginia's higher education student assessment movement for accountability has its roots in the national movement for accountability through accrediting agencies. This tie was gradually broken in the mid-1970's and 1980's as individual colleges and states realized that accrediting agencies' standards lacked rigor, and serious self-criticism on the part of institutional participants. Fueled by Secretary of Education William J. Bennett's call for greater accountability, and the release of several national reports on the quality of the nation's colleges and universities, the state of Virginia passed its initial student assessment legislation, Senate Joint Resolution 125, in 1985. This piece of legislation was followed by Senate Joint Resolution 83 in the 1986 session of

the General assembly and Senate Bill 534 which was passed in the 1989 session.

2. What were the major events and characters in the formulation of Virginia's student assessment policy?

Three major events stirred Virginia's move towards student assessment:

- * the national movement for student assessment;
- * the Virginia's State Council of Higher Education's push for student assessment;
- * an increase in funds to institutions of higher education by the General Assembly.

Major characters in the formulation of Virginia's student assessment policy:

*Frances Dana Payne - primary lobbyist for student assessment in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Payne was employed by Virginia Commonwealth University and had written several articles on the topic of student assessment. Payne contacted Senator Robert Russell in an attempt to push student assessment.

*Senator Robert Russell - State Senator from Senate District 11 which includes all of Chesterfield County

except for Matoaka and Ettrick in the southern area of the county was the initial sponsored of SJR 125.

*Representative/Senator Benjamin Lambert - Senator Lambert from Senate District 9 which includes eastern Richmond both north and south of the James River, and five Henrico precincts adjacent to the city was the sponsor of SJR 83 and Senate Bill 534.

*Dr. Gordon Davies - Director of the State Council of Higher Education.

*Governor Gerald J. Baliles - Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Baliles was instrumental in pushing assessment by tying incentive funding into the system.

3. On the basis of the historical description and narrative gathered for this study, does the case study of assessment policy formulation in Virginia conform clearly to one of the six policy formulation models (system theory, elite theory, group theory, rational decision-making theory, incrementalism, and institutionalism) as proposed by Thomas R. Dye in his book, Understanding Public Policy?

Of the six policy formulation models (as proposed by Thomas Dye in his 1972 book, Understanding Public Policy) tested for fit with Virginia's student assessment policy formulation study, it was found that elements of four (elite, group, incremental, and systems theory) applied moderately

well to Virginia's case. However, it was impossible to determine which of the six was "best."

Elite theory assumes that the general public or masses are apathetic and ill-informed about public policy. Also associated with elite theory is the premise that public policy flows downward from the elites of society to the masses.

The group theory begins with the proposition that interaction among groups is the central basis of politics and that politics is essentially the struggle among groups to influence public policy. Four primary groups were identified by the researcher as having significant affects on the development of Virginia's student assessment legislation. They were the staff of the State Council of Higher Education (SCHEV), the state Legislature, the representatives of public colleges an universities, and the general constituents interested in student assessment. These groups interacted both positively and negatively to shape Virginia's student assessment policy.

Incrementalism argues that current policies exist as a base upon which increments or modifications are added. The state's commitment to accountability served as the base for Virginia's student assessment policy. The increments were selected from other states' policies. Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, and New Jersey were used in the construction of the increments for Virginia's policy. The increments taken from other state's policies were: 1) the initiators were state

legislators as opposed to a coordinating board; and 2) incentive funding was used as a mechanism to improve undergraduate quality. The identified unique "increment" for Virginia's policy was its emphasis on maintaining diversity among its public institutions of higher education.

Systems Theory views public policy as an output of the political system which consists of interrelated structures and processes which function authoritatively to allocate values for society. It was found by the researcher that evidence of elite, group, incrementalism, and systems theories existed in Virginia student assessment case study; however, the researcher concluded that the systems theory was more comprehensive than the elite, group, and incremental theories and therefore should not be on the same level as the other models. An alternative to Dye's system theory was proposed by the researcher to include interactions of all of Dye's theories as a better fit for Virginia's student assessment case.

Implications

1. By giving the State Council of Higher Education additional responsibilities for monitoring student assessment through the passage of Senate Bill 534, the relationship between institutions of higher education and the state will be furthered strained. SCHEV's role should continue to be one of "server to the government" but it must also play the dual

role of "spokesman and protector of colleges and universities" otherwise it will become simply another state agency that encroaches upon the autonomy of Virginia's public colleges and universities.

2. The State Council of Higher Education and other state officials should continue to stress that student assessment at the state colleges and universities will not be used as a mechanism for making across the board comparisons of institutions with diverse missions. Diversity must be maintained. Any changes in the original intent or language of the legislation should be immediately reported to interested parties at the colleges and universities.

3. There are three main areas where the effectiveness of colleges and universities can be evaluated: students, programs, and faculty. If institutions continue to display a "passive" voice in state intrusion, then it follows that legislation for the remaining two areas could very easily follow Virginia's student assessment legislation.

Recommendations for Further Study

This research used an exploratory field study as its primary methodology. Since an exploratory field study seeks only to discover what exists in order to lay the groundwork for further studies, the following recommendations for further study are offered:

1. Given the importance of student assessment in public colleges and universities, a study should be conducted to determine the influence of the student assessment movement on private colleges and universities.

2. The limitations of this study excluded the chronology of Virginia's student assessment policy past its passage, however one might wonder about problems associated with its implementation within the colleges and universities.

3. As a matter of maintaining diversity among Virginia's institution of higher education, Virginia's student assessment policy required that institution's Plans for Student Assessment take into consideration their specific missions. With this in mind, how has the traditionally black institutions, community colleges, flagship institutions, etc. developed their plans?

4. In more recent editions of Thomas Dye's book, Understanding Public Policy, two other models of policy formulation have been proposed; the Process (policy as political activity), and the Game (policy as rational choice in competitive situations) Models. Research to test the fit of these models to student assessment policy formulation should be conducted.

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Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions Regarding the Role of The State in Higher Education Governance (Everyone will be asked these questions):

- 1). In your opinion what do you feel the proper role of the state should be in the governance of higher education?
- 2). For what reasons do you favor either increasing or reducing either the state role or SCHEV's role in higher education governance? (Depends on who is being interviewed)

Questions for Peter Ewell:

- 1). What were the intended goals of student assessment? And what has been some of the unintended consequences of student assessment?
- 2). What forces or perceived forces affected the development of the student assessment movement in the United States?
- 3). Why has student assessment been instituted at the state level when other review and accrediting agencies already exist to monitor the quality of colleges and universities?
- 4). Who were the major participants and what were their roles in the development of the student assessment movement in the United States?

Policy Development Questions (for legislators):

- 1). Who were the major participants and what were their roles in the development and passage of Virginia's student assessment legislation?
 - A. Who first initiated the possibility of instituting a student assessment policy?
 - B. Who or what groups supported or resisted the passage of Virginia's student assessment legislation? And what were their reasons for taking a stand one way or another?
 - C. From whom did the legislators receive advice for the development of Virginia's student assessment legislation?
- 2). What are some of the perceived reasons (stimulants) of Virginia's student assessment policy?
- 3). What are some of the intended results of Virginia's student assessment policy according to the house and senate committees that passed the legislation?
- 4). What are some of the characteristics of Virginia's political

system that aided the passage of Virginia's student assessment legislation?

A. Why was Virginia's student assessment policy initially instituted in the form of a resolution which has no force of law as opposed to a bill which requires the governor's signature and also has force of law?

B. Were you contacted directly by those who mounted a campaign for or against SJR's 125 and 83? Did they contact you directly?

C. Which of their arguments did you find most influential (convincing) and why?

D. To what extent did you feel it was necessary to be responsive to their suggestions or points of view?

E. Who were other individuals (within or outside of the legislature), interest groups, or agencies who have been influential in shaping your attitudes towards a student assessment policy? Do their opinions typically influence your views on education issues?

F. What role has your constituency played in shaping your attitudes on the student assessment issue?

G. Has party affiliation been an important determinant of your position on student assessment? Does party affiliation typically play an important role in higher education policy issues?

APPENDIX B: DANA PAYNE'S DOCUMENTS

APPENDIX B: DANA PAYNE'S DOCUMENTS

F. DANA PAYNE
4705 FIVE SPRINGS COURT
MIDLOTHIAN, VIRGINIA 23113

744-5224

14 May 84

Dear Senator Russell,

Enclosed you will find a general outline of my proposal for accountability in higher education. Two of the articles are the same, but are merely from different sources. A more lengthy editorial from the News Leader in favor of the plan has been misfiled.

I would appreciate discussing this idea, as soon as convenient for you.

Sincerely,

Dana Payne

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UPAO, Public Sentiment, The Federal Bureaucracy, and the Social Science Establishment

by Ralph Scott, University of Northern Iowa

Shortly after President Reagan was swept into office, it became quite apparent that UPAO was registering a significant impact on various components of the federal bureaucracy, and particularly those components which directly dealt with social issues. This should not have been surprising. The president's election rested, in large measure, on overwhelming voter repudiation of government-sponsored intervention programs which had been crafted by social engineers over the prior several decades.

Generally, the professional work of UPAO members provided an added measure of structure and credibility to the Reagan social-educational philosophy, and so the new administration tapped a number of UPAO members for government service. This hasn't set well with those who were appointed by previous administrations, or those whose federal grant proposals have, in the past, been uncritically funded with tax dollars, largely because they mirrored an ideology long favored within the bureaucracy, albeit disavowed by most Americans.

The National Institute of Education (NIE), research arm of the Department of Education, has recently become the flash point of conflict between the Social Science Establishment and government appointees who strive to fulfill the Reagan mandate. For years, NIE doled out money to support research projects which, in retrospect, can only be considered slipshod. Some illustrations of NIE's past bias are recorded in projects which have been funded and refunded to report rather amazing achievement benefits for black children who were forcibly bused, often over strong parental objection. An appraisal of the primary statistics upon which those studies are based fails to affirm contentions of the NIE-funded researchers on the important but sensitive question of busing. In fact, a review of some of those projects baffles informed observers: *This trash has been repeatedly supported with tax dollars by the nation's most prestigious federal research agency? Similarly, the NIE has historically funded dubious research in a variety of social-activist areas. And (misused) NIE credibility has eroded public support for research within the social-educational sphere.*

Throughout the years which witnessed NIE adoption of a careless, ideology-based approach toward research — despite the presence of a substantial number of highly competent NIE personnel who, as individuals, were unable to objectify overall agency activities — the Social Science Establishment has never, to my knowledge, expressed either any concern over the agency's generally poor research quality, or reservations concerning "Old Left" bias within the agency. But now the shoe is on the

(Continued on page 4)

Accountability in Colleges.

by F. Dana Payne, Virginia Commonwealth University

The Problem

The student who transfers from one college to another tells an amazing story. The story is that the levels of college education differ in kind as well as quality. Students who pass calculus in one college, place in remedial mathematics in a second; students who successfully complete third-year French in one are placed in beginning in a second. It appears that some colleges, in their competition for students, are willing to sacrifice standards, while students prefer attending college to working in the business world. Could this be called a symbiotic relationship in which both profit from lack of demands and rigor?



DANA PAYNE

Corporations have internal auditors. These individuals check on day by day financial operations of the company. Colleges have instructors and deans. They also check on day by day, term by term operations and learning of students. But in addition, corporations have external auditors who oversee the general corporate financial operations to assure that internal auditors live up to their responsibilities.

What check is there on colleges? There are accrediting groups, but do they really check the educational *product* that comes out of the colleges? A few, but not the majority, do.

The Solution

The state should set up an examining and testing board. This board would delegate to individual disciplines a series of examinations to spot-check and administer examinations to classes within colleges which receive federal or state aid, or whose students receive federal or state aid. The examinations would be secured, administered, and graded by persons *external* to the college. In no way could the colleges control the marking or public publishing of the results. To prevent the relaxation of examination rigor, examinations would be published following their administration.

Would colleges teach to improve examination scores? Probably, yes. But would this not be a better method of teaching than is generally seen today when some students do not know the difference between the spelling of "die" and "dye," that World War II was previous to the Korean War, or that an orbit is the path an electron travels around the nucleus?

Let us recognize that all colleges are not intended to be equal academically. Could we not place colleges in several

categories, perhaps four? For example, Group "A" would be expected to have an average grade of "80" per discipline on the inter-college examinations; Group "B" 70, Group "C" 60, Group "D" 50 per discipline. Group "A" would be permitted to have some disciplines below 80, but the average score should be 80 or above. The same standard would apply to the other groups in a similar manner.

Our nation spends an enormous sum on higher education. Citizens/taxpayers need a responsible oversight of what they are buying. The state needs to show greater stewardship of the taxpayers' dollars going into higher education.

F. Dana Payne is director of general studies at Virginia Commonwealth University, and has also served as deputy director for White House Fellows, associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Cornell University, and assistant director of financial aid at Princeton University. Mr. Payne received a B.A. degree at Princeton and is a UPAO member.

Decline of "Power"

Michael Korda, editor-in-chief of Simon & Schuster, writing in *Family Weekly* for August 29 recalls how in two generations the American people have "turned against the very idea of power." Whereas formerly "teachers ran their classes (and) America was ruled, in effect, by authority figures," now he cites many instances of power vacuum, and we have "transformed our . . . government into a town meeting of 250 million . . . in which everyone has an equal right to prevent . . . but . . . no one person can effectively control or begin anything." He asks, "What is wrong with children being taught to respect teachers?" *Universitas* invites comment on this and related questions pertinent to the campus.

To the Editor

I read with interest your article, "Anonymous Student Evaluation of Teaching," in the May 1982 issue of *Universitas*.

When I was recently promoted to full professor here, I had to submit my fall teaching evaluation scores for the last five years to "prove" that I am a good teacher.

Fortunately my enrollments also are quite good. I know of one instructor in foreign languages who had her salary frozen last year because of a high dropout rate.

Many years ago there was a certain type of instructor, the hard demanding kind, who was looked upon as a good teacher. Today such a style of teaching would only lead to poor student evaluation scores, low enrollments, and high dropout rates. If such an instructor does not have tenure, his or her days at the university will probably be limited.

The French have a saying, the more things change, the more they remain the same. This, however, does not hold true with respect to university teaching. We have entered the era of student liberation, and God help the professor with high standards.

With best wishes,

Dr. Edward W. Chester
University of Texas-Arlington
Box 19277, UTA Station
Arlington, TX 76019

The President's Corner

by Charles A. Moser, UPAO President

UPAO was founded over 12 years ago, at a time of great instability on American campuses, at a time when many were worried about the very survival of the university as an institution of our society. The situation is very different now, and the more extreme fears of 12 years ago have proven to be unfounded. The university is still very much a part of our society, and still adheres to the same general standards it always has.



CHARLES MOSER

And yet, beneath the surface, all is not well in American higher education. The storms of yesteryear have passed, but many of the demands student radicals made in the 1960s have now been institutionalized within the university, often with the assistance and encouragement of the federal government. The radical demand that the university allocate some of its sources to social betterment has largely been met; various sorts of "studies" programs advance aims which are more nearly political than scholarly. The political concept of "fairness" deriving from membership in a collectivity has been vigorously forced upon the university, and the conflict between that concept and the ideal of excellence is undermining the original concept of the university: reportedly even the *Harvard Law Review* is reserving a certain number of places for women and minorities regardless of whether they can meet its standards or not.

Marxism has acquired a certain fashion on university campuses even as it is discredited in countries where it holds sway, and textbooks are being boldly rewritten to achieve radical purposes of social engineering. Societies are often resistant to such manipulation, but if we believe that ideas have consequences, as we surely do — then we must worry whether these intellectual currents may not in the long run have a very deleterious effect upon the intellectual traditions in which we believe.

The way to fight ideas is with better ideas, and it is in the intellectual sphere that the battle is raging. It is a battle which requires more subtlety and probably more commitment — through perhaps less physical courage — than the struggle which was fought out on the campuses a decade or more ago. But the battle will have great consequences for the future, and it is up to UPAO to play a leading role in directing it.

An Editorial Question — "What is Secular Humanism?"

by Karl F. Drlica, Editor

UPAO President Charles Moser in "The President's Corner" broaches one of the most important questions of our time, that of maintaining the stability of the university, and I will add the stability of our American culture. An article entitled "Clinton Roosevelt's Communist Manifesto" appears on page 3 of this issue; Roosevelt's book predates Marx by seven years and was published in the United States. Communism and humanism are analogous.

(continued)

University Assessor System

Professions for some years have demanded entrance examinations. To be qualified as an accountant, physician or a lawyer a candidate must pass an examination after graduation from professional school. Recently, because many colleges and universities fail to educate students sufficiently, banks, brokerage firms and corporations require special examinations even though the candidate has graduated from college. Why? Colleges and Universities have lowered their requirements for a degree and external employers do not trust the diploma.

Government--national, state and local have permitted standards to be unpredictable in the various higher educational institutions. A student may be sophomore level in math at one university, transfer to another university and find himself in remedial math. The examples are true in foreign languages, physics and chemistry. Less measurable is the transferring English and History majors from one university to another university. English and History instructors tell horror stories of uneven education between various universities.

How do other countries keep the integrity of the university diploma? In France and Germany there are national exams. The student at the University of Caen takes the same biology, physics, etc. exam as the one at the University of Strasbourg. This system retains diploma integrity but is rigid in uniformity.

In Great Britain there is a compromise between the unsupervised American quality control and the rigid Continental quality demand. The Ministry of Education in Great Britain assigns assessors to each of the British Universities. The assessors' responsibility is to make certain each British University attains a certain standard, a floor so to speak, but not uniformity in British education.

How does this work? First an assessor spot checks a course examination. There the assessor reads a few A and B papers and a few D and E papers. (The grades have been translated to the American System of marking.) Finally, if the assessor feels it necessary he interviews orally some stronger and weaker students in the course. Following these procedures the assessor sends an evaluation to the British Ministry of Education.

The United States could profit from the British assessor system. I propose to follow up with an on the spot investigation of the British assessor performing his duties. In turn I would make a report on how and why features of the British assessor system could be adopted in the United States.

ACCOUNTABILITY IN COLLEGES

Francis Dana Payne
Virginia Commonwealth University

August 12, 1982

The Problem

The student who transfers from one college to another tells an amazing story. The story is that the levels of college education differ in kind as well as quality. Students who pass calculus in one college place in remedial mathematics in a second; students who successfully complete third year French in one are placed in beginning in a second. It appears that some colleges, in their competition for students, are willing to sacrifice standards, while students prefer attending college to working in the business world. Could this be called a symbiotic relationship in which both profit from lack of demands and rigor?

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of "die" and "dye", that World War II was previous to the Korean War, or that an orbit is the path an electron travels around the nucleus?

Let us recognize that all colleges are not intended to be equal academically. Could we not place colleges in several categories, perhaps four? For example, Group "A" would be expected to have an average grade of "80" per discipline on the inter-college examinations; Group "B" 70, Group "C" 60, Group "D" 50 per discipline. Group "A" would be permitted to have some disciplines below 80, but the average score should be 80 or above. The same standard would apply to the other groups in a similar manner.

Our nation spends an enormous sum on higher education. The citizen/taxpayer needs a responsible oversight of what they are buying. The state needs to show greater stewardship of the taxpayers' dollars going into higher education.

The Assembly Convenes

The Assembly will not have the emotional and time-consuming equal rights amendment to kick around this year. And given the pitfalls and paradoxes such schemes tend to create, wise legislators will restrain their impulses to honor historically notable Virginians, or those who have had substantial impact on the state.

Among other items:

— A proposal to allow private retailers to sell liquor has been scrubbed. These outlets would replace perhaps 10 low-volume, low-profit ABC stores. We hope this legislation returns for consideration in the future; we hope also it becomes the first step in removing the state from the liquor business — which should be in private hands (though under state supervision).

— Ethics legislation has become a hardy perennial. The Assembly should bear in mind that (a) where there is smoke, there is often smoke, (b) ethics laws sometimes have the effect of catching the unwary rather than the crooked, and (c) strict laws about disclosure can keep out of politics men and women who have been successful in other fields, especially in a state such as Virginia, whose lawmakers remain citizen-legislators.

— The drinking age. The Assembly should stop wasting time and raise it to 21.

— Bills requiring returnable containers for beer and soft-drinks have been, well, bottled up by past Assemblies. Some proponents have the quaint notion that brewers and soft-drink makers, rather than careless citizens, cause the problem. Other forms of litter abound in Virginia, and accepting and storing bottles and cans would create large headaches for grocers large and small. A bottle bill might have merit if a way could be devised to make litterers responsible for their actions, rather than those who make or sell beverages.

— Accountability in education long has vexed teachers and parents. VCU administrator Dana Payne has suggested the recruitment of faculty members from other universities who would do what outside auditors do for businesses. They would select classes at random, administer tests, grade them, and publicize the results. Payne's plan is not popular at VCU; perhaps the Assembly could consider such a proposal on an experimental basis.

Reports Faulting Higher Education Are Likely to Cause Heated Debate

By ANNE MACKAY-SMITH

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

While high schools and elementary schools have been repeatedly criticized over the past year and a half, higher education has mostly escaped rebuke. Now, with a report sponsored by the National Institute of Education as the opening salvo, colleges and universities are also coming under fire.

The report cites several "warning signals" that the quality of higher education has severely deteriorated. Half the students who start college never get their degrees, and growing numbers are shunning more rigorous disciplines in favor of narrow, vocational curricula. For example, the percentage of degrees awarded in arts and sciences fell to 36% in 1982 from 49% in 1971. "If American higher education . . . allows the chase for academic credentials to supersede the pursuit of learning, all levels of education will suffer," the report says.

In the next 18 months, several other major reports and more specialized studies are due out that will expand on the institute's points or move to new topics:

● In November, William J. Bennett, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, will publish a report on the state of the humanities in undergraduate learning. Based on discussions with 31 higher-education authorities, the report will outline "some definite areas where improvements can be made," a spokesman says. "All is not rosy for the humanities in higher education."

● The Association of American Colleges will release a report in February on the undergraduate curriculum. The report, which will suggest ways to improve the quality and coherence of studies leading to baccalaureate degrees, will challenge faculty to "think about curriculum as a whole, not just a smorgasbord of individual courses and departmental offerings," a spokesman says.

● Frank Newman, a presidential fellow at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, will publish a report in March on federal policy and higher educa-

tion. Mr. Newman, author of two reports in the 1970s on reform in higher education, says the report will extensively discuss higher education's role in teaching civic responsibility and producing creative thinkers.

● The Carnegie Foundation will publish "College: A Report on the Undergraduate Experience" in early 1986, focusing on the plight of the liberal-arts program. The study, which will entail visits to 30 campuses and national surveys of students and faculty, will be headed by the foundation's president, Ernest Boyer, who also wrote last year's widely read report, "High School."

The National Institute of Education report, "Involvement In Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education," was written by a seven-member study group appointed by the institute, which is the research branch of the Department of Education. A study of test scores on examinations taken by college seniors going to graduate school was conducted concurrently with the institute study, and will be published in two weeks. The institute report, to be released Monday, notes that in 11 of 15 subject areas, primarily those that emphasize verbal skills, scores on the Graduate Record Examinations fell sharply between 1964 and 1982.

A common theme among several reports is that while many students pile up course credits and earn degrees, they don't learn much of value. "Most colleges don't make you prove that you know anything when they give you a degree," says Chester E. Finn Jr., director of the Center for Education and Human Development at Vanderbilt University. "They certainly don't know whether you know anything more than you did when you started."

Critics say standards have declined sharply within the university. The institute's study notes that "in some colleges, students can earn the same number of credits for taking a course in family food management or automobile ownership as for taking a course in the history of the American city or

neuropsychology." At some Texas colleges, foreign-language literature courses are taught in translation and college-credit math courses include "Introduction to Algebra."

Education watchers cite several reasons for the quality problems. The number of students entering college has quadrupled since 1950. That increase created rapid and poorly controlled growth at many universities, resulting in a lack of consensus as to what should be taught. Later, many colleges began dropping specific major and graduation requirements in the face of criticism from students and society that they represented "outdated institutional priorities." Says the Carnegie Foundation's Mr. Boyer, "There wasn't real institutional confidence that the requirements made sense."

Such problems were compounded in recent years when the college-age population began to drop. Because funding in many areas is determined by how many students are enrolled, competition for students caused some colleges to drop standards and accept unprepared candidates.

To meet such problems, the institute's report encourages tying funding to program quality rather than enrollment. It also suggests setting high standards for both how much students learn and how well, noting, "When we expect too little, we will seldom be disappointed." Also central to its recommendations are that students be actively involved, full-time participants in learning, and that testing during and at the conclusion of programs be used to measure real progress and to improve curriculum.

Most education watchers expect the quality issues to be hotly debated, although they see the situation as different from the debate over high schools. Colleges and universities "aren't a public utility in the same way, but it's much more of a sacred-cow problem," says Vanderbilt's Mr. Finn. "Nobody's got the combination of bravery and legitimacy to criticize it. A lot of critics of elementary and high schools have been professors. But imagine third-grade teachers critiquing the colleges."

Report asks big reforms at colleges

From wire dispatches

WASHINGTON — Education Secretary Terrel Bell, who last year triggered a crusade to upgrade the nation's elementary and secondary schools, issued a report yesterday that called for sweeping reform in the colleges.

The study by a panel of seven educators concluded student learning must be increased, the 50 percent dropout rate cut, deteriorating buildings repaired and the integrity of an undergraduate degree restored.

It made 27 recommendations, including better pay for faculty, proficiency assessments of students and a requirement that all bachelor degree recipients have at least two years of liberal education — even if it extends the normal four-year program.

Bell said, "Some warning signs and trouble spots identified in the report will require prompt attention . . . if we are to avoid the difficulties that have affected our elementary and secondary schools."

Last year, Bell's National Commission on Excellence in Education issued a report that found "a rising tide of mediocrity" in elementary and secondary schools.

That study, "A Nation at Risk," helped generate what a follow-up study called a "tidal wave of reform" that saw many states and localities return to the basics, implement tougher graduation requirements and boost teacher pay.

The new report, "Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Education," was begun last year under the sponsorship of the Education Department's National Institute of Education.

Among the "warning signals and trouble spots" identified by the Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education were:

- Of the academically qualified high school senior, one of eight decides against going to college.

- Half of the students who start

Continued on page 2, col. 6

Report asks big reforms at colleges

Continued from first page
college fail to graduate.

- The buildings and equipment of colleges and universities "are rapidly deteriorating."

- Test scores of college graduates applying to graduate and professional schools are declining.

Recommendations included:

- Colleges must supplement the credit system with proficiency assessments in liberal education and the student's major as a condition of awarding degrees.

- "State legislatures and boards of trustees should reverse the decline in faculty purchasing power by increasing faculty salaries at a rate greater than inflation."

- "Student evaluations of academic programs and the learning environment should be conducted on a regular basis."

The presidents of five major higher education groups issued a statement applauding the study.

But they also said the report slighted adult learners and gave the false impression "that all of higher education is composed of 18- to 21-year-olds all pursuing a baccalaureate degree."

They also took issue with the report's statement that only half the students who start college aiming for a bachelor's degree "actually attain this goal." The American Council on Education said its statistics show that 65 percent of freshmen complete the degree within five years and 75 percent after 10 years.

The criticism came from the heads of the council, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, the Association of American Colleges and the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges.

Bell faulted the report for "flirting" with the idea of granting credit for remedial courses. The report said research suggests students learn more if they get credit for remedial courses.

Bell also questioned the report's criticism of part-time faculty, who occupied 23 percent of the teaching slots in 1966 but 41 percent by 1980. "I know of some part-time faculty who bring some expertise that you couldn't get" otherwise, he said.

Panel members were: Chairman Kenneth Mortimer of Pennsylvania State University; Alexander Astin of the University of California at Los Angeles; J. Herman Blake of Tougaloo College, Tougaloo, Miss.; Howard R. Bowen of Claremont Graduate School, Los Angeles County, Calif.; Zelda F. Gamson of the University of Michigan; Harold Hodgkinson of the Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington; and Barbara Lee of Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J.

10/24/84

THE NATION'S NEWSPAPER

USA TODAY

PUBLISHED BY GANNETT

Colleges told 'get tough' before too late

By Pat Ordovensky
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — A new report urges tougher standards for our colleges — including five years of study if that's what it takes — to assure a solid grounding in liberal arts. The report comes after a

year of highly critical education reports on USA education.

It says colleges have "the shuffles" and steps must be taken to avoid "a bad cold or even pneumonia." Education Secretary Terrel Bell said Monday.

"I thought it would be much more critical. It's comforting to know higher education is in

pretty good shape," Bell said.

The report, compiled by seven university educators for Bell's office, recommends:

- Reviving a comprehensive exam in a student's major, in order to graduate.

- Two years of liberal education for all students before they specialize, which would

require five years' work instead of four years for many undergraduate degrees.

The report cannot mandate any changes. Bell said it is designed to "stimulate debate" and "by responding promptly,

we will avoid a major crisis that will erode public confidence and support."

Among college-level "warning signs" the report found:

- Scores on the most commonly used entrance exam for graduate school have declined in 11 of 15 areas since 1964.

- Fourteen state university systems toughened admission requirements but none raised graduation requirements.

APPENDIX C: SJR 125--JANUARY 22, 1985

1985 SESSION

LD9117146

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 125

Offered January 22, 1985

Requesting the Senate Committee on Education and Health and the House Committee on Education to establish a joint subcommittee to study the quality of higher education in the Commonwealth.

Patrons—Russell, R. E., Gray, Schewel, and Walker

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, Virginia's public institutions of higher education are a source of pride to the Commonwealth and the basis for the state's continued economic and cultural growth; and

WHEREAS, Virginia has an investment in excess of \$1 billion in physical plant and over \$300 million in equipment in its institutions of higher education; and

WHEREAS, Virginia historically devotes over seventeen percent of its general funds in the biennial budget to higher education, which amounts to over \$1.3 billion in general funds in the current biennium; and

WHEREAS, continued, broad public support for Virginia's system of higher education is essential to the system's growth and well-being; and

WHEREAS, the National Institute of Education, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council on Education, and other respected authorities in higher education are raising serious questions nationally about curriculum requirements, quality of faculty, and student skills in communication and computation acquired in the nation's colleges and universities; and

WHEREAS, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia is reviewing the criticisms and suggestions in these reports as to how they may apply to Virginia and is actively seeking, in conjunction with higher education associations such as the Southern Regional Education Board, a fair and comprehensive means of measuring student achievement in institutions of higher education; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Senate Committee on Education and Health and the House Committee on Education are requested to establish a joint subcommittee to study the quality of higher education in the Commonwealth.

The joint subcommittee shall consist of eight members, two from the membership of the Senate Committee on Education and Health to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, and three from the House Committee on Education to be appointed by the Speaker of the House. The Secretary of Education, the Chancellor of the Virginia Community College System, and the Director of Higher Education shall serve as ex officio members. All institutions of higher education are requested to cooperate and assist the joint subcommittee in the study as it deems appropriate. The joint subcommittee shall also seek the assistance of representatives of the various professional higher education state associations and the views of the public in its deliberations.

The joint subcommittee is requested to review each of the reports of the studies by the National Institute of Education, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American

1 Council on Education and other respected authorities in higher education, especially as to
 2 how their findings relate to curriculum requirements, quality of.. faculty, student
 3 achievement in communications and computational skills, and how high quality higher
 4 education may be continued in the Commonwealth. The joint subcommittee shall complete
 5 its work by December 15, 1985.

6 The costs of this study, including direct and indirect costs, are estimated to be \$16,410.

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Date: _____	Date: _____
Clerk of the Senate	Clerk of the House of Delegates

APPENDIX D: GORDON DAVIES' EXCERPTS FROM
INVOLVEMENT IN LEARNING



SCATS 335-26
LOCAL (804) 225-26

GORDON K. DAVIES
DIRECTOR

COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

JAMES MONROE BUILDING
101 NORTH FOURTEENTH ST
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Excerpts from Involvement In Learning:
Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education.
(The Report of the Study Group on the
Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education,
commissioned by the
National Institute of Education, 1984)
With comments and comparisons to Virginia higher education.

Gordon K. Davies
State Council of Higher Education for Virginia
November 19, 1984

Text of New Report on Excellence in Undergraduate Education

The Success Story and the Warning Signals

The Scope and Impact of Higher Education

Higher education in the United States is an enterprise of vast scope and diversity. Our colleges, community colleges, and universities enroll more than 12 million students, employ nearly 2 million workers, and account for 3 per cent of the Gross National Product.

Three in five of all American high school graduates now enroll in college. Indeed, the United States has outdistanced all other industrialized nations in the proportion of its young people who participate in higher education. Equally important is the diversity of the 12 million students:

- ▶ More than half of all undergraduates are women.
- ▶ One out of every six is a member of a minority group.
- ▶ Two out of every five are over the age of 25.
- ▶ Fewer than three in five are attending college full time.

Virginia:

290,000 students (public and private)
45,000 employees (public and private)

Virginia:

59 percent in Fall 1979 went to college

Virginia:

- 55.6 percent women
- one out of five is a member of a minority group
- two out of five are over 25
- 57.6 percent are full-time

Growth and Change

As a result of our expectations, attitudes, and dreams, American higher education has undergone a dramatic period of growth and change over the past few decades. Few institutions in our society could have been subjected to the pressures of such rapid expansion and still have contributed as much to individuals and to the Nation.

The factor of growth has been most obvious. Since 1950 alone, enrollment in higher education has increased almost 400 per cent, while the number of institutions has increased by almost 60 per cent to nearly 3,300—including over 600 two-year community colleges that have been created since 1960.

GROWTH

1972 - 1982

All Students	34.8%	77.4%
Men	15.1%	43.6%
Women	60.8%	113.4%
White	29.5%	46.5%
Minority	85.3%	118.1%
Full-Time	18.9%	41.8%
Part-Time	65.6%	167.1%

The Warning Signals

The strains of rapid expansion, followed by recent years of constricting resources and leveling enrollments, have taken their toll. The realities of student learning, curricular coherence, the quality of facilities, faculty morale, and academic standards no longer measure up to our expectations. These gaps between the ideal and the actual are serious warning signals. They point to both current and potential problems that must be recognized and addressed.

Student Achievement

- ▶ One out of eight highly able high school seniors does not choose to attend college.
- ▶ Only half of the students who start college with the intention of getting a bachelor's degree actually attain this goal.
- ▶ Student performance on 11 of 15 major Subject Area Tests of the Graduate Record Examinations declined between 1964 and 1982. The sharpest declines occurred in subjects requiring high verbal skills.

One cannot blame these trends entirely on the decline in the preparation of entering college students. Part of the problem is what happens to students after they matriculate in college. Knowledge about how to improve retention rates and overall student achievement is accessible, but evidently higher education is not using it fully.

One of the principal purposes of our recommendations is to suggest ways in which existing knowledge can be utilized to close the gap between expectations and performance implied by these trends.

Undergraduate Programs and Degrees

- ▶ Increasing numbers of undergraduates are majoring in narrow specialties. American colleges, community colleges, and universities now offer more than 1,100 different majors and programs, nearly half of them in occupational fields.
- ▶ The proportion of bachelor's degrees awarded in arts and sciences (as opposed to professional and vocational programs) fell from 49 per cent in 1971 to 36 per cent in 1982. The percentage of arts and sciences (or "general program") degrees awarded by community colleges (the degrees that are most likely to lead to transfer to four-year institutions) declined from 57 per cent in 1970 to 37 per cent in 1981, with a corresponding rise in occupational degrees.
- ▶ Enrollment patterns have changed. One in three of our freshmen have delayed entry to college after high school, more than two in five undergraduates attend college part-time, and over half of the bachelor's degree recipients take more than the traditional four years to complete the degree.

Virginia:

- *The source of this information is unknown
- *Of a typical class, 56.5 percent either have graduated or are still enrolled four years later. Many who dropout return later for degrees.
- *These data are not available by state

Virginia is convening a state conference (January 17-18, 1985) to consider strategies for improving higher education retention rat

Virginia:

- *1400 degree programs in 350 fields
- 59 percent in the arts and sciences

- *Bachelor's degrees in arts and sciences
- 1971: 53 percent
- 1982: 42 percent

- Community college arts and science degrees
- 1970: 37 percent
- 1981: 33 percent

- *42.4 percent are part-time
- 36.8 percent graduate within four years

- ▶ Students have abandoned some of the traditional arts and sciences fields in large numbers. Just since 1977, the proportion of entering freshmen intending to major in the physical sciences has declined by 13 per cent—in the humanities by 17 per cent; in the social sciences by 19 per cent; and in the biological sciences by fully 21 per cent.
- ▶ Accreditation standards for undergraduate professional programs often stand as barriers to the broad understanding we associate with liberal learning. For example, the guidelines of one professional accrediting association confine one-half to two-thirds of a student's baccalaureate program to courses in two areas. Another association prescribes approximately 70 per cent of a student's total program and confines that percentage wholly to two subject areas.

Faculty

- ▶ College and university faculty have lost approximately 20 per cent of their purchasing power in the past decade. Furthermore, because of market forces, faculty members in some departments are paid so much more than those in other departments that collegiality has become strained.
- ▶ The proportion of faculty who teach part-time increased from 23 per cent in 1966 to 41 per cent in 1980. The higher the proportion of part-time faculty, the more difficult it becomes to maintain collegiality, to assure continuity in the instructional program, and to preserve coherence in the curriculum.
- ▶ The proportion of entering college freshmen intending to pursue careers as college professors dropped from 1.8 per cent in 1966 to 0.2 per cent in 1982. This 89 per cent decline bodes ill for the future of higher education.

Virginia:

•1983 Freshman intended majors

Physical Science:	National 26 percent
	Virginia 25 percent
Humanities:	National 10 percent
	Virginia 11 percent
Biological Science:	National 20 percent
	Virginia 19 percent
Social Science:	National 17 percent
	Virginia 19 percent

Virginia:

- 72 degree-granting institutions hold 251 accreditations
- accreditation standards in some disciplines severely restrict liberal arts and sciences enrollment. Music (professional degree), Business, Engineering, Engineering Technology, Nursing, and Allied Health among most restrictive.
- Standards appear often to be interpreted more rigidly than they have to be

Virginia:

- 1970-1980 decline in purchasing power, public institution faculty only, is 15.7 percent. 1970-1982 decline is 12 percent.
- Part-time faculty: 19.9 percent (13.2 percent doctoral; 13.8 comprehensive; 36.4 community college)
- The source of the report's data are not known

The Condition of Institutions

- ▶ While enrollments have risen nearly 400 per cent since 1950, the number of America's colleges and universities increased only 60 per cent. This means that more and more students attend large institutions. Since 1970, the average headcount enrollment of all of these institutions has expanded by 25 per cent. Unfortunately, the greater the size of institutions, the more complex and bureaucratic they tend to become, the fewer the opportunities for each student to become intensely involved with intellectual life, and the less personal the contact between faculty and students.
- ▶ The physical plant and equipment of American colleges and universities are rapidly deteriorating. Even the most prestigious research universities carry millions of dollars in deferred maintenance on their books, and equipment budgets for state colleges and community colleges are inadequate for student learning.
- ▶ Virtually all institutions of higher education, public and private, are dependent on some form of enrollment-driven funding and hence tend to serve the changing whims of demand rather than student needs. Approximately 75 per cent of the Education and General revenues in all public institutions, and 50 per cent of those revenues in all private institutions, are dependent on enrollments and hence are vulnerable to enrollment decline.

Requirements and Standards

- ▶ Fourteen out of 50 state university systems have recently raised their requirements and standards—but only for purposes of admission, not for purposes of graduation. Stiffening admission requirements in some areas, such as years of high school study in basic academic disciplines, may well have a beneficial influence on the preparation of entering college freshmen. But imposing higher admission standards in other areas—cutoff scores on standardized tests and grade point averages—is an inappropriate response to recommendations for more rigor in subject matter preparation.
- ▶ Most American colleges and universities award their degrees when students have accumulated a given number of credits distributed among liberal education courses, major requirements, and electives and have achieved a minimum grade point average. Credits are measures of time and performance, but they do not indicate the academic worth of course content. In too many instances, quality control in the assignment of credits to courses is problematic. For example, in some colleges students can earn the same number of credits for taking a course in family food management or automobile ownership as for taking a course in the history of the American city or neuropsychology.

Virginia:

- Since 1970, headcount enrollment has increased 139 percent in public institutions and 35.8 percent in private.
 - Between now and 1994, institutions have identified \$68 million in renovation needs.
- Instructional equipment deficit is estimated at \$100 million, not including instructional computing.
- Public institutions: about 65 percent of general fund determined by size of present enrollment

Virginia:

- range of institutions from highly selective to open access.
- unique among states. 4 of 5 most selective institutions are state-supported (and 7 of 10 most selective)
- 7 state-supported with average SAT over 1000
William and Mary, University of Virginia, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, James Madison University, Virginia Military Institute, Mary Washington College, George Mason University
- 8 private with average SAT over 1000

Conditions of Excellence in Undergraduate Education

Excellence in higher education has traditionally been judged in terms of institutional resources, using measures such as endowments and expenditures, the breadth and depth of curricular offerings, the intellectual attainments of faculty, the test scores of entering students, and selectivity in admissions. Both educators and the public at large have valued these institutional characteristics because they appear to facilitate educational growth. And, indeed, some of them, such as the depth of the curriculum and the adequacy of libraries and laboratories, have the potential to influence student learning in very direct ways.

But there are two significant problems with these measures: (1) they are all proxies for educational excellence, and (2) they are all inputs. None of them tells us what students actually learn and how much they grow as a result of higher education. None of them tells us anything about educational outcomes. As a result, we have no way of knowing how academic institutions actually perform.

However inadequate they may be, these measures continue to be employed. They encourage institutions to focus their energies on acquiring more resources, sometimes to the detriment of student learning and development. Excellence in higher education, we believe, requires:

1. That institutions of higher education produce *demonstrable improvements* in student knowledge, capacities, skills, and attitudes between entrance and graduation;
2. That these demonstrable improvements occur within *established, clearly expressed, and publicly announced and maintained standards of performance* for awarding degrees based on societal and institutional definitions of college-level academic learning; and
3. That these improvements are achieved *efficiently*, that is, that they are cost-effective in the use of student and institutional resources of time, effort, and money.

Adequate measures of educational excellence must thus be couched in terms of *student outcomes*—principally such academic outcomes as knowledge, intellectual capacities, and skills. Outcomes also may include other dimensions of student growth, such as self-confidence, persistence, leadership, empathy, social responsibility, and understanding of cultural and intellectual differences.

Before offering specific recommendations as means to

meet the requirements of excellence in higher education, we must emphasize that the advice we offer about standards of content is intentionally general. It is not our aim to dictate particular and highly detailed sets of knowledge, capacities, skills, or attitudes that students should develop in the course of their undergraduate education. We were not charged to define the "knowledge most worth having," and it would be inappropriate for us to do so. Nowhere do we mean to imply that every college graduate should have read a particular book, should be able to perform a particular experiment or apply a particular theory to a real life situation, or should have taken a particular course in foreign language, computer science, calculus, Shakespeare, contemporary civilization, macroeconomics, or whatever. Our reason is simple: the responsibility for defining specific standards of content and levels of student performance and college-level learning in undergraduate education must fall on academic institutions themselves, or those standards will have no credibility.

Thus, our recommendations are designed to assist college administrators and faculty members in fulfilling that responsibility—through their colleges or through learned societies, higher education organizations, or accreditation bodies. Their leadership is absolutely necessary in setting standards and raising expectations.

Much is known about the conditions under which student learning and growth can be maximized and about the methods and benchmarks by which these changes can be measured, even though the extent to which any one student benefits from these conditions depends on many immeasurable factors. But our colleges, community colleges, and universities rarely seek and apply this knowledge in shaping their educational policies and practices. We contend that the quality of undergraduate education could be significantly improved if America's colleges and universities would apply existing knowledge about three critical conditions of excellence—(1) student involvement, (2) high expectations, and (3) assessment and feedback.

1

College administrators should reallocate faculty and other institutional resources toward increased service to first- and second-year undergraduate students.

- ▶ States should revise funding formulas so that institutions receive as much money for freshman and sophomore students as they do for junior and senior students.

3

Learning technologies should be designed to increase, and not reduce, the amount of personal contact between students and faculty on intellectual issues.

Since no factor seems to account for student learning and satisfaction with college more than faculty contact, we are concerned about any technology that has the potential of diminishing significant intellectual contact between faculty and students, and of removing the passion from learning. New technologies can have a tremendously beneficial impact on undergraduate learning, but the narrative evidence we have examined suggests that most of our current uses of computers, other forms of programmed instruction, language laboratories, and televised instruction isolate the learner from the teacher and the teacher from the assessment process. When colleges race to install as many microcomputers as possible, only to use them as drill sergeants or as the exclusive source of instruction in problem solving, we question whether they are concerned more with acquiring the machinery than with using it well.

We are also concerned that the distribution of technological resources may be uneven. Corporations seem to have assisted in establishing "the wired university" principally at prestigious and/or technologically oriented institutions. Students at state colleges, historically black colleges, denominational liberal arts colleges, and community colleges should have equal access to the potential benefits of this technology.

*Virginia guidelines produce fewer faculty for courses offered at the lower level than for those offered at the upper level. The guidelines are based upon analysis of actual institution teaching practices. Institutions can allocate faculty as they choose.

*Getting students off to a good start is important. Freshmen and sophomores should have the best possible teaching and advising available within an institution.

*There is no evidence that Virginia colleges and universities are misusing computers or telecommunications instruction. There is evidence to the contrary.

*This is potentially a problem. 1986-88 budget guidelines for higher education will propose guideline for the amount of instructional computing needed by all institutions. This will help to ensure equitable distribution of resources.

7

Academic administrators should consolidate as many part-time teaching lines into full-time positions as possible.

The motive behind this recommendation is also environmental and bears on student involvement. Strong faculty identification with the institution and intense faculty involvement with students requires a primary commitment. Part-time faculty have difficulty making such a commitment, and this is especially true of those who teach courses before or after they work at another full-time job and who are not available—or prepared—to serve in advisory roles to students. In our minds, one full-time faculty member is a better investment than three part-timers, largely because the full-time faculty member contributes to the institutional environment in ways that go beyond teaching courses.

*Virginia is below the national average for part-time faculty, and the report does not provide convincing evidence that the disadvantages outweigh the advantages of using part-time faculty.

*If part-time faculty are treated as members of faculty and given some of the privileges of faculty, they will respond accordingly.

*In some disciplines, part-time faculty are the only realistic source of qualified faculty. Data Processing and Technologies for instance. It is foolish to ignore the highly qualified individuals in D.C., Richmond, and Norfolk who can add to program content.

8

Faculties and chief academic officers in each institution should agree upon and disseminate a statement of the knowledge, capacities, and skills that students must develop prior to graduation.

*This is an excellent proposal.

All bachelor's degree recipients should have at least two full years of liberal education. In most professional fields, this will require extending undergraduate programs beyond the usual four years.

We are recommending what some might regard as a radical restructuring of undergraduate professional programs in fields ranging from agriculture, business administration, and engineering to music, nursing, pharmacy, and teacher education.

When we look carefully at the curricula prescribed for students in such four-year professional programs, it is clear that they offer few opportunities to develop the capacities and knowledge that most institutions would expect of baccalaureate graduates. Our objective in expanding those opportunities is to strengthen undergraduate professional degree programs and the future options of students who pursue them. Students are not likely to accumulate in four years both the generalized and special knowledge necessary for first-rate performance as professionals. This fact has long been acknowledged in baccalaureate degrees in architecture (most of which require five- or six-year programs) and in many undergraduate programs in engineering (which offer five-year options).

A special word is necessary about teacher education programs, since it is through them that our colleges and universities exercise the most direct influence on the quality of schooling in the United States. Changing the parameters of the undergraduate professional degree program in teacher education is a necessary—but not a sufficient—step toward improving the quality of the teaching profession. In addition, we recommend that colleges and universities treat admission to the undergraduate program in teacher education as they would an honors program: require a sustained, rigorously evaluated internship in a school at an early point in the college career of prospective teachers; recruit faculty from the disciplines to join in the instruction and supervision of future school teachers; and make greater use of the research on effective teaching and effective learning environments in the teacher education curriculum. All of these steps are intended to insure that the teacher education candidate becomes a person who is both competent in a subject and capable of offering high quality service in a variety of settings.

*In Virginia, 62 percent of all credit hours are in liberal education. The great bulk are at the freshmen and sophomore level.

*The recommendation misses the point. Colleges and universities generally need more coherent programs of liberal education, with opportunities for advanced work regardless of major, and with closer ties to the career-oriented majors.

*The extension of undergraduate education beyond four years is an option that should be exercised where necessary.

*There may be a proposal from a Virginia university to establish an honors program in teacher education, as part of a five-year curriculum that will earn students both bachelor's and master's degrees. This proposal was in preparation before the NIE study was released.

12

Community colleges, colleges, and universities should supplement the credit system with proficiency assessments both in liberal education and in the student's major as a condition of awarding degrees.

This recommendation is intended to provide a warranty for postsecondary credentials and hence increase their value for students. Higher education must take the lead in establishing supplements to the almost exclusive reliance on credits and grades that are too often substitutes for measures of learning. The practice we recommend will insure that students take their general education or liberal arts requirements as seriously as they take their vocational or professional programs. It will also drive course selection and discourage the choice of the frivolous, thus guiding students to allocate and use more of their time for academic learning.

Faculty may choose from a variety of available standardized tests for this purpose, may develop their own examinations, or may use means other than paper-and-pencil instruments to assess student performance. Needless to say, the tests or methods selected should be appropriate to the knowledge, capacities, and skills to be measured; and they should be widely promulgated so that the public will recognize that what is being assessed is college-level learning.

The most useful analogy for the way these tests might be offered is that of a professional licensing examination. When one takes such an examination—to become an accountant, architect, lawyer, nurse, or teacher—one must prepare for that examination independently of courses. The examination itself assesses an individual's grasp of principles, methods, and knowledge that should have been acquired in formal course work and related experience. For community college students seeking transfer to four-year institutions, the warranty implied by this assessment is very important.

At one time, the comprehensive exam in the major was far more common than it is now. We are recommending that this largely abandoned tradition be reinstated for majors as well as for liberal education.

13

Institutions should offer remedial courses and programs when necessary but should set standards and employ instructional techniques in those programs that will enable students to perform well subsequently in college-level courses.

We intend this somewhat generalized statement of goals to cover the following specific strategies and policies to improve rates of student persistence and success:

- ▶ Students assigned to remedial programs should carry limited course loads, but they should be encouraged to include at least one course per semester in an area of academic interest to them.
- ▶ Remedial courses should be accompanied by a variety of means (including support groups and greater use of peer tutors) to enhance students' self-esteem, academic identity, and sense of direction in life.
- ▶ Remedial programs should place heavy emphasis on communications skills, and on reading, writing, and listening skills in particular.
- ▶ In no case should final standards of performance in remedial courses in English be normed at less than twelfth grade levels.

We discussed the difficult problem of awarding credit for remedial courses, and concluded that this critical decision should be made by individual institutions. While many institutions currently do not allow remedial courses to count as credit toward the degree, research suggests that students may actually learn more from such courses if they are offered for credit.

14

In rewarding faculty through retention, promotion, tenure, and compensation, all college officials directly responsible for personnel decisions should both define scholarship broadly and demand that faculty demonstrate that scholarship.

The true frontiers of knowledge in any academic field are usually explored by but a handful of researchers, and most of their discoveries or "breakthroughs" are found in notebooks and correspondence long before being reported in academic journals and subsequently cited by anyone writing about the field. We expect this level of research from such a small percentage of the American professoriate that it is patently unrealistic to set similar standards for the rest. Most of the "research" activity of faculty, on the other hand, can be called "scholarship," and much of it will never lead to publication in the major juried journals of a discipline. These basic facts have been well documented by those who have studied the academic professions.

Virginia: Council of Higher Education task force recommendations (1982)

- Limited course loads; no courses which require basic skills that student lacks
- must complete remediation before 30 hours accumulated
- remediate at high school level, with 12th grade competence required
- remediate in grammar, composition, reading and math
- no degree credit for remedial work

• Faculty in Virginia senior institutions are about 60 percent tenured. In all institutions they are about 50 percent tenured. This is well below the national average of about 70 percent.

• The recommendation is good.

16

Faculty and academic deans should design and implement a systematic program to assess the knowledge, capacities, and skills developed in students by academic and cocurricular programs.

19

College officials directly responsible for faculty personnel decisions should increase the weight given to teaching in the processes of hiring and determining retention, tenure, promotion, and compensation, and should improve means of assessing teaching effectiveness.

This recommendation is directed to faculty committees, department chairs, deans, academic vice-presidents, presidents, and boards of trustees. We urge them to develop systems for the assessment of teaching effectiveness that will be accepted by faculty and to promulgate criteria for the relationship between teaching effectiveness and rewards.

21

To balance the specialization of graduate training in the disciplines, graduate departments should require applicants for admission to present evidence of a broad undergraduate liberal arts education.

While we have emphasized the importance of a liberal arts education for all undergraduates, that education is particularly important for future college teachers. Our concern in this recommendation is with the impact of faculty preparation on student learning. Since the ability to set an idea in a broader context is a key contribution higher education can make to students' intellectual development, we should expect faculty to model this capacity in their interaction with students. The broader contexts are derived from a liberal education.

There is a growing sense that graduate and professional schools are shaping undergraduate education by their requirements. Medical schools have recently been criticized for this based upon evidence that the overwhelming majority of medical school students were biology (or pre-med) majors in college.

State and system-level officials should minimize the intrusions of administrative and fiscal agencies into the *daily and routine* operations of public colleges, community colleges, and universities.

Our rationale for this recommendation is that such intrusions ultimately influence the lives—and learning—of students. The message of these intrusions is that the State does not trust a local institution to manage its daily life. The irony is that faculty and administrators respond by investing an inordinate amount of time and energy “getting around” state regulations and practices. Their frustration—and the cynicism that inevitably accompanies it—rubs off on students. An environment dominated by distrust and cynicism is not one in which learning flourishes.

The reports of other commissions that we examined—along with a growing body of literature—have documented the distressing extent of this problem. There is no reason why every purchase order should have to be reviewed and approved by several complex layers in a process so time consuming and complex that sometimes the supplies and equipment necessary for learning arrive after courses are over. There is no reason why guest lecturers have to be masked as “consultants” (or consultants as “lecturers”) in order for honoraria to be approved by the State. There is no reason why the State should dictate policies concerning which faculty can travel where to what kinds of professional conferences. These are routine and daily operations that are necessary to the maintenance of a productive and positive environment for teaching and learning and for which administrative flexibility is essential. It is a legitimate responsibility of states to audit institutional practices, to demand evidence of their effectiveness, and to correct abuses. It is quite another matter for them to operate the institution from a distance on the assumption that faculty and administrators are either incompetent or corrupt.

The integrity and autonomy of colleges are critical to the establishment of an environment conducive to student learning and growth. When bureaucratic practices distort institutional values and drain energy away from teaching and learning, not only does the learning environment suffer but costs to the taxpayer increase. We believe that it is the responsibility of legislators and other state officials to minimize practices that breed distrust and cynicism in public colleges and universities.

Virginia:

- The administration, the Council of Higher Education and the institutions will begin this month a study to determine ways in which administrative procedures can be made more efficient and less onerous for institutions which meet certain standards for administrative performance.
- The examples cited by the NIE report are extreme and do not apply in general to Virginia.
- A national study of state control over high education did identify Virginia as the 40th most restrictive of the 50 states (J. Fredericks Volkwein, SUNY, Albany; March 1984)

State officials should establish special and alternative funding for both public and private institutions to encourage efforts that promote student involvement and institutional assessment.

In many ways, this recommendation goes to the heart of a basic contradiction in state-supported higher education: it is funded on the basis of enrollments, not on the grounds of learning. Funding driven by enrollments in a period when enrollments are declining while fixed costs rise spells trouble. The inevitable result is a loss of standards, and student learning suffers the most. As long as states fund higher education according to such actuarial formulas, institutions will devote unwarranted energy to maintaining or increasing enrollments simply to meet costs. They will be able to exert little quality control, nor will they be able to assure students and their families that the credentials awarded are meaningful.

We know that one cannot eliminate formula funding completely. It is a fiscal impossibility. But program improvement funding can inject an element of quality into the system that is not currently apparent. For public institutions, this funding might involve a set-aside percentage of the total state appropriations for public higher education. For private institutions, incentive funding might involve a special state appropriation based on any one of a number of variables the state might choose. A few states have embarked on these efforts, but only for public colleges. We believe that the public benefits derived from the work of private colleges equally warrant this type of incentive.

We stress that these external incentives do not imply competition *among* institutions but rather competition *within* institutions for the best ideas and programs to advance student learning. We also emphasize that these alternative funding mechanisms do not imply external control of academic programs. In the final analysis, improving educational quality in a college depends on the efforts of its own faculty and students.

- Since 1982, Virginia institutions have not been funded for enrollment growth (with the exception of the VCCS and three senior institutions in 1984-86).
- For 1986-88, the Council will propose that enrollment growth, if any, be identified in budget requests and that any funds provided for it be appropriated to the institutions in "escrow" to be released only if growth materializes.
- The Virginia record during years of funding based largely upon size is one of controlled growth, not the chaos depicted by the report.
- The report appears to assume that those who oversee, administer and teach at colleges and universities are either incompetent or without integrity. Quality controls can be and are maintained.
- The first step to be taken by those who espouse funding quality instead of growth should be to hold harmless colleges and universities whose enrollments begin to decline, either permanently or temporarily.
- The present guidelines are an allocation tool only. It is possible to take an amount off the top of the money for higher education and set it aside for quality improvements while distributing the rest by guidelines. It is not possible to do this with a "level funding" approach to individual budgets.
- Private college assistance in Virginia is based on enrollment of Virginians. Notwithstanding the recommendation's cautions, other approaches probably would be regarded as interfering with institutional autonomy.

26

State legislatures and boards of trustees should reverse the decline in faculty purchasing power by increasing faculty salaries at a rate greater than inflation.

In 1983-84, average Virginia faculty salaries increased 1.4 percent, while the national average increased 6.1 percent.

1984-85, Virginia salaries increased 10 percent while the national average is expected to increase 6 percent.

1985-86, Virginia salaries increased 10 percent, while the national average is projected to increase 4-6 percent.

Inflation in 1984-85 is 4.5 percent.

APPENDIX E: GORDON DAVIES' DRAFT RESOLUTION

TO: San Russell 1/21

FROM:

Here is a draft of the
resolution we discussed.
Please call if you'd like to
discuss it
ordon Davis
52600



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION

James Monroe Building
101 North Fourteenth Street, Richmond, Va. 23219

WHEREAS - Virginia's public institutions of higher education are a source of pride to the Commonwealth and the basis for the state's continued economic and cultural growth; and

WHEREAS - Virginia has an investment in excess of \$1.5 billion in physical plant and over \$600 million in equipment in her institutions of higher education, and

WHEREAS - Virginia historically devotes over 17% of its general funds in the biennial budget to higher education, amounting to over \$1.3 billion in general funds in the current biennium; and

WHEREAS - continued, broad public support for Virginia's system of higher education is essential to the system's growth and well-being; and

WHEREAS - various studies of higher education have raised questions about curriculum requirements, quality of instruction, and student achievement in the nation's colleges and universities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED - that the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, is requested to establish a joint study commission to be composed of four Senators and four Delegates whose purpose it shall be to review, with the State Council of Higher Education, Virginia public college and university officials, and interested citizens, student achievement in Virginia's public higher education system, and to investigate means by which student achievement may be measured so as to assure the citizens of Virginia of the continuing high quality of higher education in the Commonwealth.

The joint subcommittee shall complete its work in time to submit a report to the General Assembly by December 15, 1985, and to submit any recommended legislation to the 1986 General Assembly session.

All direct and indirect costs of the study are estimated to be \$12,000.

APPENDIX F: SENATOR RUSSELL'S STATEMENT:
AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
SJR 125--FEBRUARY 1, 1985

STATEMENT TO SENATE RULES COMMITTEE

SENATOR ROBERT E. RUSSELL

FEBRUARY 1, 1985

The Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute for Senate Joint Resolution #125 would establish a study committee to review student achievement and to investigate means by which student achievement may be measured in our colleges and universities.

This resolution is the result of: (1) attention being focused on higher education nationally by several studies currently being conducted and/or published; and (2), most importantly, by the fact that the State Council of Higher Education, certain state colleges and universities, and the Southern Regional Education Board, among others, are beginning to grapple with the task of measuring just how well our undergraduates are being prepared.

Let me share with you a portion of an editorial by Dr. Gordon K. Davies, Director of the Council of Higher Education, published December 2, 1984. In response to the report on higher education issued by the National Institute for Education, Dr. Davies said:

..."We need to evaluate more thoroughly the achievement of students in our undergraduate programs."

Dr. Davies goes on to say:

"We should reinstitute comprehensive examinations in all undergraduate majors, and in general liberal education as well. If we do that, if we state clearly the benefits of studying the arts and sciences, and if we insist in our actions as well as with our words that undergraduate education is valuable in and of itself, we shall have contributed greatly to the strength of our colleges and universities."

The purpose of SJR #125 is to provide a forum in which we can begin to discuss the need to institute such evaluations, to discuss the approaches being taken by other state and other institutions of higher education addressing this question, and how we may further public support for Virginia's colleges and universities by undertaking the development of a consensus with regards to the subject of undergraduate student achievement in the Commonwealth.

The Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute which you are asked to consider has been drafted with the assistance of Dr. Davies and the State Council of Higher Education.

APPENDIX G: SJR 125--AMENDMENT
FEBRUARY 1, 1985

1985 SESSION

LD9146146

**SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 125
AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE**

**(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Rules on
February 1, 1985)**

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Russell, R. E.)

Requesting the Senate Committee on Education and Health and the House Committee on Education to establish a joint subcommittee to study the quality of higher education in the Commonwealth.

WHEREAS, Virginia's public institutions of higher education are a source of pride to the Commonwealth and the basis for the State's continued economic and cultural growth; and

WHEREAS, Virginia has an investment in excess of \$1 billion in physical plant and over \$300 million in equipment in its institutions of higher education; and

WHEREAS, Virginia historically devotes over seventeen percent of its general funds in the biennial budget to higher education, which amounts to over \$1.3 billion in general funds in the current biennium; and

WHEREAS, continued, broad public support for Virginia's system of higher education is essential to the system's growth and well-being; and

WHEREAS, various studies of higher education have raised questions about curriculum requirements, quality of instruction, and student achievement in the nation's colleges and universities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Senate Committee on Education and Health and the House Committee on Education are requested to establish a joint subcommittee to review, with the State Council of Higher Education, state college and university officials, and interested citizens, student achievement in Virginia's public higher education system, and to investigate means by which student achievement may be measured to assure the citizens of Virginia of the continuing high quality of higher education in the Commonwealth.

The joint subcommittee shall be composed of eight members, three from the membership of the Senate Committee on Education and Health to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, and five from the membership of the House Committee on Education to be appointed by the Speaker of the House. The joint subcommittee shall submit its recommendations to the 1986 Session of the General Assembly.

The costs of this study, including direct and indirect costs, are estimated to be \$16,410.

APPENDIX H: SJR 125

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 125

Requesting the State Council of Higher Education to study the quality of higher education in the Commonwealth.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 22, 1985

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 20, 1985

WHEREAS, Virginia's public institutions of higher education are a source of pride to the Commonwealth and the basis for the State's continued economic and cultural growth; and

WHEREAS, Virginia has an investment in excess of \$1 billion in physical plant and over \$300 million in equipment in its institutions of higher education; and

WHEREAS, Virginia historically devotes over seventeen percent of its general funds in the biennial budget to higher education, which amounts to over \$1.3 billion in general funds in the current biennium; and

WHEREAS, continued, broad public support for Virginia's system of higher education is essential to the system's growth and well-being; and

WHEREAS, various studies of higher education have raised questions about curriculum requirements, quality of instruction, and student achievement in the nation's colleges and universities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the State Council of Higher Education conduct a study on student achievement in Virginia's public higher education system, and to investigate means by which student achievement may be measured to assure the citizens of Virginia of the continuing high quality of higher education in the Commonwealth.

In conducting its review, the Council is requested to seek advice from Virginia's colleges and universities.

The Council should submit its findings and recommendations to the 1986 Session of the General Assembly.

The costs of this study, including direct and indirect costs, are estimated to be \$16,410.

APPENDIX I: SENATE DOCUMENT 14

**REPORT OF STUDY CONDUCTED
BY THE COUNCIL OF
HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA**

**The Measurement of Student
Achievement and the
Assurance of Quality in
Virginia Higher Education**

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



Senate Document No. 14

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
1986**

THE MEASUREMENT OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND THE
ASSURANCE OF QUALITY IN VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION

STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA

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January, 1986

Introduction.

Senate Joint Resolution 125, passed by the 1985 Virginia General Assembly, directed the Council of Higher Education to conduct a study "to investigate means by which student achievement may be measured to assure the citizens of Virginia the continuing high quality of higher education in the Commonwealth." Appendix 1 is the text of the resolution. This report of the study:

(1) discusses the literature which describes ways to measure student achievement;

(2) describes notable assessment programs developed by institutions and states outside Virginia;

(3) gives examples of efforts made by Virginia's public colleges and universities to measure student achievement, with special attention to the comprehensive pilot program being implemented by James Madison University; and

(4) offers recommendations to establish assessment policies and procedures at Virginia's state-supported institutions of higher education.

The Measurement of Student Achievement in Higher Education.

Measuring student achievement is an integral part of teaching and learning in higher education. Faculty evaluate students through examinations, written and oral presentations in virtually all courses to determine students' grades and whether or not course objectives are being met.

Recently, however, the public and educational leaders have expressed concern about the limitations of traditional evaluation procedures and have proposed extraordinary means to ascertain how well students are acquiring the knowledge and skills traditionally associated with a college education. These concerns parallel similar questions about the effectiveness of elementary and secondary education.

Some critics use evidence of decline in secondary schools to conclude that the quality of higher education is threatened. The persistent long-term decline in the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores of students seeking admission to college, documented by The College Board, suggests that many entering students are not well-prepared for college work. A 1983 study of secondary education by a national commission concluded that the failure of the nation's high schools to produce competent graduates places the country "at risk." The inference is that poor preparation will affect students throughout their college careers and may erode the college curriculum.

More direct evidence of student achievement in higher education is cited in a 1984 National Institute of Education (NIE) report, *Involvement in Learning*, prepared by the Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education. The report summarizes the results of a study of the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE's), tests taken by students seeking admission to graduate education. The study documents declining GRE scores between 1964 and 1982 for 11 of 15 subject areas tested. Preliminary analyses of specialized professional school entrance examinations--including the Graduate Medical Admissions Test and the Law School Admissions Test-- show similar declines for the same time period. These results provide only general information because the College Board, the Educational Testing Service and other organizations that control test scores will not release institutional or state-by-state comparisons.

The 1984 NIE study called on faculty and academic deans to design assessment programs which evaluate students' knowledge, capacities and skills. The Association of American Colleges, in a 1985 report *Integrity in the College Curriculum*, proposed assessment programs that nurture institutional autonomy and diversity while stimulating educational excellence. The Southern Regional Education Board, in *Access to Quality Undergraduate Education: A Report to the SREB by Its Commission for Educational Quality, 1985*, states that "the quality of undergraduate education is unacceptably low and needs to be raised" and asks that institutions and states continue to pursue the goal of access while ensuring that participation in higher education will have lasting value. As with the NIE study, the SREB

report does not provide state data on student achievement; and neither the SREB nor the NIE study substantiates fully the charge that declines in student achievement are widespread.

The SREB recommends comprehensive programs to upgrade preparation for college work, sustain access through further preparation in remedial programs, establish clear standards for progress through the entire system of higher education, including standardized tests of minimum competence, and provide accountability to the public for student performance. The report emphasizes the major role faculty must play in defining necessary skills and standards, teaching challenging and demanding curricula which incorporate these skills, and providing opportunities to develop and practice them.

Scholars of higher education are addressing the problem of student learning by conducting research and publishing materials that debate the merits of particular approaches and propose ways to measure achievement. This literature illustrates the importance of defining precisely what is meant by achievement and educational quality, and clarifying the objectives of assessment programs. Various types of assessment are proposed or conducted, as might be expected in a nation with a diverse array of colleges and universities that have different missions and goals. Appendix 2 is a selected bibliography of the relevant literature.

Within institutions assessments are used diagnostically to counsel students and place them into appropriate courses and curricula, evaluatively to determine the success of programs or teaching methods or to certify the acquisition of particular skills, and reflectively to ascertain if institutional objectives and missions are being met. Within systems of higher education the few assessment programs which have been established are intended to evaluate students' basic skill levels, screen applicants for admission to particular programs, or determine students' eligibility to progress into a higher level in the curriculum.

The measures used reveal competing perspectives on what constitutes achievement and how and when it should be measured. Achievement may be defined in terms of cognitive skills or knowledge. Most observers distinguish between general knowledge (for example, the presumed common content appropriate for all baccalaureate candidates) and more specialized knowledge associated with majors or academic disciplines. Advocates of skill testing emphasize the importance of what students can or cannot do rather than what students know. Again, distinctions are made between general functioning skills such as quantitative reasoning, communication or critical thinking, and specialized skills.

Standardized or locally designed tests can measure cognitive growth in general or specific knowledge and skills. The tests may be administered once or offered in a test-retest format.

More pragmatic approaches relate achievement to the development of occupational or professional skills. Assessment often focuses on certifying that graduates have the necessary job-related skills. Employer surveys, student evaluations of the worth of their programs and passage rates on licensing examinations can measure specialized skill development. Students also may be required to engage in actual performances in real or simulated job situations. Some institutions track program graduates into at least their first jobs as a follow-up measure.

Alternatively, cognition may be viewed as part of a broader college experience which includes changes in attitudes, values or behavior patterns, the inculcation of the attributes of good citizenship, or the development of disciplined intellectual habits of mind. Student achievement in this context is assessed by psychological testing instruments or by surveys of student attitudes or satisfaction with the college experience.

These multiple perspectives on the measurement of student achievement represent different dimensions of the many purposes and expectations associated with higher education. Criteria used to measure achievement reflect this diversity. But two broad approaches to measurement may be identified.

The "value-added" approach --sometimes also referred to as the "outcomes" or "talent development" approach-- focuses on net gains in student achievement over time. Advocates of this approach attempt to measure directly the influence of an institution or curriculum on student achievement through pre- and post-tests. This evaluation technique is intended to disregard non-institutional factors affecting achievement-- for example, family background, pre-college preparation, personal aspects of students' lives during college-- in order to isolate the changes resulting from a student's academic experience alone. Students are assessed for entering competencies and then reassessed following the completion of appropriate courses to measure growth in achievement based on students' improvement. The focus is on change rather than the absolute level of achievement reached. Several dimensions of learning can be measured, each defined in relationship to institutional or program purposes and objectives, taking into account differences in mission and student clienteles.

A second approach focuses on the attainment of a specified standard of student achievement, recognizing the demand that institutions and programs educate students with an assured level of basic or professional skills. Advocates of the "attainment" view argue that all college students, for example, should achieve a minimum level of competence to qualify as college graduates; or that all program graduates should have a designated level of competence to qualify for admission to the profession or further training. No attempt is made to determine whether or not factors other than the college academic experience influenced the level of learning achieved.

Using this approach, institutions can establish standards to mark student progress through the curriculum, including standards for admission, remediation, general education, enrollment in advanced courses or majors, and graduation. The student attainment approach affirms the importance of widely shared expectations and standards for general or specialized competencies that all students participating in higher education should achieve regardless of differences in institutional missions or students served.

Examples of Assessment Programs in Other States.

Traditional institutional measures of quality did not focus on student achievement, but emphasized instead peer rankings and resources. Ranks were based on institutional size, prestige or selectivity. Early versions of student-related assessment focused on general measures of professional or academic success, for example, the proportion of an institution's graduates listed in *Who's Who*, the percentage entering graduate or professional school, or the number earning doctorates. These measures are beneficial to selective institutions, those widely known with secure reputations, and those enjoying historically strong financial support from public and private sources. Newer institutions, those undergoing recent mission changes, and those with a commitment to broad student access, feel disadvantaged by this approach and tend to endorse a "value-added" assessment program.

Examples of assessment programs developed recently by institutions in other states include the following:

(1) The program at Northeast Missouri State University is a widely-cited illustration of value-added assessment. The institution: (a) uses standardized tests to evaluate students' general education, measuring knowledge gained by comparing individual scores on tests administered during both the freshmen and junior years; (b) determines achievement in the major by giving students either the Graduate Record Examination for that field or a pre-professional certification test, comparing average scores with national norms when possible; and (c) surveys student attitude changes through standardized tests administered at different points in the students' career, including alumni. The university administration distributes results to departments for curriculum development and program evaluation, and to the state legislature to compete for funds and demonstrate accountability.

(2) Miami-Dade Community College serves a large, urban, culturally diverse student body. Faced with the problem of advising students and monitoring their success, the college began a program of competency testing backed by an automated support system for advising and placement. The college administers entrance examinations to evaluate students' ability to qualify for particular programs, monitors progress to detect early signs of difficulty and produces computerized individual advising profiles that identify courses for which a student is eligible and those needed to complete a program. The assessment program promotes individual student success rather than departmental or curriculum improvements.

(3) The program at Alverno College (Milwaukee, Wisconsin) emphasizes a close relationship among the institution's mission, curriculum, and student services. As a small college, Alverno is committed to effective teaching, personal student counseling and a cohesive institutional culture. Beginning in 1973 the college identified eight basic "skills that last a lifetime" and built its curriculum around them. Faculty identified six increasingly complex levels of skill development and organized their courses by selecting from among the skills and levels. The college assesses student achievement of these skills by evaluating student performance on assigned tasks or in decision-making situations. Members of the local business and professional community assist the institution in the evaluation. The college gives students their test results and encourages self-improvement by involving students in their own evaluation. Faculty and administrators offer counsel and advice on student plans to improve performance. An Office of Research and Evaluation assesses the curriculum, student development and teaching. The office is conducting a study over a period of several years using standardized and locally developed tests to determine the influence of the curriculum on students.

(4) The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, is a research institution serving a diverse student body. The state provides incentive funding to institutions that develop assessment procedures to improve programs. In response to the state initiative, the university established a faculty task force to evaluate available tests measuring general education, knowledge in the disciplines and professions, and student satisfaction. On the recommendation of the task force, the institution designed a comprehensive testing program and established pilot assessment projects in 14 departments. Faculty in seven of those departments selected either standardized or local tests of student knowledge; the other seven chose measures of student and alumni satisfaction. The Learning Resource Center offers technical advice and summarizes results. The administration provides financial incentives to departments showing improvements, but gives the academic unit responsibility to develop the assessment procedures.

Several institutions require students to pass proficiency examinations before taking upper division course work, including the University of Massachusetts at Boston, the University of Arizona and The City University of New York. These tests focus on general skills such as reading, writing and mathematics rather than on knowledge or skills associated with specific courses in the curriculum.

At the state level, there are several assessment programs to measure student achievement in high school.

(1) Florida requires students enrolling in college to take a standardized entrance examination which evaluates basic communication and computation skills. Students whose test scores indicate a need for remediation are required to enroll in "college preparatory" programs. Four-year colleges and

universities establish contracts with community colleges to conduct this instruction, and students do not receive college degree credit for the work.

(2) The New Jersey Basic Skills Placement Test evaluates students' writing, computation, reading and grammar. It is used for counseling and course placement. The California State University has a similar examination that serves as a diagnostic tool to help students select appropriate courses.

(3) The Early Testing Program supported by the Ohio Board of Regents administers a mathematics placement examination to high school juniors. The results are analyzed by the state's public colleges and universities and students are able to take appropriate courses and overcome deficiencies during their senior year before entering college.

(4) Minnesota has an early admissions program for high school students who demonstrate college-level skills and knowledge. The program permits qualified juniors and seniors to enroll in college for the remainder of their high school years without paying tuition.

A few states have achievement tests for students already enrolled in college.

(1) Mississippi requires a test of general education skills for students seeking admission to teacher education programs.

(2) Florida administers the College Level Academic Skills Program (CLASP) to all students seeking advancement to upper division courses and programs.

(3) The University System of Georgia's Regents' Testing Program, established in 1972, is designed to ensure that students receiving degrees from institutions possess "literacy competence," defined as minimum reading and writing skills. Students take the test initially during the sophomore year. Those not passing both parts of the test by the middle of their junior year are required to take remedial courses. No limits are established for the number of times a student may take remediation and retake the test.

(4) The California State University System requires that each campus develop its own means of assessing students' writing skills and mandates that each undergraduate and graduate student demonstrate writing proficiency before graduation.

(5) The Tennessee Performance Funding Program relates student assessment directly to state appropriations. A five percent supplement to the state appropriation for higher education is distributed among institutions based on their ability to achieve outstanding performance on five criteria: the percent of accreditable programs accredited, the value added to students' general education, student performance in the major, student satisfaction and plans to improve programs through institutional evaluation procedures. The

five variables are weighted and institutions are graded on a scale of 100. Funding supplements are awarded based on the percentage attainment of the maximum score. Institutions decide how to validate their performance and select the instruments to demonstrate student achievement.

Both institutional and state-wide assessment programs require expenditure of scarce resources. The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) has developed cost estimates for four types of institutional programs, including the costs of designing instruments or purchasing standardized examinations, administering tests to students, analyzing the results and coordinating the process (Ewell and Jones, 1985). NCHEMS estimates the annual cost to a small liberal arts college of a value-added assessment program at slightly more than \$29,000. This includes a standardized national examination administered to incoming freshmen and graduating seniors, a yearly consultation visit from the test design staff, an attitude survey of all freshmen and a sample of other students, and an alumni survey conducted every three years. For a major public research university of approximately 20,000 undergraduates, a program of standardized tests for graduates of about ten programs per year combined with a sample survey of college student life could cost more than \$120,000 a year.

New Jersey's Basic Skills Assessment Program costs approximately \$500,000 annually for 50,000 to 60,000 test takers, plus four staff for state level administrative support. The Florida College Level Academic Skills Test cost the state approximately \$500,000 to design and now carries annual costs estimated at \$500,000 plus state-level coordination and institutional test administration.

A comprehensive program which includes assessment for diagnostic purposes and surveys all students rather than a sample population will be significantly more costly.

Assessment Activities at Virginia's Public Colleges and Universities.

The Council staff requested Virginia's state-supported institutions of higher education to submit descriptions of their current assessment activities. Examples, based on their responses, follow.

(1) A majority of the community colleges conduct annual or semi-annual follow-up studies of program graduates to obtain information on students' perception of their college experience and their current employment status. A few institutions also conduct periodic studies of students who leave the college before completing a program, to determine their reasons for leaving and their current activities. Each college tests some students to determine their need for remediation. These tests are used for placement and advising and to assess students' readiness to take college-level programs.

(2) Lord Fairfax and Piedmont Virginia Community Colleges have conducted studies of former students' success after transferring to George Mason University and the University of Virginia respectively. The Piedmont program includes a value-added assessment to determine student progress at the community college prior to entering the university and to relate this improvement to the students' performance at the university.

(3) The University of Virginia uses published reputational surveys to determine its students' achievements and concludes from this information that the institution has national standing as one of the top ten state universities in perceived quality of undergraduate education. The information referred to includes a survey analysis of college guides and profiles and articles in periodicals and news stories reviewing reputational studies. Institutional analyses of entering freshmen indicate that about two-thirds had at least an A- grade-point average in high school, and that approximately 85 percent will attain the baccalaureate degree within six years with an average college grade of B.

Individual schools within the university compile information on job placement, salaries, and subsequent degrees earned for graduates. The university also determines the percentage of graduates applying to and accepted by medical and law schools and compares Graduate Record Examination scores of graduates with national averages for verbal, quantitative and analytical tests.

(4) Virginia Military Institute monitors each cadet to determine his progress, class standing and grades. The Alumni Association publishes a directory of graduates that describes employment, additional degrees and community interests. The Career Development Center is initiating an opinion survey of graduates on the VMI experience.

(5) Old Dominion University annually surveys the previous year's graduates to identify their employment status. The university requires a passing score on an "Exit Writing Examination" for graduation.

(6) Richard Bland College gave a random sample of graduating students the American College Testing Program College Outcomes Measures examination in 1985. Scores will be compared to another random sample of students entering as freshmen in Fall 1985, with plans to re-test this group in Spring 1987.

(7) Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University maintains detailed records of student job placements and offers an alumni placement service that permits further tracking of graduates. Various colleges within the university conduct exit interviews, maintain records of post-graduate activities, and compare VPI students' scores on standardized licensing examinations with national norms.

(8) Longwood College has, since 1981, implemented a program to assess student accomplishment of 14 goals. The goals were proposed by the president after consultation with alumni, faculty, students and literature on higher education and defined as competencies involving knowledge, skills and attitudes. They include intellectual goals such as critical thinking and an understanding and appreciation of the sciences, career goals such as effective communication and a sense of direction, social goals such as responsible citizenship, and personal goals such as leisure skills and a sense of well-being. The college provides students with "maps" to identify opportunities on campus to help achieve the goals.

Convinced by the authors of the National Institute of Education report on higher education that students should be active in the assessment process, the college adopted a student self-assessment instrument to measure progress toward each goal. The institution also provides opportunities for group discussion and individual counseling based on the results.

In addition to these institutional programs, individual departments and schools at many state-supported colleges and universities have assessment procedures more directly related to specific program goals. The School of Education at Virginia Commonwealth University, for example, requires students to demonstrate minimum reading, writing and mathematical skills before admission to student teaching. The College of Education at VPI&SU has a value-added assessment program and administers the Missouri English Test to all its undergraduates. The Philosophy Department at the College of William and Mary keeps track of graduates' careers.

Perhaps the assessment effort with the greatest potential for all of Virginia higher education has been undertaken by James Madison University. The 1985 General Assembly appropriated \$125,000 to Madison to begin a program called "Initiatives for Excellence and Accountability: A Five Year Plan." The program entails a comprehensive review of the curriculum and related activities. As a first priority, a university-wide evaluation and assessment committee is exploring means to determine student achievement. Faculty and administrative committees also are examining admissions, advising and orientation, general education, the ways in which the university challenges students, student learning outside the classroom, programs for outstanding students, departmental governance and faculty relations, and the development of common objectives for all courses. Each committee is seeking ways to assess the program of change it designs.

During 1985-86 the assessment committee is engaged in a pilot project to determine what forms of evaluation are most suitable for JMU to adopt. The university has identified four evaluation models and is testing them in four academic departments to identify their strengths and weaknesses and to propose a JMU model for further use. The models include: (1) a discrepancy evaluation which allows a faculty to set its own standards by which to measure student achievement and determine the gap between student performance and the established objectives; (2) a value-added assessment based on the

Northeastern Missouri State University program described above, which permits external comparisons between an institution and its peers and focuses on the influence of the institution on student learning; (3) the Alverno College model described above, which emphasizes diagnostic use of tests to measure student development and guide course selection and assesses student performance on problem-solving tasks; and (4) a student outcomes program based on the Tennessee Performance Funding Program, which employs standardized and locally developed tests to determine students' achievement.

The goal of the pilot project is to design a comprehensive evaluation program for the university coordinated through an office of student assessment. The institution is proposing to implement the first stage of the program in 1986-87, including entry level performance tests for incoming freshmen, perhaps focused on groups of special students such as high risk or gifted freshmen; tests of student performance in the general education program of liberal studies and for the common course objectives; exit examinations of performance in the major, including performance measures in appropriate disciplines; and assessment of student and alumni attitudes about the undergraduate experience at JMU. The university is now deciding the extent to which the assessment program will be used not only to measure student achievement but also as a diagnostic tool for counseling and advising students and as a means of program evaluation.

Recommendations for Measuring Student Achievement at Virginia's Public Colleges and Universities

Citizens of the Commonwealth, parents and students have a right to hold institutions of higher education accountable for effective teaching and learning. Institutions can benefit from more systematic knowledge of student achievement. The Council recommends against a system-wide minimum competency testing program for Virginia as the best means to measure student achievement. This approach lacks several characteristics of a good assessment program. It promotes standardization, is insensitive to important institutional differences in mission and curriculum, ignores broader educational objectives which should be assessed, threatens to establish minimums as the norm, and fails to contribute to improvement of the teaching and learning that occur in classrooms. Virginia has worked long and carefully to nurture a diverse set of colleges and universities. It is not appropriate to impose a single statewide test upon this diversity.

The Council proposes an alternative approach to measure student achievement that encompasses a wider range of educational objectives. The Council thinks this approach will preserve the diverse system of public colleges and universities in Virginia and maintain the Commonwealth's commitment to access and quality in higher education.

Assessment programs alone will not guarantee improvements in student achievement. Complementary actions are needed to strengthen education programs at all levels of formal schooling, from elementary through graduate education. The increased requirements for high school graduation recently established by the Board of Education, for example, should improve students' preparation for college. Institutions of higher education should support this change by upgrading their admission requirements, with special emphasis on the academic courses completed in high school. Attention should be focused on the elementary and middle or junior high school curricula to ensure that students will be prepared and motivated to pursue the more stringent optional academic diploma. Colleges and universities should examine the relationship between the undergraduate and graduate curricula and evaluate graduate and professional education to assess quality and identify ways to improve these programs.

The Council recognizes that assessment can be costly. As institutions establish their programs, they will have to consider ways to minimize costs, by using information already available, by employing sampling techniques, and by adopting standardized tests of achievement where feasible.

The Council recommends the following actions as the best means to measure student achievement at the Commonwealth's colleges and universities.

Recommendation 1: That the academic relationship between secondary and higher education be strengthened:

(a) By developing programs such as the Ohio Board of Regents' Early Testing Program to help high school students prepare for college and the Minnesota early admissions program to reward those who demonstrate an ability to do college-level work; and

(b) By providing reports from colleges and universities that tell the high schools how well their former students are doing in college.

Recommendation 2: That all state-supported institutions of higher education establish procedures and programs to measure student achievement. These programs should:

(a) Derive from institutional initiatives, recognizing the diversity of Virginia's public colleges and universities, the tradition of institutional autonomy, and the capacity of faculty and administrators to identify their own problems and solve them creatively;

(b) Be consistent with each institution's mission and educational objectives;

(c) Bear a direct relationship to teaching and learning in the classroom, enabling faculty to use the results to address student deficiencies, evaluate and improve the curriculum, and develop better teaching techniques;

(d) Involve faculty in setting the standards of achievement, selecting the measurement instruments and analyzing the results;

(e) Consider the relative importance of both assessment to determine student attainment as measured by an absolute standard and assessment of student growth in learning attributable to the influence of the institution;

(f) Follow student progress through the curriculum, as appropriate, with consideration of achievement measures (1) at transition points to ensure student readiness to proceed, (2) upon completion of the major, and (3) at graduation or on leaving the institution; and

(g) Include follow-up of graduates through employer surveys, studies of participation rates in further education and alumni reports of career progress.

Recommendation 3: That institutions administer tests to determine the entry-level skills of students whose past performance, as defined by high school grades or Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, indicates they might have difficulty doing college-level work; and that each institution identify a minimum threshold of achievement to qualify for college degree-credit courses.

Recommendation 4: That institutions with students whose skills fall below the threshold established for college-level work provide remedial education to maintain access while improving the quality of students' performance prior to full participation in degree credit courses. Where possible, remediation for students at four-year institutions should be arranged through agreements with community colleges. No credit toward a degree should be awarded for remedial work.

Recommendation 5: That an advisory committee to the Council of Higher Education be established to develop guidelines for designing good assessment programs, to assist the institutions on request to develop the programs, and to advise the Council on progress in this area.

Recommendation 6: That the state-supported colleges and universities submit annual reports of progress in developing their assessment programs and concrete, non-anecdotal and quantifiable information on student achievement to the Council of Higher Education. The reports should include information about the achievement of transfer students from the community colleges enrolled in four-year colleges and universities and about the performance of professional program graduates on licensing and certification examinations. The Council should publish results of the assessment programs and reports of other actions to strengthen educational quality in its biennial revisions to the Virginia Plan for Higher Education. - .! 1666 5127

Appendix 1

Text of Senate Joint Resolution 125

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 125

Requesting the State Council of Higher Education to study the quality of higher education in the Commonwealth.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 22, 1985
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 20, 1985

WHEREAS, Virginia's public institutions of higher education are a source of pride to Commonwealth and the basis for the State's continued economic and cultural growth; and

WHEREAS, Virginia has an investment in excess of \$1 billion in physical plant and over \$300 million in equipment in its institutions of higher education; and

WHEREAS, Virginia historically devotes over seventeen percent of its general funds to the biennial budget to higher education, which amounts to over \$1.3 billion in general funds in the current biennium; and

WHEREAS, continued, broad public support for Virginia's system of higher education is essential to the system's growth and well-being; and

WHEREAS, various studies of higher education have raised questions about curriculum requirements, quality of instruction, and student achievement in the nation's colleges and universities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the State Council of Higher Education conduct a study on student achievement in Virginia's public higher education system, and to investigate means by which student achievement may be measured to assure the citizens of Virginia of the continuing high quality of higher education in the Commonwealth.

In conducting its review, the Council is requested to seek advice from Virginia colleges and universities.

The Council should submit its findings and recommendations to the 1986 Session of the General Assembly.

The costs of this study, including direct and indirect costs, are estimated to be \$16,410.

Appendix 2

**Selected Bibliography of Literature on
the Assessment of Student Achievement**

Selected Bibliography of Literature on
the Assessment of Student Achievement

Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need to know and Be Able to Do. New York: The College Board, 1983.

Access to Quality Undergraduate Education: A Report to the Southern Regional Education Board by Its Commission for Educational Quality. Atlanta: Southern Regional Education Board, 1985.

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Ewell, P. T. & Jones, D. P. "The Institutional Costs of Assessment." Paper presented at the 1985 National Conference on Assessment in Higher Education, Columbia, S.C.

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Ewell, P. T. Information on Student Outcomes: How to Get It and How to Use it. Boulder, CO.: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 1983.

Harris, J. "Assessing Outcomes in Higher Education: Practical Suggestions for Getting Started." Paper presented at the 1985 National Conference on Assessment in Higher Education, Columbia, S. C.

Heywood, J. Assessment in Higher Education, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1977.

Integrity in the College Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community (Project on Redefining the Meaning and Purpose of Baccalaureate Degrees) Washington: Association of American Colleges, 1985.

Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education. Washington, D. C.: National Institute of Education, 1984.

Measuring Educational Progress in the South: Student Achievement. Atlanta: Southern Regional Education Board, 1984.

Mingle, J. R. "Measuring the Educational Achievements of Undergraduates: State and National Developments." Paper prepared for State Higher Education Executive Officers, Denver, CO., January, 1985.

Pace, C. R. Measuring Outcomes of College. San Francisco, CA.: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1979.

APPENDIX J: SJR 83

APPENDIX

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 83

Regarding the recommendations of the State Council of Higher Education regarding measurements of student achievements.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 11, 1988

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 23, 1988

WHEREAS, Senate Joint Resolution No. 125 of the 1985 Session of the General Assembly requested the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia to study the means by which student achievement may be measured to assure the citizens of Virginia the continuing high quality of higher education in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the Council study determined that all public colleges and universities should establish procedures and programs consistent with each institution's mission and educational objectives to measure student achievement; and

WHEREAS, the Council study determined that the best programs to measure student achievement are related directly to teaching and learning in the classroom, include assessments of entry-level skills of students who might have difficulty doing college work, identify a minimum threshold of achievement for students to qualify for college degree credit courses, and establish standards for student progress to higher levels of the curriculum; and

WHEREAS, the Council proposes the establishment of an advisory committee to develop guidelines for designing good assessment programs, to help the institutions develop programs, and to advise the Council based on annual reports by the institutions of concrete, quantifiable information on student achievement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly accepts the recommendations of the Council study and affirms its conviction that student achievement should be measured as a means to assure the continuing high quality of higher education in the Commonwealth; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the institutions and their boards of visitors are requested to establish assessment programs to measure student achievement; and that the Council, in cooperation with the state-supported colleges and universities, should establish guidelines for designing good assessment programs and report to the public results of institutional efforts to measure student achievement in its biennial revisions of *The Virginia Plan for Higher Education*.

APPENDIX K: GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Guidelines for Student Assessment

Senate Joint Resolution 125, passed by the 1985 Virginia General Assembly, directed the Council of Higher Education "to investigate means by which student achievement may be measured to assure the citizens of Virginia the continuing high quality of higher education in the Commonwealth." The study was presented to the 1986 General Assembly as Senate Document No. 14. In Senate Joint Resolution 83, the assembly accepted the recommendations made in the study and requested institutions of higher education in the state "to establish assessment programs to measure student achievement." It further resolved that "the Council, in cooperation with the state-supported colleges and universities, should establish guidelines for designing good assessment programs and report to the public results of institutional efforts to measure student achievement in its biennial revisions of The Virginia Plan for Higher Education."

In November 1986, a meeting was convened of representatives from colleges and universities which already were developing assessment plans. The group's task was to establish guidelines that respected both the complexity of the issue and the need to provide state-wide coherence to the assessment plans. The committee was guided in its work by the recommendations contained in Senate Document No. 14.

Guideline 1

Plans to evaluate undergraduate student outcomes should be appropriate to the mission of each institution and allow for diversity of program goals. As far as possible institutions should use multiple indicators of student achievement. These should be appropriate to the disciplines in question; the goals of the various programs; and the intellectual, performance, attitudinal, or emotional outcomes being assessed. Individual institutions may focus their reports either on absolute measures of student learning and performance or on the contribution the institution has made to the student's development ("value-added assessment").

Guideline 2

In many cases, data collected for other reasons will be suitable for assessment purposes. Some examples might be admissions information, retention and completion data, alumni follow-up studies, job placement data, information on licensing and certification examinations, accreditation reports, other assessment studies, state-wide program reviews, retention studies, and studies of community-college transfer students. Institutions may want to select appropriate nationally available instruments or create campus-based measures. In deciding which existing measures to use and in developing new ones, faculty involvement is critical.

Guideline 3

In developing or selecting assessment procedures, institutions should consider the effect the procedures will have on students and ensure that they do not take an unreasonable amount of time or cause undue hardship on individual students. Wherever appropriate or feasible, the results should be shared with individual students, with follow-up support provided when necessary.

Guideline 4

Students should be assessed at appropriate intervals during college, and data should be collected on alumni. The assessments should include student outcomes in general education and in the major. Institutions need not assess students who are only taking occasional courses. Rather than measuring the learning and performance of every student, it may be appropriate to use sampling procedures. Every program need not be measured every year, but each institution is responsible for developing a plan that will measure student outcomes in all undergraduate programs on a regular schedule.

Guideline 5

As part of the institutional description published in The Virginia Plan, each institution should identify minimal verbal and quantitative skills, below which threshold students will need remediation at that institution. It should describe how it identifies incoming high-risk students-- such as by SAT scores, high-school grades, or other indicators-- and its plans for assessing their verbal and quantitative skills. It should indicate how placement in remedial courses affects a student's admission into degree-credit work.

Guideline 6

Each institution should describe its plans for and its means of measuring the success of remediation, including, for instance, the retention, progress, and graduation rates of remediated students. Where possible, remediation for students at senior institutions should be arranged through agreements with community colleges. Credits for remedial courses should count in the student's academic load and the institution's FTE calculations but not toward degree requirements.

Guideline 7

Each year institutions of higher education in Virginia should provide progress reports on all full-time, first-year students who received high-school diplomas in Virginia during the prior year, containing information such as retention, grade-point average, and whether students are taking remedial coursework. The report should be sent to the State Council of Higher Education, which will work with the Department of Education to distribute the information to the schools or the school divisions.

Guideline 8

Similar material should be compiled by senior institutions for Virginia community-college transfer students, along with graduation information and the number of credits transferred. The data should be sent to the State Council of Higher Education, which will distribute the information to the appropriate parties.

Guideline 9

It is each institution's responsibility to evaluate its assessment procedures initially and regularly thereafter. It should ensure that those procedures meet standards within the field for scholarly integrity, are compatible with the institutional mission and program goals, and are useful for program improvement.

Guideline 10

The purpose of assessment is not to compare institutions but to improve student learning and performance. As part of its plan, therefore, each institution should have in place or develop student, faculty, and curricular development programs to address identified areas of weakness.

The plans will be described in a report on student assessment to be published in the 1987 revision to The Virginia Plan. They will therefore be due to the State Council in June, 1987. In accordance with the guidelines above, they should contain identifications or descriptions of the following:

- Assessment procedures for general education
- Assessment procedures for the majors
- Alumni follow-up studies
- The skills necessary to do college-degree-credit work at the institution
- Procedures for identifying high-risk students

- Policies regarding placement of students doing remedial work in degree-credit courses
- Plans for remediation
- Methods of assessing the success of remediation
- The timetable for implementation of the assessment plan
- Procedures for evaluating the assessment plan
- Plans for faculty, student, and curricular development programs to address identified problems or deficiencies.

By 1989, institutions will begin to report the results of their assessment procedures. The published results of the assessment should be concrete, more than anecdotal, and presented in quantified form.

April 3, 1987

APPENDIX L: SB 534

1989 SESSION

LD6072128

SENATE BILL NO. 534

Offered January 17, 1989

A BILL to amend and reenact § 23-9.6:1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to duties of Council.

Patron—Lambert

Referred to the Committee on Education and Health

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 23-9.6:1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 23-9.6:1. Duties of Council generally.—In addition to such other duties as may be prescribed elsewhere, the Council of Higher Education shall have the duty, responsibility and authority:

(a) 1. To prepare plans under which the several state-supported institutions of higher education of Virginia shall constitute a coordinating system. In developing such plans, the Council shall consider the future needs for higher education in Virginia at both the undergraduate and the graduate levels, the mission, programs, facilities and location of each of the existing institutions of higher education, in addition to such other matters as the Council deems appropriate. The Council shall revise such plans biennially in each odd-numbered year and shall submit within the time prescribed by § 2.1-394 of the Code of Virginia the plans as revised to the Governor and the General Assembly together with such recommendations as are necessary for their implementation.

(b) 2. To review and approve or disapprove any proposed change in the statement of mission of any presently existing public institution of higher education and to define the mission of all public institutions of higher education created after the effective date of this provision. The Council shall, within the time prescribed in (a) above subdivision 1 of this section, make a report to the Governor and the General Assembly with respect to its actions hereunder; provided, however, no such actions shall become effective until thirty days after adjournment of the session of the General Assembly next following the filing of such a report. Nothing contained in this provision shall be construed to authorize the Council to modify any mission statement adopted by the General Assembly, nor to empower the Council to affect, either directly or indirectly, the selection of faculty or the standards and criteria for admission of any public institution, whether related to academic standards, residence or other criteria, it being the intention of this section that faculty selection and student admission policies shall remain a function of the individual institutions.

(c) 3. To study any proposed escalation of any public institution to a degree granting level higher than that level to which it is presently restricted and to submit a report and recommendation to the Governor and the General Assembly relating to the proposal. The study shall include the need for and benefits or detriments to be derived from the escalation. No such institution shall implement any such proposed escalation until the Council's report and recommendation have been submitted to the General Assembly and the General Assembly approves the institution's proposal.

(d) 4. To review and approve or disapprove all enrollment projections proposed by each public institution of higher education. The Council's projections shall be in numerical terms by level of enrollment and shall be used for budgetary and fiscal planning purposes only. The student admissions policies for the institutions and their specific programs shall remain the sole responsibility of the individual boards of visitors.

(e) 5. To review and approve or disapprove all new academic programs which any public institution of higher education proposes. As used herein, "academic programs" include both undergraduate and graduate programs.

(f) 6. To review and require the discontinuance of any academic program which is presently offered by any public institution of higher education when the Council determines

1 that such academic program is nonproductive in terms of the number of degrees granted,
2 the number of students served by the program and budgetary considerations. As used
3 herein, "academic programs" includes both undergraduate and graduate programs. The
4 Council shall make a report to the Governor and the General Assembly with respect to the
5 discontinuance of any academic program ; ~~provided, however, no~~ . No such discontinuance
6 shall become effective until thirty days after the adjournment of the session of the General
7 Assembly next following the filing of such report.

8 ~~(g)~~ 7. To review and approve or disapprove the creation and establishment of any
9 department, school, college, branch, division or extension of any public institution of higher
10 education which such institution proposes to create and establish. This duty and
11 responsibility shall be applicable to the proposed creation and establishment of
12 departments, schools, colleges, branches, divisions and extensions whether located on or off
13 the main campus of the institution in question ; ~~provided, however, that if~~ . If any
14 organizational change is determined by the Council to be proposed solely for the purpose
15 of internal management and the institution's curricular offerings remain constant, the
16 Council shall approve the proposed change. Nothing in this provision shall be construed to
17 authorize the Council to disapprove the creation and establishment of any department,
18 school, college, branch, division or extension of any institution which has been created and
19 established by the General Assembly.

20 ~~(h)~~ 8. To develop a uniform comprehensive data information system designed to gather
21 all information necessary to the performance of the Council's duties. ~~Said~~ The system shall
22 include information on admissions, enrollments, personnel, programs, financing, space
23 inventory, facilities and such other areas as the Council deems appropriate.

24 9. *To develop in cooperation with institutions of higher education guidelines for the*
25 *assessment of student achievement. An institution shall use an approved program which*
26 *complies with the guidelines of the Council and is consistent with the institution's mission*
27 *and educational objectives in the development of such assessment. The Council shall*
28 *report the institutions' assessments of student achievement in the biennial revisions to the*
29 *state's master plan for higher education.*

30 ~~(i)~~ 10. To develop in cooperation with the appropriate state financial and accounting
31 officials and to establish uniform standards and systems of accounting, record keeping and
32 statistical reporting for the public institutions of higher education.

33 ~~(j)~~ 11. To review annually and approve or disapprove all changes in the inventory of
34 educational and general space which any public institution of higher education may propose
35 and to make a report to the Governor and the General Assembly with respect thereto ;
36 ~~provided, however, no~~ . No such change shall be made until thirty days after the
37 adjournment of the session of the General Assembly next following the filing of such
38 report.

39 ~~(k)~~ 12. To visit and study the operations of each of the public institutions of higher
40 education at such times as the Council shall deem appropriate and to conduct such other
41 studies in the field of higher education as the Council deems appropriate or as may be
42 requested by the Governor or the General Assembly.

43 ~~(l)~~ 13. To provide advisory services to private, accredited and nonprofit institutions of
44 higher education, whose primary purpose is to provide collegiate or graduate education and
45 not to provide religious training or theological education, on academic, administrative,
46 financial and space utilization matters. The Council may also review and advise on joint
47 activities, including contracts for services, between such private institutions and public
48 institutions of higher education or between such private institutions and any agency of the
49 Commonwealth or political subdivision thereof.

50 ~~(m)~~ 14. To adopt such rules and regulations as the Council believes necessary to
51 implement all of the Council's duties and responsibilities as set forth in this Code. The
52 various public institutions of higher education shall comply with such rules and regulations.

53 ~~(n)~~ 15. In carrying out its duties and responsibilities, the Council, insofar as practicable,
54 shall preserve the individuality, traditions and sense of responsibility of the respective

institutions. The Council, insofar as practicable, shall seek the assistance and advice of the respective institutions in fulfilling all of its duties and responsibilities.

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Clerk of the Senate	Clerk of the House of Delegates

VITA

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Birthdate: December 17, 1961

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to review the historical origins and chronology of the student assessment movement in the United States and to describe and analyze the development of Virginia's higher education student assessment policy within that movement. "Student assessment," the process of determining whether or not students have met educational goals set by their programs of study, institutions of higher education, or the state is a relatively new event in Virginia. Major participants involved in the passage and implementation of Virginia's policy were identified from historical documents and interviewed based on their specific areas of knowledge.

From the interviews and document analysis it was found that the historical origins for Virginia's student assessment policy were synonymous with the history of accrediting agencies. A second possible origin for student assessment was the response to periods of expansion and curriculum development that occurred from 1918-1928 and again from 1952-1983.

The recent push for student assessment was spurred in the mid-1980's by the release of several national studies on the condition of the curriculum, instruction, and student achievement in higher education in the United States. These reports caused the states to question the credibility of regional accrediting agencies as a means of ensuring educational quality. As a result, at least two-thirds of the states have instituted some form of student assessment legislation since 1984.

The state of Virginia's student assessment policy began in 1985 with the passage of Senate Joint Resolution 125 which called on the State Council for Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) to investigate means by which student achievement could be measured to assure the citizens of Virginia of the continuing high quality of higher education in the state. The study was conducted and presented to the 1986 General Assembly of Virginia as Senate Document No. 14 and was accepted in Senate Joint Resolution 83. This resolution requested the state-supported institutions of higher education to establish student assessment programs in consultation with SCHEV. In 1989, Senate Bill 534 amended The Code of Virginia giving SCHEV formal authority to oversee student assessment activities.

After completing the case study, the study was compared for fit with six models of policy formulation (elite, rational, incremental, group, systems, and institutional) as proposed by Thomas Dye in his 1972 book, Understanding Public Policy. It was found that, the systems model was the best fit of the six models. However, since vestiges of the other models existed within Virginia's student assessment policy formulation process the study proposed a revised systems model that included each of Dye's six models.