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Yearly Tuition Increases at Virginia Colleges Fall to Decade-Low
– Average increase of 4.1 percent in 2012 is less than half of 10-year average; Down from 7.9% Last Year; Tuition at Virginia Schools had Increased by 91% over Last Decade –

Drop in Tuition Increases Made Possible by \$230 Million Additional Investment in the 2012-14 Biennial Budget

RICHMOND - As students prepare to return to campus for another year, Governor McDonnell and other higher education leaders today announced that Virginia undergraduates at public colleges and universities in the Commonwealth this fall will experience the lowest tuition and mandatory fee increase in a decade. The announcement comes as the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) releases its annual report on tuition and fees at public higher education institutions. Joined by members of the General Assembly, students, representatives from the State SCHEV, college presidents and Chairman of the Governor's Commission on Higher Education Reform, Innovation, and Investment Tom Farrell, Governor McDonnell announced that the average tuition increase of 4.1 percent represents a 3.8 percent drop from last year's increase of 7.9 percent. This year's low tuition and fee increases were possible due in large part to the continued commitment of reinvestment by Governor Bob McDonnell and the 2012 General Assembly's allocation of \$230 million in additional general fund support to Virginia's public higher education institutions in the 2012-14 biennium. The Governor and General Assembly's reinvestment in higher education will help public institutions meet the goals of the 'Top Jobs' Virginia Education Opportunity Act of 2011, landmark legislation that calls for an additional 100,000 college graduates by the year 2025.

"I am incredibly pleased to see that when Virginia students go back to school this fall, they will encounter the lowest yearly tuition increases in a decade. We ran on a commitment to making college more affordable and accessible for Virginia students. Now, we are turning that policy proposal into tangible results for Virginia parents and students" said Governor McDonnell. "Too many Virginia students graduate from college with significant debt, making the high cost of a college education both a deterrent and an ongoing financial burden. This year's reduced tuition increases, however, will help make higher education more affordable and more accessible for Virginia students and their families. The new funding in the biennial budget, coupled with the dollars that will be reallocated to the programs and priorities set forth in the Top Jobs legislation put Virginia's higher education institutions on track for a strong and vibrant future. I thank the college presidents for their dedication to work to increasing access to our world-class schools in Virginia. As a father of five, I know very well how expensive college is, and the burdens it puts on families and students. We are investing in higher education again in Virginia, and that investment is reducing costs for our young people. This is real progress, and it is the result of bipartisan cooperation and commitment in addressing this critical issue."

Delegate Kirk Cox said, "The 91 percent increase in tuition and fees over the last 10 years in Virginia is unacceptable and this year, through the collaborative work of the General Assembly, college presidents and Governor McDonnell, we have seen schools significantly rein in tuition increases. As students and their parents prepare for the coming school year, this is yet another sign that Virginia remains serious about making higher education affordable and accessible for our citizens."

Senator Tommy Norment said, "When we passed the bipartisan "Top Jobs of the 21st Century" higher education legislation in 2011, we set the goal to give every student in Virginia a quality education at an affordable price. Limiting tuition increases is a central component of that significant reform, and I thank the college presidents, the governor and my colleagues in the General Assembly for putting in the work to make today's announcement possible."

Chairman of the Governor's Commission on Higher Education Reform, Innovation, and Investment Tom Farrell said, "When I joined the governor to announce the 'Top Jobs' of the 21st Century" higher education legislation last year, we laid out a clear roadmap to making the kind of reform-based investments that will build the foundation for job creation, business recruitment and economic success for the Commonwealth in years to come. While work remains to increase access to higher education for all Virginians, today's announcement of decade-low tuition increases marks a significant step in the right direction."

"The Commonwealth must continue to pursue a policy to make higher education more affordable and accessible," said Gil Bland, Chairman of SCHEV. "The average total charge for an in-state undergraduate student living on campus at a 4-year institution has grown from 32.2 percent of per capita disposable income (income available for spending and saving) in 2002 to 45 percent in 2012."

SCHEV is the Commonwealth's coordinating body for Virginia's system of higher education. The agency provides policy guidance and budget recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly, and is a resource for Virginia colleges and universities on higher education issues.

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