



## The Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Report 2020

### A History of Commitment to All Students

The Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges has a history of commitment to students who are traditionally underrepresented on most college campuses. Our commitment is evident by the concerted effort we make not only to help our schools attract and recruit these students but the way in which we facilitate their access to higher education through generous financial support.

Established in 1952, the VFIC aims to advance the distinctive values and strengths of the fifteen colleges across Virginia that make up our consortium. We accomplish this mission by generating financial support for our schools – more than \$163 million since our inception. Using these funds, we then establish and administer a range of programs that help them attract the best and brightest, create a vibrant and rigorous and affordable educational experience, prepare students for a fulfilling career, and cultivate responsible leaders for the communities they call home. This year alone, the VFIC secured close to \$3.03 million in gifts and pledges, including \$699,778 used to award 509 scholarships. VFIC donor partners made it possible to distribute 26 undergraduate student research fellowships and 18 faculty awards. All funds – 100 percent – raised for scholarships and fellowships go to support students.

The effort today among universities and various organizations to focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is not a new concern at the VFIC. One of our longstanding goals has been to make sure students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds have access to a college education at one of the fifteen schools in our consortium, which is one reason why securing need-based scholarship support for students is a key component of our mission. The purpose of this report is to highlight VFIC's commitment to supporting the efforts of the fifteen schools in our consortium to educate underrepresented students. Diversity, equity, and inclusion have always played an integral role in how we pursue our mission and embrace our responsibility to all people.

Who are underrepresented students? Minorities, members of the Hispanic population, New Americans, the economically disadvantaged, and first-generation students. According to the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia, 30 percent of VFIC students come from minority backgrounds, 29 percent receive a Pell Grant, and 27 percent come from households with incomes of \$40,000 or less. More than 23 percent of our students are the first in their families to attend college. With enrollments that range from 340 students to 3,500 students, VFIC schools provide these and other students with a broadly pragmatic liberal arts and sciences education in environments that value and encourage ethical leadership and responsible citizenship.

The VFIC has a long history of supporting DEI initiatives. In the early 1990s, we played an important role in establishing a program for visiting black faculty members through the DuPont Visiting Scholars Program. In 2005, with signature funding from Altria, we created the New Horizons Program to help VFIC schools achieve two strategic objectives. First, we helped our schools diversify their student bodies. Second, we expanded college access and opportunity to students from lower-income, rural, or minority

families, as well as first-generation students. One of the core programs in the New Horizons initiative is Partnership for the Future (PFF). A college readiness program, PFF helps minority students in Richmond prepare for and gain admission to VFIC colleges. The VFIC works to increase the enrollment of PFF graduates into our schools by providing scholarship funding. We also provide grants for our colleges to help them increase their orientation and transition activities for the targeted population. In 2015, we launched the Excelencia Campus Program. This program built on the success of our PFF campus tour program as we introduced prospective Latino students to VFIC schools.

In 2020, the VFIC was the recipient of the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships/GEAR UP Leadership Award. This award recognizes the work we do to help low-income students access and succeed in college. Why is this so important? As the Pew Research Center reports in *The Rising Cost of Not Going to College*, “On virtually every measure of economic well-being and career attainment – from personal earnings to job satisfaction to the share employed full time – young college graduates are outperforming their peers with less education.” We know that with the prospect of a college education in their future, the underrepresented students we attract, serve, and financially support can begin to envision their place in tomorrow’s workforce and prepare for a career path that offers the bright hope of personal success and economic independence.

### **VFIC Scholarships and Programs Enhance Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

At the VFIC, we act on the moral imperative that students who want to earn a college degree – students from all cultural, racial, ethnic, and financial backgrounds – should have the opportunity to do so. To that end, we are committed to providing our students with the opportunities and resources they need to succeed both in the classroom and, upon graduation, in the workforce.

#### **Opening Doors for Underrepresented Students**

The VFIC develops programs that provide students from underrepresented populations with the resources they need – academic planning, support services, financial support – to attend one of the fifteen schools in our consortium.

Our need-based scholarship programs include the following opportunities:

- **Brighter Futures Scholarship Program** – enables VFIC students with financial need to pursue their dreams of securing a college degree.
- **New Horizons Scholarship Program** – ensures that the educational opportunities available at VFIC colleges and universities are accessible and affordable for those who wish to enroll.

Over the past decade, the VFIC has awarded more than \$1.5 million in scholarships to students from underrepresented groups. In cases where students demonstrate financial need – perhaps the student receives a PELL grant – the VFIC has awarded \$19 million over the same period.

Students from underrepresented populations often are the first generation in their families to have the opportunity to attend college. The VFIC offers a program that helps make the transition from high school to college less daunting and the transition from college to work for successful:

- **Excelencia Program** – provides Hispanic students from around the Commonwealth with introductory campus tours at our member colleges. The VFIC has provided campus tours to 559 Latino students from sixteen different high schools located throughout the Commonwealth to help increase college enrollment and success.

- **Partnership for the Future** – helps break the cycle of poverty for young people by arranging college visits and workplace internships that enable students to transition successfully from high school to college and then to the workplace. VFIC schools participate in an annual college fair specifically for these students.
- **Real World Playbook** – uses comprehensive, online modules to help college students answer FAQs about subjects such as personal finance, health care, housing, taxes, and retirement planning.
- **Career Preparation for Underrepresented Students** – enhances the work of career development officers at VFIC schools by providing them with the special resources they need to help underrepresented students secure a fulfilling, lucrative job upon graduation.

### **Cultivating Leadership in Women**

The consensus of many who monitor the issue of women and leadership at the corporate level is that organizations now need to do their part by correcting the gender gap and committing themselves to a culture of diversity. They can begin to accomplish these goals through hiring and promotion. By bringing more women into their organization and narrowing the opportunity gap, they can remove obstacles in the path that leads toward manager-level positions, even the C-suite.

Our goal at the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges is to help the undergraduate women who attend our member colleges cultivate their leadership potential at the same time our schools develop their intellectual capacity and broaden their career options. One way we can encourage women to reach for the top is by routinely engaging them in conversations about leadership earlier in their lives . . . and certainly before they begin their career journey. We can also demonstrate to them the importance of mentors, the value of networking, and the need to set and work toward achieving ambitious goals.

- **Starting Now: VFIC 2019 Women’s Leadership Development Summit** – offers young women from VFIC schools the opportunity to hear from corporate and civic leaders about how to assume roles of authority in professional and personal settings.

### **Enhancing the Quality of Education**

Students who attend VFIC schools benefit from our continuous effort to develop programs and provide financial resources that enhance the quality of education at each our schools. Support from individual gifts, grant funding, and corporate philanthropy make this possible. The individuals and organizations that support us share our commitment to providing all students with a high-quality education – one that instills knowledge, develops critical thinking, and offers experiential learning activities.

- **STEM Education Initiative** – facilitates the collaborative among faculty and students in the areas of undergraduate research, community outreach and instructional methodology.
- **Undergraduate Research Fellowships and Scholarships** – enables students to gain valuable experience from direct participation in the creation, discovery, and use of new ideas and technologies.
- **Annual Fund for Academic Excellence** – supports initiatives that strengthen our colleges, such as educational programs, library acquisitions, technology improvements, and capital enhancements.
- **Ethics Bowl** (held annually since 1997) – matches student teams from each of our fifteen member colleges to address contemporary ethical dilemmas in a highly competitive event.

### **DEI Programs on VFIC Campuses**

**Working Together with Multicultural and Inclusivity Affinity Group**

In order to fully execute the DEI collaborative programs among the VFIC schools, the VFIC works closely with the multicultural & inclusivity staff throughout the year and holds an annual workshop meeting where staff come together to network with one another and to hear from a speaker on topics that relate to the multicultural and inclusivity field. Topics include “Creating an Inclusive Community on Your Campus,” “Building Resilient Organizations through Compassionate Conversations,” and “Cross Cultural Mentoring in a Multicultural World.”

Over the last decade, the VFIC has distributed more than \$169,000 in funding to the colleges to increase their multicultural and inclusivity programming. These programs have a positive impact on students and include peer mentoring, student socials, and outreach to prospective students. Based on student feedback, these programs engage a wide array of students at each school, and they offer the perfect forum for discussing ideas and opinions in ways that build relationships and strengthen unity.

The following is a sample of the programs a few of our schools developed over the past four years:

#### **2016-2017 Academic Year**

**The Ida B. Wells Gateway Program for African American Women.** Offered at Mary Baldwin University, this program provided first-year African American women with a year-long orientation program that addressed their unique transition into college. The program equipped these students with tools for college success, self-discovery, civic engagement, wellness, inclusive community, and leadership development.

#### **2017-2018 Academic Year**

**Eagle Success Program for First Generation Students.** Offered at Bridgewater College, the Eagle Success Program is an effort by the school to retain first-generation college students of color. Arriving on campus early, these students participate in programs that address academic expectations, describe campus and community resources for students, build relationships with student leaders, and explain what it means to be a Bridgewater student.

#### **2018-2019 Academic Year**

**Equity and Inclusion at Hampden-Sydney College.** Hampden-Sydney College used funding from the VFIC in several programs, most of which were inspired by the fiftieth anniversary of the school’s racial integration. Programs focused on building and maintaining diverse communities, establishing a film series in honor of Black History Month, and funding activities for the LGBTQ+ students.

#### **2019-2020 Academic Year**

**Career and Professional Development for Latinx Students.** Offered at Washington & Lee University, this program sponsored six Latinx students to attend the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute’s Leadership Conference (September 10-11, 2019) in Washington, DC.

### **Student Data Reflects the VFIC’s Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Data on students who attend VFIC schools reflect the diverse population of our schools – racially, culturally, and financially – and reveal that, over the past decade, our schools have increasingly attracted students from underrepresented backgrounds to our campuses.

The VFIC’s fifteen member schools currently educate more than 28,000 students. Of those, 22,000 are undergraduates. The following information offers a profile of students who attend the fifteen schools in

our consortium. The most recent data reported by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) come from the 2018-2019 academic year.

#### **Students of Color Enrolled at VFIC Schools (2018-2019)**

- 28% of students at VFIC schools are students of color
- 22% of 2018-2019 VFIC school graduates were students of color
- 11% of students in 2018-2019 were black, an increase of 38% from 2009-2010
- 8% of students in 2018-2019 were Hispanic, an increase of 118% from 2009-2010

At Virginia private colleges, 17% of students are black. At Virginia's 4-year public colleges, 15% are black. Over the past 10 years, Virginia private colleges have seen a 44% increase in enrolled students of color while Virginia's public colleges have seen a 29% increase. (Council of Independent Colleges in Virginia – CICV).

#### **Students from Underrepresented Groups**

Underrepresented groups include minorities, members of the Hispanic population, New Americans, the economically disadvantaged, and first-generation students.

- 43% in 2009-2010
- 48% in 2018-2019

69% of students at Virginia private colleges come from underrepresented groups. At 4-year public colleges, 55% come from these groups. (CICV)

#### **Financial Need of Students**

"Students with need" includes degree-seeking undergraduate students who completed the FAFSA and were eligible for federal and/or state need-based aid.

- 43% of students were considered "Students with Need" in 2018-2019

#### **Students with Pell Grants**

Federal Pell Grants usually are awarded only to undergraduate students who display exceptional financial need and have not earned a bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree.

- 24% in 2009-2010
- 29% in 2018-2019

48% of students attending Virginia private colleges receive the federal Pell grant for low-income students. At Virginia 4-year public institutions, 27% receive the Pell grant. (CICV)

#### **STEM-H Graduates – All Students**

STEM-H graduates are students who major in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and health.

- 19% of graduates in 2009-2010
- 29% of graduates in 2018-2019

While this statistic on STEM-H graduates reflects a trend among the larger student body, the emphasis on STEM-H education at VFIC schools indicates that they are intensifying efforts to attract people into various fields of science and prepare them for highly marketable careers.

### **Partnerships Reinforce the Impact of the VFIC's DEI Initiatives**

The VFIC partners with various organizations to achieve its DEI initiatives, including the following:

#### **GEAR UP Virginia (Located in Richmond)**

The mission of GEAR UP Virginia (GUV) mission is to increase student college enrollment and success and to transform the lives of low-income families and their communities. The goals of GUV are to increase the academic performance and college preparation of GUV students, increase the number of students in rigorous courses, increase knowledge of college and financial aid among students and their families, improve college readiness rates, and increase college enrollment rates.

#### **Partnership for the Future (Located in Richmond)**

Partnership for the Future (PFF) is a community-driven college preparation and workforce development program dedicated to breaking the cycle of poverty for young people by providing training and educational opportunities that will fuel their future success. PFF works with high-potential high school students from challenging circumstances in the Richmond metro area and equip them with tools and knowledge that will sustain them through both college and their careers.

#### **Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (Located in Richmond, Tysons)**

The mission of the Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce is to build economic bridges between Hispanic businesses and the community at large in order to create, promote, and enhance business opportunities for its members and partners. The chamber plays a role in over 150 events throughout the year created to promote growth, visibility, and credibility for our members and Hispanic businesses. From training courses to job fairs, the chamber provides everything necessary for Hispanic individuals, from preparing them to enter the workforce, to submitting government bids and contracts.

#### **Virginia Latino Higher Education Network**

The mission of the Virginia Latino Higher Education Network is to empower Latinx students in the Commonwealth of Virginia with the tools to succeed in high school, college, and beyond. The organization works to improve access and retention for Latino students, to increase the numbers of Latino faculty and staff, and to create campus climates which are nurturing and culturally sensitive.

#### **State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (Located in Richmond)**

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) is the Commonwealth's coordinating body for higher education. The mission of the SCHEV is to advocate and promote the development and operation of an educationally and economically sound, vigorous, progressive, and coordinated system of higher education in the Commonwealth of Virginia and to lead state-level strategic planning and policy development and implementation based on research and analysis. The SCHEV also seeks to facilitate collaboration among institutions of higher education that will enhance quality and create operational efficiencies. It also works with institutions of higher education and their boards on board development.

#### **The Council of Independent Colleges (Located in Washington, DC)**

The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) is an association of nonprofit independent colleges and universities that has worked since 1956 to support college and university leadership, advance institutional excellence, and enhance public understanding of private higher education's contributions to society. CIC is the major national organization that focuses on providing services to leaders of independent colleges and universities as well as conferences, seminars, and other programs that help institutions to improve the quality of education, administrative and financial performance, and institutional visibility. CIC also provides support to state fundraising associations that organize programs and generate contributions for private colleges and universities.

## Sources

Could put sources of information listed below here. Not all the text.

## Data Points

### NCES and U.S. Department of Education

- Enrollment data at U.S. Colleges <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2019/2019038.pdf>.
  - Chapter 5 is information on postsecondary education. There are also highlights on page vi-vii in the beginning of the publication.
  - In 2016, the total college enrollment rate was higher for Asian young adults (58 percent) than for young adults who were of two or more races (42 percent), White (42 percent), Hispanic (39 percent), Black (36 percent), Pacific Islander (21 percent), and American Indian/Alaska Native (19 percent). From 2000 to 2016, total college enrollment rates increased for White (from 39 to 42 percent), Black (from 31 to 36 percent), and Hispanic young adults (from 22 to 39 percent) but were not measurably different for the other racial/ethnic groups during this time period.
  - Among full-time, full-year undergraduate students, 88 percent of Black students, 87 percent of American Indian/Alaska Native students, and 82 percent of Hispanic students received grants in 2015–16. These percentages were higher than the percentages for White (74 percent) and Asian (66 percent) students. Among full-time, full-year undergraduate students, a higher percentage of Black students (71 percent) received loans in 2015–16 than students who were White (56 percent), of two or more races (54 percent), Pacific Islander (53 percent), Hispanic (50 percent), American Indian/Alaska Native (38 percent), and Asian (31 percent).
  - The 6-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time undergraduate students who began their pursuit of a bachelor's degree at a 4-year degree-granting institution in fall 2010 was highest for Asian students (74 percent), followed by White students (64 percent), students of Two or more races (60 percent), Hispanic students (54 percent), Pacific Islander students (51 percent), Black students (40 percent), and American Indian/Alaska Native students (39 percent).
  - Overall, a higher percentage of bachelor's degrees were awarded to females than to males in 2015–16 (58 vs. 42 percent). However, in STEM fields, a lower percentage of bachelor's degrees were awarded to females than to males (36 vs. 64 percent). This

pattern—in which females received higher percentages of bachelor’s degrees overall but lower percentages of bachelor’s degrees in STEM fields—was observed across all racial/ethnic groups.

- NCES Table 302.60. Percentage of 18-24-year olds enrolled in college, by level of institution and sex and race and ethnicity of student 1970-2018:  
[https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d19/tables/dt19\\_302.60.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d19/tables/dt19_302.60.asp)
- NCES Bachelor’s degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity and sex of student: selected years, 1976-77 through 2016-2017:  
[https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d18/tables/dt18\\_322.20.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d18/tables/dt18_322.20.asp)
- NCES Race/ethnicity of college faculty: <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=61>
- NCES Table 202.20. Percentage of recent high school completers enrolled in college, by race/ethnicity: 1960 through 2016:  
[https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17\\_302.20.asp?referer=raceindicators](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_302.20.asp?referer=raceindicators)
- U.S. Dept. of Education Advancing Diversity & Inclusion in Higher Education (November 2016):  
<https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/advancing-diversity-inclusion.pdf>