2022 Session

Budget Bill - HB29 (Introduced)

Item 4-9.02

§ 4-9.02 LEVEL II AUTHORITY

a. Notwithstanding the provisions of § 5 of Chapter 824 and 829 of the 2008 Acts of Assembly, institutions of higher education that have met the eligibility criteria for additional operational and administrative authority set forth in Chapters 824 and 829 of the 2008 Acts of Assembly shall be allowed to enter into separate negotiations for additional operational authority for a third and separate functional area listed in Chapter 824 and 829 of the 2008 Acts of Assembly, provided they have:

1. successfully completed at least three years of effectiveness and efficiencies operating under such additional authority granted by an original memorandum of understanding;

2. successfully renewed an additional memoranda of understanding for a five year term for each of the original two areas.

The institutions shall meet all criteria and follow policies for negotiating and establishing a memorandum of understanding with the Commonwealth of Virginia as provided in § 2.0 (Information Technology), § 3.0 (Procurement), and § 4.0 (Capital Outlay) of Chapter 824 and 829 of the 2008 Acts of Assembly.

b. As part of the memorandum of understanding, each institution shall be required to adopt at least one new education-related measure for the new area of operational authority. Each education-related measure and its respective target shall be developed in consultation with the Secretary of Finance, Secretary of Education, the appropriate Cabinet Secretary, and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. Each education-related measure and its respective target must be approved by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. The development and administration of education-related measures described in paragraph b. and in § 23.1-1003 A.3. are suspended through 2020-2022.

c. 1. As part of a five-year pilot program, George Mason University is authorized, for a period of five years, to exercise additional financial and administrative authority as set out in each of the three functional areas of information technology, procurement and capital projects as set forth and subject to all the conditions in §§ 2.0, 3.0 and 4.0 of the second enactment of Chapter 824 and 829 of the Acts of Assembly of 2008 except that (i) any effective dates contained in Chapter 824 and 829 of the Acts of Assembly of 2008 are superseded by the provisions of this item, and (ii) the institution is not required to have a signed memorandum of understanding with the Secretary of Administration regarding participation in the nongeneral fund decentralization program as provided in subsection C of § 2.2-1132 in order to be eligible for the additional capital project authority.

2. In addition, the institution shall exercise additional financial and administrative authority over financial operations as follows:

a). BOARD OF VISITORS ACCOUNTABILITY AND DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY.

The Board of Visitors of the University shall at all times be fully and ultimately accountable for the proper fulfillment of the duties and responsibilities set forth in, and for the appropriate implementation of, this Policy. Consistent with this full and ultimate accountability, however, the Board may, pursuant to its legally permissible procedures, specifically delegate either herein or by separate Board resolution the duties and responsibilities set forth in this Policy to a person or persons within the University, who, while continuing to be fully accountable for such duties and responsibilities, may further delegate the implementation of those duties and responsibilities pursuant to the University's usual delegation policies and procedures.

b) FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING SYSTEM.

The President, acting through the Executive Vice President, Chief Operating Officer, or Chief Financial Officer, shall continue to be authorized by the Board to maintain existing and implement new policies governing the management of University financial resources. These policies shall continue to (i) ensure compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, (ii) ensure consistency with the current accounting principles employed by the Commonwealth, including the use of fund accounting principles, with regard to the establishment of the underlying accounting records of the University and the allocation and utilization of resources within the accounting system, including the relevant guidance provided by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia chart of accounts with regard to the allocation and proper use of funds from specific types of fund sources, (iii) provide adequate risk management and internal controls to protect and safeguard all financial resources, including moneys transferred to the University pursuant to a general fund appropriation, and ensure compliance with the requirements of the Appropriation Act.

The financial management system shall continue to include a financial reporting system to satisfy both the requirements for inclusion into the Commonwealth's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, as specified in the related State Comptroller's Directives, and the University's separately audited financial statements. To ensure observance of limitations and restrictions placed on the use of the resources available to the University, the accounting and bookkeeping system of the University shall continue to be maintained in accordance with the principles prescribed for governmental organizations by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board.

In addition, the financial management system shall continue to provide financial reporting for the President, acting through the Executive Vice President, Chief Operating Officer, or Chief Financial Officer, and the Board of Visitors to enable them to provide adequate oversight of the financial operations of the University.

c) FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES.

The President, acting through the Executive Vice President, Chief Operating Officer, or Chief Financial Officer, shall create and implement any and all financial management policies necessary to establish a financial management system with adequate risk management and internal control processes and procedures for the effective protection and management of all University financial resources. Such policies will not address the underlying accounting principles and policies employed by the Commonwealth and the University, but rather will focus on the internal operations of the University's financial management. These policies shall include, but need not be limited to, the development of a tailored set of finance and accounting practices that seek to support the University's specific business and administrative operating environment in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its business and administrative functions. In general, the system of independent financial management policies shall be guided by the general principles contained in the Commonwealth's Accounting Policies and Procedures such as establishing strong risk management and internal accounting controls to ensure University financial resources are properly safeguarded and that appropriate stewardship of public funds is obtained through management's oversight of the effective and efficient use of such funds in the performance of University programs.

The University shall continue to follow the Commonwealth's accounting policies until such time as specific alternate policies can be developed, approved and implemented. Such alternate policies shall include applicable

accountability measures and shall be submitted to the State Comptroller for review and comment before they are implemented by the University.

d) FINANCIAL RESOURCE RETENTION AND MANAGEMENT.

The Board of Visitors shall retain the authority to establish tuition, fee, room, board, and other charges, with appropriate commitment provided to need-based grant aid for middle- and lower-income undergraduate Virginians. Except as provided otherwise in the Appropriation Act, it is the intent of the Commonwealth and the University that the University shall be exempt from the revenue restrictions in the general provisions of the Appropriation Act related to non-general funds. In addition, unless prohibited by the Appropriation Act, it is the intent of the Commonwealth and the University that the University shall be entitled to retain non-general fund savings generated from changes in Commonwealth rates and charges, including but not limited to health, life, and disability insurance rates, retirement contribution rates, telecommunications charges, and utility rates, rather than reverting such savings back to the Commonwealth. This financial resource policy assists the University by providing the framework for retaining and managing non-general funds, for the receipt of general funds, and for the use and stewardship of all these funds.

The President, acting through the Executive Vice President, Chief Operating Officer, or Chief Financial Officer, shall continue to provide oversight of the University's cash management system which is the framework for the retention of non-general funds. The Internal Audit Department of the University shall periodically audit the University's cash management system in accordance with appropriate risk assessment models and make reports to the Audit and Compliance Committee of the Board of Visitors. Additional oversight shall continue to be provided through the annual audit and assessment of internal controls performed by the Auditor of Public Accounts. For the receipt of general and non-general funds, the University shall conform to the Security for Public Deposits Act, Chapter 44 (§ 2.2-4400 et seq.) of Title 2.2 of the Code of Virginia as it currently exists and from time to time may be amended.

e) ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE MANAGEMENT AND COLLECTION.

The President, through the Executive Vice President, Chief Operating Officer, or Chief Financial Officer, shall continue to be authorized to create and implement any and all Accounts Receivable Management and Collection policies as part of a system for the management of University financial resources. The policies shall be guided by the requirements of the Virginia Debt Collection Act, Chapter 48 (§ 2.2-4800 et seq.) of the Code of Virginia, such that the University shall take all appropriate and cost effective actions to aggressively collect accounts receivable in a timely manner.

These shall include, but not be limited to, establishing the criteria for granting credit to University customers; establishing the nature and timing of collection procedures within the above general principles; and the independent authority to select and contract with collection agencies and, after consultation with the Office of the Attorney General, private attorneys as needed to perform any and all collection activities for all University accounts receivable such as reporting delinquent accounts to credit bureaus, obtaining judgments, garnishments, and liens against such debtors, and other actions. In accordance with sound collection activities, the University shall continue to utilize the Commonwealth's Debt Set-Off Collection Programs, shall develop procedures acceptable to the Tax Commissioner and the State Comptroller to implement such Programs, and shall provide a quarterly summary report of receivables to the Department of Accounts in accordance with the reporting procedures established pursuant to the Virginia Debt Collection Act.

f) DISBURSEMENT MANAGEMENT.

The President, acting through the Executive Vice President, Chief Operating Officer, or Chief Financial Officer, shall continue to be authorized to create and implement any and all disbursement policies as part of a system for the management of University financial resources. The disbursement management policies shall continue to define

the appropriate and reasonable uses of all funds, from whatever source derived, in the execution of the University's operations. These policies also shall continue to address the timing of appropriate and reasonable disbursements consistent with the Prompt Payment Act, and the appropriateness of certain goods or services relative to the University's mission, including travel-related disbursements. Further, the University's disbursement policy shall continue to provide for the mechanisms by which payments are made including the use of charge cards, warrants, and electronic payments.

These disbursement policies shall authorize the President, acting through the Executive Vice President, Chief Operating Officer, or Chief Financial Officer, to independently select, engage, and contract for such consultants, accountants, and financial experts, and other such providers of expert advice and consultation, and, after consultation with the Office of the Attorney General, private attorneys, as may be necessary or desirable in his or her discretion. The policies also shall continue to include the ability to locally manage and administer the Commonwealth's credit card and cost recovery programs related to disbursements, subject to any restrictions contained in the Commonwealth's contracts governing those programs, provided that the University shall submit the credit card and cost recovery aspects of its financial and operations policies to the State Comptroller for review and comment prior to implementing those aspects of those policies. The disbursement policies shall ensure that adequate risk management and internal control procedures shall be maintained over previously decentralized processes for public records, payroll, and non-payroll disbursements. The University shall continue to provide summary quarterly prompt payment reports to the Department of Accounts in accordance with the reporting procedures established pursuant to the Prompt Payment Act.

The University's disbursement policies shall be guided by the principles of the Commonwealth's policies as included in the Commonwealth's Accounting Policy and Procedures Manual. The University shall continue to follow the Commonwealth's disbursement policies until such time as specific alternative policies can be developed, approved and implemented. Such alternate policies shall be submitted to the State Comptroller for review and comment prior to their implementation by the University.

3. The Auditor of Public Accounts or his legally authorized representatives shall audit annually the accounts of each institution and shall distribute copies of each annual audit to the Governor and to the Chairmen of the House Committee on Appropriations and the Senate Committee on Finance. Pursuant to § 30-133, the Auditor of Public Accounts and his legally authorized representatives shall examine annually the accounts and books of each such institution, but the institution shall not be deemed to be a state or governmental agency, advisory agency, public body, or agency or instrumentality for purposes of Chapter 14 (§ 30-130 et seq.) of Title 30 except for those provisions in such chapter that relate to requirements for financial recordkeeping and bookkeeping. Each such institution shall be subject to periodic external review by the Joint Legislative and Audit Review Commission and such other reviews and audits as shall be required by law.

d. Subject to review of its Shared Services Center by the Department of General Services, and approval to proceed with decentralized procurement of authority by the Department of General Services, the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) is authorized, for a period of five years, to exercise additional financial and administrative authority as set out in each of the three functional areas of information technology, procurement and capital projects as set forth and subject to all the conditions in §§ 2.0, 3.0 and 4.0 of the second enactment of Chapter 824 and 829 of the Acts of Assembly of 2008 except that (i) any effective dates contained in Chapter 824 and 829 of the Acts of Assembly of 2008 are superseded by the provisions of this item. The State Board for Community Colleges may request any subsequent delegation of procurement authority after consultation with and positive recommendation by the Department of General Services.

e. Notwithstanding the small purchase thresholds set forth in the Rules Governing Procurement for institutions of higher education that have operational authority in the area of procurement, the small purchases thresholds shall be the same thresholds set forth in the Virginia Public Procurement Act (§ 2.2- 4300 et seq). Where small purchase thresholds in the Rules Governing Procurement for such institutions exceed those in 2.2-4300 et seq, the Rules Governing Procurement shall be the authorized procurement threshold.