

1.0 ISSUES

- ! Last year Virginia established objective funding targets for higher education for the first time in over a decade. The General Assembly's Joint Subcommittee on Higher Education Funding Policies has established guidelines for all E&G funding categories – including, this year, operation and maintenance of plant. Were the joint subcommittee's recommendations to be fully funded, JMU's operating budget would increase by a minimum of \$26.4 million and it would jump from last place in total E&G funding per student within its peer group to 18th place out of 25 institutions which report comparable financial data. This level of additional funding would, however, still leave the university considerably below its peer group average.
- ! JMU continues to lag behind most other Virginia comprehensive institutions in appropriations per student. Our general fund appropriation is \$438 per in-state student per year less than the state average for comprehensive colleges and universities X an improvement from being \$648 less than the average in 1996-97. In order for JMU to be funded at the average, our general fund appropriation would need to be increased by \$4.3 million.
- ! JMU now ranks fifth among Virginia comprehensive colleges and universities in total per student E&G appropriation – general fund, tuition and E&G fees. The university's 2001-02 E&G appropriation is \$844 per FTES below the state average for comprehensive institutions. JMU would require an additional \$12.8 million in total E&G funds to reach the average.
- ! Compared to its 24-school national peer group, JMU ranks last in total E&G funding per FTE student. JMU would need an additional \$2,526 per student – or \$35.9 million for the institution – to reach its peer group median.
- ! The university continues to be a financially effective institution. On the most commonly used indicator of financial effectiveness (percent of operating expenditures devoted to instruction and academic support), JMU ranks number one among its peer group and the state comprehensive institutions. JMU also spends less on administration per student than any other Virginia public college or university and is the lowest of 20 institutions reporting comparable data in its national peer group on percent of E&G budget expended on institutional support. These data indicate that JMU focuses its financial resources on its primary mission of instruction.
- ! Virginia remains X in spite of its absolute dollar increase in general fund support to higher education for 1995-96 to 2001-02 X a high tuition and fee state. The Commonwealth ranks twelfth highest out of 50 states and the third highest in the southern region for in-state undergraduates. Virginia also remains low in general fund support for higher education. Regionally, the Commonwealth ranks 11th out of 15 southern states on this important indicator.
- ! An education at a state public college or university became more affordable for the average Virginian. For the seventh time since 1980-81, the average annual state tuition and fee cost as a percent of Virginia per capita income was reduced. From a high of 39.8% of per capita disposable income in 1994-95, the comparable number dropped to 33.2% in 2001-02.