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GROUP OF STUDENT LEADER WILL WORK FOR CHANGES

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A group of student leaders representing seven state universities met Saturday at William and Mary to found the Virginia Student Coalition, designed to serve as an advocacy, education and lobbying group for students in higher education.

"We want to break out of the mold of Generation X," said Martin Haley, representing George Mason University. "We are about empowering students."

The group, which will meet again today, will work for public policy favorable to universities throughout the state and lobby for issues that concern students.

"We hope to continue expanding to include private universities and perhaps even high school seniors," Heather Mullins, student president of Mary Washington College, said.

All members of the coalition acknowledged the main concern is not educating policy makers, but instead educating the public and advocating change.

"Our problems (with legislators in Richmond) aren't ones of ignorance, but influence," said Matt McGuire, liaison director for the William and Mary student government.

College of William and Mary President Timothy Sullivan spoke highly of the group and its possibilities.

"You have a chance to be more effective than all the presidents of your universities," he told the group. "University presidents seem to me to be more united now than in the past. . . . You can count on my help."

Coalition members said they plan to address the problems of higher education and funding from several angles, first by working with students, their parents, and local business and community leaders. The group has already put together support from CSX Corporation, the Richmond-based Ukrops supermarket chain, the Sony Corporation, Canon and NASA.

"(The coalition) need not simply be students," said **Greg Werkheiser**, student president from William and Mary. "We should attempt to empower all groups interested in the continued excellence of Virginia's higher education system."

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The group included representatives from William and Mary, Mary Washington, George Mason, Longwood College, the University of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University and Virginia Tech.

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