

**STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA**

**EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT**

**AT CHARLESTON**

**EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 16-18**

**By the Governor**

**WHEREAS**, post-secondary education is vital to the future of West Virginia; and

**WHEREAS**, for the State to realize its potential, post-secondary education must be competitive in the changing national and global environment, is affordable for the state and its citizenry, and have the capacity to deliver the programs and services necessary to meet regional and statewide needs; and

**WHEREAS**, in recent years, the State has reduced the amount of funding provided to post-secondary education; and

**WHEREAS**, as the United States strives to rebound from the national economic downturn, ensuring that institutions of higher education have the flexibility, funding, and authority to make decisions at the local level that will best position post-secondary education in the State to enrich this State's economic well-being by providing critically needed workforce participants and leadership across the State; and

**WHEREAS**, the State's four-year institutions of higher education provide vital services to the State in not only educating the leaders and workers of tomorrow but also in serving as vibrant and fundamental centers of economic activity for communities across the State of West Virginia and it is vital that the State take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure that these institutions remain viable and thrive;

**WHEREAS**, in recent years, the Legislature has taken meaningful steps to reduce centralized bureaucracies and eliminate unnecessary, outdated, and inefficient policies and practices that have stifled innovation, added unnecessary costs, and previously led to a patchwork and inconsistent set of governance rules for four-year institutions that has been counter-productive

to four-year degree granting institutions in this state; and

**WHEREAS**, there remains additional work to be done to improve four-year higher education in this State;

**WHEREAS**, the staff of the Higher Education Policy Commission has proposed a funding formula for four-year institutions of higher education;

**WHEREAS**, before any funding formula may be adopted in West Virginia, it is imperative that the State of West Virginia analyze the overall structure of four-year institutions of higher education; and

**WHEREAS**, the efficient and effective delivery of post-secondary education in communities across West Virginia is of paramount concern to Governor Jim Justice.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, JIM JUSTICE**, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of West Virginia, do hereby **ORDER** that:

1. The Blue Ribbon Commission on Four-Year Higher Education (the “Commission”) is hereby constituted.

2. The Commission shall consist of the individuals identified in this Executive Order, who shall serve at the will and pleasure of the Governor. The members of the Commission may only designate individuals to serve in their place with the express written consent of the Governor.

3. Members of the Commission shall be individuals who have education, experience, and particular knowledge regarding the workforce and economic diversification of West Virginia, and the value of a high, performing proactive system of higher education, as follows:

- (a) Presidents of West Virginia University, Marshall University, and Concord University, who shall serve as Co-Chairs;
- (b) Two (2) representatives of the Higher Education Policy Commission;
- (c) West Virginia Superintendent of Schools;
- (d) Three (3) members of the Senate, two (2) being of the Republican party and (1) being of the Democratic party, as

designated by the Senate President, who shall serve as ex-officio non-voting members;

- (e) Three (3) members of the House of Delegates, two (2) being of the Republican party and (1) being of the Democratic party, as designated by the Speaker of the House of Delegates, who shall serve as ex-officio non-voting members;
- (f) Two (2) presidents of institutions of higher education in the State;
- (g) One (1) representative of the interest of workers in the State;
- (h) Two (2) representatives of the business community;
- (i) Three (3) individuals having knowledge and expertise in state government, higher education, workforce development, and economic diversification.

4. The Commission shall review, study and assess the current state of four-year higher education in the State, including but not limited to:

- (a) The adequacy of current funding levels for four-year institutions of higher education;
- (b) The current governance structure relating to four-year institutions of higher education;
- (c) The role and value of the Higher Education Policy Commission;
- (d) The identification of bureaucratic inefficiencies that cause a negative impact;
- (e) Measures to be taken to facilitate the long-term viability of higher education delivery in communities across the State; and
- (f) Anything else the Commission deems necessary to provide a thorough evaluation in preparation of its report.

5. The Commission shall also elicit input from the students, faculty, staff, and Presidents of the public and private four-year institutions in the State of West Virginia; the State Board of Education, the West Virginia Community and Technical College System, the West Virginia Association of School Administrators, the West Virginia Education Alliance, and business trade organizations in the State of West

Virginia.

6. The Commission may establish subcommittees as it deems necessary and convenient to carry out the requirements of this Executive Order.

7. The Commission shall provide a report of the findings and recommendations of the Commission for the long-term financial viability of four-year institutions of higher education in the State of West Virginia.

8. The Commission shall hold its organizational meeting on or before August 1.

9. The Commission shall prepare and issue a final report prior to the December 2018 interim meetings of the West Virginia Legislature, advising of its findings and recommendations. Upon completion of the Commission's duties and the submission of its final report, it shall be abolished.

10. The Report of the Commission's findings and recommendation shall be submitted to the Governor and the Joint Committee on Government and Finance. Staff support and facilitation for the Commission shall be provided by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of West Virginia to be affixed.



**By the Governor**

**DONE** at the Capitol, in the City of Charleston, State of West Virginia, this the twenty-sixth day of June, in the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Eighteen, and in the One Hundred Fifty-Sixth year of the State.

  
**GOVERNOR**

  
**SECRETARY OF STATE**