

JOINT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

House Chamber
September 19, 2016

- **Agency Responses (January 5, 2016 and August 2, 2016)**

Performance Evaluation and Research Division's Agency Review of the Higher Education Policy Commission and the Council for Community and Technical College Education

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Dr. Paul Hill, Chancellor and Dr. Sarah Tucker, Chancellor



West Virginia
Higher Education
Policy Commission



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Policy Commission



Report to the Joint Committee on Education

September 19, 2016

**January 5, 2016
Agency Response**

**Performance Evaluation and Research Division's Agency Review
Higher Education Policy Commission and the Council for Community
and Technical College Education**



West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
West Virginia Community and Technical College System



Bruce L. Berry, M.D.
Chair

Paul L. Hill, Ph.D.
Chancellor

1018 Kanawha Boulevard, East, Suite 700
Charleston, West Virginia 25301
(304) 558-2101

www.hepc.wvnet.edu
www.wvctcs.org

Clarence "Butch" Pennington
Chair

Sarah Armstrong Tucker, Ph.D.
Chancellor

January 5, 2016

Mr. Aaron Allred
Legislative Manager, Legislative Auditor
West Virginia Legislature
Building 1, Room E-132
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Dear Mr. Allred:

This letter is in response to your December 22, 2015 inquiry regarding the legislative authority and statutory functions of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (Commission) and West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education (Council).

You will find, upon earnest review, that with a shared staff of only 46 employees funded by state general revenue, and a modest state operating budget of \$2.8 million, we provide essential services to the State of West Virginia that fulfill not only our statutory functions, but also create tremendous opportunities for West Virginians to achieve a college education.

There may exist public misconceptions that our agencies receive a total annual state appropriation of \$352 million. That figure is extremely misleading. It is critical to understand that the vast majority of these funds are appropriated directly to public institutions – and that **the following wide-ranging work, and much more, is achieved on an annual state operating budget of \$2.8 million for the Commission and Council combined:**

- We generate tens of millions in federal and private dollars to our state in line with the overall mission of ensuring higher education opportunities to more West Virginians –much of which goes directly to provide student services and workforce development that would cease to exist without our centralized higher education offices.
- We help West Virginians access, afford and complete postsecondary education through the administration of student financial aid programs; hundreds of annual statewide outreach initiatives that help students and their families understand and reach the opportunities available to them; and, statewide degree completion programs.
- We work directly with business and industry to ensure that we meet the workforce needs of West Virginia, helping to grow its economy.

- We act within our limited statutory authority to provide consumer-driven oversight that ensures the accountability and efficiency of West Virginia’s publicly-entrusted and supported postsecondary education systems.
- We provide shared services that result in proven efficiencies for our institutions that they count on, especially during current challenging state budget times.

During the last six months, we have promptly provided you with thousands of pages of documents in response to our scheduled performance review. However, we believe these inquiries and the corresponding requested documents fall short of effectively illustrating the remarkable number of services the Commission and Council provide.

Generally, the Legislature has given the Commission and Council, in West Virginia Code §18B-1B-4 and §18B-2B-6, the primary responsibility “to develop, oversee and advance the public policy agenda” in a broad visionary role for state higher education. Since the inception of the Commission and the Council in 2000 and 2004, respectively, the Legislature has enacted an extensive series of laws that charge our agencies to educate West Virginia’s citizenry, provide the state with a skilled workforce, and ensure our colleges and universities are good stewards of the state’s appropriations and students’ tuition dollars. Despite the limited authority provided to our coordinating boards to carry out these duties, we are effectively meeting and dutifully exceeding the requirements of those laws.

We do this through a variety of services that ultimately serve a primary purpose: Help more West Virginians go to college, complete their degrees and meet our state’s workforce needs. **Our record number of degrees awarded last year – more than 18,000 – is a testament to our success, and it is an answer to findings of national studies that have predicted more than half of all jobs in West Virginia will require an associate’s degree or higher by 2020.** Beyond that, and in an effort to build on our record degree production, our agencies recently adopted a joint statewide goal to “Double the Degrees” produced annually in our state to 40,000 by the year 2025.

As designated by the Legislature, the functions and services of our agencies are multifaceted. We hope the following highlights and breakdown of shared services effectively demonstrate the extensive duties we perform as coordinating boards and centralized higher education staff to guide more West Virginians to an education that will set them on the path to a bright future, while giving confidence to West Virginia taxpayers that public investments in higher education are responsibly and wisely employed.

HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR WORK

Federal Grants: Generating Outside Dollars that Far Exceed our State Appropriations

{West Virginia Code §18B-4-4} We are especially proud of the outstanding external grant funding our staff has secured over the last several years, which exceeds state appropriations many times over. **In fact, nearly one-third of our employees and their fringe benefits are supported solely by external grants, bolstering our ability to fulfill the Legislature’s plan for higher education.** These dollars represent a partnership between the state and federal agencies that are dependent on commitments to target and improve education systems beyond the status quo, recognizing our small base staff.

Over the past seven years, the Commission and Council have generated more than \$125 million in federal grants. Currently, we are administering \$80 million in grants we have secured, including:

- \$21 million U.S. Department of Education Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) grant (awarded in 2014);
- \$25 million U.S. Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant (awarded in 2013);
- \$20 million National Science Foundation grant to West Virginia’s Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) (awarded in 2015);
- \$9 million U.S. Department of Education College Access Challenge Grant (awarded in 2009); and,
- \$5.25 million U.S. Department of Labor Emergency Grant (awarded in 2015 in conjunction with WorkForce West Virginia).

{{§§18B-1D-3 and 18B-1D-4}} Combined, these grant dollars help students in high-need regions of the state prepare for college, providing statewide college access and readiness services, preparing students for the in-demand occupations of today and tomorrow, supporting scientific research and education that are essential to West Virginia’s economic future, providing education and training opportunities and support for our state’s displaced and dislocated workers, and putting in place programs that will better position students for success once they enter a college campus.

Helping West Virginians Access, Afford and Complete Higher Education

{{§§18B-4-2 and 18C-1-1}} The Commission and Council administer all state financial aid programs – nearly \$100 million annually in awards – for West Virginia students. **Our small financial aid staff processes more than 200,000 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) submissions each year** and distributes awards from and monitors the state’s student aid programs, including the following:

- PROMISE Scholarship Program;
- Engineering, Science and Technology Scholarship Program;
- West Virginia Higher Education Grant Program;
- Underwood-Smith Teacher Scholarship Program;
- Higher Education Adult Part-Time Student (HEAPS) Grant Program;
- Medical Student Loan Program; and,
- Nursing Scholarship Program.

{{§§18B-1D-3 and 18B-1D-4}} Beyond the administration of these programs, we hold hundreds of events and face-to-face meetings across the state annually to educate students and their families about the financial aid opportunities available to them, provide direct application assistance, and administer the state’s free college- and career-planning website and outreach initiative, the College Foundation of West Virginia (www.cfwv.com).

These meetings and events are critical for students in our state. Researchers have found that one of the most significant barriers to college is the belief that college is unaffordable. In a state where public higher education tuition is among the lowest in the country, it is essential that we

communicate to students and their families that college is financially obtainable, and these meetings and events provide us the forum to do so.

In addition, through the GEAR UP Program, we are helping young students in high-need regions of the state learn more about college, prepare for the college process, and make the commitment to further their education.

“West Virginia, I could make the case, is the birthplace of the national college completion movement.”

-Bruce Vandal, Vice President, Complete College America

The Commission and Council also recognize that our work doesn't end when a student enters a college campus – but that strong policies and support networks are needed to ensure these students are earning their credentials. That is why we are diligently working on a number of fronts, including the following initiatives, to improve college completion rates across West Virginia's public higher education institutions:

- **{§18B-14-2} The Legislature in 2015 passed House Bill 2867, which put additional emphasis behind the policies on academic credit transfer already implemented by the Commission and Council.** Prior to our agencies' updated Procedural Rule, Series 17, acceptance of the transfer of academic credits among institutions largely had been left to the discretion of the institution receiving the transfer. Students and their families criticized that earned credits were not being transferred from one institution to another, causing students to duplicate work at considerable expense.

To ensure credit hours are being transferred appropriately, the Commission and Council provide for both a guaranteed transfer of core coursework and an objective centralized appeal process for students whose requested transfer credits are denied by a department or institution.

Just this December, the Commission negotiated the purchase of transfer equivalency software that will be implemented at all public institutions, and enable students, faculty and staff to quickly and easily determine if a course is likely to transfer and how it will affect their expected graduation date.

- **{§§18B-2B-6(c)(41), 18B-1D-3 and 18B-1D-4} The Council is a recognized national leader in adopting and implementing the co-requisite remediation model which allows students in remedial courses to instead enroll in credit-bearing courses that put them on an accelerated path toward their degree.** Approximately 64 percent of students entering community and technical colleges in West Virginia are unprepared for college-level work. The co-requisite model for remediation has improved the successful college math completion rates for these students from 14 percent after two years, to 62 percent after one semester. The implementation of this model was a Council-led initiative targeted at improving the retention and graduation rates of community college students.
- **{§§18B-1D-3 and 18B-1D-4} To promote on-time degree completion and student success, the Commission launched a public awareness and information campaign called “15 to Finish.”** The campaign informs students of the importance and benefits of enrolling in

and completing at least 15 credit hours every semester. Taking 15 credit hours or more per semester is essential to completing a degree “on time” – within two years for a two-year degree or four years for a four-year degree. But too few students are taking this full course load.

Reaching out to Business and Industry, Focusing on Workforce Development

West Virginia is facing a skills gap. Sixty-five percent of new jobs between now and 2020 will require postsecondary education, and currently West Virginia’s citizens do not have the necessary education to fill many of these jobs. If the state’s economy is going to grow, it is incumbent upon higher education to work collaboratively with business and industry to ensure we provide programs that will adequately train the workforce employers need, while simultaneously educating West Virginians about the job opportunities that exist and the training they need to realize those opportunities.

The four-year higher education system succeeds in providing a highly-professional workforce for West Virginia comprised of health care providers, teachers, entrepreneurs, engineers, and countless others. The vast majority of PROMISE Scholars attend public four-year institutions, and we have seen that these students stay in the state for their careers at higher rates than overall graduates. In fact, one study found that 80 percent of PROMISE Scholars who graduated in 2003-04, among the first students to receive the scholarship, were working in the state in 2012.

“With the evolution of the community college system, the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education has provided leadership in policy development, strategic planning, collaborative ventures, and funding that has enabled our colleges to create workforce development centers and initiatives in each region of the state. Focusing on customized training, program development, and business and industry partnerships has enhanced the ability of institutions to meet the needs of local partners – a role so critical for economic development.”
-Jo Harris, President, BridgeValley Community and Technical College

{{§18B-2B-6(c)(28) and 18B-3C-8}} Workforce development is central to the mission of the Council, and indeed was highlighted by the Legislature as being pivotal to the creation of the Community and Technical College System of West Virginia. The Council approaches workforce development from a variety of angles, but two key aspects of our approach include outreach to career technical education centers (CTE) and sector-based workforce development.

- **{{§18B-3C-4}}** As established by the Legislature, each community college is a member of a district consortium. The purpose of these consortia is to ensure that CTEs and community colleges are working collaboratively to provide seamless career pathways for students from K-12 to higher education. Each consortium meets at least quarterly and both the Council and the West Virginia Department of Education (DOE) are responsible for monitoring the progress and success of these consortia. In an effort to increase the number of CTE students who matriculate to community colleges, the Council and DOE are developing a strategy to encourage additional career pathway opportunities for students, based on the occupational needs of the state. This initiative begins this January.
- **{{§18B-2B-6(c)(35)}}** The Council’s second approach to creating a trained workforce is sector-based workforce development. The idea behind this approach is that there are employer

sectors, oil and gas for example, that cover a large part of the state. When trying to meet the needs of the oil and gas industry, it was more efficient to coordinate curriculum efforts and resource needs at the state level. We were then able to implement the same petroleum technology program at both West Virginia Northern Community College and Pierpont Community and Technical College, without duplicating the efforts it takes to develop and implement technical programs and without making business and industry plan two different programs with two different colleges. The same example holds true for other sectors, including the manufacturing sector, which continues to stretch across the state, particularly now with Procter and Gamble expanding to the Eastern Panhandle. Without the guidance and participation of the Council, individual institutions would not have the awareness of others' programs to even begin to facilitate shared program development.

“We have found internships to be a win-win for Kureha and the interns. Kureha wins by getting to test-drive talent and increase productivity with additional short-term manpower at an attractive cost. Kureha has found these internships are a way to find future employees, support students investigating a career in chemical plants, give back to the community, and increase employee retention by investing in their future.”

-Tom Provost, Executive Vice President, Kureha PGA LLC

- **{§§18B-3D-1 et seq}** Working effectively with business and industry is essential to the mission of the Council, but it is also costly. Thankfully, the Legislature has appropriated three workforce development grant sources that are awarded and monitored by the Council to the community colleges. These grants are Workforce Development (House Bill 3009, which includes the Learn and Earn Program), Technical Program Development, and Advance Grants. These grants have allowed the colleges to immediately respond to business and industry. By centralizing the dissemination of these grant funds from the system office, it also allows the Council to eliminate duplication.

If, for example, an institution created a mechatronics program using a technical program development grant, that institution must share its curriculum and all materials created for the program with any other institution that also needs the program. This centralization also helps ensure any new programs are actually in need in the service region of the institution. The system does not award grant funding unless there is a workforce need demonstrated by the college. Companies have been very responsive to providing programmatic recommendations, internship opportunities, and equipment donations to our colleges because of these grant programs and our outreach efforts.

- **{§18B-4-4}** The federal 2006 Perkins Act is intended to improve the academic, career and technical skills of secondary and postsecondary students enrolled in career technical education programs. Each year West Virginia is awarded \$8.4 million from the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) for implementing this Act, and the Council is the state's eligible agency for this award. The Council and its nine institutions receive a total of \$2.4 million of this award. The responsibilities of the Council include: Developing, implementing and evaluating a state plan for career technical education; developing performance definitions and measures consistent with the core indicators of performance outlined in the Act; developing career and technical programs adopted by both secondary and postsecondary schools; and submitting an annual report to the USDOE. **The USDOE auditor has referred other states to the Council as a model of best practices.**

Providing Institutional Guidance and Consumer-Focused Oversight

“The Commission has been of significant importance and value in providing oversight, guidance, advisement, and appropriate control in the University’s fiscal affairs, budgeting, purchasing, capital spending, academic-program creation and review, and numerous other areas vital to our operation.”

-John P. McCullough, President, West Liberty University

During the last decade, the Legislature has granted each of our institutions and their respective governing boards a great deal of flexibility, which delegates daily operation and oversight to the local level. Rather than granting direct governing authority, these changes have designated the Commission and Council as coordinating boards, responsible for approving or disapproving of the hiring and performance of college and university presidents, creation of new degree programs, elimination of underperforming programs and tuition increases above five percent, among other duties listed below.

- **{{§§18B-1D-8 and 18B-2B-6(c)}}**The Legislature established measures for West Virginia to be one of the first states to require annual Report Cards that detail the demographics, initiatives and results of our agencies’ actions and the institutions under our jurisdiction. These annual Report Cards from 2002 to the present can be accessed at <http://www.wvhpc.edu/resources/reports-and-publications/>. These reports not only inform legislators and stakeholders, but also serve as invaluable data points and research as we plan for future programs and statewide goals.
- Both boards approve institutional master plans and capital projects. A recent initiative by the Legislature, West Virginia Code §18B-19-1 et seq, charges the Commission and Council with guaranteeing that capital construction and maintenance at the institutions are done in the most efficient, affordable, and energy compliant manner.
- **The Commission and Council are required to collect and disseminate consumer information that allows students and parents to align their needs with available offerings and compare the performance and affordability of public and private institutions.**

{{§§18B-1D-4 and 18B-2B-6 and 18B-4-7}} All higher education institutions – public, private non-profit and private for-profit – operating in the State of West Virginia must undergo an annual performance audit conducted by the Commission and Council, to be authorized to offer degrees to our students. Those audits investigate financial stability of the institutions, graduation rates, faculty qualifications, accreditation status, campus crime statistics and student opinions and complaint resolution, among other measures. We conduct those audits and bring them before the Commission and Council for their consideration and a formal reauthorization vote.

- **{{§18B-1B-4}}** The Commission and Council establish legislative and procedural rules that provide institutions with guidance for carrying out the Legislature’s vision for higher education. Rules pertain to finance, purchasing, financial aid, human resources, academic program review, capital projects, organizational management, student assessment and

admission, accountability and various institutional matters, among others. Without a set of common rules, institutions could interpret the Legislature's intent in varying ways.

- The Council is required to permit and annually reauthorize all correspondence, business, occupational and trade schools, pursuant to West Virginia Code §18B-2B-9. The permitting process includes a site visit from the Chancellor to any new school.
- The Council is responsible for the Vocational Education Methods of Administration (MOA) civil rights compliance activities. Pursuant to the federal Guidelines for Eliminating Discrimination and Denial of Services on the Basis of Race, Color, National Origin, Sex and Handicap in Vocational Education Programs (34 C.F.R. Part 100, Appendix B), the Council is required to conduct comprehensive civil rights compliance reviews of selected community and technical colleges and to report these compliance activities to the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (OCR).
- The Commission and Council serve as the designated ombudsmen for student complaints that are unresolved at the institutional level for both the public colleges under our jurisdictions and for the proprietary institutions.
- {§18B-1D-9} The Commission and Council are required to provide higher education governance oversight by offering continuing education and training opportunities for institutional boards of governors, as well as tracking board members' achieved training credits. More information is available at the following links:
<http://www.wvhepc.edu/resources/training-for-boards-of-governors/> (for the Commission) and <http://www.wvctcs.org/index.php/2013-06-28-14-21-03/bog-resources> (for the Council).

Shared Positions and Centralized Resources

{§18B-4-2} While the Commission and Council have distinct legislative directives, focusing on different workforce needs, the two systems have similar administrative requirements. As such, our offices share multiple employees who work concurrently for both agencies to avoid costly duplication. **In fact, only 9 staff members serve either the Commission or Council exclusively.**

Our shared staff include student financial aid, student affairs, legal services, human resources, finance and facilities, academic affairs, computing and Internet services and scientific research, all serving more than 90,000 students on 23 campuses across the state system.

Most of our state's colleges and universities do not have the administrative resources needed to carry out their missions and meet legislative mandates. The Legislature wisely directed our agencies to provide from a central office those services that otherwise would be impossible without wasteful, decentralized and duplicative offices and employees at each campus.

{§18B-1D-5} In addition, we are required to monitor each of our public higher education institution's performance and update the Legislature on their progress in meeting state and national measures. Without this centralized resource, legislative requests for information would need to be gathered from each individual institution.

Provided below and on the following pages is an outline of the critical functions and centralized services made possible by shared staff of the Commission and Council.

SHARED SERVICES & EFFICIENCIES

Financial Aid

Our Financial Aid services are a valuable resource for families, students, colleges, and others across the state, with a small staff always available to answer questions about financial aid or address problems individuals are experiencing with the financial aid process.

{§18C-1-1} Shared staff administer eight state financial aid programs and award nearly \$100 million annually in financial aid to West Virginians, helping clear the path to college for thousands of residents. **This includes the processing of federal aid (FAFSA) applications for more than 200,000 individual students** with multiple transactions, including 11,000 PROMISE Scholarship applications, along with applications for the Engineering, Science and Technology Scholarship, HEAPS and its Workforce Development component, the Underwood-Smith Teaching Scholarship and, beginning this year, the Nursing Scholarship Program.

In addition:

- Financial Aid staff determine student eligibility for state financial aid programs according to State Code and legislative rules; process invoices so payments to institutions can be made and disbursed to student accounts; and process closing statements so state aid funds are reconciled at the end of each academic year with each institution.
- Staff members conduct financial aid training for high school counselors, college access providers and others, including vocational rehabilitation and WorkForce West Virginia. Staff members also train financial aid staff at individual colleges and universities. In fact, over the past two years, staff have provided federal financial aid training that has enabled 34 employees at 16 institutions and agencies in West Virginia to earn more than 150 national credentials in financial aid administration.
- We have entered into agreements with more than 90 high schools in West Virginia to help high school personnel identify which of their students have completed the FAFSA in an effort to increase applications for financial aid. Our staff have scheduled more than 85 financial aid night presentations and FAFSA workshops at high schools across West Virginia this academic year alone. These programs educate students and parents about the financial aid application process and the federal and state financial aid programs available for them.

“I would like to express my appreciation to the West Virginia Community and Technical College System for their assistance in preparing Eastern’s successful appeal to the U.S. Department of Education. The technical assistance and support Eastern received is evidence that West Virginia is building a great Community and Technical System that is committed to institutional and student success.”

-Charles “Chuck” Terrell, President, Eastern West Virginia Community & Technical College

- We centrally process financial aid for three individual institutions as a recent cost-saving measure resulting from constrained budgets. We regularly audit institutions to ensure state financial aid programs are administered in accordance with State Code and legislative rules and we conduct technical reviews to correct deficiencies in the administration of financial aid.
- To lower costs to our colleges and universities, over the past several years, our staff negotiated statewide purchases for federally required net price calculators and for default management. We provide training and support to institutions to help them manage their student loan default rates.
- Shared staff also administer four student loan forgiveness programs that require students to work in specific fields in West Virginia to avoid paying back the award with interest. We manage and assist in the repayment process for these programs so that due diligence, skip tracing, and other collection efforts are used in accordance with federal regulations for the collection of debts.

Student Affairs

{§§18B-1D-3 and 18B-1D-4} Pursuant to the Legislature’s directive that the Commission and Council increase access to postsecondary education for more West Virginia students, our Student Affairs staff cultivate a statewide culture that values education and the advanced academic achievement of all citizens, regardless of age or income. We conduct numerous college access and completion initiatives, with the largest portion of those expenses, including staff salaries and benefits, supported through external grants and contracts. **Student Affairs has secured more than \$48 million in external competitive grant and contract funding since 2008.**

Initiatives conducted through Student Affairs include:

- **West Virginia Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP)**

*“GEAR UP was my support system in school. They gave me a new beginning, a new hope...”
-Kendyl Ryan, Boone County native, Marshall University student, former GEAR UP student*

A federally-funded grant program aimed at increasing college-going rates among students in 10 high-need counties, West Virginia GEAR UP provides academic preparation and college readiness services to 5,500 unduplicated low-income, first-generation K-12 students each year. The Commission and Council are in year two of their second, seven-year \$21 million GEAR UP grant. Funds are sub-granted to school districts and college partners to implement a portion of the work.

Outcomes from the 2008-15 GEAR UP grant indicate that GEAR UP is well positioned within the Commission and Council to achieve success.

From Fall 2008 (baseline data) compared to Fall 2014, WV GEAR UP schools increased their college going rate by 3.7 percentage points. From the 2012-13 FAFSA cycle to the

2014-15 FAFSA cycle, WV GEAR UP schools increased their FAFSA completion rates by 4.0 percentage points (50.4% to 54.4%). More than 7,000 students visited a college campus between 2008-2015 as a result of the GEAR UP program. More than 7 out of 10 students in GEAR UP schools received direct assistance from a college representative, while fewer than 5 out of 10 students in GEAR UP comparison schools received similar help. More than 95 percent of students in GEAR UP schools have spoken to a high school staff member about college entrance requirements, compared to only 78.6 percent of students in comparison schools. In addition, GEAR UP students were more than three times more likely to accurately estimate the price of tuition than students in the comparison group.

- **The College Foundation of West Virginia (CFWV)**

Born out of the work of former Governor Joe Manchin, CFWV is a college readiness outreach initiative aimed at helping students and families learn how to enroll – and succeed – in college. CFWV is a partnership among the Commission, the Council, the West Virginia Department of Education, and the West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts.

As a result, a college and career planning web portal is available, at no cost, to all West Virginia students, families and educators. This site, www.cfwv.com, is a one-stop college- and career planning website that features information about all of the state’s colleges and universities, as well as financial aid programs, and career and degree programs. The site includes free ACT and SAT test preparation and a variety of career and skill-based inventories. All public two- and four-year institutions, and many private schools, have an application housed on the web portal.

Since the launch of the portal in October 2009, more than 308,000 West Virginians have created a secure account and utilized the website. Since January 1, 2015, more than 74,900 West Virginians have utilized the site through their secure login. More than 330,000 individuals visited the site during 2015. More than 13,800 college applications have been submitted and processed since January 1, 2015. In addition, staff have trained more than 2,000 educators on how to utilize the website since its launch.

In response to Governor Tomblin’s 2014 legislation, an entire Middle Grades Module, known as “School-2-College-2-Work,” was launched to help students at an early age begin exploring colleges and careers. More than 125 middle schools have been introduced to the modules and more than 250 educators trained on how to incorporate the module into their classrooms.

Student Affairs staff also have produced and distributed thousands of CFWV outreach materials related to college and career planning.

As part of CFWV, Student Affairs conducts three major college and career planning milestone events.

- The first event occurs at the conclusion of the West Virginia College Day Tour and is known as College Application and Exploration Week. **In 2015, more than 400 elementary schools, middle schools, high schools and adult basic education classes across West Virginia participated.**

- The second event, College Goal Sunday, is coordinated with Financial Aid staff and is focused on FAFSA completion. This one-day event, held in February of each year at 25 sites across the state, provides an opportunity for students and families to receive free financial aid counseling and assistance. The event involves more than 300 volunteers. **In 2015, nearly 1,000 FAFSAs were completed during this single day.**
- The newest event is College Decision Day, part of a growing national effort to celebrate seniors for their postsecondary plans and assist them and their families in enrolling in and transitioning to colleges, workforce training programs, and/or military service. Nearly 20 high schools piloted College Decision Days in 2015. This event will be scaled as an option for all West Virginia high schools in 2016.

- **Student Text Messaging Support Program**

In August 2013, Student Affairs staff secured a \$225,000 grant from the Kresge Foundation to develop a three-year pilot project offering college counseling and support services to students via text messaging. Messages provided through the campaign help students complete critical college-preparation tasks, adjust to campus life and connect with counselors and other personnel who can provide individualized assistance.

Through the program, eligible students are able to begin receiving messages during the spring of their 12th grade year and continue receiving support by text through their first year of college. Early evaluation results indicate that students who participated in the project are more likely to complete 15 hours during their first semester of college and have a higher grade point average than similar peers who did not participate in the texting project. **Based upon this early evaluation data, we are scaling the project to allow all (more than 18,000) high school seniors in West Virginia the opportunity to participate in the project beginning in January 2016.**

- **Veterans Education and Training**

§§18B-4-9 and 18B-4-10 Our Veterans Education and Training staff are required to ensure every eligible veteran, National Guard member and reservist in West Virginia is aware of and has full and fair access to high quality, ethically administered education and training programs. We serve more than 2,700 student veterans and family members at the state's public two- and four-year institutions.

Among other key charges, we are responsible for monitoring more than 100 eligible institutions, apprenticeship sites, and other eligible entities to ensure they are in compliance with federal and state guidelines regarding the administration of veterans' benefits such as GI Bill funds. Without our state-level audit services, the federal Veterans Administration would not compensate students or institutions.

With the leadership of the Commission and the Council, all public institutions in West Virginia accepted our new "5-Star Challenge," a call to action for West Virginia's public two-year and four-year institutions and their coordinating agencies to adopt a set of exemplary standards for supporting student veterans. Colleges and universities have agreed to

place a sharpened focus on access and affordability for student veterans and service members; provide them with increased academic support, including priority registration for classes; enhance social networks that will allow them to be more engaged on campus; and work more closely with community organizations to provide a holistic approach to meeting student veterans' needs.

- **Support of Campus-Based Student Affairs Offices**

Student Affairs staff support campus-based student affairs offices and personnel in numerous ways. In conjunction with the West Virginia Association of Admissions Counselors and Registrars, we organize an eight-week college fair tour during which campus staff visit high schools and regional sites to conduct college fairs each fall. We also administer nearly \$100,000 in diversity grants through a competitive process. We oversee the work of West Virginia's Campus Compact program, which advances the public purposes of colleges and universities by deepening their ability to improve community life and to educate students for civic and social responsibility.

{§18B-6-4} We also coordinate the annual Student Success Summit, which convenes more than 500 education administrators, teachers, students, military leaders and community group members to help students prepare for lifelong success. We work with campus-based student government leaders to support the work of the statutorily mandated Advisory Council of Students. Additionally, staff organize an annual three-day student leadership development conference for student government leaders and advisors. And we provide ongoing training and support to student affairs leaders as requested, including campus safety, federal Title IX regulations, providing accommodations for students with disabilities and student retention and completion topics.

Academic Affairs

Academic Affairs staff are responsible for implementing a number of statewide academic planning initiatives for West Virginia's two- and four- year public colleges and universities.

“In the most recent academic year, the [Commission] has assisted the smaller institutions through price reductions in becoming part of International Studies (J-1 Exchange Program, SARA, and DegreeWorks programs and systems. Otherwise, the costs for these programs and systems would be a huge financial burden on Concord.”

-Concord University

- **Degree Programs**

We are required to administer the approval process for new academic degree programs, with the exception of Marshall University and West Virginia University, to ensure need, viability, resources, and quality assurance. In addition, we coordinate the post-approval audit of new programs, and approved new programs undergo a post-approval audit three years after the initial approval is received. We also coordinate the five-year program review and biennial productivity review of all institutional programs, facilitate the post-audit review of occupational programs, and maintain statewide degree inventory.

This authority most recently was tested – and proven to be crucial – as the Commission brokered a Memorandum of Understanding for degree program offerings among West Virginia University, Concord University and Bluefield State College so each institution could jointly operate in the Beckley area. **Without this agreement arbitrated by the Commission, West Virginia University would not be able to begin operations at its recently acquired Beckley campus, and our smaller regional institutions might have faced additional, unnecessary competition for a limited student body.**

- **Collaboration with West Virginia Department of Education**

Our Academic Affairs staff have a major role in fostering curricular and programmatic alignment with West Virginia’s K-12 schools. This includes addressing college readiness issues, teacher education programs, which includes collaboration with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

- **Reauthorization**

West Virginia Code §18B-4-7, passed during the 2012 Legislative Session, required that a system of annual reauthorization be developed and implemented for West Virginia post-secondary degree-granting institutions, including public, private non-profit and private for-profit schools. The Commission and the Council were statutorily charged with the responsibility for this system of annual reauthorization.

- **State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA), Online or Distance Education**

The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) is an agreement among member states, districts and territories that establishes comparable national standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance education courses and programs. It is intended to make it easier for students to take online courses offered by postsecondary institutions based in another state. SARA is overseen by a national council, referred to as NC-SARA, and administered by four regional education compacts.

West Virginia was accepted as part of SARA through the Southern Regional Education Board Compact. The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission has been designated the portal agency for SARA – the entity responsible for leading SARA activities West Virginia.

- **Academic Common Market**

The Academic Common Market is a long-standing program administered by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and coordinated by each individual state. Fifteen SREB states participate voluntarily. Students can enroll in selected baccalaureate and graduate programs not offered in West Virginia at participating public institutions in other states and pay in-state tuition. Academic Affairs coordinates this program for students in West Virginia.

- **Tuition Contract Program**

The Commission maintains a tuition contract program, funded by the Legislature, for West Virginia residents interested in pursuing first professional health education in veterinary medicine, optometry or podiatry. These professional programs are not available at public institutions to any West Virginian. Students selected pay reduced tuition at one of the participating institutions.

- **WVROCKS**

The Commission has undertaken a major initiative to enhance the ability of adults to attain a bachelor's degree through a new enhancement to the RBA programs – West Virginia Remote Online Course Knowledge System (WVROCKS). While the Regents Bachelor of Arts has been successfully offered for adults for more than 30 years, WVROCKS provides adults with previous college experience a greater opportunity to complete a bachelor's degree in an accelerated, flexible, online format. To ensure quality, WVROCKS also provides faculty training in online instruction so more courses meet national standards for online education.

- **Quality Matters**

The Commission has implemented an initiative to improve the quality of online classes offered by member institutions. In January 2012, West Virginia entered into a statewide agreement with Quality Matters, a nationally recognized peer review process for online courses.

- **The Erma Byrd Higher Education Center**

We operate the Erma Byrd Higher Education Center in Beaver, a facility established in 2007 to provide higher education opportunities to the citizens of southern West Virginia. The Center is the state's first higher education collaborative and is home to Bluefield State College, Concord University, Marshall University and New River Community and Technical College.

The Center provides students the convenience of driving to a single location, exploring several different college and university degree program options, enrolling in a degree program, and completing that degree at the same location.

- **International Education**

We have actively pursued statewide initiatives to promote West Virginia as a destination for international students and increase the number of West Virginia students going abroad on exchanges. More than 3,500 international students from 131 countries are currently enrolled at the four-year campuses in West Virginia and contribute more than \$65 million to the West Virginia economy annually. **Showing dramatic progress, West Virginia's international student population increased nearly 17 percent last year alone.**

In 2015, the Commission was granted designation by the U.S. State Department to sponsor visiting students, scholars, professors and researchers on the J-1 exchange visitor visa. West

Virginia is one of a handful of states approved for J-1 designation as a statewide multi-campus system. The consortium will provide the opportunity for member campuses to increase educational and cultural exchange between West Virginia's four-year campuses and international partner universities.

Through the Commission, all 10 four-year public universities are profiled on the Keystone international education portals. The pages are translated into 36 languages and optimized for country-based search engines. The Commission also created the www.studywv.org website to promote West Virginia as an international study destination.

The West Virginia Collaborative Online International Learning Consortium (COIL) Fellows Program is a statewide effort sponsored by the Commission to deepen global engagement of students in the classroom, without requiring travel abroad, by implementing online collaboration with international partners and linking university classes in different countries. The COIL Fellows Program supports faculty representing all of West Virginia's campuses to develop COIL courses. Glenville State College is leading this initiative.

All of these international programs are designed to bring global awareness and opportunities to campuses and communities that do not have the capability to attract international students on the statewide scale that we do. International students also help to offset the cost of education for resident students by providing critical non-resident tuition revenue. They bring a global perspective to West Virginia students who do not have the opportunity to travel abroad.

- **Additional Initiatives**

Academic Affairs staff are facilitating the mandates of the Legislature for a uniform policy of transfer and articulation of college credit courses.

Shared Academic Affairs staff coordinate the Regents Bachelor of Arts (RBA) and Board of Governors Associate in Applied Science degree programs. Both are nontraditional, degree completion opportunities specifically for adult learners.

We direct the approval process for external (out-of-state) higher education institutions that seek to operate in West Virginia and coordinates tuition reciprocity agreements among border states. In addition, we administer the "Improving Teacher Quality State Grants Program."

Policy and Planning

"From my perspective, the [Commission] provides an objective resource for all West Virginia postsecondary institutions... they provide a venue for central data collection and analysis that would otherwise be lacking. This is so important for institutional and legislative leaders to have in order to make data-driven decisions to improve education in our state and to spur economic development."

-Kendra Boggess, President, Concord University

Policy and Planning staff serve a number of critical functions for the Commission, Council and state legislative and executive leadership. Our data system is the only central repository for the state's public postsecondary data. **The collection and validation process takes data from each individual institutional information system and produces a single, uniform set of data that is used to generate legislatively-mandated reports and to answer questions about postsecondary education outcomes.**

Our programming staff services the central data system and develops and maintains financial aid software that is responsible for the application and award processes for the state's various financial aid programs such as the PROMISE Scholarship Program and the Higher Education Grant Program. The customized and internally developed applications save significant administrative costs that otherwise would be required to purchase and support third-party software.

Policy and Planning is the research component of both the Commission and the Council, fulfilling regular and impromptu data and research requests from: Commission and Council members, two- and four-year public and private institutions, the Governor's office, House and Senate education committees, individual legislators, the West Virginia Department of Education, K-12 county and school leadership, community leaders, grantors, bond underwriters, media outlets, concerned citizens and other higher education stakeholders. We process requests ranging from questions about college enrollment from a specific high school to the number of students taking nursing courses at our colleges.

Policy and Planning administers the state-level master planning process for the four-year colleges and universities, as well as supports oversight functions of the Commission and Council by providing data and analysis.

Policy and Planning coordinates with other state agencies, such as the West Virginia Department of Education and WorkForce West Virginia, as they work to fulfill their statutory requirements, federal grants and associated reports, and other data needs. When the Legislature requests information about student or institutional performance, staffing and budgets, Policy and Planning staff provides and analyzes that information.

Finance and Facilities

West Virginia's public higher education institutions are not typical state agencies. To operate, they must generate most of their revenues from sources other than state government. The magnitude of their revenues depends not only upon the value that they provide to the state, but also the value provided to students, the federal government, and donors.

To maintain an adequate flow of revenues, public colleges and universities must allocate resources strategically to provide value to their students. To ensure the state receives value for its investment in higher education, the Commission and Council Finance staff understand the unique attributes of higher education and provide a systemized and coordinated approach to its efficient delivery.

Finance and Facilities staff provide multiple services to public higher education institutions, including the following.

- **Strategic Planning**

Finance staff provide guidance to institutions as they cope with reduced resources. Strategies to improve capacity utilization and reduce costs are provided to and discussed with institutions. We hold meetings to share and discuss the effective strategies that institutions have used to address management, budgeting and compliance issues.

- **Facility Planning and Administration**

We assist institutions in developing facility master plans and are ultimately responsible for evaluating and ultimately approving these plans.

“The central office was an invaluable partner to Blue Ridge during the construction of our new headquarters building. We had weekly phone updates with central staff during the approximately 18 months of design and construction. At Blue Ridge, the headquarters building was our first effort at building a new facility and the central office’s expertise was a considerable benefit for us.”

-Peter Checkovich, President, Blue Ridge Community and Technical College

- **Capital Expenditures**

For all institutions except for Marshall University (MU) and West Virginia University (WVU), the Commission and Council advise and assist the institutions on capital projects and facilities needs. We also advise institutions on compliance with West Virginia Code §18B-19-1 et seq, and system policies and procedures on capital project management, and review and approve capital budgets.

The Commission and Council are responsible for approving and managing capital construction projects for institutions of \$1 million and above (with the exception of MU and WVU) since institutions generally do not have the experienced staff or resources necessary to manage such large projects. When appropriations are received for capital projects, we manage the allocation of these funds and work with institutions to spend the funds on approved projects. The Commission must approve capital projects in excess of \$15 million for MU and WVU.

Finance staff prepare the annual capital project priorities and appropriation requests to the governor and legislature annually for both systems. Additionally, we handle matters related to issuing, managing and paying debt service for Revenue Bonds issued to fund capital projects.

- **Operating Budgets**

The Commission and Council review and approve institutional annual operating budgets for institutions other than Marshall University and West Virginia University. For these two institutions the Commission reviews their budgets. These reviews are conducted in conjunction with tuition and fee requests as well as capital budgets.

- **Audits**

Finance staff coordinate the annual financial and single audits for each institution. Through the audits, a uniform reporting approach is employed to ensure comparability among the institutions.

- **Bonds**

The Commission administers over \$351 million in outstanding system bond debt. This debt is reflected in the Commission's financial statements. It transfers funds accumulated from lottery revenues and institutional payments to bond trustees for system debt service payments. The Commission provides information to rating agencies and discloses required information to the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board. The system debt is reflected on the Commission's financial statements.

- **Internal Audits**

The Commission and Council provide internal audit services to colleges and universities. A risk based approach is used to identify areas that need to be reviewed and strengthened.

- **Coordinating State Financial System Implementations**

The Commission has coordinated the implementation of the OASIS system for public higher Education. This includes the creation of a common set of object and revenue source codes to ensure the usefulness of financial and human resource reporting. The Commission conducts a weekly conference call to support the system's implementation. The Commission has also coordinated the creation of interfaces from institutional general ledger systems to the OASIS system.

- **Procurement**

Finance staff provide purchasing and procurement guidance and assistance to institutions, pursuant to West Virginia Code §18-5-4. In addition it has saved the institutions more than \$200,000 by creating a consortium contract for workers compensation insurance. We also assist with the advertisement of bids.

- **Institutional Loans**

The Commission administers the Water and Energy Savings Loan Fund. This fund provides capital interest free loans to institutions for projects that result in energy and water saving.

- **West Virginia Regional Technology Park**

{§18B-1F-1} The Legislature transferred ownership of the West Virginia Regional Technology Park in South Charleston to the Commission. While a non-profit governing board and a small staff employed by that board carries out the day-to-day management of the Park, the Commission oversees its director and ensures the park is providing the greatest investment return possible for West Virginia.

Health Sciences

“... [The Commission] maintains the checks and balances between a college’s desire to grow and the state’s commitment to provide excellence in education. It does this with knowledge, collaboration and expertise. [The Commission] is the only state entity that provides this needed oversight.”

-Michael D. Adelman, President, West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine

{§18B-16-1 et seq} We coordinate health sciences programs and policies, particularly those impacting the state’s three academic health centers at Marshall University, the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine and West Virginia University. This includes policies and programs related to the health sciences education and workforce development within the state, identifying and facilitating opportunities for our state’s three health sciences centers to collaborate, promoting practice opportunities in rural and underserved areas to health professions students, and supporting research at our universities and in our communities that address health disparities affecting West Virginians.

- In accordance with West Virginia Code §18B-16-4, we oversee the **Rural Health Initiative**, a state-funded program directed at improving the recruitment and retention of healthcare providers to rural areas of the state. The Rural Health Initiative provides rural community-based training and enrichment opportunities for students in dentistry, medicine, nursing, pharmacy and allied health fields. Health Sciences works with grantees to ensure the funds are spent appropriately, provides programmatic technical assistance, and fosters collaboration between grantees. Last year, Health Sciences provided grants of \$587,000 each to the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine, the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine, and the West Virginia University Health Sciences Center to conduct Rural Health Initiative programming. We also provide smaller grants to other institutions, nonprofits and healthcare organizations for activities that support the goals of the Rural Health Initiative.
- West Virginia Code §18C-3-3 establishes the **Health Sciences Service Program**, which offers a recruitment incentive to West Virginia students in 10 health professions disciplines in exchange for a commitment to practice for at least two years in an underserved area of the state. Health Sciences coordinates program outreach, the application and award process and assists recipients in locating employment at qualifying sites. Last year, \$330,000 in awards was made to 17 health professions students. Since the inception of the program in 1995, 162 participants have completed their service obligation in rural or underserved areas of the state.
- Over the past two years, **Health Sciences has received \$270,000 in funding from the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation**. With the funding, it has created the West Virginia Alliance for Creative Health Solutions, a network of primary care providers working to identify innovative ways to improve the health of their patients and the communities they serve. The Alliance also works with all three medical schools to advance clinical translational research across West Virginia.
- **{§18C-3-4}** As part of changes made during the 2014 Legislative Session, the **West Virginia Center for Nursing and the Nursing Scholarship Program** became a part of Health Sciences. The Center advances strategies to support the education, recruitment and retention

of nurses in West Virginia and partners closely with the schools of nursing, nursing students, the boards of nursing and other healthcare stakeholders. It also works with Financial Aid to administer the Nursing Scholarship Program, which provides scholarships to licensed practical nursing, licensed practical nursing teaching certificate, registered nursing and master's and doctoral level nursing students. Over the last year, the program made 58 awards totaling more than \$156,000.

- Health Sciences also houses the **West Virginia Perinatal Partnership**, a statewide partnership of healthcare professionals and public and private organizations working to improve perinatal health in West Virginia. In addition to funding received from other sources, we administer a grant to the Partnership that provides its core operational funding. The Partnership coordinates programs and advances policies that have achieved tremendous results related to mother and baby health such as the expansion of newborn testing to include 29 metabolic conditions that are often life threatening, the development of obstetrical and neonatal guidelines of care and the creation of a hospital self-assessment program.

Science and Research

Commission staff provide centralized services to the state's scientific community by developing, administering and reporting to federal agencies the outcomes of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) activities at colleges and universities. **Last July, the Commission was awarded \$20 million from the National Science Foundation to conduct research on the state's water supplies and for work at the Green Bank National Observatory.** With key faculty participants from West Virginia University, Marshall University and West Virginia State University, this grant will build infrastructure to make state institutions more competitive nationally for additional financial support for research and lead to potential new discoveries that not only advance knowledge but support patenting, licensing, business development and job creation in STEM fields.

Staff also provide expert review services to institutional faculty in scientific fields ranging from astrophysics to biotechnology and energy research, administering more than \$2.5 million annually to institutions for scientific equipment utilized in STEM teaching, research and innovation. Annual reports are provided to the Legislature and Governor on the performance of the state's Research Trust Fund, or Bucks for Brains program, which invested \$50 million in endowed accounts managed by Marshall and WVU and were matched by private gifts for a total of \$100 million. These endowments are now providing more than \$12.8 million in new annual dividends that support ongoing STEM programs at our institutions.

Human Resources

{§18B-9A-1 et seq} We provide strategic human resources services and support for all of West Virginia's public colleges and universities, in addition to the Commission and Council. **We ensure responsible oversight of more than 12,000 full-time and 2,000 part-time employees in the state higher education workforce.**

Our services help our institutions attract, empower and retain a high-quality workforce through a variety of state-mandated initiatives, including organizational design, labor cost management and

benefits program management. We are charged by statute to maintain a uniform system of classification and compensation, including conducting the current salary market study, as ordered by the passage of Senate Bill 439 in the 2015 Regular Session.

Human Resources coordinates and supports public institution compliance with law in employee relations, policy development, classification and compensation, benefit services, training and development, affirmative action and equal employment opportunity programs. We provide human resources information to our institution governing boards, the Commission, the Council, the Governor and the Legislature to help them make informed, data-driven decisions on policy that affects thousands of state employees.

- **Classification and Compensation**

Human Resources is responsible for the design, development and maintenance of a uniform system of classification and compensation for classified employees in higher education, and provides guidance and assistance to the public supported higher education institutions with design and development of classification and/or compensation programs for faculty and employee groups. We conduct compensation studies, establish minimum pay levels, design pay structures, maintain classification systems to reflect best practices, and conduct compliance reviews to ensure the system is properly administered at each college and university.

- **Benefits Administration**

We oversee and coordinate the retirement programs available to public higher education employees. The qualified 401A, 403B and other supplemental and deferred compensation plans we administer have a combined value of more than \$3 billion.

- **Higher Education Employee Training Programs**

The Legislature has directed us to analyze and determine training and employee development needs for all public higher education employees; however, this mandate has not yet been funded with appropriations. Our Human Resources team provides this counsel where available, but additional resources would be needed (and are stipulated) in State Code.

Legal

With a staff of only five attorneys, the Legal staff provide full requested legal services statewide to the Commission, the Council and all institutions. Having a consolidated department allows both agencies and all institutions to be fully served at a fraction of the cost such services would demand if each institution were required to staff its own legal department. Presently, we do not charge the institutions for any legal services other than travel and expenses associated with individual legal actions.

Our attorneys represent the Commission, Council and institutions in lawsuits, employee grievances, Human Rights Commission claims, Equal Employment Opportunity Office claims, Presidential

contracts, general contract oversight, bond agreements, capital purchases, policy development, rule promulgation, and student complaints, to name a few. **Except for the larger universities, state institutions do not have legal representation on these matters except through the Commission and Council office.**

Our attorneys also advise the Commission and Council regarding the reauthorization of private institutions; provide legal advice and opinions to governing boards, college presidents, the Commission and Council, as well as agency staff; provide guidance and expertise to the Chairs of and legal counsel to the House and Senate Education Committees, including during Legislative Sessions; and, provide counsel during presidential searches and contract negotiations.

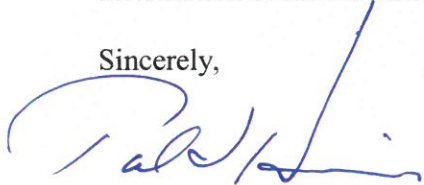
Commission and Council Legal staff are committed to service, knowledge of the law, and facilitating the educational mission of state colleges, universities and community and technical colleges. Their function is to provide, manage, and coordinate all legal services for these institutions and to minimize legal risks and costs efficiently, reliably, and professionally.

We hope this information more clearly elucidates the far-reaching services provided by the Commission and Council's combined staff, our innovative work to bring outside funding to West Virginia that provides opportunities for West Virginians and far eclipses our annual state budget, and the streamlined work we carry out to provide institutions and our own agencies with shared services to make the best use of state taxpayer dollars.

Above all else, we hope this letter speaks to the core of our student-centered mission as objective, forward-looking agencies working to provide opportunities for West Virginians to succeed in postsecondary education and move our state ahead. Without our programs and without the Legislature's continued support to address the challenges ahead, West Virginia will have a weakened system of higher education that fails to position our state for the workforce and economic demands of the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your recent request. We are pleased to provide additional information or further clarification upon your request and upon consultation with our boards.

Sincerely,



Paul L. Hill
Chancellor



Sarah Armstrong Tucker
Chancellor

Cc: The Honorable Craig Blair
The Honorable Paul Espinosa
The Honorable Gary Howell
The Honorable David Sypolt

Attachments: 1.) Resources for Further Reference
2.) Partial List of the Council's Partner Companies
3, 4, 5.) Letters from Presidents

COUNCIL EMPLOYER PARTERSHIPS

1. 1-79 Service Center
2. AC&S Inc.
3. Access Midstream
4. Advanced Technological Solutions, LLC
5. Affiliated Construction Trades Foundation
6. All-Tech
7. Alpha Technologies
8. American Woodmark Corp.
9. Antero Resources
10. ArcelorMittal Weirton, LLC
11. Ashland, Inc.
12. Bayer Material Science
13. Braskem America
14. Bruce Allen, INc.
15. CAMC
16. Chapman Corporation
17. Chemical Alliance Zone
18. Chemours
19. CNX Gas Company
20. Coal River Energy
21. Consol Energy
22. Cornerstone Interiors
23. DALB
24. Daniel Chevy
25. Dominion Resources
26. Dominion Transmission
27. Dow Chemical Company (WV Operations)
28. Downard Hydraulics
29. DuPont
30. DuPont, Belle Plant
31. Eagle Manufacturing Co.
32. Eagle Research
33. Ecolab, Inc.
34. Energy Transfer
35. EnerVest Operating, LLC
36. ePlus Technology
37. ePlus Technology, Inc.
38. EQT
39. EQT Midstream
40. Essroc, Inc.

41. Fenwick Technologies, Inc.
42. First Energy Generation Corp.
43. Frontier Communication
44. FTI Consulting
45. Gestamp WV, LLC.
46. Greenwood
47. Greystar
48. HG Energy
49. HP Hood, LLC.
50. Huntington Steel and Supply Co., Inc.
51. ICL-IPA
52. Independent Oil and Gas Association – WV
53. Innovative Mattress Solutions
54. IPM Industrial Plating & Manufacturing
55. Jacobs Engineering
56. JW Wireline
57. Key Energy Services
58. Kimray
59. Kureha PGA, LLC.
60. Logan Concrete Inc.
61. Lumos Networks
62. M3 Midstream LLC
63. Markwest Energy
64. Matric
65. Mountaineer Gas
66. Murray Sheet Metal Company, Inc.
67. Nabors Drilling
68. National Armature and Machine
69. Neighborgall Construction
70. Netranom Communications, Inc.
71. NGK
72. NOMAC
73. Orgill, Inc.
74. Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe, LLP
75. PDC Energy
76. Phillips Machine
77. Pike Electric
78. Pinnacle Wind LLC.
79. Polymer Alliance Zone
80. Proctor & Gamble
81. Quad Graphics
82. Right-At-Home
83. Rio Group, Inc.
84. Savanna Energy
85. Smith Services, a Timken Company
86. Steel of West Virginia, Inc.

87. Sun Energy
88. Superior Well Service
89. T & N Electric Motor Exchange
90. Thomas Health Systems
91. Toothman Rice PLLC
92. Toyota Motor Manufacturing
93. U.S. Silica
94. Union Carbide
95. US Well Service
96. Vanderra Resources
97. W & B Fabricators, Inc.
98. Walker Machinery
99. Warren Drilling Company
100. Watts Transforming, Inc.
101. Weatherford International
102. Weir SPM
103. Wheeling Nisshin, Inc.
104. Williams Company
105. Wright Concrete-Underground Division
106. WV Manufacturers Association
107. WV Oil and Natural Gas Association (WVONGA)
108. XTO Energy



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

January 04, 2016

Dr. Paul Hill
Chancellor
West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
1015 Kanawha Boulevard East, Suite 700
Charleston, WV 25301

Dear Chancellor Hill:

In preparing this letter of support for the HEPC, I have requested that members of my Cabinet provide me a listing of the services you and your staff have provided to Concord University in recent years. It is my hope that the Legislative Auditor will make time to review some of the comments my colleagues have provided in order to understand the impressive range of services your offices provide to Concord University alone. Compiling this information with the statements of support from other universities and colleges across the state would be compelling.

From my perspective, the HEPC provides an objective resource for all WV postsecondary institutions. Not only does the HEPC gain a "birds-eye view" that is often difficult for those of us aligned with a particular campus, they provide a venue for central data collection and analysis that would otherwise be lacking. This is so important for institutional and legislative leaders to have in order to make data-driven decisions to improve education in our state and to spur economic development.

Your work is integral to the work of Concord University, its faculty and staff. Thank each of you for the admirable service you offer the state and its students.

Sincerely,

Kendra Boggess
President

1-304-384-5224

Fax: 1-304-384-5165

www.concord.edu

presidentboggess@concord.edu

P.O. Box 1000

Athens, WV 24712

HEPC Services to Academic Affairs

- 1) The HEPC creates a sense of collaboration and oversight for colleges, universities and CTCs throughout the state.
- 2) The HEPC has provided us guidance relating to policies that assist in the advancement of our institution. If the HEPC were not available to the colleges and universities, each individual institution would need to carry full responsibility for remaining updated in every area of operation. The joint services they provide are a cost savings to the state. Without funding from the state or from the grants provided by HEPC, the colleges, universities and CTCs would face even more detriments.
- 3) In the most recent academic year, the HEPC has assisted the smaller institutions through **price reductions** in becoming part of International Studies (J-1 Exchange Program), SARA, and DegreeWorks programs and systems. Otherwise, the costs for these programs and systems would be a huge financial burden on Concord.
- 4) The HEPC provides us with an "extra" layer of validation towards HLC accreditation.

Services Provided to the Concord University Business Office. The HEPC:

- 1) Coordinates all aspects of our annual audit to include selection of the auditor, and preparation to be included in the state-wide CAFR. (The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report of the State)
- 2) Provides bond financing to the schools. More importantly, they do this in a manner that is fair and equitable.
- 3) Keeps us informed regarding legislation and other issues that affect Higher Education.
- 4) Acts as a source of expertise that we cannot afford to have in-house. (e.g. purchasing, legal, financial)
- 5) Provides rules for the system that we can implement at the unit level.
- 6) Is a source of grant funding. (e.g. Gear Up, NSF, Promise, WV Grants)
- 7) Encourages and promotes best practices and consistency in reporting financial data (operating and capital).

HEPC Value-Added Services to Student Affairs/Retention. The HEPC:

- 1) **Provides Statewide data collection, analysis, & reports**
 - Increases transparency among higher education institutions for positive consumer benefit (students/parents)
 - Provides cross-institution and statewide data on key measures (no singular institution could/would do so)
 - Creates and updates the institutional Data Portal

- Higher Education Report Card and Financial Aid Report Card and Supplement
 - College going rates by school and county
 - (Note: WV has some of the best higher ed data in country)
- 2) **Administers statewide Financial Aid programs:**
- WVHEG, PROMISE, Underwood-Smith Teacher Scholarship, HEAPS, WV Health Sciences, WV Engineering, Science & Technology Scholarship, etc.
 - CFWV, CFWV (e.g., CU is beginning to use the site’s free career inventories/surveys)
 - College Goal Sunday Coordination and outreach initiatives
 - Public Service Announcements in institutions’ communities
 - Scholarship Search
- 3) **Saves institutions money** through Consortium agreements with private vendors (e.g. SMARTHINKING, DegreeWorks, Text Message platform, loan default—EdFinancial/Inceptia...)
- 4) Instituted the P-20 Initiative to streamline the educational process from early childhood through graduate school; improves communication between K-12 and postsecondary; removes roadblocks for students. (P-20 database is forthcoming, which will also include workforce data); involves faculty in common core assessment work and brings together K-12, higher ed, industry and others to discuss college and career readiness.
- 5) Plans and organizes Student Leadership initiatives
- Annual Student Leadership Conference
 - State Advisory Council of Students
- 6) Provides needed resources to smaller institutions that would otherwise be unavailable/unaffordable.
- 7) Offers funding opportunities (e.g. mini-grants for research and services—diversity, technology, retention, rural education, STEM, etc.)
- 8) Provides technical Assistance
- Title IX
 - Legal issues
 - Jamie’s Law
 - VAWA/Clery Act reporting
 - US Dept. of Ed and State of WV requirements
 - Articulation agreements
 - Board of Governors trainings
 - Student Affairs issues
 - Human Resources
 - Strategic Plans/Compact

- 9) Creates opportunities for improved College Access, Retention, and Graduation initiatives
 - GEAR UP
 - Public Service Announcements
 - Text messaging project
 - Common Ground project for veterans
 - DegreeNow/Adult Learner
 - TRIO program support
 - FAFSA Completion initiatives
 - Co-requisite courses in lieu of developmental coursework
 - And has led the charge with K-12 Common Core assessment
 - P-20 initiatives (see bullet #4, above)
 - Focus on first-generation, low income, & adult learners, as well as keeping our “best and brightest” in-state
 - Student and Parent guides (publications)
 - Career resources
 - 15 to Finish Campaign and Coordination
 - RBA program coordination
 - Core Transfer Agreement (reduces time to graduation for transfer students and creates more seamless pathways)

- 10) Student Success Summit (share best practices; open communication between P-12 and postsecondary)

- 11) Provides professional development (access to nationally recognized leaders in field; e.g. Maggie Culp, Jennifer Bloom, John Gardner, Betsy Barefoot, ACT, College Board)

- 12) Provides professional networking and cross-discipline/constituent networking (e.g. Student Affairs, Administration, Faculty, Students, community members...)

- 13) Other
 - State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA)
 - Quality Matters (to improve online course quality)

HEPC Value Added Services. The HEPC adds value to Concord’s Human Resources and Organizational Development practice through a variety of provided services, including but not limited to:

- 1) **Human Resources**
 - Professional consultation on compensation and implementation of the classified staff pay schedule.
 - Repository of comparative HR metrics and data

- Professional consultation on classified employee classification, including the use of job analysis and job audits.
- Providing neutral overview and analysis of classification decisions via leading the Job Classification Committee (mandate).
- Provides the framework for meeting the statutory requirements regarding classification and compensation including vendor interface and project management.
- Professional HR representation on WVOASIS / KRONOS change management projects.
- Provides or secures training for system's HR professionals.

2) Legal

- Professional representation at grievance and unemployment hearings.
- Counsel regarding FOIA requests.
- Developmental activities provided for the Board of Governors has proven helpful.

In other Human Resource and Legal administrative capacities, it is extraordinarily helpful to have access to information on the data portal, academic reports and publications, and financial information made available through the HEPC / WVNET website.

Service provided by HEPC to Facilities Management on campus

- 1) Concord University uses HEPC lawyers regularly. Not only is it cheaper to do so, but HEPC lawyers are current on all higher education law, so are specialists.
- 2) When building or renovating large, expensive projects, the HEPC is a second set of eyes to review blueprints, a second check on spending, and an advocate for the various institutions with regard to the Fire Marshall's office, elevator inspectors, and other inspectors.
- 3) Helps coordinate the institutions as a large group to wield power for expensive purchases which affect us all.
- 4) Coordinate state-wide meetings for important training, much of which is required by state or federal law.
- 5) Advocate for all institutions during legislative sessions, and help explain new laws.

Services provided for Concord University/Technology Services

- 1) Funded our 2014 Network Security and Penetration Test by Protivity, Inc.
- 2) Leadership by Ed McGee, and management of the weekly calls for **wvOASIS** implementation. CIOs, CFOs, and CHROs participate, usually 60-80 participants.
- 3) **WVNET (reports to HEPC):**
 - manages hosting for Argos, DegreeWorks, and data backup services.
 - Provides centralized procurement for software licensing to higher education. Oracle, Banner, Blackboard, Microsoft, and other software.
 - Concord is actively exploring moving our production web site to a WVNET hosted location as a disaster recovery strategy.

- Provides the programming and content for the annual West Virginia Higher Education Technology Conference which Concord representatives attend.
- 4) Manages the Erma Byrd Higher Ed Center.

HEPC support for Admissions and Financial Aid:

- 1) The HEPC led the effort to implement **default management support** at each of its institutions.
- 2) The HEPC covers half of the annual cost for Inceptia, one of two service providers that schools could choose to partner with in their communication with students who are eligible to enter repayment. This partnership has helped us decrease our default rate and maintain Title IV aid eligibility.
- 3) The HEPC covers half of the cost on an international student lead generation platform, online at: www.bachelorstudies.com
- 4) The HEPC leads the effort to provide support and resolve common issues in recruitment
- 5) While HEPC isn't overly involved in Admissions and Recruitment, they definitely help cover costs and find quantity discounts for recruitment platforms (websites) that generate interested students.
- 6) HEPC's involvement in financial aid is much appreciated. If they hadn't stepped in to cover the costs for default management support, quite a few schools would be in danger of losing Pell and Direct Loan eligibility.



WEST LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

Office of the President
208 University Drive
Campus Union Box #142
West Liberty, WV 26074

Dr. John P. McCullough
Office: (304) 336-8000
Fax: (304) 336-8829
mcculljp@westliberty.edu

TO: Aaron Allred, Legislative Manager/Legislative Auditor
State of West Virginia Legislature---Joint Committee on Government and Finance

FROM: John P. McCullough, Interim President

DATE: December 31, 2015

RE: West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission

Dear Mr. Allred:

The purpose of this communique is to provide, in very condensed fashion, my perspective regarding the value of the duties and functions of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission.

As a 45-year employee of West Liberty University and having served as Interim President on three separate occasions (totaling close to four years) and as Provost (approximately eleven years), I have been a witness to and recipient of the value provided by the HEPC and the Chancellor and the Chancellor's staff to its constituent institutions. The Commission has been of **significant importance and value** in providing oversight, guidance, advisement, and appropriate control in the University's fiscal affairs, budgeting, purchasing, capital spending, academic-program creation and review, and numerous other areas vital to our operation.

Without the HEPC, the critical elements of review, monitoring, and "auditing" at West Liberty University would be conducted on a strictly "in-house" basis, without any real comparative analysis. While our Board of Governors functions effectively and with a committed focus upon the wellbeing of the University, the completely-volunteer BOG simply does not possess the resources to function to the depth or breadth of the HEPC in many areas.

As a long-term employee of WLU, I have witnessed the various iterations of governmental oversight throughout the past five decades. From my experience, the duties and functions fulfilled by the HEPC have **added real value** to the effective operation of West Liberty University and our sister four-year public institutions of higher education.

I appreciate having the opportunity to provide my perspective on this matter, and I thank you for the work you do on behalf of the tax payers of West Virginia.

C: Chancellor Paul L. Hill



West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine

Office of the President

January 4, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine's (WVSOM) support for the Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC). The Commission is comprised of dedicated individuals who represent the state of West Virginia. Further, it is led by a highly qualified and dedicated Chancellor.

HEPC's oversight is essential to ensure that the State's higher educational institutions provide the highest quality of education possible. Similar to a Board of Regents in other states, the Commission helps to protect those students that seek to further their education and pay tuition.

The Commission also acts as the State's accrediting body for new higher education institutions and programs. In this capacity, HEPC provides the oversight to ensure an institution has appropriate faculty, facilities, and finances necessary for a quality educational program. Thus, HEPC maintains the checks and balances between a college's desire to grow and the state's commitment to provide excellence in education. It does this with knowledge, collaboration and expertise. HEPC is the only State entity that provides this needed oversight.

In summary, WVSOM supports the HEPC. We believe that it plays an essential role in helping the state's colleges and universities meet their mission to provide excellence in higher education throughout West Virginia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Michael D. Adelman', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Michael D. Adelman, D.O.
President, WVSOM



West Virginia
Higher Education
Policy Commission



Report to the Joint Committee on Education

September 19, 2016

**August 2, 2016
Agency Response**

**Performance Evaluation and Research Division's Agency Review
Higher Education Policy Commission and the Council for Community
and Technical College Education**



Bruce L. Berry, M.D.
Chair

Paul L. Hill, Ph.D.
Chancellor

West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
West Virginia Community and Technical College System

1018 Kanawha Boulevard, East, Suite 700
Charleston, West Virginia 25301
(304) 558-2101

www.hepc.wvnet.edu
www.wvctcs.org



Clarence "Butch" Pennington
Chair

Sarah Armstrong Tucker, Ph.D.
Chancellor

August 2, 2016

Mr. John Sylvia
Director
Performance Evaluation and Research Division
West Virginia Legislature
Building 1, Room W-314
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Dear Mr. Sylvia:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the January 12, 2016 Legislative Auditor's report of the agency review of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (Commission) and the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education (Council).

We participated in an audit exit conference with legislative analysts on July 14, 2016, and shared our concerns about misconceptions in the report, but we have since been informed that no changes were made to the original report based our discussions during the exit conference.

In short, we appreciate the necessity of the scheduled agency reviews and the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the operations of our offices. While this review process has taken more than a year and a half to complete, the audit staff who worked with us during this time have been professional and we believe our responses to the numerous requests for information have been prompt and thorough.

However, we disagree with assertions in the final report, which we believe suggests a misunderstanding of our agencies' statutory authority and the Legislature's will and history in funding our colleges and universities through state appropriations. We also believe the review presents limited understanding of the structure of the two higher education systems and how

the current coordinating function was established and operates in West Virginia and in other state public higher education systems.

In addition, we do not think the auditor's staff were able to evaluate the effort, deliberation and time put into the decision-making processes of our duly appointed Commission and Council members, particularly when those members consider tuition increases and evaluate programs offered by the institutions.

From our standpoint, the review did not seem to follow typical audit protocol and did not provide recommendations about how to improve Commission and Council accountability or processes. The review instead abruptly issues a sweeping recommendation that the agencies' functions be transferred, for an unspecified reason, to the institutions, while simultaneously and diametrically oppositely recommending that the institutions need stronger state-level oversight. This seems counterintuitive.

We believe our agencies are functioning at a superior level – as coordinating bodies - as the Legislature has intended. The appointed, unpaid members of the Commission and Council take seriously their roles and decisions when evaluating degree programs, tuition increases and capital and operating budgets.

Further, the Legislature has granted a great deal of local control and fiduciary responsibility to the institution governing boards, which the PERD report suggests should be divested “back.” This statement highlights what we believe is a critical misinterpretation of the coordinating versus governing function our agencies have been tasked with providing.

To address the report's conclusions about shortcomings in governance of the institutions, the Commission and Council would need additional authority not currently granted by State Code. Each of the issues pointed out by the review, and our responses, are attached to this correspondence.

We stand ready to provide further background and analysis on these issues, including how alternate state higher education governing and coordinating authority might function, should the Legislature wish to pursue other higher education oversight options. Regardless of our disagreement with issues presented in the Legislative Auditor's agency review and report, we have taken the review's findings seriously and have begun modifying our processes to improve upon the reported shortcomings.

Those modifications may include: Creating a matrix that tracks objectives being pursued by our institutions; more detailed transcription of meeting discussions about the approval of tuition and fee increases; creating a matrix related to institutional program review; and visiting the institutions for random audit samples of reported data to confirm accuracy.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul L. Hill".

Paul L. Hill
Chancellor

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sarah Armstrong Tucker".

Sarah Armstrong Tucker
Chancellor

FINDINGS AND AGENCY RESPONSE

Issue 1: The Commission and Council do not oversee institutions' academic program reviews in accordance with statute.

Response:

The Commission's and Council's Series 10, Procedural Rules, Policy Regarding Program Review, specifies a detailed policy that we carefully follow for academic program review, including a provision that academic programs at public institutions be reviewed every five years.

The report takes issue with the program reviews we conduct and notes a failure to discontinue non-producing programs. We have been given no statutory authority to discontinue academic and technical programs, only to review existing programs and approve certain new ones. Once the Commission and Council recommend that a program be discontinued, it is the responsibility of the governing board of the institution in question to carry out that recommendation. We have been given no control over new Marshall University and West Virginia University programs, unless those are offered in a new location.

Issue 2: The Commission and Council always grant tuition and fee increases over five percent and they do not consider statutory criteria in their decisions.

Response:

The Commission and Council have not been granted the authority to review tuition and fee increases below the five percent threshold. Auditors interviewed only one Commission member and no Council members in making their determination that Commission and Council members do not consider statutory criteria when considering tuition increases.

Commission and Council members take their authority seriously. They consider many factors in approving tuition increases, especially in the last few years as higher education appropriations have been cut, with the understanding from budget officials and legislators that colleges are able to increase tuition to make up for the reduced state funding. Throughout the year and during their scheduled regular meetings and numerous special meetings, Commission and Council members discuss and learn about all the factors required by State Code for tuition and fee considerations.

For example, the Commission in 2015 debated a substantial increase in West Virginia University tuition and fees and granted approval only after the institution laid out its formal plans for student retention and increased private fundraising to provide scholarships. Most recently, much public attention was shed on the Council for its rejection of what it considered unnecessarily large tuition increases from several of the community colleges. This type of

deliberation has not been taken into account in the agency review nor were audit staff present at the public meetings when these items were discussed.

The review seems to imply that lack of strenuous oversight is evidenced by what is or is not contained in meeting minutes of the Commission and Council. The review did not consider that the appropriate criteria actually were addressed by staff, followed by responses from the institutions, placed before the Commission and Council members, reviewed in work sessions and ultimately voted on during official meetings. Meeting minutes could not possibly capture the thought processes of individual Commission and Council members as they considered evidence and recommendations that evolved over several months.

We believe without reservation that our Commission and Council members look carefully at every tuition increase before them and ask the questions that State Code requires for them to make informed decisions about whether to approve or reject the requested increases.

Issue 3: The Commission's and Council's budget review and approval process does not consider achievement of institutional compacts.

Response:

The Auditor's report seems to imply that compacts should be considered concurrently with budget approvals, however, there is no requirement in Code for this assumption.

The report also suggests that the Commission and Council should use budget requests to shape institutional behavior so that they comply with the compacts. This assumption illustrates what we believe is a misconception about the current ability of the Commission and Council to control appropriations to our institutions.

In 2000, the statute which created the Commission and Council intended for our agencies to receive appropriations from the Legislature, and then to distribute those state funds to the institutions, based on their meeting certain standards. However, that funding scheme never materialized and, since that time, the Legislature has provided line-item appropriations directly to the institutions. In addition, the Legislature has granted additional appropriations to certain institutions without Commission or Council endorsement or support.

Unless this process is changed by the Legislature, neither the Commission nor the Council have the statutory authority to control institution appropriations. Should the Legislature so approve, the Commission and Council would welcome the ability to allocate institutional appropriations and connect funding with academic outcomes directly related to state priorities.

Issue 4: The Commission and Council do not conduct reviews of institutional reported data to ensure performance data is accurate.

Response:

The Commission and Council follow national data collection standards and have multiple review checkpoints to ensure the accuracy of the data we gather. The accuracy of our data collection and methodology is clearly spelled out in Section 3.2 of Series 3, Legislative Rule, Higher Education Report Card:

“The President or administrative head of each public college, regional campus, or community and technical college shall be responsible for ensuring that all requested information is submitted annually to the Commission and shall certify that the information submitted has been reviewed for accuracy.”

In addition, the Legislative Rule provides guidelines for how data will be collected and utilized. Uniformity is expressly considered in how data is collected and reported, which directly contradicts the report’s claim that variation exists in data reporting. After receiving the Auditor’s draft report, our staff surveyed state central higher education offices across the country. They found that a vast majority of these agencies collect higher education data through processes very similar to that of West Virginia.

The agency review falsely presumes that the Commission and Council merely reformat submitted data from the institutions without reviewing for accuracy when, in fact, our staff work closely with staff at each of the institutions to ensure the data submitted to the Commission and Council is as accurate as possible.

In addition, the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability and legislative staff of both the House and Senate Education Committees frequently call on the Commission and Council for data analysis so they can make informed decisions. This is a service that would not be possible without our existing data collection processes.

We believe this review provides no evidence that our data collection process is flawed. However, we will continue to evaluate best practices for data collection, and have an active dialogue and relationship with the institutions to not only streamline these processes and eliminate unnecessary duplication, but also to focus on the data that will result in improved student success.

Conclusion

The Commission and Council work diligently to provide transparency concerning our operations and how we deliver value to our students and families who have been, are or will be served by West Virginia’s public two- and four-year institutions. We welcome the opportunity to work with other state agencies, businesses, community organizations, individual citizens, and the

Legislature to relay the Commission and Council's important role in providing access and promoting academic success at our public institutions.

We provide policy guidance and oversight along with a unique set of services to our institutions focused on student success. While our two agencies would appreciate direct feedback from the Performance Evaluation and Research Division that focuses on improving our operations, the report's findings do illustrate a need for the Commission and Council to exercise more, rather than reduced, authority over the institutions. This can only be accomplished through the will of the Legislature and necessary statutory changes.