

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
WEST VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY COMMISSION**

By Zoom Videoconference

**October 19, 2020
2:00 p.m.**

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Resolution Honoring President Stephen Greiner**
- III. Institutional Textbook Affordability Report Update**
- IV. Approval of Modification to Standardized National Testing Deadline for the PROMISE Scholarship**
- V. Approval to Suspend the Assessment Standards for the Underwood-Smith Teaching Scholars Program**
- VI. Additional Board Action and Comment**
- VII. Adjournment**

To join the meeting by phone, dial 646-558-8656 and enter meeting ID 969 6564 1791

**West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
Meeting of October 19, 2020**

ITEM: Institutional Textbook Affordability Report Update

INSTITUTIONS: All

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION: Resolved, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission suspend the November 1, 2020, institutional annual textbook report to allow for revision of the procedural rule to incorporate new legislative requirements.

STAFF MEMBER: Corley Dennison

BACKGROUND:

Textbook affordability for students remains a priority of the Commission; however, the previous process of collecting data on timeframes for required textbook posting and methods of cutting costs did not reflect newer standards and types of affordable classroom learning materials. Commission staff, in working with our institutions and national experts, determined the best way to reduce student textbook and learning material costs is to modernize the way texts are provided and available to students without sacrificing quality.

In addition, state legislation passed in 2019 and 2020 has had a direct impact on how colleges and universities must seek to lower learning material costs for their students. In 2019, House Bill 2853 charged the West Virginia Library Commission with creating the West Virginia Program for Open Education Resources (OER) to encourage and facilitate the use of open education resource materials in both higher education and kindergarten through 12th grade in West Virginia schools.

Since the passage of HB 2853, the Commission and the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education were required to determine what institutions or faculty are using OER material and to propose a competitive application system to award grant funding for those faculty and institutions seeking to use the materials. The higher education central office also was charged with developing strategies to leverage further open resource material to benefit higher education institutions and to seek private and foundation support for the project.

The Commission and Council staff have done just that. In 2019 and 2020, the Policy and Planning and Academic Affairs divisions successfully received grant funding to support OER initiatives. In September 2020, the office of Academic Affairs conducted an Open Educational Resource seminar with college and university faculty.

In light of the higher education central office's progress toward OER on our campuses and in accordance with 2019 and 2020 amendments to W. Va. Code § 18B-10-14 made by HB 2853 and HB 4729, the Council and Commission intend to amend their procedural rule to revise the outdated textbook affordability reporting requirement.

To that end, Commission staff seek approval to remove the institutions' textbook affordability reporting requirement for November 1 of this year.

**West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
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ITEM: Approval of Modification to Standardized National Testing Deadline for the PROMISE Scholarship

INSTITUTIONS: All

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION: *Resolved,* That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves extension of the standardized national testing deadline to qualify for the PROMISE Scholarship.

STAFF MEMBER: Brian Weingart

BACKGROUND:

ACT and the College Board have offered standardized national tests this fall. Students have signed up to take a standardized test only to have the location in which they signed up cancel.

The Higher Education Student Financial Aid Advisory Board recommends the extension of the standardized national testing deadline to qualify for the PROMISE Scholarship from October 2020 to December 2020 for the Class of 2020 because of the state of emergency.

The Higher Education Student Financial Aid Advisory Board also recommends the extension of the national standardized testing deadline to qualify for the PROMISE Scholarship from July 2021 to August 2021 for the Class of 2021.

**West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
Meeting of October 19, 2020**

ITEM: Approval to Suspend the Assessment Standards for the Underwood-Smith Teaching Scholars Program

INSTITUTIONS: All

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION: *Resolved*, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves suspension of the college-ready assessment standards for the Underwood-Smith Teaching Scholars application process for 2021 cohort.

STAFF MEMBER: Brian Weingart

BACKGROUND:

The Underwood-Smith Teaching Scholars program requires applicants meet the college-ready assessment standards as one of many criteria of a three-round application process. Each year a new cohort of 25 students are selected as Underwood-Smith Teaching Scholars.

The college-ready assessment standards are part of the first-round application process in addition to meeting the minimum grade point average to qualify for the second-round application process. The first-round application process ends December 31, 2020. The cancelation of assessments during the state of emergency is limiting the ability of students to meet this criterion to qualify for the second-round application process. Staff recommends suspension of the college-ready assessment standard for the 2021 cohort.